

EVENTS OF 37TH STANZA

The 38th Stanza in the Life of Henry Thoreau

FALL 1854	JULY 1854	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
WINTER 1854/1855	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER 1854
SPRING 1855	JANUARY 1855	FEBRUARY	MARCH
SUMMER 1855	APRIL	MAY	JUNE 1855

Following the death of [Jesus Christ](#) there was a period of readjustment that lasted for approximately one million years.

-[Kurt Vonnegut](#), THE SIRENS OF TITAN



JULY 1854



[Henry David Thoreau](#)'s 38th stanza began on his birthday, July 12th, Wednesday, 1854.

- Thoreau's profile was sketched by the Reverend William Henry Furness.



- Publication of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) by Ticknor and Fields. The book was scathingly condemned in the pages of the [New-York Times](#). Its author, [Mr. Henry D. Thoreau](#) or "Thorrau" was erratic, impracticable, and apt to confuse rather than arrange the order of things mental and physical. He imagines himself a philosopher but presents us with no philosophy. He is not a Christian but, perhaps, is a Communist. His new manifesto is of interest only as a contribution to the comic literature of America, yada yada yada. The book

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was reviewed in the [Daily Alta California](#) as a very strange book, the history of a philosopher living in the woods, a sort of Robinson Crusoe life. It shows the simplicity with which life can be conducted, stripped of some of its conventionalities, and the whole narrative is imbued with a deep philosophic spirit. All together besides being beautifully written, it has an air of originality which is quite taking.

- “SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS” appeared in Garrison’s [The Liberator](#) and in [The National Anti-Slavery Standard](#).
- A new lecture “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” was advertised in [The Liberator](#) and in all 4 of [Providence, Rhode Island](#)’s major newspapers—the [Daily Post](#), [Daily Journal](#), [Bulletin](#), and [Daily Tribune](#).

THOREAU’S SERMON

[Various versions of “LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE”, variously titled, would be delivered:

“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on December 6, 1854 at Railroad Hall in [Providence](#)

“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on December 26, 1854 in the [New Bedford](#) Lyceum

“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on December 28, 1854 at the Athenaeum on [Nantucket Island](#)

On January 4, 1855 in the [Worcester](#) Lyceum, as “The Connection between Man’s Employment and His Higher Life”

“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on February 14, 1855 in the [Concord](#) Lyceum

“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on November 16, 1856 for the [Eagleswood](#) community

“Getting a Living” on December 18, 1856 in the vestry of the Congregational Church of Amherst, [New Hampshire](#)

“LIFE MISSPENT” on Sunday morning, October 9, 1859 to the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)’s 28th Congregational Society in Boston Music Hall

“LIFE MISSPENT” on Sunday, September 9, 1860 at Welles Hall in Lowell.]

- At the new opera-house in [New-York](#), Thoreau attended a performance of [Vincenzo Bellini](#)’s final opera [Lpuritani](#) featured dramatic soprano [Madame the Marquise Giulia Grisi](#) as the Puritan roundhead revolutionary daughter Elvira and her husband or consort the tenor [Sir Giovanni Matteo de Candia](#) as Lord Arthur Talbot, one of [King Charles I](#)’s cavalier loyalists.

BACKGROUND EVENTS OF 1854

BACKGROUND EVENTS OF 1855

Read  [Henry Thoreau’s Journal for July 1854 \(AET. 36-37\)](#) in the 1906 version



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➡ Summer: [Brownson's Quarterly Review](#), No. 2

CATHOLICISM

- I. *Uncle Jack and His Nephew*
- II. *Protestantism Developed*
- III. *Temporal Power of the Popes*
- IV. *Where is Italy?*
- V. *The Mercesburg Hypothesis*
- VI. **Literary Notices and Criticisms**

MAGAZINES

ORESTES AUGUSTUS BROWNSON

➡ July: During this period we indulged ourselves in a week of naval shelling and burning at the port of San Juan del Norte (Greytown) on the coast of Nicaragua, in order to avenge ourselves for some sort of insult the country had allegedly made to our American Minister. –Or so 'twas being explained.

US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

➡ July: Someone bombed the [Catholic](#) Church in Dorchester.


ANTI-CATHOLICISM

➡ July: 650 people died of [cholera](#) in the Brooklyn suburb of [New-York](#).




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 Summer or Early Fall: Mr. and Mrs. [Eben J. Loomis](#) stayed at the Thoreau boarding house in [Concord](#) while Samuel Worcester Rowse was in town, at work on his commissioned portrait of [Waldo Emerson](#):¹

Mrs. Thoreau invited Mrs. Loomis and myself to spend the summer of 1854 with her at Concord.... I was very much interested in watching him [Rowse] while he was watching the Expression of Henry's face.... It is for me, on the whole, the most satisfactory likeness, for it represents Henry just as he was in that summer; so memorable to me ... memorable for my intimacy with Henry.

 July 13, Thursday: At 2PM [Henry Thoreau](#) went along the Fitchburg Railroad tracks and then to Bare or Pine Hill in Lincoln (Gleason J9).

Abbas I, Turkish Viceroy of [Egypt](#), was murdered by 2 of his slaves. He was succeeded by Mohammed Said.

Having been sent by [President Franklin Pierce](#) to demand reparations from the town of San Juan del Norte, Nicaragua for an alleged slight of the US Minister to that country, the USS *Cyane* began bombarding the town. Over the course of 7 hours they fired over 200 rounds into San Juan, which consisted of about 50-60 thatched huts. At the end of the bombardment, [U.S. Marines](#) were sent ashore. They looted what they could find, including a large cache of liquor, and burned the rest. Merchants of 6 countries demand \$2,000,000 compensation for their destroyed goods, which of course would never be paid.

In San Francisco, the Lady Washington Engine Company changed its name to Manhattan Engine Company No. 2.

CALIFORNIA



July 13. Thursday. 2 P.M. — To Bare Hill, Lincoln, by railroad.

Have heard a faint locust-like sound from crickets a week or two. In the midst of July heat and drought. Tho season is trivial as noon. I hear the hot-weather and noonday birds, red-eye, tanager, wood pewee, etc. Plants are curled and withered. The leaves dry, ripe like the berries. The point of a lower leaf of a smooth sumach is scarlet, and some geranium leaves.

Many birch leaves are yellow and falling. Leaves are very much eaten (June is the time to collect perfect ones); of some kinds hard to find a perfect specimen, unless of a firm texture. The *Pyrus arbutifolia* is very thick and glossy dark green. The tupelo leaf is pretty firm and perfect, not so glossy, more or less winding, and the shoots are zigzag or winding. *Polygonum Hydropiper* at Baker Swamp. Thoroughwort, tomorrow or next day. *Scutellaria lateriflora*, some days at least. The chestnuts, now in full bloom, are conspicuous from the hills (Bare Hill), like a yellowish or creamy-tinged rime.

Vaccinium vacillans on Bare Hill ripe enough to pick, now considerably in advance of huckleberries; sweeter than last and grow in dense clusters. The *V. Pennsylvanicum* is soft and rather thin and tasteless, mountain andspring like, with its fine light-blue bloom, very handsome, simple and ambrosial. This *vacillans* is more earthy, like solid food. Many of the huckleberries here on the hilltop have dried black and shrivelled before ripening.

Boys go after the cows now about 5.30 o'clock.

Decodon not distinctly flower-budded yet. Gnaphalium (pearly) well out, say yesterday. If there is an interregnum in the flowers, it is when berries begin.

Scent the bruised leaves of the fragrant goldenrod along the Lincoln road now. What I have called *Solidago arguta* at Walden (*vide* radical leaves), also an aster, probably *Diplopappus utnbellatus*, at Baker Swamp, will open in a few days.

[Transcript]



1. Unfortunately the original crayon has deteriorated to the point at which its copies are now better than it.

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So: Who Knew First When It Started To Rain?



July 14, Friday: The Sultan of Muscat ceded the Kuria Muria Islands to Great Britain.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went over Nawshawtuct or Lee's Hill (Gleason F6) to James P. Brown's Pond-Hole or Cold Pool (Gleason H4).



July 14. Friday. Awake to day of gentle rain, very much needed; none to speak of for nearly a month, methinks. The cooler and stiller day has a valuable effect on my spirits.

P. M. — Over the Hill to Brown's watering-place.

It holds up from time [to time], and then a fine, misty rain falls. It lies on the fine reddish tops of some grasses, thick and whitish like morning cobwebs. The stillness is very soothing. This is a summer rain.

The earth is being bedewed. There is no storm or violence to it. Health is a sound relation to nature.

Anychia plenty by the watering-place (with the amphicarp[ae]a), but calyx apparently not expanded. Amphicarp[ae]a, not yet. Penthorum, three or four days.

Xyris, apparently three or four days in meadow close by. Hardhack, two or three days. A hedyotis still.

Elodea to-morrow. The red capsules of the *Hypericum ellipticum*, here and there. This one of the fall-ward phenomena in still rainy days.

[Transcript]



July 15, Saturday: Russian forces defeated the Turks on the Cholok River and forced them back to Batum (Batumi).

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) took the Sudbury River to Hubbard's Bridge (Gleason H6) causeway.



July 15. Saturday P.M. — To Hubbard's Bridge causeway via river.

Rained still in forenoon; now cloudy. Fields comparatively deserted to-day and yesterday. Hay stands cocked in them on all sides. Some, being shorn, are clear for the walker. It is but a short time that he has to dodge the haymakers. This cooler, still, cloudy weather after the rain is very autumnal and restorative to our spirits. The robin sings still, but the gold-finch twitters over oftener, and I hear the link link finch of the bobolink (one perfect strain!), and the crickets creak more as in the fall. All these sounds dispose our minds to serenity. Perhaps the mosquitoes are most troublesome such days in the woods, if it is warm enough. We seem to be passing, or to have passed, a dividing line between spring and autumn, and begin to descend the long slope toward winter. On the shady side of the hill I go along Hubbard's walls toward the bathing-place, stepping high to keep my feet as dry as may be. All is stillness in the fields. The calamint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*), standing by the wall with its hoary upper leaves, full of light even this cloudy day and reminding of the fragrance which I know so well, is an agreeable sight. I need not smell it; it is a balm to my mind to remember its fragrance.

I hear a bay-wing on the wall near by, sound[ing] far away, — a fainter song sparrow strain, somewhat.

I see its open mouth and quivering throat, yet can hardly believe the seemingly distant strain proceeds from it, yaw yaw, twee twee, twitter twitter, te twee twe tw tw tw, and so ends with a short and rapid trill.

Again I am attracted by the Clamshell reach of the river, running east and west, as seen from Hubbard's fields, now beginning to be smoothed as in the fall. First, next the meadow, is the broad dark-green rank of pickerel-weeds, etc., etc. (polygonum, etc.), then the light-reflecting edging of pads, and then the smooth, still, cloud-reflecting water. My thoughts are driven inward, even as clouds and trees are reflected in the still, smooth water. There is an inwardness even in the mosquitoes' hum, while I am picking blueberries in the dank wood.

Rhexia near the *Rhus copallina*, apparently yesterday.


The flicker still, and the veery full, and Maryland yellow-throat, and nuthatch. Many birds begin to fly in small flocks like grown-up broods. Green grapes and cranberries also remind me of the advancing season. The former are as large as ripe cranberries, the latter as big as peas, though the vines are still full of blossoms. Cymbidiums are quite fresh and pogonias linger still. *Drosera rotundifolia*, end of Hubbard's bank wall, Corner road, some days, perhaps a fortnight, for it was nearly out on the 2d, its lower flowers first, and now dry.

The stems and leaves of various asters and goldenrods, which ere long will reign along the way, begin to be conspicuous. *Ameranthus hybridus*, several days at least. It has come out quite fair and warm.

There many butterflies, yellow and red, about the *Asclepias incarnata* now.

[Transcript]



 July 16, Sunday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked along the Fitchburg Railroad tracks and then to Saw Mill Brook (Gleason G9).

In New-York, Elizabeth Jennings (who would later add the married name Graham) and a friend Sarah Adams boarded the 3d Avenue streetcar on their way to church. The conductor advised these two women of color that they needed to get off, since during that period people of color were not allowed to ride should any white passenger object. When Jennings refused, the conductor attempted to eject her physically, but she held onto a window ledge and then clutched the conductor's jacket. Only after a police officer joined in the effort was she shoved into the street. She was sore and injured and her Sunday attire was in tatters. She would write about this and her letter would be published by both Frederick Douglass and Horace Greeley — she described how the police officer “without listening to anything I had to say thrust me out and tauntingly told me to get redress if I could.” Her fellow church members would stage a protest the following day. She would file a lawsuit against the Third Avenue Railway Company, using a young Chester A. Arthur as her attorney, and would be awarded \$225 in damages.



July 16. Sunday. A thick fog began last night and lasts till late this morning; first of the kind, methinks.

[Transcript]


P.M. — Via railroad and pond to Saw Mill Brook.

Many yellow butterflies and red on clover and yarrow.

Is it the yellow-winged or Savannah sparrow with yellow alternating with dark streaks on throat, as well as yellow over eye, reddish flesh-colored legs, and two light bars on wings? *Solidago nemoralis* yesterday.

Woodcock by side of Walden in woods. Methinks there were most devil's-needles a month ago. *Lycopus Virginicus* by Target Meadow, a day or two; maybe as long as the other elsewhere. *Ludwigia palustris* [^Box kind] grows there. *Goodyera repens* to-morrow. *Polygala verticillata*, apparently some days. The *Rhus Toxicodendron* leaves are turned clear light yellow in some places, in others, many dried and brown. *Mimulus ringens* at Saw Mill Brook, apparently two days. The large (?) circ[ae]a (it is the *lutetiana*, though the flowers are white), apparently two or three days. Trientalis, ash-colored fruit. After the late rains and last night's fog, it is somewhat dog-dayish, and there is a damp, earthy, mildewy scent to the ground in wood-paths. *Aralia nudicaulis* berries well ripe. The *Polygala sanguinea* heads in the grass look like sugar-plums.



 July 17, Monday: In San Francisco, the Calvary Presbyterian Church was organized.

CALIFORNIA

As Madrid rose in revolt, Queen Isabella dismissed the liberal prime minister Luis José Sartorius Tapia, conde de San Luis and appointed the Fernando Fernández de Córdoba y Valcárcel (before this point the districts of Barcelona, Valencia, St. Sebastian, and Valladolid had already declared against the government).

At 11 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went up the Sudbury River to Fair Haven Bay (Gleason J7).



July 17. Monday. Last night and this morning another thick dogdayish fog. I find my chamber full this morning. It lasts till 9 n. n.

[Transcript]



11 A.M. — By river to Fair Haven.

I go to observe the lilies. I see a rail lodged in the weeds with seven tortoises on it, another with ten, another with eleven, all in a row sunning now at mid-day, hot as it is. They are mostly the painted tortoise.

Apparently no weather is too hot for them thus to bask in the sun. The pontederia is in its prime, alive with butterflies, yellow and others. I see its tall blue spikes reflected beneath the edge of the pads on each side, pointing down to a heaven beneath as well as above. Earth appears but a thin crust or pellicle.

The river was at its lowest thus far probably on the 31th. The rains succeeding the drought have now raised it a little, and this forenoon, though a little air is stirring, the water is smooth and full of reflections here and there, as if there had been oil in those rains, which smoothed it. In that hottest and driest weather about the 4th, there was yet considerable air stirring.

Methinks that about this time the waters begin to be more glassy, dark and smooth. The cuckoo cows at midday. At Purple Utricularia Shore, there are, within a circle of four or five rods' diameter, ninety-two lilies fairly open and about half a dozen which appear to have already partly closed. I have seen them far more numerous. I watch them for an hour and a half.

At 11.4592 fairly open

At 12 ...88

At 12.15 ...75


At 12.30 ...46

At 12.45 ...26

At 1 ...4 which are more or less stale

By about 1.30 they are all shut up, and no petal is to be seen up and down the river unless a lily is broken off. You may therefore say that they shut up between 11.30 and 1.30, though almost all between 12 and 1.

I think that I could tell when it was 12 o'clock within half an hour by the lilies. One is about an hour about it. The petals gradually draw together, and the sepals raise themselves out of the water and follow. They do not shut up so tight but that a very little white appears at the apex. Sometimes a sepal is held back by a pad or other weed, leaving one side bare. Many fall over on their sides more or less, but none withdraw under water as some have said. The lilies reach from the water's edge, where they are raised two or three inches above the surface, out five or six rods to where the water is four feet deep, and there succeed the small yellow lily.

Meanwhile large yellowish devil's-needles, coupled, are flying about and repeatedly dipping their tails in the water. Why are not all the white lily pads red beneath? On the muddy bottom, under the pads and between their stems, are countless red bugs crawling about. The birds are quite lively at this hour of noon,—therobin, red-eye, wood pewee, martins, and kingbirds, etc. The cuckoo [Black-billed Cuckoo  Coccyzus erythrophthalmus] is a very neat, slender, and graceful bird. It belongs to the nobility of birds. It is elegant.

Here and there a phalanx of bluish-green large bulrushes rises near the shore, and all along a troop of pontederias, fronted and often surrounded by a testudo of pads. I feel an intense heat reflected from the surface of the pads. The rippled parts of the stream contrast with the dark smooth portions. They are separated as by an invisible barrier, yet, when I paddle into the smoothness, I feel the breeze the same. I see where a *Juncus militaris* has grown up through a white lily pad and stands two feet above it. Its hard, sharp point pierced it, instead of lifting it off the water. It reminds me of the Saladin's cutting a silk handkerchief in the air with his cimetar. This continual snapping of the pads which I hear appears to be made underneath and may be produced by minnows darting at the insects which feed on them.

At Cardinal Shore, *Lobelia cardinalis* a day or more.

Pycnanthenauna incanum, apparently several days. It also is hoary at top. Staghorn sumach in fruit. The fall of hellebore and cabbage has begun. The former lies along, yellow and black and decaying. The stinging spotted flies are very troublesome now. They settle in the hollows of the face, and pester us like imps.

The clams lie on their edges or ends like buds or bulbs crowded together. *Desmodium acuminatuna* at Conant Orchard Grove, perhaps two or three days. One four feet high, its leaves making a flat cricket, a foot from the ground.

Agrimony here almost done. *Diplopappus cornifolius*, a day or more. I was surprised by the loud humming of bees, etc., etc., in the bass tree; thought it was a wind rising at first. Methinks none of our trees attract so many. I am surprised to see crossing my course in middle of Fair Haven Pond great yellowish devil's-needles, flying from shore to shore, from Island to Baker's Farm and back, about a foot above the water, some against a head wind; also yellow butterflies; suggesting that these insects see the distant shore and resolve to visit it. In fact, they move much faster than I can toward it, yet as if they were conscious that they were on a journey, flying for the most part straight forward.

It shows more enterprise and a wider range than I had suspected. It looks very bold. If devil's-needles cross Fair haven, then man may cross the Atlantic.

Seeing him, I am reminded of Horace's lines about the breast of triple brass. Pasture thistle on Lee's Cliff, three or four days. Woodbine on rocks begun to redden there. I start two green bitterns in different places amid the weeds by the shore. In Conant's meadow just behind Wheeler's, the smaller fringed orchis not quite reached by the mowers. It may have been out four or five days. It is a darker purple for being so exposed. None yet opening




in the shade. *Aralia racemosa* at Spring a short time. The sarothra tomorrow.
The late rose not fairly begun along the river, now when *lucida* is leaving off.



July 18, Tuesday: Ángel de Saavedra y Ramírez de Baquedano, duque de Rivas replaced Fernando Fernández de Córdoba y Valcárcel as Prime Minister of Spain.

At 5 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went up the Turnpike. In the afternoon he went by boat on the Assabet River to Samuel Barrett's (Gleason 6/E5), and the old Wheeler house.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
 — [PROFESSOR ROBERT M. THORSON](#), THE BOATMAN,




July 18. Tuesday. 5 P.M. — Up Turnpike.


A haymaking morning fog, through and above which the trees are glorious in the sun. The elm leaves appear to be drinking the moisture along the dusty, debauched highway; some of them yellowing. Whence these fogs and this increase of moisture in the air? The kingbird, song sparrows, and quail are lively. The centaurea, not yet. I think I have not heard a night-warbler for a fortnight. *Erigeron Canadensis*. *Erigeron strigosus* I must call the other.

P.M. — To Sam Barrett's by boat, and old Wheeler house.

A hot midsummer day with a sultry mistiness in the air and shadows on land and water beginning to have a peculiar distinctness and solidity. The river, smooth and still, with a deepened shade of the elms on it, like midnight suddenly revealed, its bed-curtains shoved aside, has a sultry languid look. The atmosphere now imparts a bluish or glaucous tinge to the distant trees. A certain debauched look, as the highway in the morning. This a crisis in the season. After this the foliage of some trees is almost black at a distance.

I do not know why the water should be so remarkably clear and the sun shine through to the bottom of the river, making it so plain. Methinks the air is not clearer nor the sun brighter, yet the bottom is unusually distinct and obvious in the sun. There seems to be no concealment for the fishes. On all sides, as I float along, the recesses of the water and the bottom are unusually revealed, and I see the fishes and weeds and shells.

I look down into the sunny water. In midsummer, when its foliage is thickest and stems most concealed, the *Salix Purshiana* is most beautiful. Its leafy sails are now all set, concealing its spars, and it appears to float in light masses buoyantly on the water.

Methinks the asters and goldenrods begin, like the early ripening leaves, with midsummer heats. Now look out for these children of the sun, when already the fall of some of the very earliest spring flowers has commenced. The Island is now dry and shows few flowers. Where I looked for early spring flowers I do not look for midsummer ones. Such places are now parched and withering. Blue vervain, apparently a day; one circle is open a little below the top. As I go along the Joe Smith road, I see some of the lower leaves of the white vervain turned a faint, mulberry-color. Brooks has let out some of his pigeons [[American Passenger Pigeons](#)  *Ectopistes migratorius*], which stay about the stands or perches to bait others. Wild ones nest in his woods quite often. He begins to catch them the middle of August.

I found so many berries on that rocky road, between and about the careless farmers' houses and walls, that the soil seemed more fertile than where I live. Every bush and bramble bears its fruit; the sides of the road are a fruit garden; blackberries, huckleberries, thimble-berries, fresh and abundant, no signs of drought; all fruits in abundance; the earth teems. What are the virtues of the inhabitants that they are thus blessed? Do the rocks hold moisture, or are there no fingers to pluck them? I seem to have wandered into a land of greater fertility, some up-country Eden. Are not these the delectable hills? It is a land flowing with milk and honey. Great shining blackberries peep out at me from under the leaves upon the rocks. There the herbage never withers. There are

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abundant dews.

Now comes the dews and fogs to save the berries and the transplanted trees.

Elecampane will apparently open in two or three days; begins to show some yellow. Choke-cherry, though not dark. [^Say a week later; ate some black, August 8th.] By the elecampane and the Wheeler house, to my great surprise growing abundantly in the road, the *Monarda fistulosa*, apparently a week at least, — three or more feet high with a few heads containing a whorl of large, very showy crimson flowers, with crimson bracts in whorls beneath, with a balm or summer savory or sweet marjoram fragrance. These: things out of the heavenward northwest. Perhaps it is Wood's variety *mollis*. It cannot be the *didyma*, for the corolla is not more than one and three eighths inches long.

Two common milkweeds I do not identify. First apparently *Asclepias Syriaca* of Linn[ae]us and Bigelow; nectaries "with in oblique ridge on each side the fissure;" horns long; with a slender point as high as the nectaries; leaves gradually acute. It appears to be *A. Cornuti* of Gray, but what does he mean by leaves "with a slight point"? Can He refer to the mucronate-leafed kind? Apparently *A. Cornuti* of Wood, but in his plate he gives the short, stout, recurved horn of the mucronate kind. Vide if the heads are spinous, as *A. Cornuti*.

Then there is a common [kind] with many thick, elliptical, short-petioled leaves (up railroad, June 25); mucronated; stout-stemmed. Is it *purpurascens* of Bigelow? It is not dark-purple. Not *purpurascens* of Gray, ~when he says that the pedicels are only about twice the length of the divisions of the corolla and that only the lower leaves are mucronate. Are the pods smooth? [^The pods have soft spinous projections, and it must be *A. Cornuti* of Gray (July 30th).The first kind, opposite the monarda, has no spinous projections.]

This side the sunflower house, against woods, in road, just beyond large pine, *Hedyotis longifolia*, a good while tufted, but without stri[ae]. in throat, many-flowered.

We have very few bass trees in Concord, but walk near them at this season and they will be betrayed, though several rods off, by the wonderful susurrus of the bees, etc., which their flowers attract. It is worth going a long way to hear. I was warned that I was passing one in two instances on the river, — the only two I passed, — by this remarkable sound. At a little distance [it] is like the sound of a waterfall or of the cars; close at hand like a factory full of looms.

They were chiefly bumblebees, and the great globose tree was all alive with them. I heard the murmur distinctly fifteen rods off. You will know if you pass within a few rods of a bass tree at this season in my part of the town, by this loud murmur, like a waterfall, which proceeds from it.



July 19, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Beck Stow's Swamp (Gleason E9) and to [Walden Pond](#).

Joaquín Baldomero Fernández Espartero, duque de la Victoria replaced Ángel de Saavedra y Ramírez de Baquedano, duque de Rivas as Prime Minister of Spain.



July 19. P.M.-ToBeckStow'sandWalden.

Alisma, apparently a day or more. Polygonum Careyi to-morrow. In Moore's Swamp I pluck cool, though not very sweet, large red raspberries in the shade, making themselves dense thickets. Wild holly berries,aday ortwo. The throttledsound ofacuckoo from out the shade of a grove. How lustily the poison-dogwoodgrows,-five feet fromtheground thisyear and still growing, covered with a rich glaucous bloom! The more smothering, furnacelike heats are beginning, and the locust days. Crotalaria's but few, apparently a day or two only. The tall, wandlike, large-leaved Desmodium Canadeuse, some days at least in the dry, rough sunflower field. Black chokeberry, several days. High blueberries scarce, but a few half an inch or more in diameter. Apparently a catbird's nest in a shrub oak, lined with root-fibres, with three green-blue eggs. Erigeron a.nnzms perhaps fifteen rods or more beyond the Hawthorn Bridge on right hand.

--a new plant,-probably last month. Thinner leaves than the strigo,s2tis. The white cotton-grass now (and how long ?) at Beck Stow's appears to be the Eriohhorrem gra.cile (?). I see no rusty ones. In the maple swamp at Hubbard's Close, the great cinnamon ferns are very handsome now in tufts, falling over in handsome curves on every side,-a rank undergrowth about three feet high, completely hiding the dead leaves. Some are a foot wide and raised up sit feet long. Clintonia berries in a day or two. I am surprised to see at Walden a single Aster patens with a dozen flowers fully open a clay or more. Smooth sumach berries . The anychia shows some small pods; probably flowered about July 1st. Lechea -minor shows stamens.

A wood thlrruslr to-night. Vecry within two or three days.

[Transcript]



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July 20, Thursday: A political convention at Worcester was attended by George Frisbie Hoar, again with the objective of fusing the Free Soilers and the more dissident members of the Whig party of Massachusetts, and again few Whigs attended.



July 20. A very hot day, a bathing day. Warm days about this.

[Transcript]

I.M.--ToHubbard Bath.

That long, narrow sparganium, which is perhaps the smaller one, growing long in our river, stands thick, with the heart-leaf and potamogeton, in the middle in shallow places. Methinks there begins to be a bluish scum on the water at this season, somewhat stagnant-looking. This may be the oil which smooths it. The large potamogeton in midstream is ten feet long.


There is in immense quantity of darns there in the middle where it is four feet deep, I dived and took up four large ones in one Band at the first grip. Now and for several days I have seen, on the leaves of the red and black oaks. minute caterpillars feeding, with very small pearly, dewdrop-like ova near them partly hatched. Skunk-cabbage fruit some days; cut by the mowers.

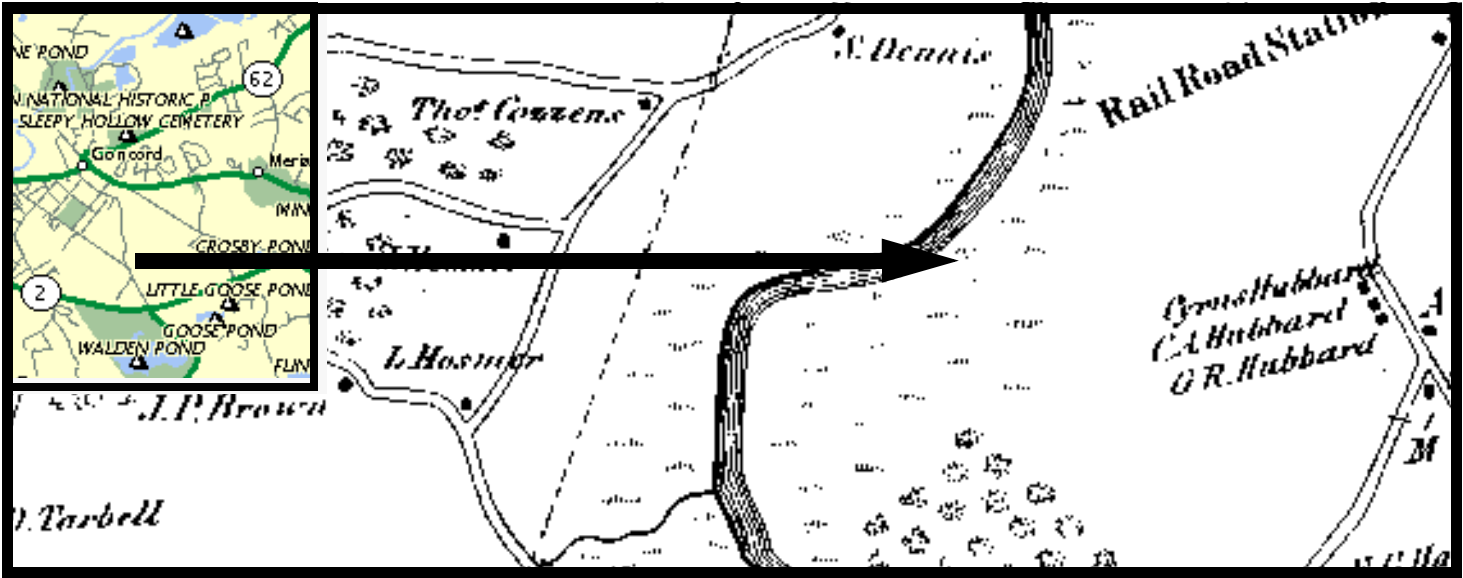
A muttering thunder-cloud in northwest gradually rising and with its advanced guard hiding in the sun and now and then darting forked lightning. The wind rising ominously also drives me home again. At length down it comes upon the thirsty herbage, beating down the leaves with grateful, tender violence and slightly cooling the air; but all the thunder and lightning was in its van. How soon it swept over and we saw the flash in the southeast! Corn in blossom these days.



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 July 20, Thursday: This was a very hot day, a bathing day, and in the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Hubbard's Bath:



Meanwhile, on this day, at [Harvard University](#), [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) was being graduated from the [Divinity School](#), and ordained. However, for good and sufficient reason his classmate [William H. Leeman](#) of

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Hallowell, Maine, was not graduating with him:



This fellow had drunk some illicit alcohol that Conway had smuggled onto campus, and then refilled Conway's illicit bottles with water — and so the indignant Conway had turned him in to the college administration.



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Refused graduation on grounds of moral turpitude, [William H. Leeman](#) was warned to make no attempt to preach. He would be dropping out of sight, evidently in a great deal of anguish. At a later point he will reappear, or his mutilated body will reappear — salvaged from the Potomac River after being used for target practice by passing drunken Virginians, and, barely recognizable, thrown onto the common pit at [Harpers Ferry](#) at midnight.²

(From the manner in which this story appears in Conway's reliably self-promotional [autobiography](#), we can be quite confident that he took no direct part in any of these proceedings and that here he was merely recounting events of which someone else had informed him.)

While I loved Theodore Parker and honoured him as the standard-bearer of religious liberty, and derived instruction from his discourses, I received no important aid from his philosophy or his theology. Indeed, none of our class in the [Harvard Divinity School](#) adopted "Parkerism" but we all felt -and I suspect our professors felt- that Parker was defending our right to enter on an unfettered ministry. We unanimously resolved to ask him to give the sermon at our graduation. When one or two of us conveyed to Parker this invitation, we were received in his library, where he sat at his desk. The conspicuous musket borne by his grandfather at Lexington was in curious contrast with the tenderness which this captain in a nobler revolution displayed for his antagonists. He was moved by our invitation, and after some moments of silence said, "I should rejoice to do it; but the professors have already been embarrassed at the reputation of your class for radicalism, and this would embarrass them further; get some one less notorious." After some discussion we took his advice, and the address was given by Rev. Dr. Furness of Philadelphia. After us came a class which without consulting Parker invited him to deliver their address. The Faculty having refused consent, and the young men to elect another, the address that year was an eloquent silence.

THEODORE PARKER

2. (Nothing was done to [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) for having merely broken the rules, rules being of course made to be broken. :-) See pages 87-8 and 240-1 of d'Entremont, where this account of William Leeman was put together for the first time.

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July 21, Friday: A prepublication notice for WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS was on the first page of the Boston Transcript: "Ticknor and Fields have allowed us to read the proof sheets of one of the most remarkable books for originality of thought and beauty of style yet written in our day. Walden, or Life in the Woods, by Henry D. Thoreau, will attract as much attention and be as widely read as if it were a new book by Hawthorne or Emerson."

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

Henry Thoreau's "SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS" appeared in Garrison's The Liberator (Volume 24, Number 29). It was so hot in Concord that it was almost impossible to work outdoors, and there were few people to be

TIMELINE OF ESSAYS



Ross/Adams commentary

seen.

That night was the hottest yet that year. It was beginning to be too hot for Henry to disappear upstairs into his attic room as he would have liked, and so for a number of evenings he would be forced to endure the boardinghouse society.

August Bondi became a naturalized American citizen. For one year he would be in the clothing business at St. Louis, Missouri.



In the service journal of Charles Usherwood, serving in the British army in Crimea, there is indication of an outbreak of cholera: "Coming home from bathing in the evening I passed a number of Turkish labourers who it appears were on their way from work. After they had passed me which was from the direction of the marshy part of the valley and reached away at only a few yards distance, an old man with grey beard and hair suddenly became ill, who falling upon the ground rolled about in extreme agony of pain and vomiting very much. I stood by and watched his companions who did all in their power to relieve him but not being able to speak the language and having never seen such an occurrence before I wondered to myself of what could it be, as in a very short time only a few minutes the Turk died."

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July 22, Saturday: Early in the morning the boiler in the Bridgefield Mill of Sparth, Rochdale, Lancashire, England, owned by Mr George Williamson and used as a weaving shed, exploded killing 10 lives and severely injuring 15. Debris was scattered a quarter of a mile in every direction. Two children and a man were rescued out of the local river, where they “had been lifted a distance of twenty-six yards” still wrapped in the ruins of their bed.

In the service journal of Charles Usherwood, serving in the British army in Crimea, there is indication of an outbreak of cholera: “Early this morning I got up, went down to the river to bathe and on my way passed the corpse of the old man who died yesterday evening and who was now lying upon the top of an Araba, or native conveyance. On reaching camp from bathing loaded as I was with milk and eggs, I learned that the cholera had suddenly attacked the Division, several men being in hospital at the time with scarcely any hopes of recovery. In 8 days from today 92 men of the Division died of this scourge.”

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Assabet Bath (Gleason 4/E5).



July 22. The hottest night, -the last.

It was almost impossible to pursue any work out-of-doors yesterday. There were but few men to be seen out. You were prompted often, if working in the sun, to step into the shade to avoid a sunstroke. At length a shower passing in the west slightly cooled the air.

The domestic animals suffer much. Saw a dog which had crawled into a corner and was apparently dying of heat. Fogs almost every morning now. ' First noticed the dry scent of corn-fields a week ago.

Now clouds have begun to hang about all day, which do not promise rain, as it were the morning fogs elevated but little above the earth and floating through the air all day

P.M.-ToAssabetBath.

Centaurea, one or two flowerets. There is a cool wind from east, which makes it cool walking that way while it is melting hot walking westward. Spear-leaved thistle, apparently several days, some being withered.

The lar-cr pinweed, apparently a few days, probably same date with the niin.or.; its lower leaves (lull-red, those of Leclwa minor equally red or brighter. Some A-uaⁿlanchier obovala leaves a light dirty scarlet. Zi zania, a clay, with a handsome light-green panicle ~L foot or more long, a long slender stem, and corn-like leaves frequently more than an inch wide. Diervilla leaves dull red and green. The large primrose lower leaves a clear clad. red. The Epilobium coloratura lower leaves very dark red. Gerardia flava, apparently two or three days, Lupine Hillside up railroad, nc Lr fence. Also Solidago odora, a day or two, tlccre, and what I will call S. pubcrula-to-morrow.

allissima on railroad, a day or two. When the flower-S. buds of the boehmcria, just ready to open, are touched with a pin, the stamens spring out remarkably, scattering their pollen.

[Transcript]



July 23, Sunday: In the service journal of Charles Usherwood, serving in the British army in Crimea, there is indication of an outbreak of cholera: “In consequence of the rapid prevalence of cholera among the regiments of the Division the whole of the troops comprising the Division were ordered to march and take up a new encampment at Monestue about 5 or 6 miles away. The Division moved and arrived at its new encampment in the course of the afternoon of same day where Serg. Murphy, Sergeant of the Guard was taken ill and died. After the arrival of the Division the two Brigades were separated at about a mile from each other and the Corps placed so as not to be too near each other. Here a Bazaar was established and the natives were induced to bring in produce of every description. Water too was plentiful and good, and which always seemed to be plentiful in this country. The houses of the inhabitants were constructed of mud and wood work and were generally encircled by a high mud wall. Within the enclosure they kept their cattle and from what I have observed found in general the interior of the dwellings of the Bulgarians very trim and clean that is to say according to their means.”

[Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Hubbard’s Grove (Gleason 69/G5), Fair Haven Hill (Gleason H7), and Walden Pond.

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July 23. Sunday. P.M. - To Walden via Hubbard's Grove and Fair Haven Hill.

Carrot by railroad, soiree time; Say ten days. Eu-paloriune tmrpurca-rn.]here is a peculiar light reflected l'rcnn tlic shorn fields, as later in the fall, when rain and coolness have cleared the air. F,upatorium pubescn.s, icy-ncorrow. The white orehis at same place, four or five clays at least ; spike one and three quarters by three inches . I see small flocks of song sparrows, etc., rustle :dcncg the wall, and faeces . Lnnicera Ciliala, algcatvctctly several clays, Corner causeway, right sick.

Boehmeria there also. Since the 19th, have heard locusts of tencer. Aster acum.irtatus at Hadula Swamp, in a day or two. Mythree-leaved Lysimachia stricta (?) at Hadula Swamp, common. A.Radula (?), aday.

Saw yesterday on edge of Lee House Meadow a low blueberry (?) bush with large oblongish black berries and narrow leaves, with little or no bloom, conspicuous calyx, apparently between Vaccinium vacillans and V. corymbosum. Some elsewhere two and a half feet high. I also have seen on Fair Haven Hill-side, near west spring, a sort of larger V. Pennsylvanicum with oblong black berries and conspicuous calyx. Lespedeza eapitata, Lupine Bank, a day. Cerasus pumila berries, some time. Hazel leaves in dry places have begun to turn yellow and brown. Lespedeza violacea, apparently several days. I see broods of partridges later than the others, now the size of the smallest chickens. Onoclea green fruit conspicuous. See a thunder-cloud coming up in northwest, but as I walk and wind in the woods, lose the points of compass and cannot tell whether it is travelling this way or not. At length the sun is obscured by its advance guard, but, as so often, the rain comes, leaving thunder and lightning behind.

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[Transcript]



July 24, Monday: A pre-publication review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), titled "[Thoreau's Life in the Woods](#)," appeared on the first page of the New York [Evening Post](#).

Reprinted in **CRITICAL ESSAYS ON HENRY DAVID THOREAU'S WALDEN**, ed. Joel Myerson (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1988), pages 17-18.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN




July 24. The last four or five days it has been very hot and [we] have been threatened with thundershowers every afternoon, which interfered with my longwalk, though we had not much. Now, at 2 P.M., I hear again the loud thunder and see the dark cloud in the west. Some small and nearer clouds are floating past, white against the dark-blue distant one. Burdock, probably Q0th.

[Transcript]



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 July 25, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) walked on the Fitchburg Railroad tracks to Bare or Pine Hill in Lincoln (Gleason J9).

A pre-publication announcement of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) titled “The Hounds in Walden Woods” appeared on the 1st page of the Boston [Commonwealth](#), in columns 6 and 7.

Messrs. Ticknor & Fields will publish in a few days a new volume by Henry D. Thoreau, author of “A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers.” It will be entitled, “Walden, or Life in the Woods.” Mr. Thoreau once built him a house, at a cost of something less than thirty dollars, near Walden Pond, in Concord, and lived there many months upon what he could raise, beans or muskrats, in the neighborhood. In this book he gives an account of his life during the summer in the woods. The following is an extract in advance of publication:

[Reprints “Winter Animals,” pages 276.31-280.9.]

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



July 25. A decided rain-storm to-day and yesterday, such as we have not had certainly since May. Are we likely ever to have two days' rain in June and the first half of July? There is considerable wind too


[Transcript]

P.M.-ToBare Hill, Lincoln, viarailroad.

High blackberries, a day or two. The middle um-bellet of the bristly aralia in some places, also a day or more. Solidago bicolor, to-morrow. I still see the cracks in the ground in old pastures, made last winter. The turtle dove dashes away with a slight note from midst of open pastures. Diplopappus umbellatus just beyond Baker Swamp, on right band of road, probably about ten days; say July 15. I see some oak sprouts from the stump, six feet high. Some are now just started again after a pause, with small red leaves as in the spring. Clematis, apparently a day or two.

Iledyotis longifolia on Bare Hill still. Decodon, not yet, but will apparently open in two or three days .

The rain has saved the berries. They are plump and large . The long chestnut flowers have fallen and strew the road. Arabis Canadensis, sickle-pod, still in flower and with pods not quite two inches long. Pennyroyal, a day or two. Hear a wood thrush . Desmodium midillor-imt., a week at least. Have I not noticed it before ? I now start some packs of partridges, old and young, going off together without mewing. Saw in woods a toad, dead-leaf color with black spots.

 July 26, Wednesday: Druids' Hall, owned by the Ancient Order of Druids, was being rented over a period of 18 months during the Crimean War to a Mr. Harris. The event of this night was a “bal masqué.” Joseph Brundell, a city policeman on duty near the establishment, noticed men attending in female attire and reported this to his sergeant, only to be instructed to interfere only if there was “disgusting conduct” in the public street. On the following day Inspector Teague would report: “From information I received relative to the frequent congregation of certain persons for immoral practices at the Druids’-hall, I proceeded thither in company with Sergeant Goodeve about 2 o’clock this morning. I saw a great many persons dancing there, and among the number were the prisoners, who rendered themselves very conspicuous by their disgusting and filthy conduct. I suspected that the prisoners and several others who were present in female attire were of the male sex, and I left the room for the purpose of obtaining further assistance, so as to secure the whole of the parties, but when we got outside Campbell came out after us, and, taking us by the arms, was about to speak, when I exclaimed,



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“That is a man,” upon which he turned round and ran back immediately to the Druids’-hall. I returned and took Campbell into custody and observing Challis, whom I have frequently seen there before, behaving with two men as if he were a common prostitute, I took charge of him also.” John Challis, 60, wearing “the pastoral garb of a shepherdess of the golden age,” and George Campbell, 35, a lawyer, “completely equipped in female attire of the present day,” were arrested on the charge of disguising themselves as women with the purpose of exciting others to commit an unnatural offence. Madeleine Vincent testified that she had attended to the refreshment department in the ballroom and saw the prisoners there, but found nothing disgusting in their conduct.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked out the Old Carlisle Road to the limekiln (Gleason 79/C6).



July 26. Wednesday. *Polygonum hydropiperoides* first obvious. Mikania, a day or two. Lilies open about 6 A.M. Methinks I have heard toads within a week.
A white mildew on ground in woods this morning.

[Transcript]



P.M. — To lime-kiln via rudbeckia.

Ate an early apple from one of my own trees. Amaranthus, apparently three or four days. The under sides of its lower leaves are of a rich pale lake-color.

This appears to have nothing to do with their maturity, since very young and fresh ones are so. I see these in Hosmer’s onion garden, where he is weeding, and am most attracted by the weeds.

One reason why the lately shorn fields shine so and reflect so much light is that a lighter-colored and tender grass, which has been shaded by the crop taken off, is now exposed, and also a light and fresh grass is springing up there. Yet I think it is not wholly on this account, but in a great measure owing to a clearer air after rains which have succeeded to misty weather.

I am going over the hill through Ed. Hosmer’s orchard, when I observe this light reflected from the shorn fields, contrasting affectingly with the dark smooth Assabet, reflecting the now dark shadows of the woods. The fields reflect light quite to the edge of the stream.

The peculiarity of the stream is in a certain languid or stagnant smoothness of the water, and of the bordering woods in a dog-day density of shade reflected darkly in the water. Alternate cornel berries, a day or two.

To-day I see in various parts of the town the yellow butterflies in fleets in the road, on bare damp sand (not dung), twenty or more collected within a diameter of five or six inches in many places. They are a greenish golden, sitting still near together, and apparently headed one way if the wind blows. At first, perhaps, you do not notice them, but, as you pass along, you disturb them, and the air is suddenly all alive with them fluttering over the road, and, when you are past, they soon settle down in a new place. How pretty these little greenish-golden spangles! Some are a very pale greenish yellow. The farmer is not aware how much beauty flutters about his wagon. I do not know what attracts them thus to sit near together, like a fleet in a haven; why they collect in groups. I see many small red ones elsewhere on the sericocarpus, etc., etc.

Rudbeckia, apparently three or four days at least; only the middle flower yet for most part. Musty cotton grass how long. Green grapes have for some days been ready to stew. *Diplopappus linariifolius*. *Aster dumosus*. Almost every bush now offers a wholesome and palatable diet to the wayfarer, large and dense clusters of *Vaccinium vacillans*, largest in most moist ground, sprinkled with the red ones not ripe; great high blueberries, some nearly as big as cranberries, of an agreeable acid; huckleberries of various kinds, some shining black, some dull-black, some blue; and low blackberries of two or more varieties. The broods of birds just matured find thus plenty to eat. *Gymnadenia* [*sic*], maybe five or six days in swamp southeast of lime-kiln; one without any spurs. It is a windy day and hence worse [?] in respect to birds, like yesterday, yet almost constantly I hear borne on the wind from far, mingling with the sound of the wind, the z-ing of the locust, scarcely like a distinct sound. Vernonia, begun in centre a day.



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July 27, Thursday: A pre-publication announcement of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) titled "Walden Ice" appeared on the 1st page of the Boston [Commonwealth](#), in column 7.

**Reprints "The Pond in Winter," pages 296.31-298.23,
followed by the words:**

H.D. Thoreau's forthcoming book.


[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JULY 27th]

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 July 28, Friday: Charles Henry Branscomb, a lawyer from Holyoke, Massachusetts serving as a general agent for the Emigrant Aid Society in the [Kansas Territory](#), traveled up the [Kansas River](#) as far as Fort Riley with a pioneer party of 30 persons to select a location for an antislavery town. He and Dr. Charles Robinson of Fitchburg would agree on the site of Lawrence.

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

William B. Sheppard, who had hoped to get married with his boss Henry C. Day's daughter, had, when his employer had refused to consent, stabbed him to death. On this day Sheriff William Gorham officiated over the [hanging](#) of the murderer on "Government Reserve property" near the Presidio in [San Francisco](#), before a crowd of 10,000 citizens. The body of the executed man would hang for an hour before Sheriff Gorham would permit it to be cut down.

FINAL EXECUTIONS		
August 30, 1850	John White Webster	last Harvard College professor to be hanged by the neck in Boston
July 28, 1854	William B. Sheppard	last public open-air hanging in San Francisco , at the Presidio before a crowd of not less than 10,000
July 25, 1857	John Lewis	hanged outside the municipal prison of Cardiff before a crowd of 12,000, the final public hanging in Wales

Also, in San Francisco on this day, [California](#) Freemasons adopted a constitution and installed officers.

A pre-publication announcement of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) titled "Life in the Woods. Former Inhabitants" appeared on the 4th page of the Boston [Daily Evening Traveller](#), in columns 1 and 2.

EXTRACT FROM MR. THOREAU'S "WALDEN." (In press, by Ticknor & Fields.)

**[Reprints "Former Inhabitants; and Winter Visitors,"
pages 256.1-264.3.]**

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



July 28. Friday. Clethra. Methinks the season culminated about the middle of this month,-that the year was of indefinite promise before, but that, after the first intense heats, we postponed the fulfillment of many of our hopes for this year, and, having as it were attained the ridge of the summer, commenced to descend the long slope toward winter, the afternoon and down-hill of the year. Last evening it was much cooler, and I heard a decided fall sound of crickets.
 Partridges begin to go off in packs.
 Lark still sings, and robin.
 Small sparrows still heard.
 Kingbird lively.
 Veery and wood thrush (?) not very lately, nor oven bird.
 Red-eye and chewink common.
 Night-warbler [^see forward] and evergreen-forest note not lately.
 Cherry-bird common.
 Turtle dove seen.

[Transcript]



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July 29, Saturday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went a-berrying to Brooks Clark's (Gleason D6) on the Old Carlisle Road.

The Bunker-Hill Aurora and Boston Mirror, on its 1st page in columns 5 and 6, under the heading "Hounds in Walden Woods," provided its readers with an 1,100-word excerpt from the "Winter Animals" chapter of WALDEN (this had been presumably supplied by William W. Wheildon).

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), presumably by [Horace Greeley](#), titled "A Massachusetts Hermit," on the 3d page of the New-York Daily Tribune, columns 2-6:

Ticknor & Fields have in press a work by HENRY D. THOREAU entitled "Life in the Woods," describing the experience of the author during a solitary residence of two years in a hut on the shore of Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts. The volume promises to be one of curious interest, and by the courtesy of the publishers we are permitted to take some extracts in advance of the regular issue.

THE HERMIT BUILDS HIS HUT.

[Reprints "Economy," pages 40.30-45.28.]

THE HERMIT PLANTS BEANS.

[Reprints "Economy," pages 54.16-56.13.]

THE HERMIT COMMENCES HOUSEKEEPING.

[Reprints "Economy," pages 65.14-67.24.]

THE HERMIT'S FIRST SUMMER.

[Reprints "Sounds," pages 111.18-114.21.]

THE HERMIT FINDS A FRIEND.

[Reprints "Visitors," pages 144.13-150.27.]

THE HERMIT HAS VISITORS, MANY OF THEM BORES.

[Reprints "Visitors," pages 150.28-154.17.]



TIMELINE OF WALDEN




July 29. P.M. — Berrying to Brooks Clark's.
Rich-weed, how long? *Amaranthus hypochondriacus*, apparently some days, with its interesting spotted leaf, lake beneath, and purple spike; amid the potatoes.

[Transcript]



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 July 30, Sunday: [Henry Thoreau](#) went to lygodium and Dugan Desert (Gleason 39/H4). “Opened one of the snapping turtle’s eggs at Dugan Desert, laid June 7th. There is a little mud turtle squirming in it, apparently perfect in outline, shell and all, but all **soft** and of one consistency, –a bluish white, with a mass of yellowish yolk (?) attached. Perhaps it will be month before it is hatched.” Tortoise Eggs



July 30. Sunday. To lygodium.

Cuscuta, not long. *Desmodium Canadense* is to be found at Clamshell Hill oaks. I have found the new rudbeckia in five distinct and distant parts of the town this year, — beyond almshouse, Arethusa Meadow, Sam. Wheeler meadow, Abel Hosmer meadow, and J. Hosmer meadow. Also in last place, beyond ditch, the rusty cotton-grass is now common. *Cicuta bulbifera*, apparently a week or more. Is that goose-grass near yellow thistles? Opened one of the snapping turtle’s eggs at Dugan Desert, laid June 7th. There is a little mud turtle squirming in it, apparently perfect in outline, shell and all, but all soft and of one consistency, — a bluish white, with a mass of yellowish yolk (?) attached.

Perhaps it will be [a] month more before it is hatched.

There are some of what I will call the clustered low blackberries on the sand just beyond the Dugan Desert.

There are commonly a few larger grains in dense clusters on very short peduncles and flat on the sand, clammy with a cool subacid taste. Small rough sunflower, apparently two days.

I have seen a few new fungi within a week. The tobacco-pipes are still pushing up white amid the dry leaves, sometimes lifting a canopy of leaves with them four or five inches. Bartonian, apparently some days.


Bunch-berries. Mountain sumach, apparently two or three days. *Nabalus albus*, apparently three or four days.

Mulgedium, apparently four or five days.

Barn swallows still.

[Transcript]




 July 31, Monday: US Army Captain Ulysses S. Grant resigned his commission at Fort Humboldt, [California](#) because his commanding officer considered his weakness for liquor to be sufficient cause for court martial or resignation. Captain Grant then came to San Francisco, where he would reside at the What Cheer House.



July 31. Blue-curls. Wood thrush still sings. *Desmodium rotundifolium*. *Lespedeza hirta*, say 26th, at Heywood Peak.

[Transcript]



 Late Summer: Someone in Missouri offering the name “Samuel Clemens” contacted Frederick Jackson, the treasurer of the Boston Vigilance Committee, and wheedled from him \$24.50 for train fare to [Boston](#), by representing himself as a northern [abolitionist](#) who had been imprisoned for two years in Missouri for “aiding fugitives to escape.” However, no Missouri record of the incarceration of any such person has ever been found and there is no abolitionist record of any publicity due to this hero Samuel Clemens’s arrival in Boston. The only person we can find in Missouri records who used any similar name was in fact the Samuel Langhorn Clemens who would later begin to write for publication, and therefore Professor Robert Sattelmeyer believes that this may well have been an early scam by the personage who would later make himself well known to the world as “Mark Twain.” It is known that Clemens was not at that time particularly concerned over the fact of human enslavement — and so it is plausible that he would not have had moral scruples about the diversion of funds into his own pocket that would otherwise be used for the functioning of the Underground Railroad. It is also known that for a brief period during this year, Clemens was at Washington DC.



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AUGUST 1854

Read  **Henry Thoreau's Journal for August 1854 (æf. 37) in the 1906 version**



August: [Thomas Cholmondeley](#) came to [Concord](#) with a letter of introduction, to visit [Waldo Emerson](#). When he commented that he would like to spend a few weeks there, Emerson recommended that he try boarding at the Thoreau boardinghouse. One may wonder what sort of conversations Emerson had with this Brit colonialist who was having so many interesting things to say, in his *ULTIMA THULE; OR, THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A RESIDENCE IN NEW ZEALAND* published in this year, about how right Lord Chancellor Bacon had been all along as to humankind being the master of the world:



Mankind is the master of the world, as far as it stands at present under his feet; as far as he dares trust himself to understand it. He is to live, and govern, and do his duty, and all things in his world are to minister to him and further his progress. In this sense, the world is meant for man, if one thing ever was contrived for another: he needs but to assert his supremacy, having perfect faith that he possesses it. So, too, with supreme nations, and master-minds: they are intended to exercise dominion. The whole world around them comes to submit itself, just as the beasts were said to have been brought to Adam, that he might name them. Increase, therefore, and empire, are based upon the perfect faith in a national greatness, to begin with; — a greatness which can require no addition in itself from the gifts or submission of others; instead of which it gives itself, and takes the stranger into its own life, being strong enough to carry many States, and to make them parts of itself. This is the duty which is set over against sovereignty, so that sovereignty can only thrive by acknowledging it, and thrive by the discharge of such duty. The wonderful spread of the British empire is nothing more than a comment upon these words. The nation colonizes on the one hand, while it assimilates on the other. The world hereby grows upon them, and becomes a part of their greatness. Hence, too, we may gather the secret of the real difference between the brute dominion of force, and a dominion of justice, civilisation, and humanity. The first takes all, and gives nothing; the second takes, in order that it may give a tenfold return, and raise the subject State to its own level. The first destroys and ruins; the second educates and endows.

READ CHOLMONDELEY

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August: Charles H. Branscomb, a lawyer from Holyoke, Massachusetts, appointed as a general agent for the Emigrant Aid Society in the [Kansas Territory](#), would be working in various advisory capacities until he would during Summer 1857 be caught padding his expense account (he has been characterized as “less dishonest than incompetent”).

In this timeframe [Judge Phisic Rush Elmore](#) was moving his family and its 14 black slaves to Tecumseh in Shawnee County in the [Kansas Territory](#).

[Martin Robison Delany](#) sponsored a national black emigration convention in Cleveland, Ohio, and lectured on “The Political Destiny of the Colored Race on the American Continent.”



The Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward was accompanied on a visit to Wales by Richard Griffiths, Esq., who could speak Welsh.

We visited Bangor, Holyhead, Beaumaris, Caernarvon, Llanberris, Snowdon, Aberystwyth, Welshpool, and so forth. My stay was so short that I can say but little of Wales, but must say that little with very great pleasure; for no country, no people, ever pleased me so much – excepting black people, of course.

I spent a Sabbath at Bangor, preaching three times to audiences of whom some could not understand sufficient English to follow a discourse. They came, however, because they wished to encourage the cause I represented, and to show their interest in the gospel, though preached in a language of which they could understand but few words. In one instance, however, there was a sermon in Welsh from one of the native ministers. This gave those who could not understand me an opportunity to receive benefit in their own tongue.

I had a very large anti-slavery meeting in Bangor, and the kind feeling of the audience was peculiar to that most benevolent people.... At Beaumaris I spoke on temperance, part of the evening, and the other part, on anti-slavery; the same at Holyhead and Caernarvon. On one of the days of our sojourn at Bangor we visited the Penryn slate quarries, belonging to the Honourable Colonel Tennant. It is a most gigantic work: the number of men employed would make quite a town, in Canada. The good order, steady industry, and regular habits, of the workmen, were quite evident. The village near the castle, composed of the labourers' cottages, and the schoolhouse and gardens, are the most beautiful and the most comfortable cottages in North Wales: indeed, I know of none equal to them anywhere. Lady Louisa, Colonel Tennant's wife, had them erected according to models of her own drawing. The school, I believe, is at her expense. Neglected as the labourers of Wales generally are, it was most gratifying to see this specimen of kind carefulness.

Beaumaris is quite a fashionable watering-place, and it is a very quiet, neat little town. It has a most capital hotel, quite



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equal to the great majority of English ones. The same may be true of Bangor; but the kindness of Mr. Edwards, our host, would not allow us to know. Caernarvon is, of course, rich in historic interest: its castle is a fine ruin. I spent some two or three days there very agreeably, being the guest of Mr. Hughes, a most kind and hospitable gentleman. From his house we made up a party to visit Snowdon – ascending it on foot, and returning in the same way. A more fatiguing journey of five miles it was never my fortune, good or ill, to make. What added to the discomfort of it was, that on reaching the top, we saw nothing but a thick Welsh mountain fog! but we had a most delightful view of the neighbouring hills and dales, from a point about half way to the summit. Being obliged to drive eight miles and speak that night at Caernarvon – to travel ninety-seven miles the next day, in a stage coach – and to preach three times the third day – made no small affair of the exercise.

Reaching Aberystwyth late on Saturday night, I was glad to take the comfortable quarters offered to the weary in the Royal Hotel. It had rained all day; but, in spite of rain, it was most delightful to travel amid the beautifully diversified scenery betwixt Caernarvon and Aberystwyth. It is bolder than Irish scenery, and the cultivation is far better – though not so good, I thought, as the Scotch; but the farming of Wales is far from being indifferent. I spent some four or five days in Aberystwyth, making some acquaintances I shall ever remember: among them are the excellent pastors of the Churches, and the Rev. Mr. Davies and his excellent mother. I had the honour, too, of making the acquaintance of Mr. Lloyd, one of the leading gentry of the country, now Lord Lieutenant of Cardiganshire. Mr. L. took the chair at a meeting which I addressed; and was kind enough to say, one of his inducements to attend was, that the meeting was to be addressed by a gentleman from Canada. Having been in early life stationed there with his regiment, the gallant gentleman had acquired an interest in my adopted country which did not leave him upon his return to Wales.

From Aberystwyth I returned to England by Welshpool, where I spent an evening, and attended a temperance meeting. The drive through that part of Wales is one of the most beautiful in this island of beautiful scenery. It reminds one of the valleys of the Genessee, the Susquehannah, and some portions of the St. Lawrence Valley. I know not when or where I have enjoyed a drive more than those through North and South Wales. Anybody else would be able to describe the scenery: all I can say is, it was most beautiful. What with the waving, ripened corn, the youthful-looking greenness of the recently mown meadows, the sparkling streamlets, the clear sky, and the gorgeously brilliant August sunlight, I was charmed beyond expression. I am sorry I cannot tell it better: please kind reader, accept the best I can perform. Since then, I have passed through portions of Wales in very rapid flying tours, as when returning from Ireland, last autumn and last spring; but have not had the pleasure of making any stay there. I think, however, that I have seen enough of Wales and the Welsh to have formed some tolerably correct views of their character.

First, however, to record an incident of no small interest to me, which occurred during my sojourn at Aberystwyth. A gentleman

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named Williams, an agent for one of the wealthiest landlords in Wales, lives about a mile from Aberystwyth. I learned that a little boy, a son of Mr. Williams, who was ill, was anxious to see me, and that his parents wished me to call. The Rev. Mr. Davies kindly consented to accompany me, and we drove there. We found Mr. and Mrs. Williams most kind and affable persons; and upon being introduced to the chamber where their son lay, we were struck with his emaciated appearance; but in spite of this, his eyes beamed with intelligence, and about his lips a most cheerful smile played constantly. His mother told us he had been a great sufferer. His bones were but slightly covered with a wasted colourless skin. He could not stand or walk, from lameness; and I believe there was but one position in which he could lie. When we saw the helplessness of the child, we were glad that we had visited him. He had read "Uncle Tom's Cabin"; he felt interested in the slaves, and daily prayed for them; he had carefully laid by the little presents of money which had been given him, and had a donation to give me, for the cause of the slave. But what made the deepest impression upon us was, his mother's telling us that, in the midst of the very severe pains which tortured the little sufferer, he would cry out, but immediately check himself, saying "Mamma, I ought not to complain so. How much more did Jesus suffer, for me!"

We left that house feeling that we had been highly privileged. We had learned the lesson of patient suffering at the bedside of that dear child - had seen a babe, as it were, praising God. That the child could long live, seemed out of the question; but the wheat of the surrounding fields was no more ripe for the sickle, than was that child to be gathered unto God. Since that day, I never suffer pain, complainingly, without fancying I see the bright, beaming eye of little Williams rebuking me, as he hushes his own cries, in the midst of anguish, by the recollection of "how much more Jesus suffered for him." That child may, ere this, have been called to his rest; he may be with Him whose sufferings he learned so early to contemplate: but until I meet him in another world, I shall ever remember the lesson learned at his bedside. Since that time, some of the severest pangs I ever felt have been mine, both in body and mind; but their coming is accompanied by the remembrance of what that beloved child learned, in agony. And, blessed be God! the divine consolations which lulled his pains are abundant, infinite in efficacy!

Wales is the most moral and most religious country, and her peasantry the best peasantry, that I know. Doubtless, many will differ from me; but such is my very decided opinion, based on the following reasons: -

1. The courts in Wales have fewer cases of scandalous crimes and misdemeanors to deal with than the courts of any other part of the kingdom, of the same population. The difference betwixt Wales and Ireland, in this respect, is immense.
2. But go to a Welsh town (such as Bangor), and how quiet and moral is it, compared with any town of the like population you can name in England, Ireland, or Scotland! Not a woman walking the streets for lewd purposes, not a drunkard brawling in the highways, no rows or fights; quietness and order reign everywhere. Holyhead is a seaport; it is the same there, and so

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in every town I visited.

3. The temperance cause has done more for Wales than for any other part of the kingdom. A drunken peasant is, indeed, a rare sight in Wales. The miners, the farm servants, and the ordinary labourers, all agree, somehow or other, to be temperate. Not that all are abstainers; but a more temperate peasantry, I am free to confess, there is not, even in Maine!

4. There is no begging in Wales. There are children who run after the carriages of tourists and cry, "ha'penny!" about the only English word they know; and this more for sport than halfpence. But there is little or no encouragement given to it by the inhabitants; and there is no such thing as a swarm of beggars at every corner, door, hotel, church-gate, and everywhere else, as in every part of Ireland.

5. The Welsh are poor as well as the Irish; and their landlords sufficiently neglect them, as to their dwellings: but the cleanliness of the peasantry is most striking. The contrast betwixt Holyhead and Kingstown, within four hours' sail of each other, is most remarkable. One can scarcely believe that he has not been to two opposite sides of the globe, instead of across a narrow channel. The reader will now see why I blame the Irish for their defects, in contrast with the Welsh.

6. The industry of the poorer classes in the Principality is most commendable. I know this has much to do with any people's moral and religious character. No one believes, as no one ought, in a very high-toned and exemplary morality, or a very devoted religion, conjoined with idleness. I do believe that the Welsh labouring classes are more correct in this than even the Highlanders in Scotland. Patient though not overpaid toil, mitigated by few comforts, is not only the lot, but to all appearance the choice, of the Welsh peasant. I have seen more idlers in one street, in Kingstown – in a circumference of 300 yards, in Glasgow – or in a small village, in Essex or Norfolk – than one can see in the whole of Wales.

7. The Welsh population not only attend divine service, but are religious: I say "the population," because it is not true, as in England, of a few persons only out of the many, but, like the Scotch, of the people generally. There are some curious and interesting facts in connection with this. In the first place, the Welsh are not Episcopalians: nine tenths of them dissent from the Establishment. It is most ridiculous to tax them for its support, for they do not go near it. Still, they quietly go to their chapels, and as quietly pay for their support. In the next place, they are not mere nominal members of Churches. The majority belong to the Calvinistic Methodist denomination, whose rules are highly and properly rigid. No laxity in morals is allowed to pass unrebuked. Besides, in travelling through Wales, it is seen that almost wherever there are a dozen houses, one of them is a chapel. The people feel their religious wants, and supply them. Moreover, the ministers of the denomination alluded to, and all others, take especial care and pains in looking after their flocks. Their preaching is deeply earnest, practical, scriptural, plain, and personal; also, most pathetic and affectionate. These combined influences are in constant operation, and are producing the very best effects upon a remarkably straightforward, simpleminded people.

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Compare these sturdy, honest preachers, with the priests of Romanism! Compare their flocks with the Papal populations of, I care not what country! I cannot consent to argue the case: in the living history of present fact it stands out in bold relief. It speaks for itself, in language clear and intelligible; its truths are undeniable, unquestionable: and though our fellow subjects of the Principality are less wealthy and less learned than some more flattered inhabitants of other portions of these islands, they excel us all in some of the best, noblest, traits that ever adorned human character. Should they diffuse education more thoroughly, cling with less tenacity to their mother tongue, draw more largely from the "well of English undefiled," and mingle more with the other elements of British population, then that brave little Principality will one day be more often visited and considered: it will take rank as high in other matters, as in morals; and, in peculiar distinctive character, appear, to its present despisers, beautiful as its own valley scenery, elevated as Snowdon's loftiest summit!

I have spoken mostly of the labouring classes in Wales; and have only to add, that the better and higher classes are essentially Englishmen – with the exception, I must once more remark, of being very far behind Englishmen and Scotchmen (and, according to the papers of the day, behind Irishmen as well!) as landlords. They need to follow more closely the example set by the Honourable Colonel Tennant and the Lady Louisa, in caring for those who minister to their comforts and convenience. I am sure an one who visits the village referred to will join me in this remark.

I know what will be said, in other countries than Wales, in reply to what I say of the chastity of the Welsh female peasantry. Reference will be made to the stupid system of courtship called "bundling" – a practice for which there is no defence: most certainly, I have no word to utter in its behalf. That it has not been attended with far worse consequences, is to me a marvel. But I have the great happiness to know, that the pulpit, which is more powerful in Wales than in any Protestant country elsewhere, has turned its whole power and influence against this barbarous practice, so that not even it, to any extent, forms a drawback to the remarks I have made upon the morality of the Welsh peasantry. It is to be hoped that a custom which has nothing better than its antiquity for its apology, but is liable to the very gravest objections on the score of morality and decency, will soon be known merely as a matter of history. Surely, when a custom so pernicious shall once be put away, all will rejoice, and all will wonder that a people of such sterling sense should have suffered it to continue so long. It certainly has outlived the former bad taste of the people; and therefore, if for no higher reason, it ought to live no longer. Most earnestly is it to be hoped that this abominable relic of ancient British barbarism will soon be so completely banished, as no longer to mar the otherwise good and exemplary character of the honest youths and maidens of that delightful Principality.

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In addition to the Rowse portraits of [Henry Thoreau](#)³ and [Waldo Emerson](#) from this period, we have a photograph of Eddie, Waldo, and Edith that evidently dates to approximately this year:

DR. EDWARD WALDO EMERSON

[I find I am unable to show you Eddie Emerson's sketch of his memory of [Thoreau](#).]




August: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#).

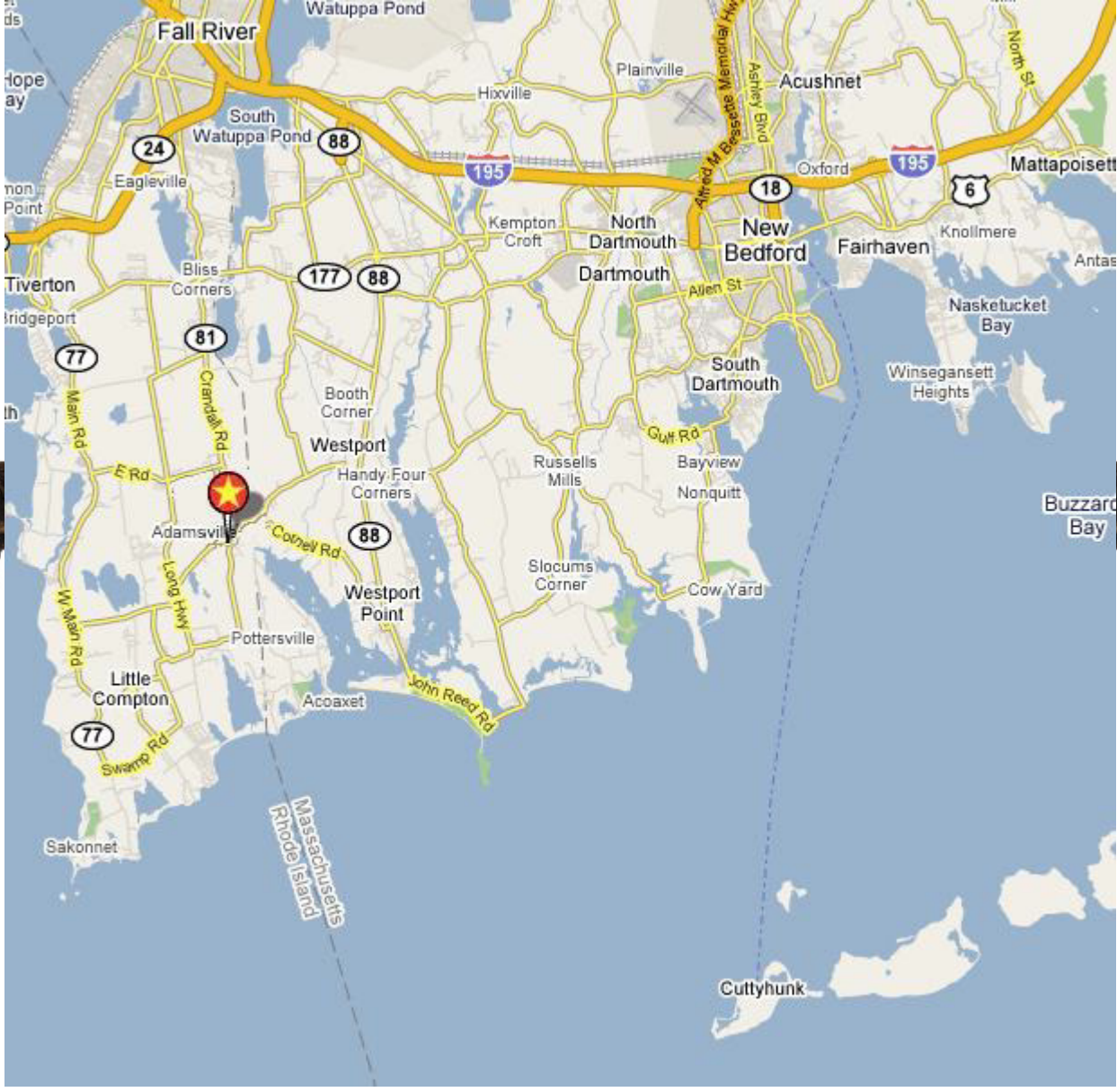
CONSULT THIS ISSUE

3. Unfortunately the original crayon of [Henry Thoreau](#) has deteriorated to the point at which its copies are now better than it.

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 August: A farmer in Adamsville in the district known as Little Compton, [Rhode Island](#) obtained a red cock from a sailor in [New Bedford](#) who said it was a “Malay” or a “Chittagong.” William Tripp would grant his acquisition the run of his hen-yard, and the result, by 1896, would be the breed once known as the “Tripp fowl” and now known as the “Rhode Island Red.” (This Rhode Island Red, “the bird we gave to the nation,” has been of course, since May 3, 1954, our state’s totem bird.)



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August 1, Tuesday: At 6 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went on the river. In the afternoon he went to Peter's (Peter's Path, Gleason E7-E9?).

Charles Henry Branscomb guided the initial group of eastern emigrants who would settle an antislavery town that they would name "Lawrence" in the [Kansas Territory](#): "... a party of about 30 settlers, chiefly from New England ... Mr. C.H. Branscomb, of Boston, on a tour in the territory a few weeks earlier in the summer, had selected this spot as one of peculiar loveliness for a town site."

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

In a letter to his friend the Reverend [William Rounseville Alger](#), a Unitarian clergyman, T. Starr King commented on [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#): "The latter half is wonderful ... I envy you your approaching rapture."⁴ The Reverend Alger had been awaiting Thoreau's 2nd book ever since, in 1849, he had read *A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS* (he had condemned it for failing to be a simple story of a vacation sailboat adventure by two brothers, saying "[f]ew books need expurgation more than this one") and thus it was that, in Boston on this day when the very 1st copy of [WALDEN](#) was sold for one dollar at the Old Corner Bookstore, the Boston retail outlet of Ticknor & Fields, it was sold to the Reverend Alger.



4. Charles W. Wendte. THOMAS STARR KING: PATRIOT AND PREACHER (Boston: Beacon Press, 1921, pages 45-46). Walter Roy Harding, "The First Year's Sales of Thoreau's *Walden*," *Thoreau Society Bulletin*, number 117 (Fall 1971): 1; Gary Scharnhorst, "'He Is Able to Write a Work That Will Not Die': W. R. Alger and T. Starr King on Thoreau," *Thoreau Journal Quarterly*, 13, numbers 1-2 (January-April 1981): 5-17.

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A review of [WALDEN](#) titled "A Massachusetts Philosopher" in the organ of the Oneida, New York utopian community, the [Circular](#), on pages 410-11. On this day Henry James, Sr. had a Daguerreotype made of him

A very curious book is in press, entitled 'Life in the Woods,' by H. D. Thoreau; from which the [New-York] [Tribune](#) prints a few extracts in advance. It is a narrative of the author's experience and mode of life during a two years' solitary hermitage in the woods, by the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Mass. The writer, being of a philosophical turn, and much given to Homer, and similar antique models, seems to have proposed to himself to reduce his mode of life to the standard nearest to primitive nature. So he took an axe, and went into the woods, to a pleasant hill-side overlooking the pond, and built himself a cabin. Of his furniture, and his views on the subject of furniture in general, he gives the following account:

[Reprints "Economy," pages 65.14-67.10.]

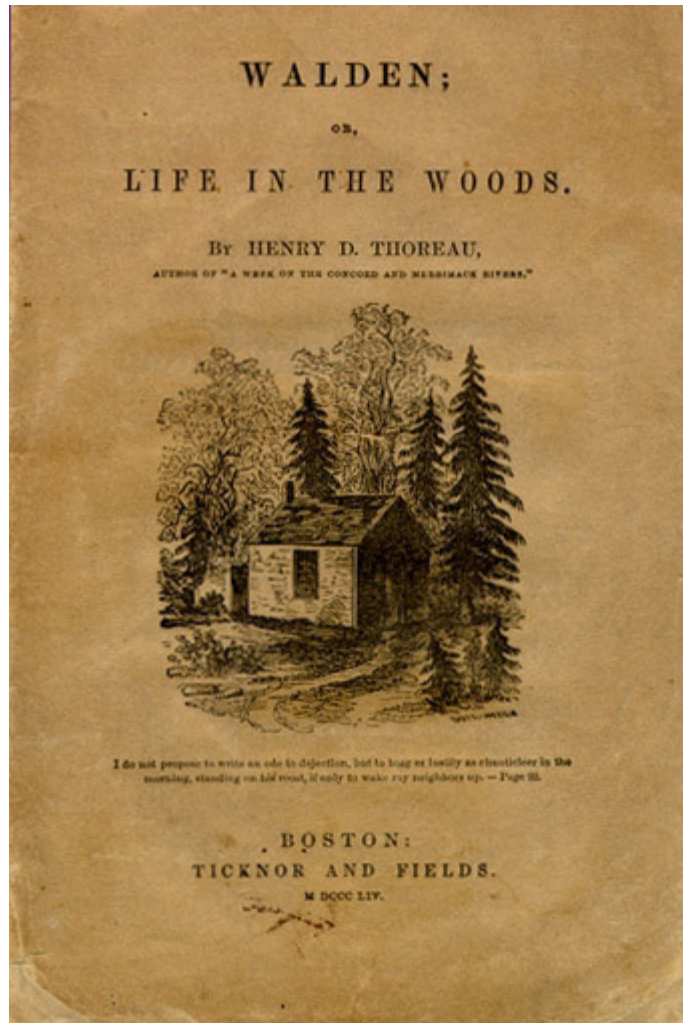
There is evident spice of truth in this. We like **Communism** particularly for its effect in relieving folks from the great mass of furniture-useless *exuvia* as Thoreau says,—that accumulates about them and seems necessary, in isolation. The Communist moves freely without being tied to any such trap. He goes from one home to another, without care for what he leaves or carrying anything with him and finds all needed furnishing in the Commune where he sits down. This is better we think than our hermit's method of getting rid of incumbrance. Here follows his agricultural experience:

[Reprints "Economy," pages 54.16-56.13.]

Bating the solitude, we think Thoreau's plan of agriculture is worth consideration. There is a simplicity and independence about it, that is rather fascinating, and if practicable in single solitude it would be certainly no less so in Association. In fact our method at Oneida and the other agricultural Associations in confining ourselves mostly to thorough garden-tillage, is substantially carrying things out to a similar result.

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and his son [Henry James, Jr.](#) This is now at the Houghton Library of Harvard University:



The material about [WALDEN](#) from the July 29th edition of the New-York [Daily Tribune](#) was repeated on pages 6 and 7 of this day's issue of the [Semi-Weekly Tribune](#).



Aug. 1. 6 A.M. On river. — *Bidens Beckii*. Bass probably out of bloom about a week. Corallorhiza, some days at Fair Haven Pond.

[Transcript]

P.M. — To Peter's.
Sunflower. Meadow-haying begun for a week.
Erechthites, begun for four or five days in Moore's Swamp. Two turtle doves in the stubble beyond. *Hieracium Canadense*, apparently a day or two. Do not see stamens of thyme-leaved pinweed, but perhaps petals. Ground-nut well out.



August 2, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed in the east part of Lincoln.

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

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



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

On this day our author received a specimen copy of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#).⁵

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)

[Thoreau](#)'s holograph title page draft for [WALDEN](#), as preserved in the photograph on page 140 of Van Doren's

5. On this day, also, a copy was purchased for \$1.⁰⁰ by F.W. Kellogg. This Member of Congress representing a district in Michigan may have purchased a copy of a new book of such a title merely due to a known genealogical connection with a Kellogg family of the 16th Century in the town of Saffron Walden in England.

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1970 ANNOTATED WALDEN, contains an epigraph from [Mosleh Od-Din Sa'di](#)'s *GULESTAN* that differs considerably from what is found in the Francis Gladwin translation: "The clouds, wind, moon, sun and sky act in cooperation that thou mayest get thy daily bread, and not eat it with indifference; all revolve for thy sake, and are obedient to command; it must be an equitable condition, that thou shalt be obedient also." Whereas the Gladwin translation has it on page 94 as "Clouds and wind, the moon, the sun, and the sky are all busied, that thou, O man, mayest obtain thy bread, and eat it not in neglect. For thy sake, all these revolve and are obedient: it is not therefore consistent with the rules of justice that thou only shouldst not obey." This is also something of a mystery for another reason, for either the epigraph had been omitted by the point at which the manuscript reached the typesetter, or the typesetter for some reason left it out and then Henry neglected to register a correction in his personal print copy:

ابر و باد و مه و خورشید و فلک در کارند
تا تو نانی به کف آری و به غفلت نخوری
همه از بهر تو سرگشته و فرمانبردار
شرط انصاف نباشد که تو فرمان نبری

At 5 PM [Thoreau](#) walked to Conantum ("J6" on the Gleason map of the Concord vicinity) along Hubbard's Path. Here is a painting "Thoreau's Path" by Cindy Kassab:



The full text of [Thoreau](#)'s "[SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS](#)" having been published in [The Liberator](#), at this point [Horace Greeley](#) used that as the basis for a republication in the [New-York Daily Tribune](#), without paragraphing and with an editorial entitled "A Higher- Law Speech":

The lower-law journals so often make ado about the speeches in

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Congress of those whom they designate champions of the Higher Law, that we shall enlighten and edify them, undoubtedly, by the report we publish this morning of a **genuine** Higher Law Speech — that of Henry D. Thoreau at the late celebration of our National Anniversary in Framingham, Mass., when Wm. Lloyd Garrison burned a copy of the Federal Constitution. No one can read this speech without realizing that the claims of Messrs. [Charles Sumner, William Henry Seward and Salmon Portland Chase] to be recognized as Higher-Law champions are of a very questionable validity. Mr. Thoreau is the Simon-Pure article, and his remarks have a racy piquancy and telling **point** which none but a man thoroughly in earnest and regardless of self in his fidelity to a deep conviction ever fully attains. The humor here so signally evinced is born of pathos — it is the lightning which reveals to hearers and readers the speaker's profound abhorrence of the sacrifice or subordination of one human being to the pleasure or convenience of another. A great many will read this speech with unctious who will pretend to blame us for printing it; but our back is broad and can bear censure. Let each and all be fairly heard.



Aug. 2. Wednesday. Surveying in Lincoln. *Solidago lanceolata*, two or three days. Decodon. *Polygonum arifolium* in swamp. *Chenopodium hybridum* probably now open. Surveyed east part of Lincoln.

[Transcript]

5 P.M. — To Conantum on foot.

My attic chamber has compelled me to sit below with the family at evening for a month. I feel the necessity of deepening the stream of my life; I must cultivate privacy. It is very dissipating to be with people too much. As C. [Ellery Channing] says, it takes the edge off a man's thoughts to have been much in society. I cannot spare my moonlight and my mountains for the best of man I am likely to get in exchange.

I am inclined now for a pensive evening walls. Methinks we think of spring mornings and autumn evenings. I go via Hubbard Path. Chelone, say two days, at Conant's meadow beyond Wheeler's. July has been to me a trivial month. It began hot and continued drying, then rained some toward the middle, bringing anticipations of the fall, and then was hot again about the 20th. It has been a month of haying, heat, low water, and weeds. Birds have grown up and flown more or less in small flocks, though I notice a new sparrow's nest and eggs and perhaps a catbird's eggs lately. The woodland quire has steadily diminished in volume.

At the bass I now find that that memorable hum has ceased and the green berries are formed. Now blueberries, huckleberries, and low blackberries are in their prime. The fever-bush berries will not be ripe for two or three weeks. At Bittern Cliff the *Gerardia quercifolia* (?), apparently four or five days at least. How interesting the small alternate cornel trees, with often a flat top, a peculiar ribbed and green leaf, and pretty red stems supporting its harmless blue berries inclined to drop off! The sweet viburnum, not yet turning. I see apparently a thistle-down over the river at Bittern Cliff; it is borne toward me, but when it reaches the rock sonic influence raises it high above the rock out of my reach. What a fall-like look the decayed and yellow leaves of the large Solomon's-seal have in the thickets now! These, with skunk cabbage and hellebore, suggest that the early ripeness of leaves, etc., has somewhat normal in it, — that there is a fall already begun. *Eupatorium sessilifolium*, one or two stamens apparently for two days; its smooth leaf distinguishes it by the touch from the sunflower.

I sat on the Bittern Cliff as the still eve drew on There was a man on Fair Haven furling his sail and bathing from his boat. A boat on a river whose waters are smoothed, and a man disporting in it! How it harmonizes with the stillness and placidity of the evening! Who knows but he is a poet in his yet obscure but golden youth? Few else go alone into retired scenes without gun or fishing-rod. He bathes in the middle of the pond while his boat slowly drifts away. As I go up the hill, surrounded by its shadow, while the sun is setting, I am soothed by the delicious stillness of the evening, save that on the hills the wind blows. I was surprised by the sound of my own voice. It is an atmosphere burdensome with thought. For the first time for a month, at least, I am reminded that thought is possible. The din of trivialness is silenced. I float over or through the deeps of silence. It is the first silence I have heard for a month. My life had been a River Platte, tinkling over its sands but useless for all great navigation, but now it suddenly became a fathomless ocean. It shelved off to unimagined depths.

I sit on rock on the hilltop, Rearm with the heat of the departed sun, in my thin summer clothes. Here are the seeds of some berries in the droppings of sonic The sun has been set fifteen minutes, bird on the rock, and a

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long cloudy finger, stretched along the northern horizon, is held over the point where it disappeared. I see dark shadows formed on the south side of the woods east of the river. The creaking of the crickets becomes clear and loud and shrill, — a sharp tinkling, like rills bubbling up from the ground. After a little while the western sky is suddenly suffused with a pure white light, against which the hickories further east on the hill show black with beautiful distinctness. Day does not furnish so interesting a ground. A few sparrows sing as in the morning and the spring; also a peawai and a chewink. Meanwhile the moon in her first quarter is burnishing her disk. Now suddenly the cloudy finger and the few scattered clouds glow with the parting salute of the sun; the rays of the sun, which has so long sunk below the convex earth, are reflected from each cloudy promontory with more incomparable brilliancy than ever. The hardhack leaves stand up so around the stem that now, at first starlight, I see only their light under sides a rod off. Do they as much by day?

The surface of the forest on the east of the river presents a singularly cool and wild appearance, cool as a pot of green paint, — stretches of green light and shade, reminding me of some lonely mountainside. The nighthawk flies low, skimming over the ground now. How handsome lie the oats which have been cradled in long rows in the field, a quarter of a mile uninterruptedly! The thick stub ends, so evenly laid, are almost as rich a sight to me as the graceful tapers. A few fireflies in the meadows. I am uncertain whether that so large and bright and high was a firefly or a shooting star. Shooting stars are but fireflies of the firmament. The crickets on the causeway make a steady creak, on the dry pasture-tops an interrupted one. I was compelled to stand to write where a soft, faint light from the western sky came in between two willows.

Fields to-day sends me a specimen copy of my "Walden." It is to be published on the 12th inst.

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August 3, Thursday: One H. Woodman, presumably the Boston lawyer Horatio Woodman who was a friend of [Waldo Emerson](#)'s, purchased a copy of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) for \$1.⁰⁰.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

There isn't conclusive evidence but it does seem likely that perusing this copy of [WALDEN](#) would fail to enable this Boston lawyer in learning to live a life of simplicity and straightforwardness — for in a later timeframe it appears that while under considerable stress due to self-induced financial and legal difficulties, he would commit [suicide](#) by dropping from a steamboat into the Long Island Sound:

*MR. WOODMAN'S DISAPPEARANCE.*A BOSTON LAWYER'S SUPPOSED SUICIDE FROM
A FALL RIVER STEAM-BOAT.

No light has yet been thrown upon the mystery surrounding the disappearance of Horatio Woodman, a well-known Boston lawyer, who, after several days' sojourn in this City, embarked for home on the steamer Newport, and did not reach his destination, as far as can be learned. Mr. Woodman had been in financial straits for years, and the object of his visit here was to raise money to refund amounts owed by him to estates which he managed, and to clear off old scores growing out of his pension business. He met with no success, and started on his return trip as stated above. The only person on board the Newport who knew him was the barber, Revallion, who has also a shop in Boston. He had often shaved Mr. Woodman in his Boston shop, and knew him well. Revallion says that the steamer was well on its way when Woodman entered the barber's shop. He seemed to be in excellent spirits, and chatted pleasantly with the barber. Baggage Agent King was questioned by Woodman as to the time the steamer landed at Newport. He said that he had engaged to meet a man there, and was perplexed to know how he could get word to his wife, who expected him home by the Fall River train which the steamer connected with. Agent King offered to carry a letter and forward it by the railway baggage agent. The proposition struck Woodman favorably, and he wrote the note and intrusted it to King. He walked off in the direction of the state-rooms, and has not been seen since. The steamer lay at Fall River while two trains were dispatched. After leaving Newport, according to custom, Purser Bowles made his rounds collecting the Providence tickets.

He found the door of the state-room occupied by Woodman open. The bedding was disordered and a hand-sachel and shawl were lying on the floor. Who owned them was not known until a week afterward. A nephew of Mr. Woodman, who inquired concerning him in Fall River, identified the articles, and ascertained the few circumstances related above. The letter to his wife had been duly forwarded. It was brief, but in cheerful tone, and assigned a business engagement in Newport as the cause of his detention. It contained no hint of a suicidal purpose or prolonged absence. The officers of the company made diligent inquiry at Newport, Providence, and Fall River, but found nothing that served as a clue. His friends have concluded that he fell, was thrown, or jumped, overboard.

Notwithstanding Mr. Woodman's cheerfulness of demeanor, the condition of his affairs has been found to be rather bad, and it is not improbable that he committed suicide to be rid of his difficulties. During most of his 40 years at the Bar he made a specialty of the land-warrant business, and secured a large and very lucrative practice in claims before the War and Pension Departments at Washington. For the past 10 years he has been considerably embarrassed financially, and on July 19, 1870, went into bankruptcy. Though that was over eight years ago, he has not yet been discharged, nor has his Assignee been yet able to declare a dividend. From the court records it appears that his liabilities footed up \$199,896, while his assets, including large tracts of Western lands of doubtful value, are set down at \$93,641. His bounty and pension business was the main source of his troubles. In one case it was shown that Woodman had exacted illegal fees for procuring a pension for Mrs. Martha A. Towner, the widow of Walter R. O. Towner, of the Forty-eighth Massachusetts Volunteers. He was tried and fined \$250, besides the costs, which amounted to \$102.15. In addition to this charge, there was a more serious one, namely, that of having forged Mrs. Towner's name. An indictment for forgery against him on account of this transaction is now pending, and was to have been put on the February docket for trial in Boston.

[Kathryn Schulz](#), who writes for [The New Yorker](#), has glanced into the cold eyes of a “[Pond Scum](#)” [Henry Thoreau](#), and has engaged in a deep reading of [WALDEN](#), coming to the considered conclusion that this writing amounts to mere “cabin porn.” —Could that help explain why one of the first readers of the book then killed himself?

Like many canonized works, [[WALDEN](#)] is more revered than read, so it exists for most people only as a dim impression retained from adolescence or as the source of a few famous lines: “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately.” “If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that



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is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them." "Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!"

Extracted from their contexts, such declarations read like the text on inspirational posters or quote-a-day calendars — purposes to which they are routinely put. Together with the bare facts of the retreat at Walden, those lines have become the ones by which we adumbrate Thoreau, so that our image of the man has also become simplified and inspirational. In that image, Thoreau is our national conscience: the voice in the American wilderness, urging us to be true to ourselves and to live in harmony with nature.

This vision cannot survive any serious reading of "Walden." The real Thoreau was, in the fullest sense of the word, self-obsessed: narcissistic, fanatical about self-control, adamant that he required nothing beyond himself to understand and thrive in the world. From that inward fixation flowed a social and political vision that is deeply unsettling. It is true that Thoreau was an excellent naturalist and an eloquent and prescient voice for the preservation of wild places. But "Walden" is less a cornerstone work of environmental literature than the original cabin porn: a fantasy about rustic life divorced from the reality of living in the woods, and, especially, a fantasy about escaping the entanglements and responsibilities of living among other people.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR AUGUST 3d]



August 4, Friday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked down the Cambridge Turnpike to Smith's Hill (Gleason G10).

The Nisshōki or Hinomaru "circle of the sun" was established by the Tokugawa shogunate as the official identifying flag to be flown by [Japanese](#) ships.

[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) was reviewed under the heading "A New Book by Henry Thoreau" on the 2d page of the Dedham, Massachusetts gazette, [Norfolk Democrat](#).

Ticknor & Fields will issue in a few days a book by the eccentric Thoreau, of Concord, entitled, "Walden, of Life in the Woods." It is a record of Mr. Thoreau's life and experience during a residence of two or three years in a house of his own building, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord. From several extracts which we have seen in the Commonwealth, Tribune, N. Y. Evening Post, and other papers, we conclude that it will be one of the most attractive books of the year.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



Aug. 4. Friday. P.M. — Via Turnpike to Smith's Hill.

A still, cloudy day with from time to time a gentle August rain. Rain and mist contract our horizon and we notice near and small objects. The weeds — fleabane, etc. — begin to stand high in the potato-fields, overtopping the potatoes. This hardhack interests me with its bedewed pyramid. Rue is out of bloom. Sicyos, apparently in a

[Transcript]



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few days. The buttonwoods are much improved this year and may recover. *Sonchus* in one place out of bloom. Purple gerardia, by brook. The autumnal dandelion is now more common. *Ranunculus aquatilis* var. *fluviatilis*, white petals with a yellow claw, small flowers on surface of Hosmer's ditch, west end, by Turnpike. A new plant. Say July 1st. Is it open in sunny weather? The lower leaves of the sharp-angled lycopus are a dull red and those of the elodea are a fine, clear, somewhat crimson red. Fragrant everlasting. The swamp blackberry on high land, ripe a day or two. I hear the pigeon woodpecker still, — wickoff, wickoff, wickoff, wickoff, from a neighboring oak. See a late rose still in flower. On this hill (Smith's) the bushes are black with huckleberries. They droop over the rocks with the weight and are very handsome. Now in their prime. Some glossy black, some dull black, some blue; and patches of *Vaccinium vacillans* intermixed. *Hieracium paniculatum* in woods by Saw Mill Brook, a day or two. The leaves of some weeds, perhaps goldenrods, are eaten in a ribbon character like some strange writing apparently half-way through the leaf, often along the edge. This for some time. *Goodyera pubescens*, a day or two. *Hieracium scabrum*, apparently two or three days. It is already fall in low swampy woods where the cinnamon fern prevails. There: are the sight and scent of beginning decay. I see a new growth on oak sprouts, three to six inches, with reddish leaves as in spring. Some whole trees show the lighter new growth at a distance, above the dark green. *Cannabis sativa*. After sunset, a very low, thick, and flat white fog like a napkin, on the meadows, which ushers in a foggy night.



August 5, Saturday: Russian forces devastated the main Turkish army of the Caucasus at Kurudere, forcing them to retreat to Kars. The battle left 11,000 total casualties.

At 8:30 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went by boat to Coreopsis Bend. A subscription library in New York City, the "Mercantile Library," purchased two copies of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) for \$1.³⁹.

[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) was reviewed under the heading "Life in the Woods" on the 1st page of the [Bunker-Hill Aurora and Boston Mirror](#), columns 6-7:

[Thoreau] says that he lived alone two years, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which he built himself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, where he earned his living by the labor of his own hands. How he lived, a few extracts from his own story will best delineate:

BUILDING THE HOUSE.

**[Reprints "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,"
page 90.32-34; and "Economy,"
pages 40.30-42.5, 42.34-45.28, 48.28-49.22.]**



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Reprint of the July 29th review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) [by [Horace Greeley?](#)] titled "A Massachusetts Hermit" in the New-York [Weekly Tribune](#), 6:6-7:1-3.

Ticknor & Fields have in press a work by HENRY D. THOREAU entitled "Life in the Woods," describing the experience of the author during a solitary residence of two years in a hut on the shore of Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts. The volume promises to be one of curious interest, and by the courtesy of the publishers we are permitted to take some extracts in advance of the regular issue.

THE HERMIT BUILDS HIS HUT.

[Reprints "Economy," pages 40.30-45.28.]

THE HERMIT PLANTS BEANS.

[Reprints "Economy," pages 54.16-56.13.]

THE HERMIT COMMENCES HOUSEKEEPING.

[Reprints "Economy," pages 65.14-67.24.]

THE HERMIT'S FIRST SUMMER.

[Reprints "Sounds," pages 111.18-114.21.]

THE HERMIT FINDS A FRIEND.

[Reprints "Visitors," pages 144.13-150.27.]

THE HERMIT HAS VISITORS, MANY OF THEM BORES.

[Reprints "Visitors," pages 150.28-154.17.]

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



Aug. 5. Saturday. 8.30 A.M. — By boat to Coreopsis Bend.

[Transcript]

A general fog in the morning, dispersed by 8 o'clock. At first the air still and water smooth, afterward a, little breeze from time to time, — judging from my sail, from the north-northeast. A platoon of haymakers has just attacked the meadow-grass in the Wheeler meadow.

Methinks the river's bank is now [[^]Vide Aug. 15.] in its most interesting condition. On the one hand are the light, lofty, and wide-spread umbels of the sium, pontederias already past their prime, white lilies perhaps not diminished in number, heart-leaf flowers, etc.; on the other the *Salix Purshiana*, full-foliaged, but apparently already slightly crisped and imbrowned or yellowed with heat, the button-bush in full blossom, and the mikania now covering it with its somewhat hoary bloom. The immediate bank is now most verdurous and florid, consisting of light rounded masses of verdure and bloom, and the river, slightly raised by the late rains, takes all rawness from the brim. Now, then, the river's brim is in perfection, after the mikania is in bloom and before the pontederia and pads and the willows are too much imbrowned, and the meadows all shorn. But already very many pontederia leaves and pads have turned brown or black. The fall, in fact, begins with the first heats of July. Skunk-cabbage, hellebores, convallarias, pontederias, pads, etc., appear to usher it in. It is one long acclivity from winter to midsummer and another long declivity from midsummer to winter. The mower's scythe, however, spares a fringe of to him useless or noxious weeds along the river's edge, such as sium, wool-grass, various sedges and bulrushes, pontederias, and polygonums. The pontederia leaves have but a short life, the spring so late and fall so early. Smaller flowers I now observe on or by the river are yellow lilies, both kinds; the larger polygonum (*hydropiperoides*), with slender white spikes, and the small front-rank rose-colored one; the *Bidens Beckii*, three to six or seven inches above the surface, on that very coarse, stout-stemmed, somewhat utricularia-like weed which makes dense beds in the water; the three water utricularias especially the purple;

the cardinal-flower; water asclepias; and a few late roses. As I go past the white ash, I notice many small cobwebs on the bank, shelf above shelf, promising a fair day.

I find that we are now in the midst of the meadow-haying season, and almost every meadow or section of a meadow has its band of half a dozen mowers and rakers, either bending to their manly work with regular and graceful motion or resting in the shade, while the boys are turning the grass to the sun. I passed as many as sixty or a hundred men thus at work to-day. They still; up a twig with the leaves on, on the river's brink, as a guide for the mowers, that they may not exceed the owner's bounds. I hear their scythes crouching the coarse weeds by the river's brink as I row near. The horse or oxen stand near at hand in the shade on the firm land, waiting to draw home a load anon. I see a platoon of three or four mowers, one behind the other, diagonally advancing with regular sweeps across the broad meadow and ever and anon standing to whet their scythes. Or else, having made several bouts, they are resting in the shade on the edge of the firm land. In one place I see one sturdy mower stretched on the ground amid his oxen in the shade of an oak, trying to sleep; or I see one wending far inland with a jug to some well-known spring.

There is very little air stirring to-day, and that seems to blow which way it listeth. At Rice's Bend the river is for a long distance clogged with weeds, where I think my boat would lodge in midstream if I did not more than guide it. The potamogeton leaves almost bridge it over, and the bur-reed blades rise a foot or more above the surface. The water weeps, or is strained, through. Though yesterday was rainy, the air to-day is filled with a blue haze. The coreopsis is (many) fairly but yet freshly out, I think not more than a week, from one foot to a foot and a half high, some quite white, commonly the petals reflexed a little, just on the edge of or in the water. The meadow-grass not yet cut there. In crossing the meadow to the Jenkins Spring at noon, I was surprised to find that the dew was not off the deep meadow-grass, but I wet the legs of my pants through. It does not get off, then, during the day. I hear these days still those familiar notes — of a vireo? — somewhat peawai-like, — two or more, whe-tar che. Near Lee's (returning), saw a large bittern, pursued by small birds, alight on the shorn meadow near the pickerel-weeds, but, though I rowed to the spot, he effectually concealed himself.

Now Lee and his men are returning to their meadow-haying after dinner, and stop at the well under the black oak in the field. I too repair to the well when they are gone, and taste the flavor of black strap on the bucket's edge. As I return down-stream, I see the haymakers now raking with hand or horse rakes into long rows or loading, one on the load placing it and treading it down, while others fork it up to him, and others are gleaning with rakes after the forkers. All farmers are anxious to get their meadow-hay as soon as possible for fear the river will rise. On the 2d, Hagar told me he had clone all his haying, having little or no meadow, and now the chief business was to fell weeds in the orchard, etc. Formerly they used to think they had nothing to do when the haying was (lone and might go a-fishing for three weeks.

I see very few whorled or common utricularias, but the purple ones are exceedingly abundant on both sides the river, apparently from one end to the other. The broad pad field on the southwest side of Fair Haven is distinctly purpled with them. Their color is peculiarly high for a water plant. In Sudbury the huckleberries, etc., appeared to be dried up. At Lee's Cliff, I meet in the path a woodchuck, — probably [a] this year's one — which stood within seven feet and turned the side of its head to me as if deaf of one ear, and stood listening till I advanced. A very large flock of blackbirds, — perhaps grackles and cowbirds and maybe (?) young red-wings, — with a roar of wings, flying from this side the river to that and alighting on the sedge and willows and ground.



August 6, Sunday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went on the Concord River to Tarbell Hills (Buttrick's Hill, Davis's Hill, and Ball's Hill at the W. Tarbell place, Gleason C8-D9).

On this day and the following one there would be anti-Catholic rioting by the [nativists](#) of Louisville, Kentucky (the Irish district of town would be attacked with small arms and cannon).

ANTI-CATHOLICISM



Aug. 6. P.M. — To Tarbell Hills by boat.

Rather cool with a strong wind, before which we glide. The rippled surface of the water and the light under sides of the white maples in rounded masses bordering the stream, and also the silvery tops of the swamp white oaks, give a pleasing breezy aspect to the shores, etc. Surprised to see the hibiscus just out nearer Flint's and also at Ball's Hill Bend. Apparently always earlier in those places. I noticed yesterday that the fields of *Juncus militaris* on the south side of Fair Haven showed a stripe six or eight inches wide next the water and bounded by a very level line above of a different color, more or less reddish or as if wet, as if there had been a subsidence of the water to that extent. Yet it has actually risen, rather. The sun is quite hot to-day, but the wind is cool and I

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question if my thin coat will be sufficient. Methinks that after this date there is commonly a vein of coolness in the wind. The Great Meadows are for the most part shorn. Small light-green sensitive ferns are springing up full of light on the bank. I see some smaller white maples turned a dull red, — crimsonish, — a slight blush on them. Grape-vines, the downy under sides of their leaves turned up by the wind, [[^]Vide Aug. 20.] are methinks more conspicuous now at a distance along the edge of the meadow, where they round and mass the trees and bushes, — long, irregular bowers, here and there marked with the white, downy under sides of the leaves. The wind is very unsteady and flirts our sail about to this side and that. We prefer to sail to-day (Sunday) because there are no haymakers in the meadow.

Landed at Tarbell's Hills. I am more pleased with the form of the ground there than with anything else, — with the huckleberry hills, and hollows, the cow-paths, and perhaps the old corn-hills. There are very agreeable slopes and undulations, and the light is very agreeably reflected from the barren surface of the earth. It is at length cloudy, and still behind the hills, and very grateful is this anticipation of the fall, — coolness and cloud, and the crickets steadily chirping in mid-afternoon. The huckleberries are somewhat shrivelled and drying up. As I look westward up the stream, the oak, etc., on Ponkawtasset are of a very dark green, almost black, which, methinks, they have worn only since midsummer. Has this anything to do with the bluish mistiness of the air? or is it an absolute deepening of their line? We row back with two big stones in the stern. Interesting here and there the tall and slender zizania waving on the shore, with its light panicle eighteen inches or more in length.

 August 7, Monday: The Barony of Knyphausen was annexed by Oldenburg.

On this day and the following one there would be anti-Catholic rioting by the [nativists](#) of St. Louis, Missouri (10 would be killed and 30 injured).

ANTI-CATHOLICISM

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked on Peter's Path (Gleason E7-E9) to Beck Stow's Swamp (Gleason E9), and thence to Walden Pond.

A remark was made about [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) by "Algoma" (Charles Creighton Hazewell) in his column titled "Our Boston Correspondence" in the New-York [Herald](#), page 6, column 2.

Mr. Thoreau's new work, "Walden, or Life in the Woods," is advertised to be out on the 9th.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



[Aug. 7.](#) It is inspiring at last to hear the wind whistle and moan about my attic, after so much trivial summer weather, and to feel cool in my thin pants.

Do you not feel the fruit of your spring and summer beginning to ripen, to harden its seed within you? Do not your thoughts begin to acquire consistency as well as flavor and ripeness? How can we expect a harvest of thought who have not had a seed-time of character? Already some of my small thoughts — fruit of my spring life — are ripe, like the berries which feed the first broods of birds; and other some are prematurely ripe and bright, like the lower leaves of the herbs which have felt the summer's drought.

Seasons when our mind is like the strings of a harp which is swept, and we stand and listen. A man may hear strains in his thought far surpassing any oratorio. Sicyos.

P.M. — To Peter's, Beck Stow's, and Walden.

Liatrix. Still autumnal, breezy with a cool vein in the wind; so that passing from the cool and breezy into the sunny and warm places, you begin to love the heat of summer. It is the contrast of the cool wind with the warm sun. I walk over the pinweed-field. It is just cool enough in my thin clothes. There is a light on the earth and leaves, as if they were burnished. It is the glistening autumnal side of summer. I feel a cool vein in the breeze, which braces my thought, and I pass with pleasure over sheltered and sunny portions of the sand where the summer's heat is undiminished, and I realize what a friend I am losing. The pinweed does not show its stamens — I mean the *L. thymifolia*. It was open probably about July 25. This off side of summer glistens like a burnished shield. The waters now are some degrees cooler. Winds show the under sides of the leaves. The cool

[Transcript]

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nocturnal creak of the crickets is heard in the mid-afternoon. Tansy is apparently now in its prime, and the early goldenrods have acquired a brighter yellow. From this off side of the year, this imbricated slope, with alternating burnished surfaces and shady ledges, much more light and heat are reflected (less absorbed), methinks, than from the springward side. In midsummer we are of the earth, — confounded with it, — and covered with its dust. Now we begin to erect ourselves somewhat and walk upon its surface. I am not so much reminded of former years, as of existence prior to years.

From Peter's I look over the Great Meadows. There are sixty or more men in sight on them, in squads of half a dozen far and near, revealed by their white shirts. They are alternately lost and reappear from behind distant clump of trees. A great part of the farmers of Concord are now in the meadows, and toward night great loads of hay are seen rolling slowly along the river's bank, — on the firmer ground there, — and perhaps fording the stream itself, toward the distant barn, followed by a troop of tired haymakers. The very shrub oaks and hazels now look curled and dry in many places. The bear oak acorns on the former begin to be handsome. Tansy is in full blaze in some warm, dry places. It must be time, methinks, to collect the hazelnuts and dry them; many of their leaves are turned. The Jersey tea fruit is blackened. The bushy gerardia is apparently out in some places. Blueberries pretty thick in Gowing's Swamp. Some have a slightly bitterish taste.

A wasp stung me at one high blueberry bush on the forefinger of my left hand, just above the second joint. It was very venomous; a white spot with the red mark of the sting in the centre, while all the rest of the finger was red, soon showed where I was stung, and the finger soon swelled much below the joint, so that I could not completely close the finger, and the next finger sympathized so much with it that at first there was a little doubt which was stung. These insects are effectively weaponed. But there was not enough venom to prevail further than the finger.

Trillium berry.



August 8, Tuesday: [Zenaide Lactitia Julie Bonaparte](#) died.

In Vienna, Austria, France, and Great Britain presented their Four Points for peace with Russia. Russia would need to abandon its claim of protection over Christians in Ottoman lands, would need to agree to a revision of the Straits Settlement, would need to agree to free passage of the mouth of the Danube, and would need to guarantee the integrity of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Serbia.

Horace Smith of the Smith & Wesson Company of Norwich, Connecticut patented the "Volcanic" metal bullet cartridge for use in revolver handguns having a bored-through cylinder.

[Henry Thoreau](#) went by boat up the Assabet River to Annurnsnack Hill (Gleason D3). The official date of publication of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) was remarked on the 2d page of the Boston [Daily Bee](#), in column 3: [Thoreau](#) wrote to [H.G.O. Blake](#).

LIFE IN THE WOODS comes out tomorrow.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

Concord Aug 8th '54

Mr Blake,

Methinks I have spent a rather unprofitable summer thus far. I have been too much with the world, as the poet might say. The completest performance of the highest duties it imposes

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would yield me but little satisfaction. Better the neglect of all such because your life passed on a level where it was impossible to recognize them. Latterly I have heard the very flies buzz too distinctly, and have accused myself because I did not still this superficial din. We must not be too easily distracted by the crying of children—or of dynasties. The Irishman erects his styè, and gets drunk, and jabbbers more and more under my eaves, and I am responsible for all that filth and folly. I find it, as ever, very unprofitable to have much to do with men. It is sowing the wind, but not reaping even the whirlwind,—only reaping an unprofitable calm and stagnation. Our conversation is a smooth and civil and never-ending speculation merely. I take up the thread of it again in the moring [sic] with very much such courage as the invalid takes his prescribed Seidlitz powders. Shall I help you

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you to some of the mackerel? It would be more respectable if men, as has been said before, instead of being such pygmy desperates, were Giant Despairs. Emerson says that life is so unprofitable and shabby for the most part, that he is driven to all sorts of [resources], and among the rest to men. I tell him that we differ only in our resources. Mine is to get away from men. They very rarely affect me as grand or beautiful; but I know that there is a sunrise & a sunset every day. In the summer this world is a mere watering-place—a Saratoga—drinking so [many] tumblers of Congress water; and in the winter, is it any better, with its oratorios? I have seen more men than usual lately, and well as I was acquainted with one, I am surprised ~~I am surprised~~ to find what vulgar fellows they are. They do a little business commonly each day, in order to pay their board, and then they congregate in sitting rooms and feebly fabulate and paddle in the social slush, and when I think that they have suf-

ficiently relaxed, and am prepared to see them steal away to their shrines (They) go unashamed to their beds, and take on a new layer of sloth. They

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may be single or have families in their faineancy. I do not meet men who can have nothing to do with me because they have so much to do with themselves. However, I trust that a very few cherish purposes which they never declare. Only think, for a moment, of a man about his affairs! How we should respect him! How glorious he would appear! Not working for any Corporation—its agent or President, but fulfilling the end of his being! A man about his business would be the cynosure of all eyes.

The other evening I was determined that I would silence this shallow din—that I would walk in various directions & see if there was not to be found any depth of silence around. As Buonaparte sent out his ~~mounted~~ horsemen in the Red Sea on all sides to find shallow water—so I sent forth my mounted thoughts to find deep water. I left the village & paddled up the river to Fair Haven Pond. As the sun went down, I saw a solitary boatman disporting on the smooth lake. The falling dews seemed to strain & purify the \forall air, and I was soothed with an infinite stillness. I got the world, as it were, by the

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nape of the neck, and held it under in the tide of its own events till it was drowned, and then I let it go down stream like a dead dog. Vast hollow chambers of silence stretched away on every side, & my being expanded in proportion and filled them. Then first could I appreciate ~~the din which the world~~ sound and find it musical.



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*But now for your news.
Tell us of the year. Have you fought
the good fight? What is the state of
your crops? Is your harvest agoing
to answer well to the seed-time, and
are you cheered by the prospect of stretching
cornfields. Is there any blight on your
fields, any murrain in your herds?
Have you tried the size and quality of
your potatoes? It does one good to
see their balls dangling in the low
lands. Have you got your meadow
hay before the fall rains shall
set in? Is there enough in your
barns to keep your cattle over?
Are you killing weeds now-a-days?
Or have you earned leisure to go
a fishing? Did you plant any
Giant Regrets last spring—such as
I saw advertised. It is not a new spe-
cies but the result of cultivation,*

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*and a fertile soil. They are ex-
cellent for sauce. How is it with
your marrow squashes for winter
use? Is there likely to be a sufficiency
of fall feed in your neighborhood?
What is the state of your springs?
I read that in your county there
is more water [in] the hills than in
the valleys. Do you find it easy to
get all the help you require?
Work early and late, and let your
men & teams rest at noon. Be
careful not to drink too much
sweetened water while at your
hoeing this hot weather. You can
bear the heat much better for it*

H. D. T.

“I have been too much with the world.”

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Also appearing in the Daily Bee in this day's issue was a report on Joe Polis:



THE PENOBSCOT INDIANS — SOMETHING INTERESTING IN RELATION TO THEM. — The following interesting information on the Penobscot Indians, is taken from a recent letter in the Puritan Recorder of this city. It was written at Oldtown, Me.

My special object in writing this communication is to give some facts respecting the Penobscot Tribe of Indians, from whom this town derived its name. Their residence is upon the islands in the Penobscot, extending some fifty miles and containing some thousand of acres. Most of the tribe dwell upon the south part of the islands, nearest to this town. The tribe like others all over the land has been gradually wasting away. It numbers less than five hundred, of whom many are constantly absent to secure the means of living. The tribe still clings to its ancient custom of retaining at its head, a Chief, or King, or Governor, whose office is hereditary. Some are anxious to have the office elective. Hence two parties were formed who became mutually hostile, and for a time were in open and bitter conflict. At length the parties agreed upon terms of peace, and pledged to each other to bury the Tomahawk at the foot of the Liberty Pole which they had erected at the place of mutual concord for the future. Here was their common rallying point, until the Catholic Bishop and Priests came with the design to cut down that Pole and erect in its stead the cross, the emblem of Romanism. The day came for this transaction. The Indians assembled. The Bishop and Priests appeared in their gorgeous robes and imposing movements to the spot. — There, the preparatory measures having been taken, the Bishop was just giving his orders to apply the axe; when, directly before him, stepped up one of the Indians, a noble, athletic and fearless man, and taking his stand between him and the Liberty Pole — he said to the Bishop: — "You go too far, Bishop. This Pole my property. He part my property. No white man any right to touch 'em. Suppose Governor of State himself come



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here; he no right to touch 'em, - Indian property. Who are you? Foreigner, - you come from Massachusetts, - and you go to destroy Indian property. You no touch 'em." The Bishop replied, "You Indians can't understand, - I am your Bishop. - I know what is best for you. You are ignorant, - you don't know." To which the Indian replied: "You say true, Bishop, - the Indian be ignorant, - but who make him ignorant? - You Bishop, and you Priests. You been here on Indian island 125 years. You never teach Indian to read one word. You bury Indian one foot deeper in darkness every year. Now you get him 125 feet deep, and then you tell him, 'He no see.' The Priests tell him, 'Learning is not suitable for Indian, learning was not made for Indian. That which is good for white man is not good for them.' Now, Bishop, you show me one place in Bible where it says learning is good for white man, - he no good for Indian, - and let me carry 'em to Oldtown and show to my friend (meaning Rev. Mr. Merrill,) and see if you read 'em right."

With such reasoning the Indian stood his ground; the Bishop and Priests were compelled to retire; and the Liberty Pole is still standing. After a little time, the same Indian said to the Priest who had been residing there for years - and only to depress the people: "I guess the best way you live somewhere else. Suppose you live here; may be you get hurt." The Priest took the hint, left the island, and has not resided there since. This young man, who took such a decided stand for the tribe, is now one of the Counsel of the Nation, and was their representative two years since to the Legislature of Maine. His deep feeling and earnest efforts for the improvement of his brethren, are traceable to a striking event. Some ten years since, among those who visited the Island, was a pious lady from Boston. She sought those who could read, and finding a young Indian near the church, who answered her inquiry in the affirmative, she presented him with a bible. He was a boy in whom the Priest had expressed great interest, had taken him to his house and had learned [sic] him thus to read the English language. That boy was then residing with the Priest. He received the Bible gratefully and read it with deep interest. He soon found its teachings to be unlike those of the priest. This increased his interest in it, and caused him to conceal the Book in his bosom when not reading it. At length, by accident, he was called suddenly from his room, where he left the bible upon his table; the Priest on coming in saw it, and asked him how he obtained it. The boy frankly told him. The priest then said, "It is a bad book," and threw it into the fire. This, however, did not settle the questions with the youth; he secured another copy and read and reflected, and was hopefully led to Christ as the only hope of his soul. Not long after he was called to his dying scene; when he entreated his elder brother to labor for the improvement of the tribe, and for its relief from the degradation to which Romanism had so



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long reduced it. That elder brother is the same person who has been described above. He and others are now active in efforts to elevate the character of the tribe; and, to furnish means of education for the children and youth, they have had, at times, a school upon the island. The pupils have learned rapidly, and as they improve, have an increasing desire to improve. Two years since the legislature paid an extra grant of \$200 to furnish means of improvement. Last year they increased the amount to \$300; and, under the direction of their real and valued friend, Rev. Mr. Merrill, the tribe are receiving advantages for continued improvement. They are feeling more and more the need of it. Obstacles exist which they are laboring to remove. They are compelled to leave the Islands and traverse the country to obtain support; thus taking the children away from a settled home and means of instruction. It is hoped relief on this point will be obtained, by establishing a deposit for the articles manufactured by them, and in return supplying them with the means of living. In respect to religion they are in a transition state. Many of them are totally dissatisfied with Romanism, and disgusted with the priests; and could a judicious course be taken, by those in whom they confide, the light of the Gospel might reach them, and its precious hopes be theirs. They are a very interesting people. No one can visit them and converse with them, without deep sympathy. As a people they are honest and upright in all their dealings, and are treated with respect and kindness by the surrounding communities. They cherish and practice principles of peace. They were never known, in our revolutionary struggles, to act against the Colonies, nor since, against the nation. Nor have they been in conflict with other tribes, except in cases of self-defence and protection. It is hoped that amid the benevolent activities of this age, they will not be overlooked by Christians who know them and can fully appreciate their condition.

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Yours truly, D.S.

WALDEN: Consider first how slight a shelter is absolutely necessary. I have seen Penobscot Indians, in this town, living in tents of thin cotton cloth, while the snow was nearly a foot deep around them, and I thought that they would be glad to have it deeper to keep out the wind. Formerly, when how to get my living honestly, with freedom left for my proper pursuits, was a question which vexed me even more than it does now, for unfortunately I am become somewhat callous, I used to see a large box by the railroad, six feet long by three wide, in which the laborers locked up their tools at night, and it suggested to me that every man who was hard pushed might get such a one for a dollar, and, having bored a few auger holes in it, to admit the air at least, get into it when it rained and at night, and hook down the lid, and so have freedom in his love, and in his soul be free. This did not appear the worst, nor by any means a despicable alternative. You could sit up as late as you pleased, and, whenever you got up, go abroad without any landlord or house-lord dogging you for rent. Many a man is harassed to death to pay the rent of a larger and more luxurious box who would not have frozen to death in such a box as this. I am far from jesting. Economy is a subject which admits of being treated with levity, but it cannot so be disposed of.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

RICHARD LOVELACE



Aug. 8. P.M. — To Annurnack via Assabet.

[Transcript]

A great spider three quarters of an inch long, with large yellow marks on the sides, in middle of a flat web. This is a day of sunny water. As I walk along the bank of the river, I look down a rod and see distinctly the fishes and the bottom. The cardinals are in perfection, standing in dark recesses of the green shore, or in the open meadow. They are fluvialile, and stand along some river or brook, like myself. I see one large white maple crisped and tinged with a sort of rosaceous tinge, just above the Golden Horn. The surface is very glassy there. The foliage of most trees is now not only most dense, but a very dark green, — the swamp white oak, clethra, etc. The *Salix Purshiana* is remarkable for its fine and narrow leaves, feathers, — of a very light or yellowish green, as if finely cut, against the dark green of other trees, yet not drooping or curved downward, but

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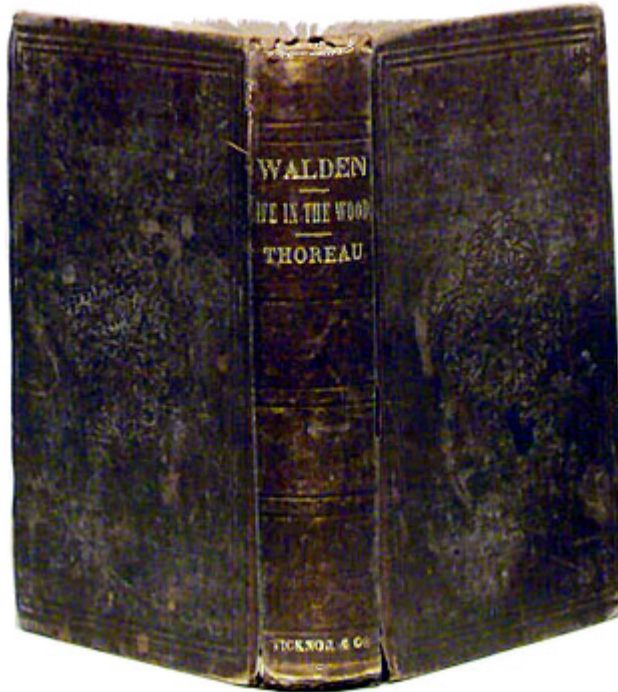
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remarkably concealing its stems. Some silky cornet leaves are reddish next water. Very many leaves on hills are crisped and curled with drought. Black cherry ripe. The meadow-hay is sprinkled here and there on the river. On Annursnack I scare up many turtle doves from the stubble. Hear a supper horn — J. Smith's? — far away, blown with a long-drawn blast, which sounds like a strain of an æolian harp. The distance has thus refined it. I see some slight dun clouds in the east horizon, — perhaps the smoke from burning meadows.



August 9, Wednesday: King Friedrich August II of Saxony died in the Tirol and was succeeded by his brother Johann.

“[WALDEN](#)’ published” (JOURNAL); Ticknor and Fields had printed 2,000 copies.



TIMELINE OF WALDEN

The drawing provided by [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) for the title page of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) has been criticized in a number of particulars. The evergreens shown are firs rather than the pines which surrounded the actual shanty, the deciduous trees are far too large and omnipresent, the slope against which the shanty was positioned is not clearly depicted, and, as [Henry Thoreau](#) himself pointed out, the door and the roof projection above it were not accurately portrayed.

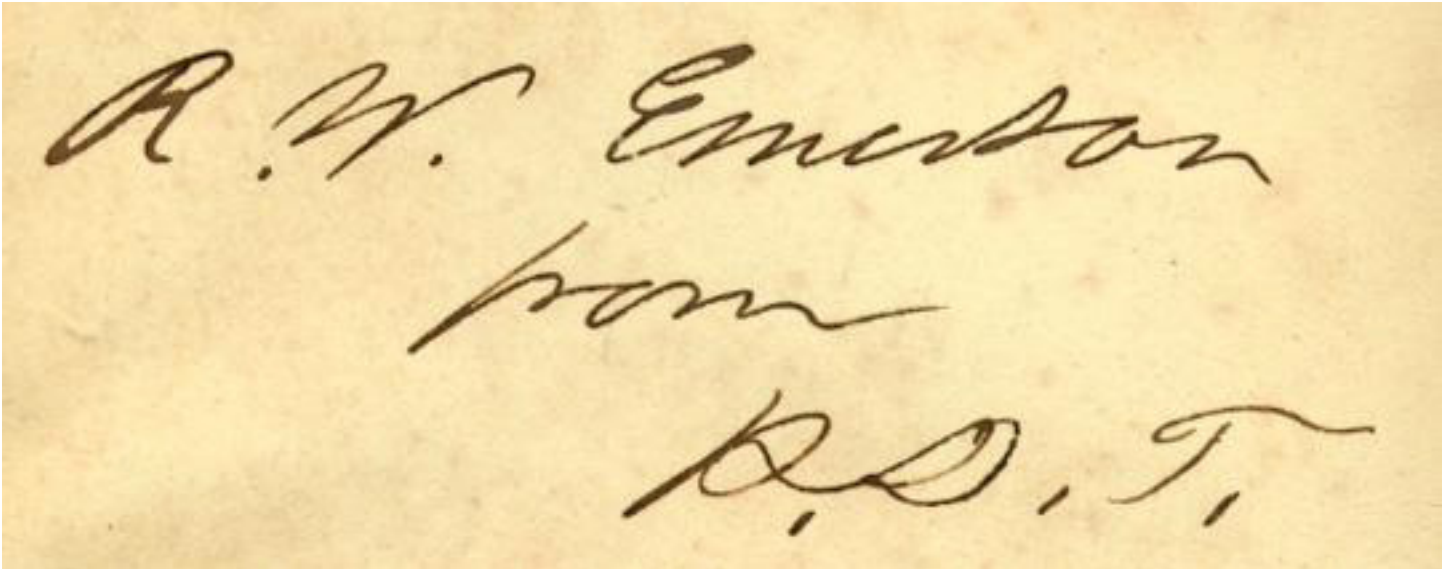
Thoreau went in to the publisher's offices to pick up copies of his book.



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Presumably it was one of these copies, that he presented to [Waldo Emerson](#):



Did Waldo ever read it? Did Waldo ever comment on it?

HDT

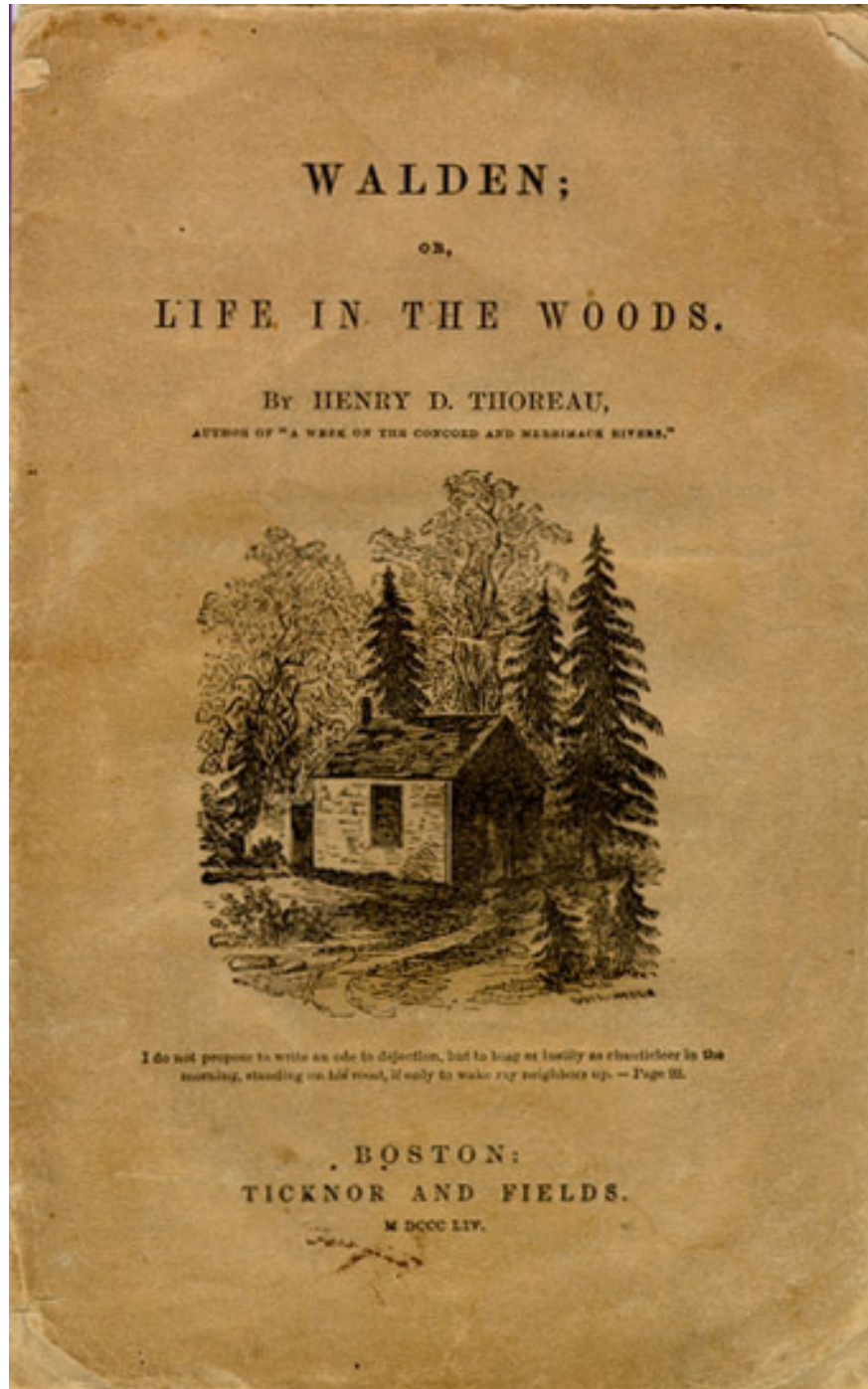
WHAT?

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A two-inch announcement of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) appeared in the [New-York Daily Tribune](#).



Of this first edition of 2,000 copies of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), as many as 500 may have been lacking the map of Walden Pond that should have faced page 307.

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Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under “New Publications” in the Boston [Daily Bee](#), 2:6.



An original book, this, and from an original man—from a very eccentric man. It is a record of the author’s life and thoughts while he lived in the woods—two years and two months. It is a volume of interest and value—of interest because it concerns a very rare individual, and of value because it contains considerable wisdom, after a fashion. It is a volume to read once, twice, thrice—and then think over.—There is a charm in its style, a philosophy in its thought. Mr. Moreau [sic] tells us of common things we know, but in an uncommon manner. There is much to be learned from this volume. Stearn [sic] and good lessons in economy; contentment with a simple but noble life, and all that, and much more. The author “lived like a king” on “hoe cakes,” and drank water; at the same time outworking the lustiest farmers who were pitted against him. Get the book. You will like it. It is original and refreshing; and from the brain of a **LIVE** man.

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) on the front page of the Boston [Daily Evening Traveller](#): That evening [Thoreau](#) dined with [Bronson Alcott](#) and presented him also with a copy of his new book.

By the day of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)’s publication, Ticknor & Fields had received advance orders for only 402 copies. Another 164 would be ordered during the first week of publication. As the number of reviews dwindled, so would sales. Over the following month, the firm would receive orders for merely 123 copies, which would bring total sales during the first five weeks after publication to a very disappointing 689. Only about 65 more copies would be sold between mid-September 1854 and early-August 1855.⁶ Not until 1859 would the printed stocks of the book be depleted — and then it would remain out of print until after Thoreau’s demise.



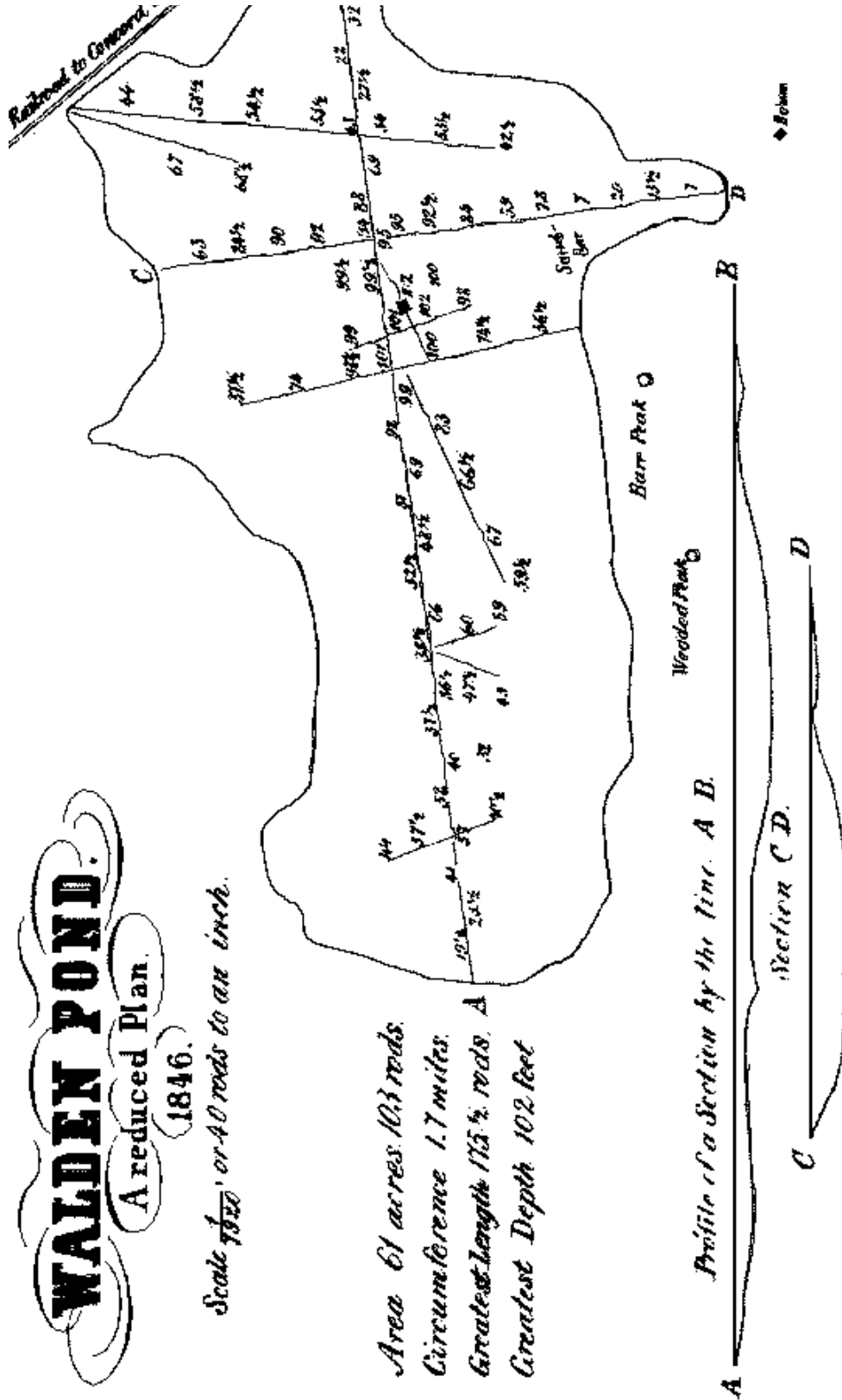
Aug. 9. Wednesday. — To Boston.
“Walden” published. Elder-berries. Waxwork yellowing.

[Transcript]

6. The information about the sale of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) is per Walter Roy Harding’s “The First Year’s Sales of Thoreau’s Walden,” 1-2. Harding noted that we have no sales records for April 1st to June 29th, 1855, but that average monthly sales figures suggest that at most 20 copies would have sold during the period.

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 August 10, Thursday: [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) purchased a copy of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#):

Bought a book this morning named Walden, or Life in the Woods, by Henry D. Thoreau, who spent several years upon the shore of Walden Pond near Concord, Mass., living in a rough board house of his own building. Much of his experience in his out-of-door and secluded life I fully understand and appreciate.

[Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#) also purchased a copy.

[Bronson Alcott](#) completed a reading of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#).

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)

At 4:30 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went to the Cliffs of Fair Haven Hill (Gleason 26/J7). In the afternoon Thoreau went to Conantum (Gleason J6) and thence to Clematis Brook (Gleason K7). He had a conversation with [Eben J. Loomis](#).



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Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) on the 2d page of the Boston Atlas:

Reprinted in CRITICAL ESSAYS ON HENRY DAVID THOREAU'S
WALDEN, ed. Joel Myerson (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co.,
1988), page 18.

[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) was reviewed under the heading "New Publications" on the front page of the Boston Daily Journal, column 6:

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This is a remarkable book. The thread of the work is a narrative of the personal experience of the eccentric author as a hermit on the shores of Walden Pond. The body consists of his reflections on life and its pursuits. Mr. Thoreau carried out his ideas of "communism" by building with his own hands an humble hut, cultivating his own garden patch, earning with the sweat of his brow enough of coarse food to sustain life, and living independent of the world and of its circumstances. He continued this selfish existence for two years, and then returned to society, but why, he does not inform his readers. Whether satisfied that he had mistaken the "pleasures of solitude," or whether the self-improvement which the world has charitably supposed was the object of his retirement had been accomplished, it is certain that he was relieved of none of his selfish opinions—that he left behind in the woods of Concord none of his misanthropy, and that he brought back habits of thought which, though profound, are erratic, and often border on the transcendental. The narrative of the two years hermit life of such a man can hardly fail to be attractive, and the study of the workings of a mind so constituted must possess a peculiar interest. But the attraction is without sympathy—the interest is devoid of admiration. The outre opinions of a mind like that of Mr. Thoreau, while they will attract attention as the eccentric outbursts of real genius, so far from finding a response in the bosom of the reader, will excite a smile, from their very extravagance, and we can easily imagine that if Mr. Thoreau would banish from his mind the idea that man is an oyster, he might become a passable philosopher. Mr. Thoreau has made an attractive book—more attractive than his "Week on the Concord and Merrimac[k]." But while many will be fascinated by its contents, few will be improved. As the pantheistic doctrines of the author marred the beauty of his former work, so does his selfish philosophy darkly tinge the pages of "Walden," and the best that can be said of the work in its probable effects is, that while many will be charmed by the descriptive powers of the author, and will smile at his extravagant ideas, few will be influenced by his opinions. This is a negative virtue in a book which is likely to be widely circulated, and which might do much mischief if the author could establish a bond of sympathy with the reader.



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Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading "New Publications" in the Salem Register, page 2 column 3.

This is a remarkable book, the production of one of the eccentric geniuses who seem to swarm in old Concord, either because they are to the manor born, as was the case with Thoreau, or because there is something sympathetic in the atmosphere which induces an immigration of oddities thither. The author affects to be a philosopher, and is a sort of compound of Diogenes and Timon, flavored with the simplicity of a hermit and a pure child of nature. There is nothing in literature, that we know of, exactly like his book. Mr. Thoreau is a graduate of Harvard College, in the class of 1837, where he was a diligent student. Subsequently, in one of his whimsical freaks, he built himself a hut in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, where he lived alone, and earned his living by the labor of his hands only, for the space of two years and two months, at the end of which time he became a sojourner in civilized life again. The book was written principally during this seclusion, and is, in some sort, a digested record of his life there, with sage reflections on the social condition and the ordinary aims of human ambition. It is a strikingly original, singular, and most interesting work. Several passages from the narrative portion have appeared in journals which were favored with sheets in advance. We avail ourselves of the following brief extract near the conclusion, which gives a little insight into his philosophy:-

[Reprints "Conclusion," pages 328.5-329.16.]

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) in the Lowell Journal and Courier, page 2 column 3.

Ticknor & Fields, of Boston, have just sent us this handsome volume, by Henry D. Thoreau, author of "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers." Mr Thoreau, who lived nearly three years in the woods, has been called 'the Concord Diogenes,' as Ralph Waldo Emerson has been called the Concord Platonist or American Plato. This is one of the most singular, as well as one of the best of works. It is no romance, though most of it is of a narrative character. The press all over the country have given the most flattering notices of it; and without doubt it will command a very extensive sale. It surely deserves it.



Aug. 10. 4.30 A.M. — To Cliffs.


A high fog. As I go along the railroad, I observe the darker green of early-mown fields. A cool wind at this hour over the wet foliage, as from over mountain-tops and uninhabited earth. The large primrose conspicuously in

[Transcript]

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bloom. Does it shut by day? The woods are comparatively still at this season. I hear only the faint peeping of some robins (a few song sparrows on my way), a wood pewee, kingbird, crows, before five, or before reaching the Springs. Then a chewink or two, a cuckoo, jay, and later, returning, the [link](#) of the bobolink and the goldfinch. That is a peculiar and distinct hollow sound made by the pigeon woodpecker's wings, as it flies past near you. The *Aralia nudicaulis* is another plant which for some time, and perhaps more generally than any, yellows the forest floor with its early fall, or turning, as soon as its berries have ripened, along with hellebore, skunk-cabbage, convallarias, etc. Ambrosia. At length, as I return along the back road, at 6.30, the sun begins to eat through the fog.

The tinkling notes of goldfinches [**American Goldfinch**  *Carduleis tristis*] and bobolinks which we hear nowadays are of one character and peculiar to the season. They are not voluminous flowers, but rather nuts of sound, —ripened seed of sound. It is the tinkling of ripened grain in Nature's basket. It is like the sparkle on water, a sound produced by friction on the crisped air.

For a day or two I have inclined to wear a thicker, or fall, coat.

P.M. — Clematis Brook [via](#) Conantum.

A cloudy afternoon and rather cool, but not threatening rain soon. Dangle-berries ripe how long? one of the handsomest berries.

On the southwest side of Conant's Orchard Grove, saw, from twenty rods off some patches of purple grass, [*Poa hirsuta* according to Russell, now in bloom, abundant; in the J. Hosmer hollow.] which painted a stripe of hillside next the woods for half a dozen rods in length. It was as high-colored and interesting, though not so bright, as the patches of rhexia. On examination I found it to be a kind of grass a little less than a foot high, with but few green blades and a fine spreading purple top in seed; but close at hand it was but a dull purple and made but little impression on the eye, was even difficult to detect where thin. But, viewed in a favorable light fifteen rods off, it was of a fine lively purple color, enriching the earth very much. It was the more surprising because grass is commonly of a sombre and humble color. I was charmed to see the grass assume such a rich color and become thus flower-like. Though a darker purple, its effect was similar to that of the rhexia. [Excursions, p. 252; Riv. 309. There the name of the grass appears as *Eragrostis pectinacea*.]

Hardly any dog-days yet. The air is quite clear now. *Aster macrocephalus* near beaked hazel by roadside, sometime. That sort of sweet-william (?) pink, with viscidness below the joints, but not pubescent, against the Minott house; how long?

The *Arum triphyllum* fallen some time and turned quite white. *Asclepias Cornuti* leaves begun to yellow; and brakes. etc. *Rhus Toxicodendron* along the Minott house ditch in the midst of its fall, almost all of its leaves [burnt brown](#) and partly yellow.

First muskmelon in garden.


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This is a remarkable book. The thread of the work is a narrative of the personal experience of the eccentric author as a hermit on the shores of Walden Pond. The body consists of his reflections on life and its pursuits. Mr. Thoreau carried out his ideas of "communism" by building with his own hands an humble hut, cultivating his own garden patch, earning with the sweat of his brow enough of coarse food to sustain life, and living independent of the world and of its circumstances. He continued this selfish existence for two years, and then returned to society, but why, he does not inform his readers. Whether satisfied that he had mistaken the "pleasures of solitude," or whether the self-improvement which the world has charitably supposed was the object of his retirement had been accomplished, it is certain that he was relieved of none of his selfish opinions—that he left behind in the woods of Concord none of his misanthropy, and that he brought back habits of thought which, though profound, are erratic, and often border on the transcendental. The narrative of the two years hermit life of such a man can hardly fail to be attractive, and the study of the workings of a mind so constituted must possess a peculiar interest. But the attraction is without sympathy—the interest is devoid of admiration. The outre opinions of a mind like that of Mr. Thoreau, while they will attract attention as the eccentric outbursts of real genius, so far from finding a response in the bosom of the reader, will excite a smile, from their very extravagance, and we can easily imagine that if Mr. Thoreau would banish from his mind the idea that man is an oyster, he might become a passable philosopher. Mr. Thoreau has made an attractive book—more attractive than his "Week on the Concord and Merrimac[k]." But while many will be fascinated by its contents, few will be improved. As the pantheistic doctrines of the author marred the beauty of his former work, so does his selfish philosophy darkly tinge the pages of "Walden," and the best that can be said of the work in its probable effects is, that while many will be charmed by the descriptive powers of the author, and will smile at his extravagant ideas, few will be influenced by his opinions. This is a negative virtue in a book which is likely to be widely circulated, and which might do much mischief if the author could establish a bond of sympathy with the reader.



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Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading "New Publications" in the Salem Register, page 2 column 3.

This is a remarkable book, the production of one of the eccentric geniuses who seem to swarm in old Concord, either because they are to the manor born, as was the case with Thoreau, or because there is something sympathetic in the atmosphere which induces an immigration of oddities thither. The author affects to be a philosopher, and is a sort of compound of Diogenes and Timon, flavored with the simplicity of a hermit and a pure child of nature. There is nothing in literature, that we know of, exactly like his book. Mr. Thoreau is a graduate of Harvard College, in the class of 1837, where he was a diligent student. Subsequently, in one of his whimsical freaks, he built himself a hut in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, where he lived alone, and earned his living by the labor of his hands only, for the space of two years and two months, at the end of which time he became a sojourner in civilized life again. The book was written principally during this seclusion, and is, in some sort, a digested record of his life there, with sage reflections on the social condition and the ordinary aims of human ambition. It is a strikingly original, singular, and most interesting work. Several passages from the narrative portion have appeared in journals which were favored with sheets in advance. We avail ourselves of the following brief extract near the conclusion, which gives a little insight into his philosophy:-

[Reprints "Conclusion," pages 328.5-329.16.]

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) in the Lowell Journal and Courier, page 2 column 3.

Ticknor & Fields, of Boston, have just sent us this handsome volume, by Henry D. Thoreau, author of "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers." Mr Thoreau, who lived nearly three years in the woods, has been called 'the Concord Diogenes,' as Ralph Waldo Emerson has been called the Concord Platonist or American Plato. This is one of the most singular, as well as one of the best of works. It is no romance, though most of it is of a narrative character. The press all over the country have given the most flattering notices of it; and without doubt it will command a very extensive sale. It surely deserves it.



August 11, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) sent a book, presumably [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), to Senator Charles Sumner, and also wrote (presumably) to [James Thomas Fields](#).



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Concord Aug 11th '54

Mr Fields,

Dear Sir[,]

I shall feel still more under obligations to you if you will send the accompanying volume to Mr. Sumner in one of your parcels. I find that I omitted to count the volume sent to Greeley — & so have one more than my due.

Will you please charge me with it.

Yrs truly

Henry D. Thoreau

In the afternoon he went to Assabet Bath (Gleason 4/E5). There was a review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading “New Publications” in the Salem, Massachusetts [Gazette](#), page 2, column 6.

This is a very noticeable work, the production of an educated, eccentric man, who thinks much, and often justly, and expresses his thoughts in a clear and agreeable style. The author lived more than two years alone in the woods of Concord, Mass., a mile from any neighbors, earning his living by the labor of his hands, and his life-like sketches of solitary and rural life will be read with interest and pleasure. At present he is a sojourner in civilized life again. He says:

[Reprints “Conclusion,” pages 323.29-324.6.]

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) on the front page of the Providence, Rhode Island [Daily Journal](#):

Reprinted in **CRITICAL ESSAYS ON HENRY DAVID THOREAU'S WALDEN**, ed. Joel Myerson (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1988), page 19.



Aug. 11. P.M. — To Assabet Bath.

[Transcript]

I have heard since the 1st of this month the steady creaking cricket. Some are digging early potatoes. I notice a new growth of red maple sprouts, small reddish leaves surmounting light-green ones, the old being dark-green. Green lice on birches. *Aster Tradescanti*, two or three days in low ground; flowers smaller than *A. dumosus*, densely racemed, with short peduncles or branchlets, calyx-scales narrower and more pointed. *Ammannia humilis* (?) (a new plant), perhaps three weeks at northeast end of Wheeler's brush fence meadow, like an erect isnardia, i.e. *Lcdwigia palustris*, with small wrinkled yellowish petals with a purplish vein.



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August 12, Saturday: In his journal, [Henry Thoreau](#) noted the 1st watermelon of the season. He went by boat to Conantum (Gleason J6). He walked the Fitchburg Railroad tracks to Bare or Pine Hill in Lincoln (Gleason J9).

[Bronson Alcott](#) completed a re-reading of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), and also of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#).

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

The Concord librarian, [Albert Stacy](#), purchased a copy of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) for the town library at a cost of \$0.⁷⁵, and the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) purchased two copies for \$2.⁰⁰. A favorable review under the heading “Editorial Correspondence” presumably by the Reverend John Sullivan Dwight appeared in [Dwight’s Journal of Music, A Paper of Art and Literature](#) (5:149-50):

... Thoreau is one of those men who has put such a determined trust in the simple dictates of common sense, as to earn the vulgar title of “transcendentalist” from his sophisticated neighbors. ... Of course, they find him strange, fantastical, a humorist, a theorist, a dreamer. It may be or it may not.... Walden’s literary style is admirably clear and terse and elegant; the pictures wonderfully graphic; for the writer is a poet and a scholar as well as a tough wrestler with the first economical problems of nature, and a winner of good cheer and of free glorious leisure out of what men call the “hard realities” of life. Walden Pond, a half mile in diameter, in Concord town, becomes henceforth as classical as any lake of Windermere. And we doubt not men are beginning to look to transcendentalists for the soberest reports of good hard common-sense, as well as for the models of the clearest writing.

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading “New Publications” in the [Boston Commonwealth](#), 2:4.

The [Bunker-Hill Aurora and Boston Mirror](#) provided a [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) review entitled “[H.D. Thoreau](#)’s Life at Walden Pond,” presumably by William W. Wheildon, on its page 2 in columns 3-5: “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.”



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We mean, before long, to say how delightful a book this is [no subsequent notice located]; but it is now Saturday, the very day when people buy books, and we can only say that it is just the pleasantest and most readable, the most thought-provoking book of the present season. It is a better work than the author[']s previous one, "A [W]eek on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," though we reckon that as a book which will live in American literature a good while. "Walden" is a record of two years' sojourning in a house built by the author with his own hands, near Walden Pond. He was a squatter upon the land, and his sovereignty was over all he surveyed. Most lively accounts he gives of his life there, mingled with pages of philosophical (sensible or other) reflections upon all sorts of topics. No more attractive book has been printed for a long time. It ought, to be sure, considering the author's theories of food and raiment, to be printed upon birch-bark, but it is, on the contrary, issued in Ticknor & Fields' best style.

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading "New Publications" in the Boston Olive Branch, 3:3-4.

This is indeed a quaint book, as any person, who is in the least familiar with the character of the author, might expect. It gives a full account of his experience during his sojourn on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Mass. Having imbibed the idea that the daily life of his neighbors, with its cares, its trials and its conformity to fashion and custom was little better than a penance, he made himself a home in that secluded spot. He built a house, which cost him about thirty dollars; furnished it scantily and began to keep "bachelor's hall." There in his solitary abode he read the great book of Nature; watched the stars, the birds and the waters, and mused and philosophized after his own fashion. Besides, he had a small piece of land near this cottage, which he cultivated, and which yielded him a small harvest. His expenditures for food and clothing were very trifling, and it will no doubt, astonish many to know that so moderate a sum supported a person two years. He gives the details of his life and we presume they will entertain the reader as they have us.

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“SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS” appeared in The National Anti-Slavery Standard.



Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading “New Publications” on the second page of the [New Bedford, Massachusetts Mercury](#), column 3:

This is a remarkable history of remarkable experiences. Mr. Thoreau is an eccentric genius, and affects the philosopher, despising all the ordinary aims and petty ambitions of the world, looking in a half cynical, half amused mood upon men and things, and meanwhile retiring into a semi barbarous state builds with his own hands a hut on Walden Pond in Connecticut [sic], where for twenty-six months he lives like a hermit on the labor of his hands, looking to nature, 'kindest mother still,' for the supply of his physical wants, and as a perpetual fountain of delight to his eye and soul. This volume is in some measure a record of his external and internal being during his retiracy, and is perfectly unique in experience and expression. A simple, pure heart, high cultivation and a luxuriant fancy, give to Mr. Thoreau a vigorous intellectual life, and impart a freshness and charm to his style which leads one on quite enchanted. For its fine descriptions of nature, it will bear more than one reading, while its stern and true lessons on the value of existence, its manly simplicity, its sage reflections, will drop many a good seed for content and true living, to spring up and flourish and beautify new homes, albeit in civilized life, for we do not think any will be so enamored of Mr. Thoreau's experience, as to seek it in his way.

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) on the second page of the Roxbury Norfolk County Journal,



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column 6:

Mr. Thoreau is an eccentric genius as well as an original thinker and good writer. His eccentricity led him to build a hut upon the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, in which he lived alone for two years, laboring in his garden patch to raise food for the support of life, and all that he might experience the pleasures of solitude and a perfectly independent life. But Mr. Thoreau is a man of education, of intellect, of taste, — though he did not show much of the latter in his odd sort of life, according to the general estimation of the world, — and he did not live alone in the woods like a savage. He mused and studied — mused somewhat on the works of nature, somewhat more on mankind, and not in the most loving and gentle spirit, and he studied his own erratic mind. The latter occupation might have been more profitable, perhaps, had he observed it from a different point of view. The book which he now gives to the world after coming out from his self imposed exile, is a sort of history of his hermitage, an account of his solitary mode of living, a description of the external things which occupied his attention, colored throughout with a sort of philosophy which is little else than the peculiarities of Mr. Thoreau's mind. The narrative and descriptions are certainly very interesting and attractive, full of life and nature, and the book is in this respect quite a charming one. In other respects it may find fewer admirers, but altogether, from its origin and character, it may be set down as a remarkable book, which will command the attention of the tasteful reader and of the thoughtful student. It is hardly necessary to say that it is published in the neat style which characterizes all the volumes issued by these publishers.



In [New Bedford](#), [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) completed a reading of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) and began

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to cultivate the author:

Finished this morning reading Walden, or Life in the Woods, by H. D. Thoreau. I have been highly interested in this book, the most truly original one I ever read, unless the life of John Buncler, an old book written by an eccentric English Gentleman. The experience of Thoreau and his reflections are like those of every true lover of Nature. His views of the artificial customs of civilized life are very correct. Mankind labor and suffer to supply themselves with the unnecessaries of life, - leisure for enjoyment is rarely obtained. I long for mankind to be emancipated from this thralldom which has spread its nets and snares over so large a portion of the human family. A love for a more simple life increases with me, and I hope that the time will ere long come when I may realize the peace to be derived therefrom. Simplicity in all things, house, living, dress, address, &c. &c. My fortune, though not large, is ample, and were my style of living less expensive I might have considerable for charitable purposes. One of my greatest luxuries has been in books, - good books I value beyond most all else in the world of earthly treasure, after my family, - handsome editions of my favorite authors. Such I want in the best of paper, type, and binding and English, for my reading is confined pretty much to my native language. England, Scotland, or rather Great Britain and America, have furnished nearly all the authors I am acquainted with. Genuine English literature is my line of reading.



On this day or the following one, [Thoreau](#) was written to by [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) in [New Bedford](#).

Mailed a letter to Henry D. Thoreau expressive of my satisfaction in reading his book, "Walden, or Life in the Woods." His volume has been a source of great comfort to me in reading and will I think continue to be so, giving me cheerful views of life and feeling of confidence that misfortune cannot so far as property is concerned deprive me or mine of the necessities of life, and even that we may be better in every respect for the changes.



[Friend Daniel](#) included on this day the interesting information that [William Cowper](#)'s "The Task" was his "greatest favorite." (I think it no exaggeration to say that you could count on the fingers of one foot the people for whom Cowper's "The Task" would their "greatest favorite," or even readable — Thoreau is one of the few

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people I have heard of, who had their own personal copy of this poem.)



Brooklawn, near New Bedford

Mass. Aug. 12th. 1854—

Dear Sir,

I have just finished reading “Walden” and hasten to thank you for the great degree of satisfaction it has afforded me. Having always been a lover of Nature, in man, as well as in the material universe, I hail with pleasure every original production in literature which bears the stamp of a genuine and earnest love for the true philosophy of human life.— Such I assure you I esteem your book to be. To many, and to most, it will appear to be the wild musings of an eccentric and strange mind, though all must recognize your affectionate regard for the gentle denizens of the woods and pond as well as the great love you have shewn for what are familiarly called the beauties of Nature. But to me the book appears to evince a mind most thoroughly self possessed, highly cultivated with a strong vein of common sense. The whole book is a prose poem (pardon the solecism) and at the same time as simple as a running brook.

I have always loved ponds of pure translucent water, and some of my happiest and most memorable days have been passed on and around the beautiful Middleboro’ Ponds, particularly the largest, Assawampset—here King Philip frequently came, and a beautiful round hill near by, is still known as “King Philip’s look-out.” I have often felt an inclination when tired of the noise and strife of society, to retire to the shores of this noble old pond, or rather lake, for it is some 5 or 6 miles in length and 2 broad. But I have a wife and four children, & besides have got a little too far along, being in my fortysecond year, to undertake a new mode of life. I strive however, and have striven during the whole of my life, to live as free from the restraint of mere forms & ceremonies as I possibly can. I love a quiet, peaceful rural retirement; but it was not my fate to realize this until a little



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past thirty years of age—since then I have been a sort of rustic, genteel perhaps, rustic. Not so very genteel you might reply, if you saw the place where I am writing. It is a rough board Shanty 12 x 14 three miles from New Bedford in a quiet & secluded spot—here for the present I eat & sleep, read, write, receive visitors &c. My house is now undergoing repairs &c and my family are in town.

A short time since a whip-poor-will serenaded me, and later at night I hear the cuckoos near my windows. It has long been my delight to observe the feathered tribes, and earlier in life I was quite an ornithologist. The coming of the first Blue bird in early Spring is to me still a delightful circumstance. But more particularly soothing to me is the insect hum so multitudinous at this season.— Now as I write the crickets & other little companions are sweetly & soothingly singing around my dwelling, & occasionally in my room. I am quite at home with partridges, Quails, rabbits skunks & woodchucks. But Winter is my best time, then I am a great tramper through the woods. O how I love the woods. I have walked thousands of miles in the woods hereabouts. I recognize many of my own experiences in your “Walden”. Still I am not altogether given up to these matters—they are my pastimes. I have a farm to attend to, fruit trees & a garden & a little business occasionally in town to look after, but much leisure nevertheless. In fact I am the only man of leisure I know of, every body here as well as elsewhere is upon the stir. I love quiet, this you know friend Thoreau don't necessarily imply that the body should be still all the time. I am often quietest, ar'nt you, when walking among the still haunts of Nature or hoeing perhaps beans as I have oftentimes done as well as corn & potatoes &c &c.

Poetry has been to me a great consolation amid the jarring elements of this life. The English poets some of them at least, and one Latin, our good old Virgil, have been like household gods to me.—

Cowper's Task, my greatest favorite now lies before me in which I had been reading & alternately looking at the western sky just after sunset before I commenced this letter. Cowper was a true lover of the country. How often have I felt the force of these lines upon the country in my own experience

*“I never framed a wish, or formed a plan,
That flattered me with hopes of earthly bliss
But there I laid the scene.”*

All through my boyhood, the country haunted my thoughts. Though blessed with a good home, books & teachers, the latter however with one exception were not blessings, I would have exchanged all for the life of a rustic. I envied as I then thought the freedom of the farmer boy. But I have long thought that the life of the farmer, that is most

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farmers, possessed but little of the poetry of labour. How we accumulate cares around us. The very repairs I am now making upon my house will to some considerable extent increase my cares. A rough board shanty, rye & indian bread, water from the spring, or as in your case, from the pond, and other things in keeping, do not burden the body & mind. It is fine houses, fine furniture, sumptuous fare, fine clothes, and many in number, horses & carriages, servants &c &c, these are the harpies, that so disturb our real happiness.

My next move in life I hope will be into a much more simple mode of living. I should like to live in a small house, with my family, uncarpeted white washed walls, simple old fashioned furniture & plain wholesome old fashioned fare. Though I have always been inclined to be a vegetarian in diet & once lived in capital health two years on the Graham system.

Well this will do for myself. Now for you friend Thoreau. Why return to "the world" again? a life such as you spent at Walden was too true & beautiful to be abandoned for any slight reason.

The ponds I allude to are much more secluded than Walden, and really delightful places. Should you ever incline again to try your "philosophy of living" I would introduce you into haunts, that your very soul would leap to behold. Well, I thought I would just write you a few lines to thank you for the pleasure I have received from the reading of your "Walden", but I have found myself running on till now. I feel that you are a kindred spirit and so fear not. I was pleased to find a kind word or two in your book for the poor down trodden slave. Wilberforce, Clarkson and John Woolman & Anthony Benezet were household words in my father's house.— I early became acquainted with the subject of slavery for my parents were Quakers, & Quakers were then all Abolitionists. My love of Nature, absolute, undefiled nature makes me an abolitionist. How could I listen to the woodland songs—or gaze upon the outstretched landscape, or look at the great clouds & the starry heavens and be aught but a friend of the poor and oppressed coloured race of our land. But why do I write—it is in vain to portray these things—they can only be felt and lived, and to you of all others I would refrain from being prolix.

I have outlived, or nearly so, all ambition for notoriety. I wish only to be a simple, good man & so live that when I come to surrender up my spirit to the Great Father, I may depart in peace.

I wrote the above last evening. It is now Sunday afternoon, and alone in my Shanty I sit down to my desk to add a little more. A great white cloud which I have been watching for the past half hour is now majestically moving off to the north east before the fine s. w. breeze

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which sets in here nearly every summer afternoon from the ocean. We have here the best climate in New England—shelter ed on the north & east by dense pine woods from the cold winds which so cut up the healths of eastern folk, or rather are supposed to—but I think if the habits of our people were right the north easters would do but little harm. I never heard that the Indians w ere troubled by them—but they were nature’s philosophers and lived in the woods. I love to go by my instincts, inspiration rather. O how much we lose by civilization! In the eyes of the world you & I are demi savages— But I rather think we could stand our hand at the dinner table or in the drawing room with most of folks. I would risk you any where, and as for myself I have about done with the follies of “society.” I never was trump’d yet.

I have lived out all the experiences of idle youth—some gentle, & some savage experiences but my heart was not made of the stuff for a sportsman or angler—early in life I ranged the woods, fields & shores with my gun, or rod, but I found that all I sought could be obtained much better without the death dealing implements. So now my rustic staff is all the companion I usually take, unless my old dog joins me—taking new track as he often does, and bounding upon me in some distant thicket. My favorite books are—Cowper’s task, Thomson’s Seasons Milton, Shakespeare, &c &c—Goldsmith Gray’s Elegy—Beattie’s Minstrel (parts) Howitt, Gil. White, (Selbourne) Bewick (wood engraver) moderns—Wordsworth Ch. Lamb—De Quincy, Macauly, Kit. North, &c &c

These and others are more my companions than men. I like talented women & swear lustily by Mary Wolstoncroft, Md^e— Roland, Joan d’arc & somewhat by dear Margaret Fuller.

The smaller fry, I let go by—

Again permit me to thank you for the pleasure & strength I have found in reading “Walden.”

Dear Mr Walden good bye for the present.

Yours most respectfully

Daniel Ricketson

Henry D. Thoreau Esq



Aug. 12. Saturday. Watermelon.

[Transcript]

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P. M. — To Conantum by boat.

Methinks I heard a few toads till about the middle of July. Today there is an uncommonly strong wind, against which I row, yet in shirt-sleeves, trusting to sail back. It is southwest. I see twelve painted tortoises on a rail only five feet long, and perhaps some were scared off before I observed them. The *Bidens Beckii* yellows the side of the river just below the Hubbard Path, but is hardly yet in fullest flower generally. I see goldfinches nowadays on the lanceolate thistles, apparently after the seeds. It takes all the heat of the year to produce these yellow flowers. It is the 3 o'clock P.M. of the year when they begin to prevail, — when the earth has absorbed most heat, when melons ripen and early apples and peaches. The cranberry cheeks begin to redden. *Viburnum dentatum* berries. Hazelnut husks now have a reddish edge, being ripe. Is not this a sign? It already the yellowing year.

Viburnum nudum berried generally green, but some, higher and more exposed, of a deep, fiery pink on one cheek and light green on the other, and a very few dark purple or without bloom, black already I put a bunch with only two or three black ones in my hat, the rest pink or green. When I got home more than half were turned black, — and ripe!! A singularly sudden chemical change. Another cluster which had no black ones was a third part turned. It is surprising how very suddenly they turn from this deep pink to a very dark purple or black, when the wine which they contain is mature. They are a very pretty, irregularly elliptical berry, one side longer than the other, and particularly interesting on account of the mixture of light-green, deep-pink, and dark-purple, and also withered berries, in the same cyme.

The wind is autumnal and at length compels me to put on my coat. I bathe at Hubbard's. The water is rather cool, comparatively. As I look down-stream from southwest to northeast, I see the red under sides of the white lily pads about half exposed, turned up by the wind to [an] angle of 45° or more. These hemispherical red shields are so numerous as to produce a striking effect on the eye, as of an endless array of forces with shields advanced; sometimes four or five rods in width. Off Holden Woods a baffling counter wind as usual (when I return), but looking up-stream I see the great undulations extending into the calm from above, where the wind blows steadily. I see no maples changed yet along this stream. There are but few haymakers left in the meadows.

On Conantum saw a cow looking steadily up into the sky for a minute. It gave to her face an unusual almost human or wood-god, faun-like expression, and reminded me of some frontispieces to Virgil's *Bucolics*. She was gazing upward steadily at an angle of about 45°. There were only some downy clouds in that direction. It was so unusual a sight that any one would notice it. It suggested adoration.

The woodbine on rocks in warm and dry places is now more frequently turned, a few leaflets bright-scarlet.

The now quite common goldenrods fully out are what I have called *stricta* and also the more strict *puberula* (?). The *arguta* and *odora* are not abundant enough to make an impression. The *Solidago nemoralis* is not yet generally out. The common asters now are the *pateus*, *dumosus*, *Radula*, and *Diplopappus umbellatus*. This is a famous year for huckleberries, etc. They are now drying up for the most part before spoiling. The bushes on Conantum are quite black with them. They are clustered like *Vaccinium vacillans* apparently. High blackberries are in prime. And I see some great low blackberries on long peduncles, lifted above the huckleberries, composed of great grains, as large as the largest high blackberries. Poke berries, also poke stems, are purple; not yet peduncles. Plucked a small *Hicracium scabrum*, hairy, which I may have called *Gronovii*.

I think I should not notice the shadow of Conantum Cliff now; perhaps because the grass is so sere and russet. It should be a tender green.

For birds: —

I think that I begin to see a few more hawks [red] than of late. A white-rumped to-day.

Partridges [**Ruffed Grouse** [red] *Bonasa umbellus*] fly in packs.

Bluebirds [**Eastern Bluebird** [red] *Sialia sialis*] sound oftener plaintively.

Larks [**Eastern Meadowlark** [red] *Sturnella magna*] are still seen.

Blackbirds fly in great flocks.

Robin [**American Robin** [red] *Turdus migratorius*] peeps occasionally.

Song sparrow [**Song Sparrow** [red] *Melospiza melodia*] sings clearly in morning, etc.

Hear pigeon woodpecker's [**Yellow-shafted Flicker** [red] *Colaptes auratus*] wickoff still occasionally.

Pigeons [**American Passenger Pigeon** [red] *Ectopistes migratorius*] begin to be seen.

Hear rush sparrow [**Field Sparrow** [red] *Spizella pusilla*] still.

No seringos [**Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis*] for some time.

Turtle doves [**Mourning Dove** [red] *Zenaida macroura*] common in small flocks in stubble.

White-bellied swallows [**Tree Swallow** [red] *Tachycineta bicolor*] still.

Barn swallows [**Barn Swallow** [red] *Hirundo rustica*] still.

Perhaps chip-sparrows [**Chipping Sparrow** [red] *Spizella passerina*] are silent.


Have not heard a wood thrush [**Wood Thrush** [red] *Hylocichla mustelina*] since last week of July.





Catbird [**Gray Catbird** [red] *Dumetella carolinensis*] and thrasher [**Brown Thrasher** [red] *Toxostoma rufum*] done singing.


Chewink [**Rufous-sided Towhee** [red] *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*] still heard.



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Wood pewee [Eastern Wood-Pewee  *Contopus virens*] "


No night-warbler [Ovenbird  *eiurus aurocapillus*, or Common Yellowthroat  *Geothlypis trichas?*] [[^]Heard one at evening, Aug. 14.], or tweezer [Northern Parula  *Parula americana*], or evergreen-forest note; nor veery [Veery  *Catharus fuscescens*].


Kingbird [Eastern Kingbird  *Tyrannus tyrannus*] twitters still.

No red-eyes [[^]Heard one today.] [Red-eyed Vireo  *Vireo olivaceus*] nor tanagers [Scarlet Tanager  *Piranga olivacea*] heard since 5th.

Goldfinch [American Goldfinch  *Carduelis tristis*] common.

Cherry-bird [Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*] heard.

Cuckoo [Yellow-billed Cuckoo  *Coccyzus americanus*].

Gold robin [Northern Oriole  *Icterus galbula*] sometimes heard partially. [[^]The nighthawk squeaks at sunset and the whip-poor-will sings, Aug. 14. The screech owl screams at evening.]



August 13, Sunday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#) in Newburyport.⁷



NEWBURYPORT, Aug 13, 1854.

Dear Sir:

Let me thank you heartily for your paper on the present condition of Massachusetts, read at Framingham and printed in [The Liberator](#). As a literary statement of the truth, which every day is making more manifest, it surpasses everything else (so I think), which the terrible week in Boston has called out. I need hardly add my thanks for "[Walden](#)," which I have been awaiting for so many years. Through Mr. Field's kindness, I have read a great deal of it in sheets:— I have just secured two copies, one for myself, and one for a young girl here, who seems to me to have the most remarkable literary talent since [Margaret Fuller](#), —and to whom your first book has been among the scriptures, ever since I gave her that.

[FRAMINGHAM MA](#)
[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)



Aug. 13. First marked dog-day; sultry and with misty clouds. For ten days or so we have had comparatively cool, fall-like weather. I remember only with a pang the past spring and summer thus far. I have not been an early riser. Society seems to have invaded and overrun me. I have drank tea and coffee and made myself cheap and vulgar. My days have

[Transcript]

7. No MS — printed copy from Franklin Benjamin Sanborn's RECOLLECTIONS.

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been all noontides, without sacred mornings and evenings. I desire to rise early henceforth, to associate with those whose influence is elevating, to have such dreams and waking thoughts that my diet may not be indifferent to me.

P.M. — To Bare Hill, Lincoln, via railroad.

I have not chanced to hear the bullfrogs trump much, if any, since the middle of July. This is a quite hot day again, after cooler weather. A few small red maples about [^written in pencil: "Pond?" Thus, written in pencil, evidently at a later date, seems to indicate that at the time he inserted it he had forgotten just where the trees were.] blush now a dull red. For about a month I think I have particularly noticed the light under sides of leaves, especially maples. I see small flocks of grass-birds, etc. In Macintosh's field (pasture), some dwarf acalypha more show than the aralia. Some are quite brown and shrivelled, others yellow, others yellow and brown, others yellow, brown, and green, making a, very rich and parti-colored or checkered work, as of plaited straw, — bead or straw work or ivory; others are still green with brown spots. In respect to these and many other plants of this size and habit, it is already fall. They stand yellow and yellowing all through the woods, — none perhaps so conspicuous as the brake. At Thrush Alley, was surprised to behold how many birch leaves had turned yellow, — every other one, while clear, fresh, leather-colored ones strewed the ground with a pretty thick bed under each tree. So far as the birches go it is a perfect autumnal scene there.

Huckleberries begin to be wormy, but are still sound on Bare Hill. Now the mountains are concealed by the dog-day haze, and the view is of dark ridges of forest, one behind the other, separated by misty valleys. Squirrels have begun to eat hazelnuts, and I see their dry husks on the ground turned reddish-brown.

The change, decay, and fall of the brakes in woods, etc., is perhaps more autumnal than any sight. They make more show than the aralia. Some are quite brown and shrivelled, others yellow, others yellow and brown, others yellow, brown, and green, making a, very rich and parti-colored or checkered work, as of plaited straw, — bead or straw work or ivory; others are still green with brown spots. In respect to these and many other plants of this size and habit, it is already fall. They stand yellow and yellowing all through the woods, — none perhaps so conspicuous as the brake. At Thrush Alley, was surprised to behold how many birch leaves had turned yellow, — every other one, while clear, fresh, leather-colored ones strewed the ground with a pretty thick bed under each tree. So far as the birches go it is a perfect autumnal scene there.



August 14, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) donated a copy of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) to the Harvard Library, gave a copy to [Richard F. Fuller](#) inscribed "from H.D.T.," and presented a copy to Mrs. Lidian "Asia" Jackson Emerson inscribed "from her friend Henry Thoreau."⁸ After a cursory scan of the copy of [WALDEN](#) which he had just purchased, [John Greenleaf Whittier](#) commented to its publisher [James Thomas Fields](#) that it was

capital reading, but very wicked and heathenish. The practical moral of it seems to be that if a man is willing to sink himself into a woodchuck he can live as cheaply as that quadruped; but after all, for me I prefer walking on two legs.

Well, but this was a bit different, as a reaction, from the reaction Whittier had had when he had received a presentation copy of [Walt Whitman](#)'s LEAVES OF GRASS: after looking that book over, he had tossed it — into the fireplace.⁹

8. These three copies are now in the Houghton Library of [Harvard University](#). The records of the Boston Society of Natural History indicate that [Thoreau](#) had donated copies of [A WEEK](#) and [WALDEN](#) to them as well.

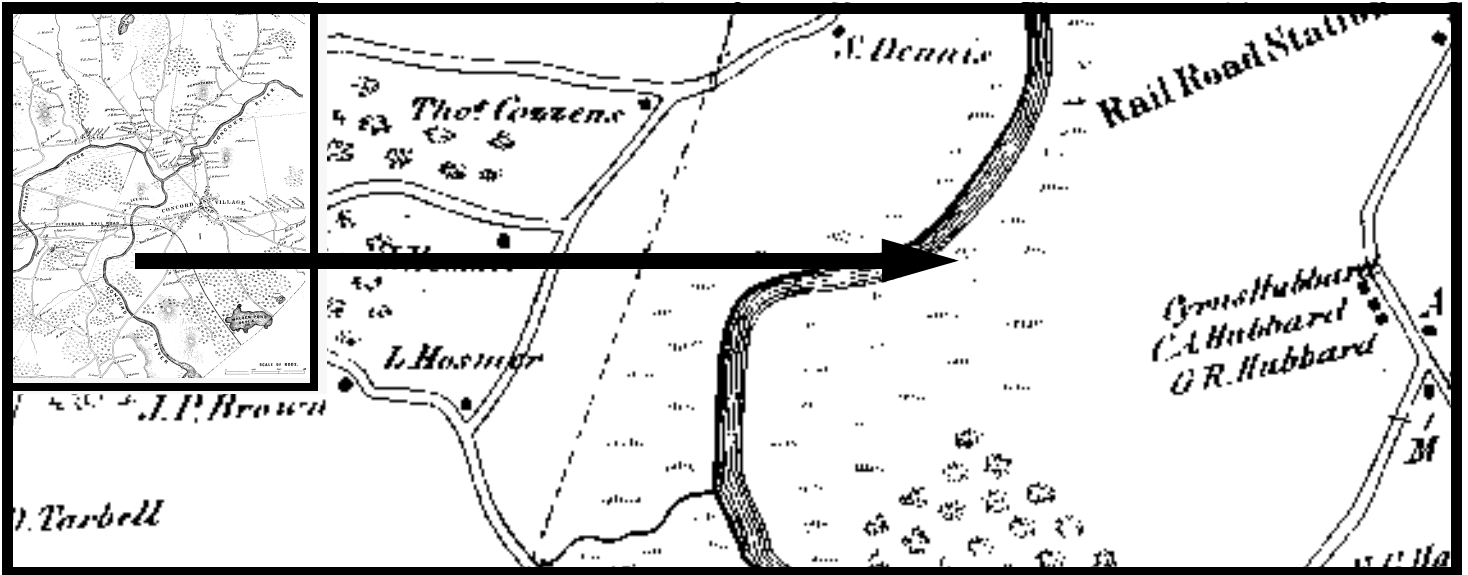
9. [Thoreau](#)'s copy of LEAVES OF GRASS would be knocked down on auction at Sotheby's in 2002 or 2003, evidently to a [Walt Whitman](#) collector, for US\$119,500.

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August 14, Monday: At 3 PM on this day, [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Edward Sherman Hoar](#) went to the location to which Henry had given the name Climbing Fern. At 6 PM Thoreau went on to Hubbard's Bath



and then on to Fair Haven Hill (Gleason H7).¹⁰

That evening, in Boston, at a meeting of colored citizens in the Belknap Street Church, [William Cooper Nell](#) reported on the National Council meeting that had taken place in Cleveland, Ohio.



Aug. 14. No rain, — only the dusty road spotted with the few drops which fell last night. — but there is quite a high and cool wind this morning. Since August came in, we have begun to have considerable wind, as not since May, at least. The roads nowadays are covered with a light-colored, powdery dust (this yesterday), several inches deep, which also defiles the grass and weeds and bushes, and the traveller is deterred from stepping in it. The dusty weeds and bushes leave their mark on your clothes. Mountain-ash berries orange (?), and its leaves half yellowed in some places.

[Transcript]

3 P.M. — To climbing fern with E. Hoar.

It takes a good deal of care and patience to unwind this fern without injuring it. Sometimes same frond is half leaf, half fruit. E. talked of sending one such leaf to G. Bradford to remind him that the sun still shone in America. The uva-ursi berries beginning to turn.

6 P.M. — To Hubbard Bath and Fair Haven Hill.

I notice now that saw-like grass [*Paspalum ciliatifolium*] seed where the mowers have done. The swamp blackberries are quite small and rather acid. Though yesterday was quite a hot day, I find by bathing that the river grows steadily cooler, as yet for a fortnight, though we have had no rain here. Is it owing solely to the cooler air since August came in, both day and night, or have rains in the southwest cooled the stream within a week? I now, standing on the shore, see that in sailing or floating down a smooth stream at evening it is an advantage to the fancy to be thus slightly separated from the land. It is to be slightly removed from the commonplace of earth. To float thus on the silver-plated stream is like embarking on a train of thought itself. You are surrounded by water, which is full of reflections; and you see the earth at a distance, which is very agreeable to the imagination.

I see the blue smoke of a burning meadow. The clethra must be one of the most conspicuous flowers not yellow at present. I sit three-quarters up the hill. The crickets creak strong and loud now after sunset. No word will spell it. It is a short, strong, regular ringing sound, as of a thousand exactly together, — though further off some alternate, — repeated regularly and in rapid time, perhaps twice in a second. Methinks their quire is much fuller

10. We can be certain that they were very careful not to start any fires that would get away from them.



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and louder than a fortnight ago. Ah! I need solitude. I have come forth to this hill at sunset to see the forms of the mountains in the horizon, — to behold and commune with something grander than man. Their mere distance and unprofanedness is an infinite encouragement. It is with infinite yearning and aspiration that I seek solitude, more and more resolved and strong; but with a certain genial weakness that I seek society ever. I hear the nighthawk squeak and a whip-poor-will sing. I hear the tremulous squealing scream of a screech owl in the Holden Woods, sounding somewhat like the neighing of a horse, not like the snipe. Now at 7.45, perhaps a half-hour after sunset, the river is quite distinct and full of light in the dark landscape, — a silver strip of sky, of the same color and brightness with the sky. As I go home by Hayden's I smell the burning meadow. I love the scent. It is my pipe. I smoke the earth.



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 August 15, Tuesday: At 5:15AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went by boat to Nawshawtuct or Lee's Hill (Gleason F6). Beginning at 9AM, he and [Ellery Channing](#) walked all day, northwest into Acton and [Carlisle](#). In the evening, at Miss MacKay's, Thoreau looked through Mr. Russell's microscope at a section of pontederia leaf.

There appeared a review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), by "W," under the heading "New Publications" in the Albany, New York [Argus](#), 2:7:

The book purports to have been written chiefly while the author resided in the woods, and earned his living by the labor of his hands. It contains a record of a strange experience, in connection with the many bright thoughts on various subjects that were suggested by it. It is an intensely entertaining production.

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)

A review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) appeared under the heading "New Publications, &c" in the [Massachusetts Life Boat: Devoted to Temperance, Morals, Education, Business and General Information](#), 2:6:

The author is certainly a great genius, and though something of a hermit, is making his mark in the world.... While we admire many passages in the book, and not a few of the author's thoughts, we cannot subscribe to all his sentiments. [Long Quotation from the final chapter of the book]

Meanwhile Elizabeth Rogers Mason Cabot,¹¹ a Boston debutante who ordinarily lived at 63 Mount Vernon Street in Boston but who was vacationing at the Cabots' summer home in New Hampshire, was writing

11. Any relation to the Nathaniel Peabody Rogers of Concord, New Hampshire who put out the [Herald of Freedom](#) prior to his death in 1846, and about whom [Thoreau](#) wrote in the last issue of [THE DIAL](#)? To Thoreau's friend James Elliot Cabot who had written on the philosophy of the Hindoos?



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in her diary:



I have finished this morning Thoreau's CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS; it has given me a little tidbit of reading every day for a long time, and is far from exhausted yet, for I am eager to go back and examine some of the truths more thoroughly. It is a life-giving book and gives a picture of life from a point of view entirely unaffected by the artificial world created by man. He is a man without money, not poor, because able to get his daily bread with small toil, and desiring nothing more, untrammelled entirely (as no man with very warm affections I think could be) by the opinions or feelings of others, afraid of nothing, intimate with nature as a bosom friend, learned in all the wisdom of the world handed down in books, ignoring ambition, position, aimless as far as concerns this world, and as unbiased as I can imagine possible. Added to these advantages are a pure large nature, vigorous intellect, and healthy life moral and physical. He is all-convincing at the time, and ought to be, for he is merely putting in practice, the principles which all daily preach, but none entirely make facts. Yet when we would follow him, our old habits of feeling rush back on us, making his purer practice a sort of dream, from which we awake, sorry that it is gone, and almost doubting still which is the unreality, the world we have left, or the world we awake to. I believe solemnly and sincerely that the spiritual life should be first, material last, and needs a very small corner, and yet we place it practically first, because other people do. I know no better reason. -FROM MORE THAN COMMON POWERS OF PERCEPTION: THE DIARY OF ELIZABETH ROGERS MASON CABOT edited by P.A.M. Taylor (Boston MA: Beacon Press, 1991).



Aug. 15. Tuesday. 5.15 A.M. — To Hill by boat.

[Transcript]

By 5.30 the fog has withdrawn from the channel here and stands southward over the "Texas Plain, forty or fifty feet high.

Some birds, after they have ceased to sing by day, continue to sing faintly in the morning now as in spring. I hear now a warbling vireo, a robin (half strain), a golden robin whistles, bluebirds warble, pigeon woodpecker; not to mention the tapping of a woodpecker and the notes of birds which are heard through the day, as wood peawai, song sparrow, cuckoo, etc. On the top of the Hill see the goldfinch eating the seeds (?) of the Canada thistle. I rarely approach a bed of them or other thistles nowadays but I hear the cool twitter of the goldfinch about it. I hear a red squirrel's reproof, too, as in spring, from the hickories. Now, just after sunrise, I see the western steeples with great distinctness, -tall white lines. The fog eastward over the Great Meadows appears indefinitely far, as well as boundless. Perhaps I refer it to, too great a distance. It is interesting when the fluvial trees begin to be seen through it and the sun is shining above it. By 6 o'clock it has risen up too much to be interesting.

The button-bush is now nearly altogether out of bloom, so that it is too late to see the river's brink in its perfection. It must be seen between the blooming of the mikania and the going out of bloom of the button-bush, before you feel this sense of lateness in the year, before the meadows are shorn and the grass of hills and pastures is thus withered and russet.

9A.M. — Walk all day with W.E.C., northwest into Acton and Carlisle.

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A dog-day, comfortably cloudy and cool as well as still. The river meadows, where no mowing, have a yellowish and autumnal look, especially the wool-grass. I see large flocks of bobolinks on the Union Turnpike. Are the darker ones with some yellowish (?) on side heads young red-wings or male bobolinks changing? Forged the Assabet at the bathing-place. Saw carrion-flower berries just-begun to turn; say in a day or two. Panicked cornel berries on College Road. Many of the trees in Barrett's orchard on Annursnack touch the ground all around like a dish cover, weighed down with fruit, and the branches are no thicker over head than around. Is not this the best form for an apple tree, — a hollow hemisphere nearly resting on the earth, the branches equally dispersed over the superficies, and light and air equally admitted?



Hills and pastures are now dry and slippery. They seem as completely russet as in winter. I associate the mist of this dog-day with the burning of meadows. Crossed from top of Annursnack to top of Strawberry Hill, past a pigeon-bed. Measured the great chestnut. At about seven feet from ground, the smallest place I could find, it is 14 3/4 feet in circumference; at six feet from ground, 15 1/12 feet in circumference; at five feet, 15 4/12; at one foot from ground not including some bulgings, 22 feet in circumference. It branches first at about nine feet from ground. The top has some dead limbs and is not large in proportion to trunk. There are great furrows in the bark. *Desmodium Marylandicum* on Strawberry Hill by wall, some days out. We took our dinner on the north side of the wall on top of the Hill. The dog-clay haze conceals the distant hills and mountains, but some new and nearer elms, etc., stand out with new distinctness against it. It is remarkable; how far and widely the smoke of a meadow burning is visible, and how hard to locate. That in the meadow near Joe Merriam's, [^It is the Brooks meadow on fire. Vide Aug. 23] half a dozen miles off, which has lasted some days, appears to possess the whole east horizon, as if any man who lived two or three miles east of this must smell it and know all about [it], but most who live within a mile of it may not have noticed it. It impresses me as if all who dwelt in the eastern horizon must know of it and be interested in it, — as if it were a sort of public affair and of moment to a whole town, — yet hardly the next neighbors observe it, and the other day, when I passed within half a mile of it, it did not make nearly so great a show as from this very distant eminence. The white smoke is now seen slanting upward across half a township and gradually mingled and confounded with the haze of the day, so that it may even seem to have produced the latter. West, by Nagog, is a dense dark, almost black smoke, and another less dark in the south. the owner of the meadow little thinks how. It is the Brooks meadow on fire. far the smoke of his burning is seen by the inhabitants of the country and by travellers, filling their horizon and giving a character to their day, shutting out much sky to those who dwell half a dozen miles away. So far a man's deformities are seen by and affect his fellows. They help to blot out the sky to those [who] dwell far away.

Looking from this Strawberry Hill to the long range behind William Brown's, northeast by east, I see that it and other hills are marked finely by many parallel lines, apparently the edges of so many terraces, arranging the crops and trees in dark lines, as if they were the traces of so many lake-shores. Methinks this is an almost universal phenomenon. When farthest inland we are surrounded by countless shores or beaches, terrace above terrace. It is the parallelism of green trees, bushes, and crops which betrays them at a distance. The locomotive whistle, far southwest, sounds like a bell. *Lycopodium dendroideum* pollen, apparently some days.

From this hill we steered northeast toward the east point of a wood in the direction of Hutchinson's, perhaps two miles off. Before starting on this walk I had studied the map to discover a new walk, and decided to go through a large wooded tract west and northwest of the Paul Dudley house, where there was no road, there at last to strike east across the head of Spencer Brook Meadow, perhaps to the old Carlisle road. A mile and a half northeast of Strawberry Hill, two or three large and very healthy and perfect sassafras trees (three large at least), very densely clothed with dark-green lemon (?) or orange (?) tree shaped leaves, singularly healthy. This half a mile or so west of the Dudley house. Comparatively few of the leaves were of the common form, i.e. three-lobed, but rather simple. There was much mountain sumach close by, turning scarlet, and sweet-ferns also browning and yellowing. Keeping on through a somewhat swampy upland, we fell into a path, which Channing preferring, though it led us through woods widely out of our course westward, I soon corrected it, and, descending through swampy land, at length saw through the trees and bushes into a small meadow completely surrounded by woods, in which was a man haying only eight or ten rods off. We felt very much like Indians stealing upon an early settler, and naturally inclined to one side to go round the meadow through the high blueberry bushes. The high blueberries were from time to time very abundant, but have acquired a dead and flat taste, lost their raciness. Soon after, we followed an indistinct path through a dense birch wood, leading quite out of our course, i.e. westward. We were covered from head to foot with green lice from the birches, especially conspicuous on dark clothes, but going through other woods soon brushed them off again.

At length, when I endeavored to correct my course by compass, it pointed so that I lost my faith in it, and we continued to go out of our way, till we came out on a side-hill immediately overlooking a stream and mill and several houses and a small mill-pond undoubtedly on the Nashoba in the northern part of Acton, on the road to

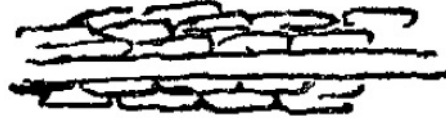
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Chelmsford. We were completely lost, and saw not one familiar object. At length saw steeples which we thought Westford, but the monument proved it Acton. Took their bearings, calculated a new course, and pursued it at first east-northeast, then east, and finally southeast, along rocky hillsides covered with weeds, where the fall seemed further advanced than in Concord, with more autumnal colors, through dense oak woods and scrub oak, across a road or two, over some pastures, through a swamp or two, where the cinnamon fern was as high as our heads and the dogwood, now fruiting, was avoided by C. After travelling about five miles, for the most part in woods, without knowing where we were, we came out on a hill from which we saw, far to the south, the open valley at head of Spencer Brook.

In the meanwhile we came upon another pigeon-bed, where the pigeons were being baited, a little corn, etc., being spread on the ground, and, [as?] at the first, the bower was already erected. What I call *Solidago arguta* is exceedingly handsome, a pyramidal head with rather horizontal branchlets with a convex surface of erect flowers ; quite a splendid flower it would be in a garden. *Aster miser*. In Carlisle, on high land, that kind of *viburnum* with smaller, darker (with rusty patches), and less oblong berries and more obtuse leaves (at both ends),-a large spreading bush eight or nine feet high at least. Russell said it was the *V. prunifolium*, but the leaves are not sharply serrate but nearly entire, only crenate at most, commonly short and broad, the peduncle not half an inch long.

At evening, Mr. Russell showed his microscope at Miss Mackay's. Looked at a section of *pontederia* leaf.



Saw what answered to the woody fibre and the cells on each side, also the starch in potato, lime in rhubarb, fern seeds (so called), and lichen ditto, of which last there were fifty or sixty in one little wart this size.



The power of this glass was nine hundred diameters. All the objects were transparent and had a liquid look, crystalline, and reminded me of the moon seen through a telescope. They suggested the significance or insignificance of size, and that the moon itself is a microscopic object to us, so little it concerns us.

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➡ August 16, Wednesday: French forces took the Russian garrison at Bomarsund (Sund) in the Åland (Ahvenanmaa) Islands. Aboard the French fleet was young volontaire aspirant Louis Berlioz, son of the composer.

[William Cooper Nell](#) visited with Charlotte L. Forten, who was staying with the Charles Lenox Remond family.



In [Henry Thoreau](#)'s journal: "R. showed me the [ginseng](#) in my collection."

At 8 AM [Thoreau](#) and John Russell went to climbing fern, and in the afternoon they went by boat to Fair Haven Bay (Gleason J7). "Extracts from [WALDEN](#)" were printed on the first page of the Worcester, Massachusetts [Palladium](#), column 4:

From Thoreau's new work, just published by Ticknor & Fields, we take the following extracts:
WALDEN ICE.
[Reprints "The Pond in Winter," pages 296.31-298.23.]
EMERSON & ALCOTT AS VISITORS TO THOREAU'S HUT.
[Reprints "Former Inhabitants; and Winter Visitors," pages 267.35-270.11.]

And the review itself, on page 3 of the [Palladium](#):

INSERT REVIEW HERE, AS OCR-SCANNED FROM PS1638 EMERSON AND THOREAU: THE CONTEMPORARY REVIEWS, EDITED BY JOEL MYERSON, NEW YORK: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1992, PAGE 376.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



Aug. 16. 8 A.M. — To climbing fern with John Russell. He says that my winkle fungus is a *Boletus* of Linn[ae]us, *Polyporus* of others, *Auricularia* (car-like) now.

[Transcript]

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My beautiful purple grass, now in flower, the *Poa hirsuta*.

Peppermint has just begun. Walked along the Dennis shore. That sedge by edge of river with three-ranked linear leaves is *Dulichium spathaceum*. My wool-grass is a trichophorum. Says that in Chelmsford they rub the pigeon bait with the *Solidago odora* to attract pigeons. That fuzzy-topped sedge with slender spikes in straw-colored ovate heads, arranged umbel-like, he thought *Scirpus* (probably *Cyperus*) *strigosus*.



Aster puniceus, a day or two. That saw-like spiked grass which is an autumnal sight in the mown fields is *Paspalum ciliatifolium*. Choke-cherry leaves are now many reddened. *Scirpus capillaris*, turned yellow, only two or three inches high, now covers the sand on Lupine Hill. A bluet still. *Aster longifolius*, a day or two. A pear-formed puffball (*Lycoperdon*), in Yellow Thistle Meadow, now dry, buff-colored.



That concave, chocolate-colored one I have is a *Lycoperdon bovi* (something) — from being in pastures.

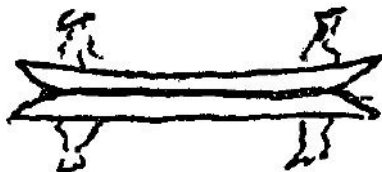


That potamogeton in Nut Meadow Brook at the watering-place beyond Jenny's is *P. Claytoni*, with many long, linear, pellucid immersed leaves half an inch wide and some floating. My stag-horn lichen is the [*Parmelia*] *Borreri*. The former grows on the ground and is more like a cladonia. *Aster l[oe]vis*, two or three days, if I have not mentioned it before. *Hypnum riparium* in the Harrington trough. *Viola pedata* again. Uva-ursi berries reddened, but R. says not ripe or soft till spring. Saw the variolaria on the white pines on Harrington Road, and opegrapha, like Arab characters. Showed me the Prussian eagle in the stem of the brake. *Aster corymbosus* (?), some time by this road. (Russell thought it *cordifolius*, but the flowers are white and petioles not winged.) In the T. Wheeler pasture, showed me the *Cladonia rangiferina* (the common white one), the *C. sylvestris* (the green one with it), also the *furcata*, and spoke of the *alpina* as common in woods.

This day and yesterday, and when I was last on the river, the wind rose in the middle of the day, blowing hardest at noon, — quite hard, — but went down toward night. Pointed out an *Erigeron strigosus* without rays. He had read of it as a variety. Some had small rays, leaves narrower. Above Rogers house, on right.

P.M. — With Russell to Fair Haven by boat.

That coarse, somewhat *B. Beckii*-looking weed, standing upright under water in the river, is hornwort (*Ceratophyllum echinatum*). That moss on the button-bushes is a fontinalis or else dichelyma. A coarser species is on the bridges. Cannot see the fruit now for some reason. On the rock at Bittern Cliff, the *Parmelia detonsa*. R. mistook a black pony in the water with a long mane behind some weeds for a heron. *Nuphar lutea* pads nearly all eaten, mere skeletons remaining. Saw where a partridge had dusted herself at a wood-chuck's hole. Methinks that for about three weeks past the light under sides of the upper leaves of maples, swamp oak, etc., etc., have been permanently conspicuous, while in June to middle of July they were observable only when there was more wind than usual. As if, owing to the dry weather and heat, those leaves were permanently held up, like those of the hardback, etc., — various weeds and shrubs on dry land, perhaps had risen in the night and had not vitality enough to fall again. Now, accordingly, I see the dark-green upper sides of the lower leaves alone, and various agreeable shades of green thence upward. Now is the season to observe these various shades, especially when the sun is low in the West. At the steam-mill sand-bank was the distinct shadow of our shadows, — first on the water, then the double one on the bank bottom to bottom, one being upside down, — three in all, — one on water, two on land or bushes.





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R. showed me the ginseng in my collection. Thinks that one of my Maine asters is a northern form of the *cordifolius*.

No haymakers in meadows now.

Prince's-feathers, how long? Woodcock in garden. *Polygonum dumetorum* at Bittern Cliff.



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August 17, Thursday: Haute-volée-Polka op.155 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in the Volksgarten, Vienna.

Sale at public auction by Selover & Sinton of water lot property in the city of San Francisco.

CALIFORNIA

A review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) appeared on page 2, column 3 of Worcester's [Daily Transcript](#):

This is the result of the Authors' [sic] experience while living alone in the woods, and during a Sojourn of two years and two months on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Mass. His object in going there was, in his own words, "not to live cheaply nor dearly; but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles; to be at once Pilot, captain and owner; to be hindered from accomplishing which for want of a little energy and business talent, appeared not so sad as foolish." Though we cannot readily yield to many of the Author's opinions, yet we will not with[h]old from him our share of the praise which the work merits. It is neatly issued by Ticknor & Co.

Another review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) has been turned up, in the Burlington, Vermont [Sentinel](#), page 3, column 1, quite recently, by Richard E. Winslow III (and the total number of known reviews during [Henry Thoreau](#)'s lifetime is now up to 69):

This is altogether a very remarkable book, and will attract much attention. It is devoted to a detailed account of the most interesting features of the life of a hermit, "in the woods," and is at once scholarly, philosophical, agricultural, statistical, satirical and poetical. The writers themes are as various and unique as could be desired - such as "Economy," "Where I lived and what I lived for," "Reading," "Sounds," "Solitude," "Visitors," "The Bean-field," "Higher Laws," "Brute Neighbors," "House-Warming," "Winter Animals," &c., &c. It is something to say of "Walden" in these days of abject and drivelling imitations, that the work is thoroughly original both in its faults and excellencies, and will be found a very readable and spicy volume. It is neatly printed, -contains 356 pages, and is sold by SAML. B. NICHOLS.



TIMELINE OF WALDEN



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR AUGUST 17th]



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August 18, Friday: As a Mormon wagon train passed, a Brulé Dakota by the name of [High Forehead](#) had shot an arrow into the flank of one of the oxen. Reaching Fort Laramie on this day, the owner of this ox made report of this incident.

[The Liberator](#) published a letter submitted by [Daniel Foster](#) in Princeton, Massachusetts on August 8th in regard to a petition from an escaped slave, the Reverend Thomas H. Jones:

Dear Mr. Garrison – The Rev. Thomas H. Jones, a fugitive slave, has been laboring in this vicinity a little, of late. You know him, and do not, therefore, require any recommendation. He is soliciting aid for the redemption of his son. An enemy has published a notice in the Worcester Transcript, cautioning people not to aid Mr. Jones, and saying that he is the owner of a home, and that his son is free. This is a malicious falsehood. I am intimately acquainted with Mr. Jones, and testify to his integrity, to his need of aid, to his ability as a speaker, and to the fact that his son, for whose redemption he is toiling, is still in bonds, and hopelessly bound, unless anti-slavery friends respond to the appeal of a bereaved and sorrowing father. Will you do him the kindness to insert this correction in your paper?

and oblige

Yours, fraternally, DANIEL FOSTER,
East Princeton, August 8, 1854

New-York [Tribune](#) reporter [James Redpath](#), assigned to cull for republication articles from Southern newspapers that usefully described the “Facts of Slavery,” came upon [the following sensational material](#):

The Deacon had an old slave that had been in the habit of running away, but had always been caught, until finally about two weeks ago he made another escape. No sooner was the old thing missing than cousin H borrowed neighbor P’s hounds and started in search of him. He had not proceeded far in the woods before he found the old man perched upon a limb of a large tree. He ordered him several times to come down, but the old man, stubborn as an ass, still maintained his position. The deacon then becoming excited, fired his gun at him. The ball passed through his ankle and mangled it in such a manner that it mortified and he died.



In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked over the Great Meadows (Gleason D8).



Aug. 18. Warbling vireo in morning, — one.

Russell thought it was the *Salix discolor* or else *eriocephala* which I saw, not *sericea*, which is not common; also that my cone-bearing one was *S. humilis*. Barratt the best acquainted with them. That the *Rubus triflorus* was badly described. That we had three gooseberries, -the common smooth, the prickly fruited, and the prickly branched. Said we had two strawberries, the *Virginiana* and the *vesca*, — the last not uncommon. That the *Thalictrum dioicum* was only about a foot high. That the seed of flowering fern was heavy, and hence it fell in circles and so grew. That the *Crataegus Crus-Galli* was a variety of the white thorn. Best time for seaside flowers middle of July, for White Mountains 4th of July. Robbins of Uxbridge best acquainted now with the potamogetons. Tuckerman thought it would be impossible to arrange them at present, European specimens being inaccessible or fragmentary. That the smaller sparganium was my taller one of the river and should rather be called *minor*, being only narrower. That we had but one urtica hereabouts. Of the rose-colored water-lily in a pond-hole in Barnstable, into which Parker stripped and went; and the farmer dug it all up and sold it. The

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Spanish moss is a lily, — *Tillandsia*, — so named by Linnæus because it dislikes moisture as much as his friend Tillands the sea. All these spots on my collection of leaves-crimson, etc. — are fungi. The transparent globes on the hornwort are an alga, *Nostoe*.

Almost impossible to find fishworms now it is so dry. I cannot find damp earth anywhere but where there is water on the surface or near.

P.M. — Over Great Meadows.

A great drought now for several weeks. The haymakers have been remarkably uninterrupted this year by rain. Corn and potatoes are nearly spoiled. Our melons suffer the more because there was no drought in June and they ran to vine, which now they cannot support. Hence there is little fruit formed, and that small and dying ripe. Almost everywhere, if you dig into the earth, you find it all dusty. Even wild 1)lack cherries and choke-cherries are drying before fairly ripe, all shriveled. Many are digging potatoes half grown. Trees and shrubs recently set out, and many old ones, are dying. A good time to visit swamps and meadows. I find no flowers yet on the amphicarpæa.

In a ditch behind Peter's a small *Cistudo Blandingii* swimming off rapidly. Its shell is four and a quarter inches long by three and a quarter wide in rear, three wide in front; and its depth is nearly two inches, with a slight dorsal ridge, which the large one has not. I distinguished it from the *Emys guttata* at first glance by its back being sculptured concentrically about the rear side, leaving a smooth space within, a half-inch in diameter. My large one is almost entirely smooth on back, being sculptured only an eighth of an inch wide on circumference of each scale. It has small, rather indistinct yellow spots, somewhat regularly arranged in the middle of each scale. Head peppered with dull-yellow spots above; head, legs, and tail black above; head light-yellow beneath, and also legs about roots, passing into a dirty white. It is a very restless and active turtle, not once inclosing itself or using its valve at all, at once walking off when put down, keeping its head, legs, and tail out, continually running out its neck to its full extent, and often bending it backward over the shell. Its neck with the loose skin about it has a squarish form. Readily turns itself over with its head when on its back. Upper shell black; sternum light-brown, with a large black blotch on the outside after part of each scale and about half its area; five claws on fore feet, four and a rudiment or concealed one on hind feet. In this small one, the sculptured part occupies nearly the whole scale and is from a half to three quarters of an inch wide, while in the large one it is only an eighth of an inch wide, a mere border. Apparently as it grows the smooth rear is extended or shoves forward and a portion of the sculptured part scales off.

In this ditch an interesting green jelly, conferva-like at a little distance, perhaps a hind of frog-spawn, but without any eyes in it, of various forms, floating; often a sort of thick ring made of a hollow cylinder. Was that a proserpinaea in that ditch with all but two or three small leaves at top, pectinate? Saw there the large semipellucid, raved, heart-shaped radical leaves of a heart-leaf, green and purplish, sometimes all purplish, more delicate than the waved radical leaves of yellow lilies, etc., — a dimple of leaves. We can walk across the Great Meadows now in any direction. They are quite dry. Even the pitcher-plant leaves are empty. [The meadows] are covered with spatular sundew. Saw a snipe. There are fifteen or twenty haymakers here yet, but almost done. They and their loads loom at a distance. Men in their white shirts look taller and larger than near at hand.

I have just been through the process of killing the cistudo for the sake of science; but I cannot excuse myself for this murder, and see that such actions are inconsistent with the poetic perception, however they may serve science, and will affect the quality of my observations. I pray that I may walk more innocently and serenely through nature. No reasoning whatever reconciles me to this act. It affects my day injuriously. I have lost some self-respect. I have a murderer's experience in a degree.

The bobolinks alight on the wool-grass. Do they eat its seeds? The zizania on the north side of the river near the Holt, or meadow watering-place, is very conspicuous and abundant. Surprised to find the *Ludwigia spærocarpa* apparently some time out (say August 1st), in a wet place about twenty rods off the bars to the path that leads down from near Pedrick's; two to two and a half feet high, with a thick but unbroken bark about the base much like the decodon; no petals; yellowish seed-vessels. I think I saw a mockingbird on a black cherry near Pedrick's. Size of and like a catbird; bluish-black side-head, a white spot on closed wings, lighter breast and beneath; but he flew before I had fairly adjusted my glass. There were brown thrashers with it making their clicking note. The leaves of the paniced cornel are particularly curled by the heat and drought, showing their lighter under sides. Low blackberry vines generally are reddening and already give an October aspect to some dry fields where the early potentilla grows, as that plain of Pedrick's.

At Beck Stow's on new Bedford road, what I had thought a utricularia appears to be *Myriophyllum ambiguum*. One is floating, long and finely capillary leaves, with very few emersed and pectinate; another variety is on the mud, short, with linear or pectinate leaves. Perhaps they are the varieties *natans* and *limosum*. The last out some days, the first perhaps hardly yet. The green bittern there, leaving its tracks on the mud. The *Solidago nemoralis* is now abundantly out on the Great Fields.



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[The “found poet” William M. White’s version of a portion of this journal entry is:]

*I have just been through the process of killing
The cistudo
For the sake of science;
But I cannot excuse myself for this murder,
And see that such actions are inconsistent
With the poetic perception,
However they may serve science,
And will affect the quality of my observations.*

*I pray that I may walk more innocently
And serenely through nature.
No reasoning whatever reconciles me to this act.
It affects my day injuriously.
I have lost some self-respect.
I have a murderer’s experience in a degree.*



August 19, Saturday: On this day in the wild and wooly west, [Lieutenant John Lawrence Grattan](#) having been dispatched from Fort Laramie to take High Forehead under arrest for having shot an arrow into the flank of a Mormon ox, when High Forehead refused to surrender himself the soldiers were ordered to fire indiscriminately into the native American village and headman Conquering Bear was fatally wounded. The Brulé Dakota warriors, assisted by Oglala Dakota warriors, overwhelmed this troop detachment. Soon a detachment under [General William Selby Harney](#) would be sent out to “punish” the Brulé group.

HDT

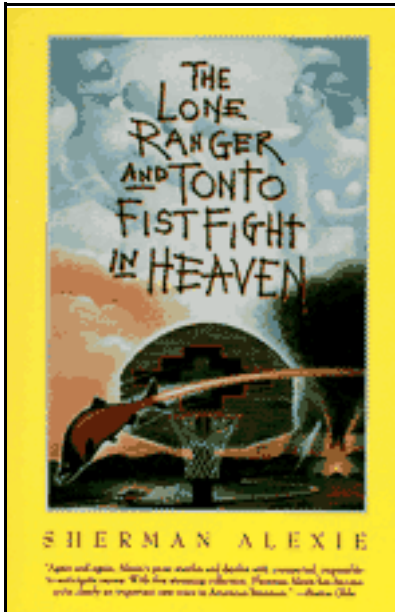
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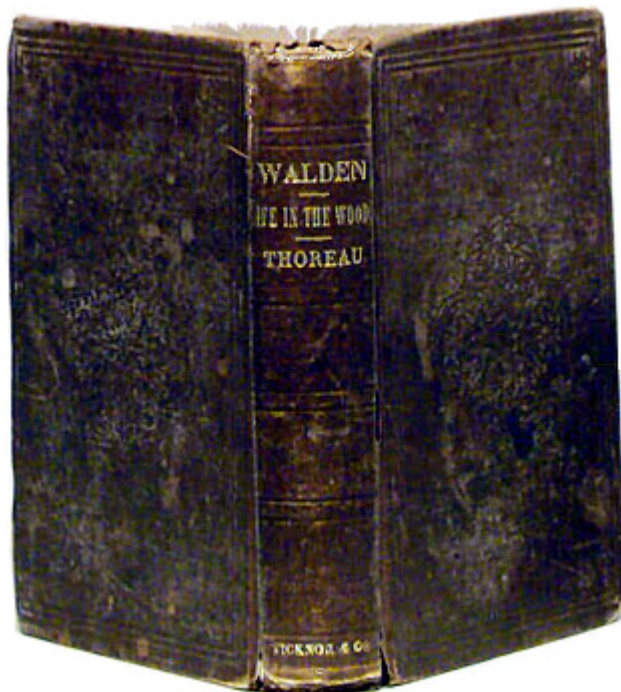
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Escalation, sound at all familiar?

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In [Concord](#) during the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Eben J. Loomis](#) walked the Fitchburg Railroad tracks to Flint's, or Sandy, Pond (Gleason J10).



There was a review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading “New Publications” on the 1st



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page of the Cincinnati, Ohio (Daily?) Gazette, column 8:

Mr. Thoreau is an eccentric young man, who chose to build himself a house in the woods, with his own hands, and dwell there two years and two months, during which period the greater portion of the contents of this volume were written. He is an utterly fearless thinker and writer, of which his book will give sufficient evidence. To those who are not familiar with his writings, the following title of some of the chapters of his book will be an acceptable hint of what they may expect to find in it: Sounds, Solitude, The Bean Field, The Village, The Ponds, Higher Laws, Brute Neighbors, Winter Animals, The Pond in Winter, and Spring.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

There was also a review of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS in the Boston Saturday Evening Gazette, 2:6.

A quaintly-philosophic work, evidently the production of an acute, as well as a peculiar intellect. It is a work which, we judge, would be to some extent "caviar to the general," yet when in a meditative mood, one cannot find a cheerier closet companion. Philosophy, politics, economy, mathematics, mechanics, with a dash of romance, thrown together very neatly by a polished verbalist, go to make up this very agreeable book.

There was also a review of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS under the heading "Recent Publications" in Philadelphia's Cummings' Evening Bulletin, 2:2.

In the multiplied and confused recollection of the hundreds of books that have passed under our notice within a year or two, there is a distinct and pleasant impression of a volume called "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," as a quaint, but original record of rural experiences. "Walden" is by the same hand, and we recognize in it the same refined appreciation of nature and her beauties, and the same benevolent and human way of treating external and moral topics. It is, in fact, the history of a sort of hermit life passed by the author, in a house built by his own hands on the shore of Walden Pond, in the town of Concord, Massachusetts. It was written, indeed, in that house, and the narrative has all the vividness of true portraiture. If the author is eccentric, there is a great deal of good sense in his eccentricity, and he has certainly made a book which will be read with pleasure by all.

There was also a review of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS in the Portsmouth Journal of Literature and



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Politics, 2:3.

The quaint writer of this volume resided for more than two years alone in the woods, in a house of his own building, a mile from any neighbor, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Mass. It has been said that it takes all sorts of people to make up a world. The writer of this book, full of quaint notions, quaint sayings, and withal a philosopher and a wit, is one of the rare ones which, like the sea-serpent, is only now and then visible—never two of them seen at the same time. The style is attractive, and although there may be some ideas which we do not readily adopt, there is not a page you wish to omit in the perusal.

There was also a review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) in the Portland, Maine Transcript, page 151.

Reprinted in **CRITICAL ESSAYS ON HENRY DAVID THOREAU'S WALDEN**, ed. Joel Myerson (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1988), page 21.

There was also a review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading "New Books" in the Daily Ohio State Journal, page 3, column 2.

Those who have read "A Week on the Concord and Merrimac[k] Rivers," by the same author, will thank him for the opportunity of enjoying a second call from the same author. We shall recur to the volume again. [No subsequent notice located.]

Another review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) has been turned up in Boston's New England Farmer, page 2, column 3, quite recently, by Richard E. Winslow III, and the total number of known reviews during



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[Thoreau](#)'s lifetime is now up to 69:



WALDEN.

Messrs. Ticknor & Fields, of this city, have recently issued a highly attractive and original volume, entitled, "Walden; or Life in the Woods," by Henry D. Thoreau, author of "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers." Mr. Thoreau, who is a philosopher of the Emerson school, give in this volume some items of experience and lessons of wisdom which he gathered during a residence of over two years alone in the woods, in a cabin built with his own hands, on the borders of Walden Pond, in Concord, Mass. He thus explains his object, in choosing this solitary abode: -

Quotes WALDEN 90:32-91:11

An idea may be formed of the scope of the book, from the title of the chapters, which are as follows: -

Lists all 18 chapters of the book

Mr. Thoreau handles his subjects in his own erratic way, weaving into his pages many charming descriptions of nature, and shrewd and caustic criticisms of men; mingling some brave truths and noble thoughts with much that is extravagant and outre; and throwing around the whole the cold mists of a selfish philosophy, which mystifies the head and repels the sympathies of the reader. Still, the book is a fresh and entertaining one, and will be widely read and admired, as the production of a mind of gifted powers and curious mould.

In addition, on this day an extract from the "Sounds" chapter of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) was presented under the heading "Wood Sounds" in Dwight's Journal of Music, A Paper of Art and Literature, as shown on the following screens:

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WALDEN: Sometimes, on Sundays, I heard the bells, the Lincoln, Acton, Bedford, or Concord bell, when the wind was favorable, a faint, sweet, and, as it were, natural melody, worth importing into the wilderness. At a sufficient distance over the woods this sound acquires a certain vibratory hum, as if the pine needles in the horizon were the strings of a harp which it swept. All sound heard at the greatest possible distance produces one and the same effect, vibration of the universal lyre, just as the intervening atmosphere makes a distant ridge of earth interesting to our eyes by the azure tint it imparts to it. There came to me in this case a melody which the air had strained, and which had conversed with every leaf and needle of the wood, that portion of the sound which the elements had taken up and modulated and echoed from vale to vale. The echo is, to some extent, an original sound, and therein is the magic and charm of it. It is not merely a repetition of what was worth repeating in the bell, but partly the voice of the wood; the same trivial words and notes sung by a wood-nymph. At evening, the distant lowing of some cow in the horizon beyond the woods sounded sweet and melodious, and at first I would mistake it for the voices of certain minstrels by whom I was sometimes serenaded, who might be straying over hill and dale; but soon I was not unpleasantly disappointed when it was prolonged into the cheap and natural music of the cow. I do not mean to be satirical, but to express my appreciation of those youths' singing, when I state that I perceived clearly that it was akin to the music of the cow, and they were at length one articulation of Nature.

Regularly at half past seven, in one part of the summer, after the evening train had gone by, the whippoorwills chanted their vespers for half an hour, sitting on a stump by my door, or upon the ridge pole of the house. They would begin to sing almost with as much precision as a clock, within five minutes of a particular time, referred to the setting of the sun, every evening. I had a rare opportunity to become acquainted with their habits. Sometimes I heard four or five at once in different parts of the wood, by accident one a bar behind another, and so near me that I distinguished not only the cluck after each note, but often that singular buzzing sound like a fly in a spider's web, only proportionally louder. Sometimes one would circle round and round me in the woods a few feet distant as if tethered by a string, when probably it was near its eggs. They sang at intervals throughout the night, and were again as musical as ever just before and about dawn.

[PEOPLE OF
WALDEN](#)[BEN JONSON](#)[EURIPIDES](#)[AEOLIAN HARP](#)[WHIPPOORWILL](#)

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When other birds are still the screech owls take up the strain, like mourning women their ancient *u-lu-lu*. Their dismal scream is truly Ben Jonsonian. Wise midnight hags! It is no honest and blunt *tu-whit tu-who* of the poets, but, without jesting, a most solemn graveyard ditty, the mutual consolations of suicide lovers remembering the pangs and the delights of supernal love in the infernal groves. Yet I love to hear their wailing, their doleful responses, trilled along the wood-side, reminding me sometimes of music and singing birds; as if it were the dark and tearful side of music, the regrets and sighs that would fain be sung. They are the spirits, the low spirits and melancholy forebodings, of fallen souls that once in human shape night-walked the earth and did the deeds of darkness, no expiating their sins with their wailing hymns or threnodies in their scenery of their transgressions. They give me a new sense of variety and capacity of that nature which is our common dwelling. *Oh-o-o-o-o that I never had been bor-r-r-r-n!* sighs one on this side of the pond, and circles with the restlessness of despair to some new perch on the gray oaks. Then -that I never had been bor-r-r-r-n! echoes another on the farther side with tremulous sincerity, and -bor-r-r-r-n! comes faintly from far in the Lincoln woods.

I was also serenaded by a hooting owl. Near at hand you could fancy it the most melancholy sound in Nature, as if she meant by this to stereotype and make permanent in her choir the dying moans of a human being, -some poor weak relic of mortality who has left hope behind, and howls like an animal, yet with human sobs, on entering the dark valley, made more awful by a certain gurgling melodiousness,- I find myself beginning with the letters *gl* and I try to imitate it, -expressive of a mind which has reached the gelatinous mildewy stage in the mortification of all healthy and courageous thought. It reminded me of ghouls and idiots and insane howlings. But now one answers from far woods in a strain made really melodious by distance, -*Hoo hoo hoo, hoorer hoo*; and indeed for the most part it suggested only pleasing associations, whether heard by day or night, summer or winter.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

EURIPIDES

SHAKESPEARE

BEN JONSON

COLERIDGE



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PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

I rejoice that there are owls. Let them do the idiotic and maniacal hooting for men. It is a sound admirably suited to swamps and twilight woods which no day illustrates, suggesting a vast and undeveloped nature which men have not recognized. They represent the stark twilight and unsatisfied thoughts which all have. All day the sun has shone on the surface of some savage swamp, where the double spruce stands hung with usnea lichens, and small hawks circulate above, and the chickadee lisps amid the evergreens, and the partridge and rabbit skulk beneath; but now a more dismal and fitting day dawns, and a different race of creatures awakes to express the meaning of Nature there.

Late in the evening I heard the distant rumbling of wagons over bridges, - a sound heard farther than almost any other at night, - the baying of dogs, and sometimes again the lowing of some disconsolate cow in a distant barn-yard. In the mean while all the shore rang with the trump of bullfrogs, the sturdy spirits of ancient wine-bibbers and wassailers, still unrepentant, trying to sing a catch in their Stygian lake, - if the Walden nymphs will pardon the comparison, for though there are almost no weeds, there are frogs there, - who would fain keep up the hilarious rules of their old festal tables, though their voices have waxed hoarse and solemnly grave, mocking at mirth, and the wine has lost its flavor, and become only liquor to distend their paunches, and sweet intoxication never comes to drown the memory of the past, but mere saturation and waterloggedness and distention. The most aldermanic, with his chin upon a heart-leaf, which serves for a napkin to his drooling chaps, under this northern shore quaffs a deep draught of the once scorned water, and passes round the cup with the ejaculation *tr-r-r-oonk, tr-r-r-oonk, tr-r-r-oonk!* and straightway comes over the water from some distant cove the same password repeated, where the next in seniority and girth has gulped down to his mark; and when this observance has made the circuit of the shores, then ejaculates the master of ceremonies, with satisfaction, *tr-r-r-oonk!* and each in his turn repeats the same down to the least distended, leakiest, and flabbiest paunched, that there be no mistake; and then the bowl goes round again and again, until the sun disperses the morning mist, and only the patriarch is not under the pond, but vainly bellowing *troonk* from time to time, and pausing for a reply.

We may well ask ourselves what [Thoreau](#) had intended, by describing the nighttime hooting of the male Eastern screech owl as “Ben Jonsonian.” Since Emerson had a 6-volume set of THE WORKS OF [BEN JONSON](#) in his library, we can presume that our Henry would have made himself pretty familiar with these materials. About all I have been able to come up with to date as an explanation for this ascription (since I have never myself read or seen performed any of Jonson’s plays) is that some of these plays have down through the years been critiqued as suffering from “an inner poverty in the humanities of the heart.” I note that Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for instance, has commented that “there is no goodness of heart in any of the prominent characters.”



Aug. 19. P.M. — To Flint’s Pond via railroad with Mr. Loomis.
The hills and fields generally have such a russet, withered, — wintry look that the meadows by the railroad

[Transcript]

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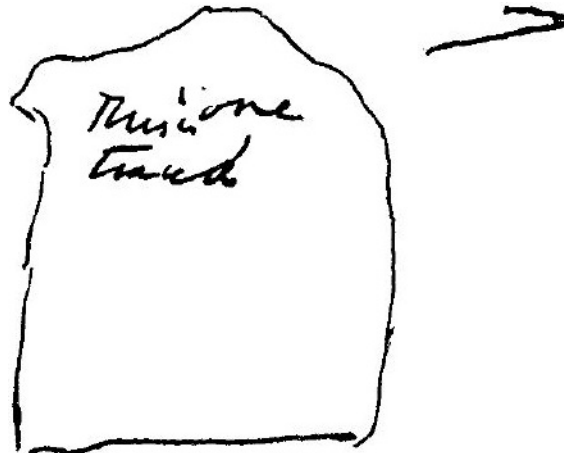
appear to have got an exceedingly fresh and tender green. The near meadow is very beautiful now, seen from the railroad through this dog-day haze, which softens to velvet its fresh green of so many various shades, blending them harmoniously, — darker and lighter patches of grass and the very light yellowish-green of the sensitive fern which the mowers have left. It has an indescribable beauty to my eye now, which it could not have in a clear day. The haze has the effect both of a wash or varnish and of a harmonizing tint. It destroys the idea of definite distance which distinctness suggests. It is as if you had painted a meadow of fresh grass springing up after the mower, — here a dark green, there lighter, and there again the yellowish onoclea, — then washed it over with some gum like a snap and tinted the paper of a fine misty blue. Thus is an effect of the dog-days. There is now a remarkable drought, some of whose phenomena I have referred to during several weeks past, q.v. Of large forest trees the red maples appear to suffer most. Their leaves are very generally wilted and curled, showing the under sides. Perhaps not only because they require so much moisture, but because they are more nearly ripe, and there is less life and vigor in them. The *Populus grandidentata* perhaps suffers equally, and its leaves hang down wilted; even many willows. Many white birches long since lost the greater part of their leaves, which cover the ground, sere and brown as in autumn. I see many small trees quite (lead,-birches, etc. I see amelanchier leaves scarlet, and black birch and willow yellowing. Various ferns are yellow and brown. When I see at the brick-sand cutting how thin a crust of soil and darker sand, only three or four feet thick, there is above the pure white sand which appears to compose the mass of the globe itself, and this apparently perfectly dry, I am surprised that the trees are not all withered, and wonder if such a soil could sustain a large growth. After digging through ordinary soil and yellow sand three or four feet, you come to a pure white sand very evenly, abruptly, and distinctly separated from the former, and this is laid open to the depth of ten feet, — I know not how much deeper it extends, — so that the forest grows as it would in a wholly artificial soil made on a rock, perchance. I presume you would not now anywhere on these plains find any moisture in that four-foot crust, and there is never any in the sand beneath. I am surprised to see how shallow and dry all the available earth is there, in which the forest grows.

So like tinder is everything now that we passed three places within a mile where the old sleepers heaped up by the track had just been set on fire by the engine, — in one place a large pile.

Plenty of *Polygonum arifolium* in the ditch in the second field. Some barberries are red, and some thorn berries. A linear-leaved epilobium in Baker's, i.e. Mackintosh's, Swamp.

Flint's Pond has fallen very much since I was here. The shore is so exposed that you can walk round, which I have not known possible for several years, and the outlet is dry. But Walden is not affected by the drought. There is such a haze we see not further than our Annurnsack, which is blue as a mountain. *Lobelia Dortmanna* is still abundantly in flower, and hedge-hyssop, etc.; some elethra. There is a good deal of wind, but I see where the waves have washed ten feet further within an hour or two over the south shore. The wet sand is covered with small bird-tracks, perhaps pectweets', and is marked all over with the galleries of some small creatures, — worms or shellfish perhaps, — of various sizes, — some quite large, — which have passed under the surface like a meadow mouse. Are not these food for the water-birds? I find growing densely there on the southeast shore and at the ball shore, where it appears to have been covered with water recently, the *Myriophyllum tenellum*, another species of that of which I found two varieties yesterday; perhaps since August 1st. A new plant.

The balls again, somewhat stale, left high and dry apparently a month ago. Some five inches in diameter. I find here and there, washed up, what I take to be the inner scales of a tortoise, and, in one place, where it fitted over the edge of the shell, thin and transparent like isinglass or parchment.



Plucked, about 4.30, one bunch of *Viburnum nudum* berries, all green, with very little pink tinge even. When I got home at 6.50, nine were turned blue, the next morning thirty. It seems that they do not always pass through

the deep-pink stage. They are quite sweet to eat, like raisins.
 I noticed these birds in this walk: —
 A lark [**Eastern Meadowlark** ■ *Sturnella magna*], which sang.
 White-bellied wallows [**Tree Swallow** ■ *Tachycineta bicolor*] on telegraph-wire.
 Barn swallows [**Barn Swallow** ■ *Hirundo rustica*], I think.
 Nighthawks [**Common Nighthawk** ■ *Chordeiles minor*], which squeaked.
 Heard a chewink [**Rufous-sided Towhee** ■ *Pipilo erythrophthalmus*] chewink.
 Saw cherry-birds [**Cedar Waxwing** *Bombycilla cedrorum*] flying lower over Heywood meadow like swallows, apparently for flies, and heard them, cricket-like.
 Kingbirds [**Eastern Kingbird** ■ *Tyrannus tyrannus*] quite common, twittering; one on telegraph-wire.
 Bluebirds [**Eastern Bluebird** ■ *Sialia sialis*], saw and heard.
 Chickadees [**Black-capped Chickadee** ■ *Parus atricapillus*], lispng note.
 Jays [**Blue Jay** ■ *Cyanocitta cristata*], scream.
 A woodcock [**American Woodcock** ■ *Scolopax minor*], in wood-path, goes off with rattling sound.
 Wilson's thrush [**Veery** ■ *Catharus fuscescens*]'s yorrick.
 Saw crows [**American Crow** ■ *Corvus brachyrhynchos*].
 Grouse [**Ruffed Grouse** ■ *Bonasa umbellus*].
 Song sparrows [**Song Sparrow** ■ *Melospiza melodia*], chirp.
 Grass-bird [**Vesper Sparrow** ■ *Pooecetes gramineus*] and perhaps another sparrow.
 Goldfinch [**American Goldfinch** ■ *Carduelis tristis*], heard.



August 20, Sunday: At 5:15 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Nawshawtuct or Lee's Hill (Gleason F6). In the afternoon he went by boat to Assabet Bath (Gleason 4/E5). Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) on the 1st page of the Philadelphia [Sunday Dispatch](#), column 6:



This is certainly a curious book, and a superior one, also. The author is an original thinker, and having built himself a house near Walden Pond, in Massachusetts, where he lived in solitude more than two years, he writes the present volume as a sort of answer to the thousand inquiries which have been made of him since his return to the social world, as to his way of life and his occupations. A tone of philosophy and sterling good sense runs through the book. The observations of Mr. Thoreau are scholarly, and they extend over a wide series of subjects connected with the hopes and usual desires of men. We recommend this work as one excellent in its class.



Aug. 20. Sunday. I hear no trilling of birds early.

[Transcript]

5.15 A.M. — To Hill.

I hear a gold robin, also faint song of common robin. Wood pewee (fresh); red-wing blackbird with fragmentary trill; bobolinks (the males apparently darker and by themselves); kingbirds [**Eastern Kingbird** ■ *Tyrannus tyrannus*]; nuthatch heard; yellow-throated vireo, heard and saw, on hickories (have I lately mistaken this for red-eye?); goldfinch [**American Goldfinch** ■ *Carduelis tristis*]; slate-colored hawk (with white rump and black wing-tips). The grape leaves even at this hour, after a dewy night, are still many of them curled upward, showing their light under-sides, and feel somewhat crisped by the drought. This, I think, is one with that permanent standing up of the leaves of many trees at this season. Prinos berries have begun to redden. When the red-eye [**Red-eyed Vireo** ■ *Vireo olivaceus*] ceases generally, then I think is a crisis, — the woodland quire is dissolved. That, if I remember, was about a fortnight ago. The concert is over. The pewees sit still oil their perch a long time, returning to the same twig after darting at an insect. The yellow-throated vireo is very restless, darting about. I hear a sound as of green pignuts falling from time to time, and see and hear the


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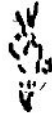
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chickaree thereabouts!!

P.M. — Up Assabet by boat to Bath.

A warm but breezy day, wind west by south. Water clear and sunny. I see much of my fresh-water sponge just above the Island, attached to the bottom, rocks, or branches under water. In form it reminds me of some *Cladonia* lichens, for it has many branches like a lichen, being a green, porous, spongy substance, with long, slender, pointed fingers or horns, pointed upward or outward, the thickest about half an inch in diameter, and emits a peculiar, penetrating, strong, rank scent like some chemicals. The whole mass perhaps eight or ten inches in diameter. When raised to the surface it slowly sinks again. The bottom of the south branch is in many places almost covered with the short cut leaves of the sium, — as I call it. On the sandy bottom in midstream (mussel shoals), a dozen rods above the Rock, I notice a small (?) green clam which must be the same with or similar to that which Perkins showed me in Newburyport. It has bright-green rays from the eye (?) on a light-green ground. Found in pure sand. Saw three. The rays show through to the inside. It is handsomer without than the common.

Some chickadees [**Black-capped Chickadee**  *Parus atricapillus*] on the pitch pines over water near the hemlocks look longer than usual, hanging back downward. See a strange bird about size of cedar-bird also on the pitch pine, perhaps greenish-olive above, whitish or ashy beneath, with a yellow vent and a dark line on side-head. [^Could it have been the female rose-breasted grosbeak?] Saw a wood pewee which had darted after an insect over the water in this position in the air:



It often utters a continuous pe-e-e.

The *Polygonum amphibium* at Assabet Rock, apparently several days, rising two or more feet above water. In many places I notice oaks stripped by caterpillars nowadays. Saw yesterday one of those great light-green grubs with spots. I see to-day many — more than a half-dozen — large wood tortoises on the bottom of the river, — some apparently eight to nine inches long in shell, some with their heads out. Are they particularly attracted to the water at this season? They lie quite still on the bottom.

Off Dodge's Brook, saw a fish lying on its side on the surface, with its head downward, slowly steering toward the shore with an undulating motion of the tail. Found it to be a large sucker which had apparently been struck by a kingfisher, fish hawk, or heron and got away. (The mill is not a-going to-day, Sunday.) It had been seized near the tail, which for three inches was completely flayed and much torn, lacerated, a part of the caudal fin being carried off. It had also received a severe thrust midway its body, which had furrowed its side and turned down a large strip of skin. It was breathing its last when I caught it. It was evidently too powerful for the bird which had struck it. I brought it home and weighed and measured it. It weighed two pounds and two ounces and was nineteen and a quarter inches long. Above, it was a sort of blue black or slate-color, darkest on the head, with blotches of the same extending down its sides, which were of a reddish golden, passing into white beneath. There were a few small red spots on the sides, just behind the gills. It had what I should call a gibbous head, but no horns; a line of fine mucous pores above and below eye; eyes at least one and a half inches apart; great corrugated ears on the lower lip; fins all dark like the back; nostrils double; opercula not golden; irides golden; scales on lateral line sixty-five (about), those near tail gone; with skin. Fin rays, as I counted: pectoral, seventeen; ventral, ten; anal, nine; dorsal, thirteen; caudal, some wanting. Looking down on it, it was very broad at base of head, tapering thence gradually to tail. It had a double bladder, nearly six inches long by oil (inch at widest part. I think it must have been a kingfisher, it was so much lacerated at the tail.

Now, at 4 P.M., hear a croaking frog [^Mole cricket.] near the water's edge, sounding like the faint quacking of a duck with more of the r in it, — something like crack grack grack, rapidly repeated. Though I knew that I must be within three feet of it, as I looked from the boat upon the shore, I could see nothing, but several times I interrupted him and caused him to jump. It is surprising how perfectly they are concealed by their color, even when croaking under one's eyes. It was *Rana palustris*, though I did not see it when it croaked. I after heard them further off, just before sunset, along the edge of the river, and saw that I had often mistaken their note for that of a cricket. So similar are these two earth-sounds. The cricket-like note of this little; frog in the meadow ushers in the evening.

A man tells me to-day that he once saw some black snake's eggs on the surface of a tussock in a meadow just hatching, some hatched. The old one immediately appeared and swallowed all the young. Assabet quite low. Those beds of dirty green ostrich-feather potamogetons are much exposed and dry at top.

I perceive quite a number of furrows of clams in the sand, all leading from the side toward the middle of the river, with the clams at that end. Can then be going down now? They have not moved opposite Hubbard Bath, where they are in middle as well as by shore. Their position in the furrows is on their sharp edges, with what I will call their two eyes forward.

We had a very little drizzling rain on the 4th, and I think that was the last drop.



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There is so thick a bluish haze these dog-days that single trees half a mile off, seen against it as a light-colored background, stand out distinctly a dark mass, — almost black, — as seen against the more distinct blue woods. So, also, when there is less haze, the distinct wooded ridges are revealed one behind another in the horizon.

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1854-1855****1854-1855**

August 21, Monday: [Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes](#) purchased a copy of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) which –on the evidence of his later writings– did him no good at all. One wonders whether he read it.



[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) was reviewed under the heading “Recent Publications” in the Newark, New

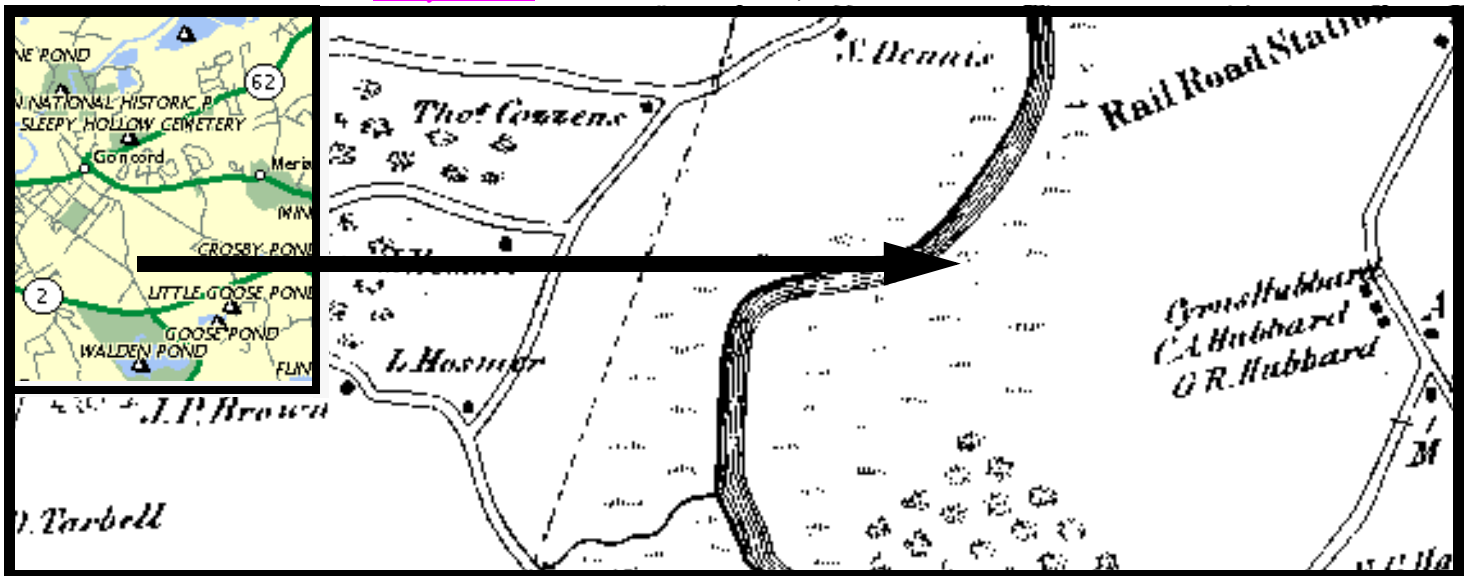
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Jersey Daily Advertiser, page 2, column 5:

We have read this volume while lying upon a sick bed, and never before better appreciated the convenience of the light octavo form, so generally adopted by his house for its publications. There were other works which more urgently demanded attention, but the convenience of this gave it the preference. Light as it was, even this was very fatiguing to hold—the others impossible. Thoreau is an original. Although of Harvard education, colleges have not formed him. He has lived according to his whims, and here is his justification. Perhaps there is nothing new in the idea, but his application and incidents are fresh. He lived alone for two years in the Walden woods near Concord, Mass., some miles from the village, away from all society, in a house (shanty) built by himself, raising his own food, principally preparing it himself, and at an actual cost of about \$100 per year, all told—and that earned by himself. This life is a novel one, but his account of it is full as curious. He writes almost as many thoughts as words. Indeed, his pages are more fully peppered with ideas than commas.—The reader cannot fail to be entertained with a book, which took two years of almost entire solitude to write, and will take as many more to think out. We would urge those tired with every day issues of the press, to seek for this, as a fresh bouquet from the wilds, fragrant and inspiring.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Hubbard's Bath,



and then to Conantum (Gleason J6).

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Aug. 21. P.M. — To Conantum via Hubbard Bath.

Leaves of small hypericums begin to be red. The river is warmer than I supposed it would become again, yet not so warm as in July. A small, wary dipper, — solitary, dark-colored, diving amid the pads. The same that lingered so late on the Assabet. Red choke-berries are dried black; ripe some time ago. In Hubbard's meadow, between the two woods, I cannot find a pitcher-plant with any water in it. Some of the Hubbard aster are still left, against the upper Hubbard Wood by the shore, which the mowers omitted. It looks like a variety of *A. Tradescanti*, [[^]Vide July 26, '56.] with longer, less rigid, and more lanceolate toothed cauline leaves, with fewer and more distant branchlets, and the whole plant more simple and wand-like. The bayonet rush has not generally blossomed this year. What has, long ago. Have noticed winged grasshoppers or locusts a week or more. Spikenard berries are now mahogany-color. Trillium berries bright-red. I see a woodchuck at a distance, cantering like a fat pig, ludicrously fat, first one end up, then the other. It runs with difficulty. The fever-bush berries are partly turned red, perhaps prematurely. Now, say, is hazel-nut time. I think that my *Aster corymbosus* — at least the early ones — are *A. cordifolius*, since Wood makes this to vary to white and to have a flexuous stem. I see robins in small flocks and pigeon woodpeckers with them. Now see in pastures tufts of grass which have been pulled up by cattle, withered, quite thickly strewn. *Spiranthes cernua*, a day or two. Brought home a great *Eupatorium purpureum* from Miles's Swamp (made species *fistulosum* by Barratt). It is ten and a half feet high and one inch in diameter; said to grow to twelve feet. The corymb, eighteen and a half inches wide by fifteen inches deep; the largest leaves, thirteen by three inches. The stem hollow throughout. This I found, to my surprise, when I undertook to make a flute of it, trusting it was closed at the leaves; but there is no more pith there than elsewhere. It would serve many purposes, as a water-pipe, etc. Probably the Indians knew it and used. They might have blowed arrows through a straight one. It would yield an available hollow tube six feet long. Did I see the yellow redpoll back? Head not conspicuously reddish.

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[Transcript]



August 22, Tuesday: Austria occupied the Danubian principalities following withdrawal of Russian troops.

WALDEN Print H

Review of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS in the Newport, Rhode Island Daily News, 2:2.

This is a singular book, and is the production of a peculiar mind. The author selected a spot on the banks of a Lake from which the book takes its name, situated about a mile from the village of Concord, Massachusetts, and there, in the woods, he erected a small house, where he resided alone for more than two years, subsisting upon plain food, working a portion of the days, and reading, writing and meditating the balance of the time. He appears to have been somewhat impressed with a kind of Utopian idea, and endeavored to test his theory on a small scale. He is a man of a good deal of genius, and the book is exceedingly well written. In many instances his reasoning is sound, and it would be better for the world if some of his notions could be carried into general practice. —Again we say the book is a very peculiar one; and well worth reading. It is issued in good style.
For sale by W.H. Peek and C.E. Hammett, Jr.



Aug. 22. The haze, accompanied by much wind, is so thick this forenoon that the sun is obscured as by a cloud. I see no rays of sunlight.

A bee much like a honey-bee cutting rounded pieces out of rose leaves.

P.M. — To Great Meadows on foot along bank into Bedford meadows; thence to Beck Stow's and Gowing's Swamp.

[Transcript]

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Walking may be a science, so far as the direction of a walk is concerned. I go again to the Great Meadows, to improve this remarkably dry season and walk where in ordinary times I cannot go. There is, no doubt, a particular season of the year when each place may be visited with most profit and pleasure, and it may be worth the while to consider what that season is in each case.

This was a prairial walk. I went along the river and meadows from the first, crossing the Red Bridge road to the Battle-Ground. In the Mill Brook, behind Jones's, was attracted by one of those handsome high-colored masses of fibrous pink roots of the willow in the water. It was three or four feet long, five or six inches wide, and four or five inches thick, — long parallel roots nearly as big as a crow-quill, with innumerable short fibres on all sides, all forming a dense mass of a singular bright-pink color. There are three or four haymakers still at work in the Great Meadows, though but very few acres are left uncut. Was surprised to hear a phoebe's pewet pewee and see it. I perceive a dead mole in the path halfway down the meadow.

At the lower end of these meadows, between the river and the firm land, are a number of shallow muddy pools or pond-holes, where the yellow lily and pontederia, *Lysimachia stricta*, *Ludwigia sphaerocarpa*, etc., etc., grow, where apparently the surface of the meadow was floated off some spring and so a permanent pond-hole was formed in which, even in this dry season, there is considerable water left. The great roots of the yellow lily, laid bare by the floating off of the surface crust last spring, two and a half or three inches in diameter and a yard or more of visible length, look like great serpents or hydras exposed in their winter quarters. There lie now little heaps or collections of the singularly formed seed-vessels of the pontederia, as they have fallen on the mud, directly under the nodding but bare spikes.

In these shallow muddy pools, but a few inches deep and few feet in diameter, I was surprised to observe the undulations produced by pretty large fishes endeavoring to conceal themselves. In one little muddy basin where there was hardly a quart of water, caught half a dozen little breams and pickerel, only an inch long, as perfectly distinct as full grown, and in another place, where there was little else than mud left, breams two or three inches long still alive. In many dry hollows were dozens of small breams, pickerel, and pouts, quite dead and dry. Hundreds, if not thousands, of fishes had here perished on account of the drought.

Saw a blue heron [**Great Blue Heron**  *Ardea herodias*] — apparently a young bird, of a brownish blue — fly up from one of these pools, and a stake-driver from another, and also saw their great tracks on the mud, and the feathers they had shed, — some of the long, narrow white neck-feathers of the heron. The tracks of the heron were about six inches long. Here was a rare chance for the herons to transfix the imprisoned fish. It is a wonder that any escaped. I was surprised that any dead were left on the mud, but I judge from what the book says that they do not touch dead fish. To these remote shallow and muddy pools, usually surrounded by reeds and sedge, far amid the wet meadows, — to these, then, the blue heron resorts for its food. Here, too, is an abundance of the yellow lily on whose seeds they are said to feed. There, too, are the paths of muskrats.

In most of the small hollows formed by the crust being carried off in the spring, the proserpinaca grows abundantly. There are now hopping all over this meadow small *Rana palustris*, and also some more beautifully spotted *halecina* or shad frogs. There is a pretty strong wind from the north-northwest. The haze is so thick that we can hardly see more than a mile. The low blue haze around the distant edge of the meadow looks even like a low fog, i.e. at a sufficient distance. I find at length a pitcher-plant with a spoonful of water in it. It must be last night's dew. It is wonderful that in all this drought it has not evaporated. Arum berries ripe. High blueberries pretty thick, but now much wilted and shrivelled.

Thus the drought serves the herons, etc., confining their prey within narrower limits, and doubtless they are well acquainted with suitable retired pools far in the marshes to go a-fishing in. I see in Pedrick's bushy and weedy meadow dense fields of *Salidago arguta*, *stricta* or *puberula* (?), and *altissima*, etc., now in its prime. Corn-stalks begin to be cut and stacked, it is so dry.

I hear that Brooks's meadow (it is what I called the burning by Joe Merriam's) is on fire and cannot be put out. Are not most ardeas (herons and bitterns) seen at this season?



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August 23, Wednesday: Due to Ariana Smith Walker's consumption, the waiting period was cut a bit shorter than the traditional year and she and [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) had their wedding celebration.

British ships destroyed Kola on the Russian Arctic coast.

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading "New Publications" in the Springfield Daily Republican, 2:3.

This is a journal and account of an ascetic life, passed in the woods near Concord, Mass. It opens with a dissertation on the economy of life and wants of human nature, which is radical and austere.

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading "Literary Record" in the Philadelphia Dollar Magazine, 3:3.

There is a good deal of wholesome food for thought in this volume; it is both instructive and entertaining. The author has evidently read much and observed acutely. Indeed most of the articles which compose "Walden," display a knowledge of men and things, which few would expect from the title of the book. They are imbued with good practical sense and sound philosophy, and are written in a terse, animated and attractive style—everywhere exhibiting a cheering freshness and originality. The paper on "Reading" is excellently suggestive, and will be read with profit and pleasure. We would commend it to the reader as a fair specimen of the good things which are so abundant throughout the volume. "Walden" is neatly and substantially got up, on good type and paper, and is well bound in one handsome, library volume.

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)



Aug. 23. Wednesday. P.M. — To Gowing's Swamp and Hadlock Meadows.

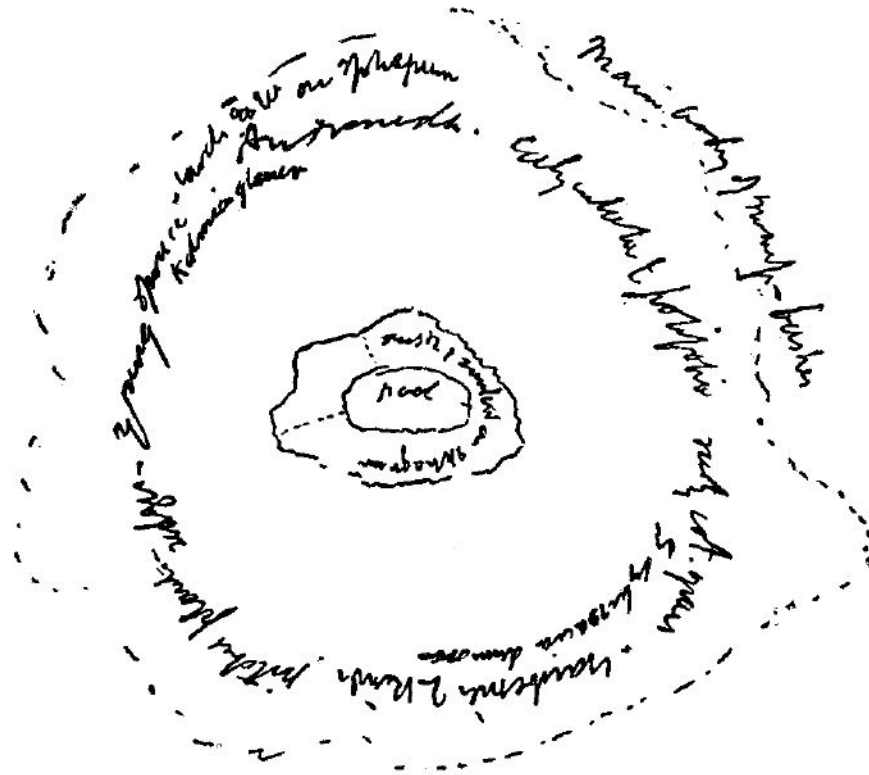
I improve the dry weather to examine the middle of Gowing's Swamp. There is in the middle an open pool, twenty or thirty feet in diameter, nearly full of sphagnum and green froth on the surface (frog-spittle), and what other plants I could not see on account of the danger in standing on the quaking ground; then a dense border,

[Transcript]

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a rod or more wide, of a peculiar rush (?),



with clusters of seed-vessels, three together, now going to seed, a yellow green, forming an abrupt edge next the water, this on a dense bed of quaking sphagnum, in which I sink eighteen inches in water, upheld by matted roots, where I fear to break through. On this the spatulate sundew abounds. This is marked by the paths of muskrats, which also extend through the green froth of the pool. Next comes, half a dozen rods wide, a dense bed of *Andromeda calyculata*, the *A. Polifolia* mingled with it, — the rusty cotton-grass, cranberries, — the common and also *V. Oxycoccus*, — pitcher-plants, sedges, and a few young spruce and larch here and there, — all on sphagnum, which forms little hillocks about the stems of the andromeda. Then ferns, now yellowing, high blueberry bushes, etc., etc., etc., — or the bushy and nut in body dry of the swamp, under which the sphagnum is new and white.


I find a new cranberry on the sphagnum amid the *A. calyculata*, *V. Oxycoccus*, of which Emerson says it is the "common cranberry of the north of Europe," cranberry of commerce there, found by "Oaken on Nantucket, in Pittsfield, and near Sherburne." It has small, now purplish-clotted fruit, flat on the sphagnum, some turned scarlet partly, on terminal peduncles, with slender, thread-like stems and small leaves strongly revolute on the edges. [[^]Vide Aug. 30, '56]

One of the Miss Browns (of the factory quarter) speaks of the yellow-flowered asclepias in that neighborhood. Crossed the Brooks or Hadlock meadows, which have been on fire (spread from bogging) several weeks. They present a singularly desolate appearance. Much of the time over shoes in ashes and cinders. Yellowish peat ashes in spots here and there. The peat beneath still burning, as far as dry, making holes sometimes two feet deep, they say. The surface strewn with cranberries burnt to a cinder. I seemed to feel a dry heat under feet, as if the ground were on fire, where it was not. It is so dry that I walk lengthwise in ditches perfectly dry, full of the *proserpinaca*, now beginning to go to seed, which usually stands in water. Its pectinate lower leaves all exposed. On the baked surface, covered with brown-paper *conferva*.



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 August 24, Thursday: There was a national emigration convention in Cleveland, Ohio.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went by boat to Assabet Bath (Gleason 4/E5).

There was a review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading “Literature” in the New-York Morning Express, 2:4.

Mr. Thoreau is a young but promising writer.—He is a manly thinker; his opinions betray a clear judgment, careful intellectual cultivation, and a great deal of talent. But the tendencies of his mind are at times too speculative. He is too impractical, and although many of the social habits against which he declaims, are susceptible of improvement; yet, he takes the privilege of most men with a “mission,” as the strong-minded philosophers and philosopheresses say, and condemns what cannot well be remedied, or what is so trivial as hardly to be worth the trouble of a chapter of Carlylean rhapsody, or epigrammatic abuse. Yet he is indubitably sound in much of what he says, and right in the main. His style is crude but forcible. Its harshness appears to be in a measure the result either of carelessness or of affectation; for some of the more elaborate passages a reader meets with in turning over the work, display a great mastery of language, much facility in expression that is at once easy and strong, and a happy fancy. When Mr. Thoreau wrote the book, he lived, he says, a mile from any neighbor and alone in the woods in a house which he had built himself on the shore of Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts. There he lived for two years and two months and supported himself by the labor of his hands, only. During the whole of this time he appears to have been a sort of anchorite; the eccentricity of his mode of life, as he relates it, is laughable. Yet it has a moral.

Here are the statistics of the first year’s outlay.

[Reprints “Economy,” page 60.10-15, 17-29.]

—The philosophy of such a Pythagoras could not be else than odd, of course, and will repay perusal.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

There was a review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading “Notices of New Publications” in



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the Boston Puritan Recorder, 133:6.

The author of this work represents himself as having played hermit during nearly the whole time that he was writing, having selected for his dwelling place a spot on the shore of Walden Pond in Concord. The author has shown not a little talent, and a world of good humor, in giving us his experiences and observations, though he occasionally lets drop a sentiment, as for instance at the top of the 118th page,¹ which seems to us inconsistent with just views of Christianity.

1. See "Reading," page 108.11, beginning "peculiar religious experience."

There was a review of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS under the heading "New Books" in the New Orleans Daily Picayune, 2:1.

Mr. B. M. Norman, 14 Camp street, sends us "Walden, a Life in the Woods," by Henry D. Thoreau, a very handsomely got up volume, from the press of Ticknor & Fields, Boston. We had a specimen of Mr. Thoreau's quality, in the 4th [of] July oration he delivered at the Abolitionists' traitor-celebration, where Garrison signalized the occasion by burning a copy of the [C]onstitution.



Aug. 24. P.M. — To Fair Haven Pond by boat.

[Transcript]

A strong wind from the south-southwest, which I expect will waft me back. So many pads are eaten up and have disappeared that it has the effect of a rise of the river drowning them. This strong wind against which we row is quite exhilarating after the stiller summer. Yet we have no rain, and I see the blue haze between me and the shore six rods off.

The bright crimson-red under sides of the great white lily pads, turned up by the wind in broad fields on the sides of the stream, are a great ornament to the stream. It is not till August, methinks, that they are turned up conspicuously. Many are now turned over completely. After August opens, before these pads are decayed (for they last longer than the nuphars of both kinds), the stronger winds begin to blow and turn them up at various angles, turning many completely over and exposing their bright crimson(?)—red under sides with their ribs. The surface being agitated, the wind catches under their edges and turns them up and holds there commonly at an angle of 45°. It is a very wholesome color, and, after the calm summer, an exhilarating sight, with a strong wind heard and felt, cooling and condensing your thoughts. This has the effect of a ripening of the leaf on the river. Not in vain was the under side thus colored, which at length the August winds turn up.

The soft pads eaten up mostly; the pontederias crisped and considerably blackened, only a few flowers left. It is surprising how the maples are affected by this drought. Though they stand along the edge of the river, they appear to suffer more than any trees except the white ash. Their leaves—and also those of the alders and hickories and grapes and even oaks more or less — are permanently curled and turned up on the upper three quarters of the trees; so that their foliage has a singularly glaucous hue in rows along the river. At a distance they have somewhat of the same effect with the silvered tops of the swamp white oak.

The sight suggests a strong wind constantly blowing.


I went ashore and felt of them. They were more or less crisped and curled permanently. It suggests what to a slight extent occurs every year. On the Cliffs so many young trees and bushes are withered that from the river it looks as if a fire had run over them. At Lee's Cliff larger ash trees are completely sere and brown,—burnt up. The white pines are parti-colored there.


Now, methinks, hawks are decidedly more common, beating the bush and soaring. I see two circling over the Cliffs. See a blue heron standing on the meadow at fair haven Pond. At a distance before you, only the two waving lines appear, and you would not suspect the long neck and legs.

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Looking across the pond, the haze at the water's edge under the opposite woods looks like a low fog. To-night, as for at least four or five nights past, and to some extent, I think, a great many times within a month, the sun goes down shorn of his beams, half an hour before sunset, round and red, high above the horizon. There are no variegated sunsets in this dog-day weather.

 August 25, Friday: The [HMS Assistance](#), constructed of teak in Calcutta and then outfitted for Arctic service, had sailed with Edward Belcher's expedition in 1852 but had been entrapped in ice off Bathurst Island. At this point the vessel was abandoned, together with its steam tender *Pioneer*.

Outside Sevastopol, Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the East [Marshall Jaques Leroy de Saint-Arnaud](#) issued the Order of the Day: "*L'heure est venue de combattre et de vaincre.*" ("The hour has come to fight and to conquer.") 



Aug. 25. I think I never saw the haze so thick as now, at 11 A.M., looking from my attic window. I cannot quite distinguish J. Hosmer's house, only the dark outline of the woods behind it. There appears to be, as it were, a thick fog over the Dennis plains.

Between me and Nawshawtuct is a very blue haze like smoke. Indeed many refer all this to smoke.

Tortoise eggs are nowadays dug up in digging potatoes.


P.M. — Up Assabet by boat to Bath.

I think that the *Polygonum hydropiperoides* is now in its prime. At the poke-logan opposite the bath place, the pools are nearly all dry, and many little pollywogs, an inch long, lie dead or dying together in the moist mud. Others are covered with the dry brown-paper conferva. Some swamp white oaks are yellowish and brown, many leaves. The *Viburnum nudum* berries, in various stages, — green, deep-pink, and also deep-blue, not purple or ripe, — are very abundant at Shad-bush Meadow. They appear to be now in their prime and are quite sweet, but have a large seed. Interesting for the various colors on the same bush and in the same cluster. Also the choke-berries are very abundant there, but mostly dried black. There is a large field of rhexia there now almost completely out of bloom, but its scarlet leaves, reddening the ground at a distance, supply the place of flowers.

We still continue to have strong wind in the middle of the day. The sun is shorn of his beams by the haze before 5 o'clock P.M., round and red, and is soon completely concealed, apparently by the haze alone.

This blue haze is not dissipated much by the night, but is seen still with the earliest light.

[Transcript]

 August 26, Saturday: [President Franklin Pierce](#) appointed a proslavery Democrat, [John Calhoun \(1806-1859\)](#), as Surveyor General of the [Kansas Territory](#) so that land surveys might begin (during the frequent absences of the territorial governor, the surveyor general would hold the gubernatorial power).

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

The chair that had emptied at the Institute was granted to Antoine Clapisson, rather than [Hector Berlioz](#).

A few days after a minor railway accident, [Phoebe Elizabeth Hough Fowler Watts Carlyle](#) gave birth.

The infant was stillborn and the mother did not survive.

In San Francisco, under Commercial Street between Montgomery Street and Kearny Street, workmen discovered the coffin of city pioneer W.C. Rae. Thomas O. Larkin not only identified the body but related that Rae had committed [suicide](#) during January 1845 after having constructed the 1st 2-story house in the municipality.

CALIFORNIA

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The new USS *Constellation* was launched at the Gosport Navy Yard in Virginia.



[Henry Thoreau](#) reported that he “Opened one of my snapping turtle’s eggs. The egg was not warm to the touch. The young is now larger and darker-colored, shell and all, more than a hemisphere, and the yolk which maintains it is much reduced.... These eggs, not warm to the touch, buried in the ground, so slow to hatch, are like the seeds of vegetable life.” Tortoise Eggs William M. White’s version of a portion of the journal entry in



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regard to the eggs is:

*We unconsciously step over the eggs of snapping turtles
Slowly hatching the summer through.
Not only was the surface perfectly dry and trackless there,
But blackberry vines had run over the spot
Where these eggs were buried
And weeds had sprung up above.*

*If Iliads are not composed in our day,
Snapping turtles are hatched and arrive at maturity.*

*It already thrusts forth its tremendous head, —
For the first time in this sphere,—
And slowly moves from side to side, —
Opening its small glistening eyes
For the first time to the light,—
Expressive of dull rage,
As if it had endured the trials of this world
For a century.*

A review titled “The Battle of the Ants” appeared in the Portland [Transcript](#), 157:1.

From Thoreau’s “Life in the Woods,” we extract the following interesting account of a curious scene in insect life.

[Reprints “Brute Neighbors,” pages 228.25-231.26.]



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Also, a review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), by the [Reverend Thomas Starr King](#) of the Universalist Church in [Charlestown, Massachusetts](#), under the heading "New Publications" in the [Christian Register](#), 135:5-6.

A young man, eight years out of college, of fine scholarship and original genius, revives, in the midst of our bustling times, the life of an anchorite. By the side of a secluded pond in Concord, he builds with his own hands a hut which cost him twenty-eight dollars and twelve and a half cents; and there he lived two and a half years, "cultivating poverty," because he "wanted to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and suck out all its marrow." Here he found that the labor of six weeks would support him through the year; and so he had long quiet days for reading, observation, and reflection, learning to free himself from all the hollow customs and false shows of the world, and to pity those who by slavery to inherited property seemed to be doing incredible and astonishing penance. In the account he gives us of his clothes, house, food, and furniture, we find mingled many acute and wise criticisms upon modern life; while in his descriptions of all living things around him, birds, fishes, squirrels, mice, insects, trees, flowers, weeds, it is evident that he had the sharpest eye and the quickest sympathy. One remarkable chapter is given to the sounds that came to his ear, with suggestions, full of poetry and beauty, of the feelings which these sounds awakened. But nothing interested him so much as the Pond, whose name gives the title to his book. He describes it as a clear sheet of water, about a mile in circumference; he bathed in it every morning; its cool crystal depths were his well, ready dug; he sailed upon its bosom in summer, he noted many curious facts pertaining to its ice in winter; in short, it became to him a living thing, and he almost worshipped it. But we must not describe the contents of this book any farther. Its opening pages may seem a little caustic and cynical; but it mellows apace, and playful humor and sparkling thought appear on almost every page. We suppose its author does not reverence many things which we reverence; but this fact has not prevented our seeing that he has a reverential, tender, and devout spirit at bottom. Rarely have we enjoyed a book more, or been more grateful for many and rich suggestions. Who would have looked to Walden Pond for a [Robinson Crusoe](#), or for an observer like the author of the [Natural History of Selbo\[u\]rne](#), or for a moralist like the writer of [Religio Medici](#)? Yet paragraphs in this book have reminded us of each of these. And as we shut the book up, we ask ourselves,

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HDT

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will the great lesson it teaches of the freedom and beauty of a simple life be heeded? Shall this struggle for wealth, and this bondage to the *impedimenta* of life, continue forever? Will the time ever come when it will be fashionable to be poor, that is, when men will be so smitten with a purpose to seek the true ends of life that they will not care about laying up riches on the earth? Such times we know there have been, and thousands listened reverently to the reply, given in the last of these two lines, to the inquiry contained in the first;

"O where is peace, for thou its path hast trod?"

"In poverty, retirement, and with God."

Who can say that it is impossible that such a time may come round, although the fashion of this world now runs with such a resistless current in the opposite direction.

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Also, on this date, a review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading "New Publications" on the 2d page of the Philadelphia [Saturday Evening Post](#), column 3:

We have, now and then, in this jostling, civilized world, an unmistakable human oddity, and the author of this strange, but interesting book, is one of that class. He is evidently a gentleman of educated and refined tastes; but, before he had attained to middle age, he appears—after having summed up and weighed the matter—to have come to the conclusion that Modern Civilization is a delusion and a sham. He, therefore, hied to the woods—a mile from any neighbor—on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Mass., where he had previously built himself a house—which house cost him not quite thirty dollars—and earned his living by the labor of his hands. Here he dwelt—(subsisting on rye and Indian meal without yeast, potatoes, rice, green corn, peas, a little salt pork, and less molasses and salt)—for two years and two months, and then returned to civilized life again, where he is at present a sojourner—probably a wiser, if not a better, man. While thus "alone in his glory," our eccentric author worked a little, visited now and then, roamed about in the woods, (watching the ways of the birds, squirrels, and coons) by day, and in the evening gazed upon the moon and stars, until he chose to retire to his lonely rest. He does not like the restraints of social life, saying that "it is hard to have a Southern overseer— worse to have a Northern one—and worst of all, when you are the slave-driver of yourself." In his humble dwelling, he had three pieces of limestone on his table—for ornament, we suppose—but finding, to his horror, that they wanted dusting every morning, he threw them out of the window. He is no believer in either expensive houses, furniture, clothes, food, or anything else—neither does he like to be crowded, and he is a little selfish, withal; for he remarks, "I would rather sit on a pumpkin, and have it all to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion." He grieves for the good old days of Adam and Eve—yea, he sighs, not for the good time coming, but for the good time long since past and gone. He appears to envy the lot of the birds, beasts, and wild Indians, and to entertain strong doubts whether our boasted Civilization is a real advance in the condition of man. He would much prefer the tub of Diogenes to the palace of a monarch—the costume of a South Sea Islander to the robes of a Prince—the simplest and plainest repast to the most delicious and sumptuous banquet. Pity it is, that he was not born a turtle, that his shell might be his shelter, as he styles a house—or a bear, and then his furry hide would serve him both for shelter and raiment. Nevertheless, his 'Life in the Woods' is a most fascinating book.



Aug. 26. For a week we have had warmer weather than for a long time before, yet not so warm nearly as in July. I hear of a great many fires around us, far and near, both meadows and woods; in Maine and New York also. There may be some smoke in this haze, but I doubt it.

[Transcript]

P.M. — To Dugan Desert.

I hear part of a phœbe's strain, as I go over the railroad bridge. It is the voice of dying summer. The pads now left on the river are chiefly those of the white lily. I noticed yesterday where a large piece of meadow had melted and sunk on a sandy bottom in the Assabet, — and the weeds now rose above the surface where it was five feet deep around. It is so dry that I take the left of the railroad bridge and go through the meadows along the river. In the hollows where the surface of the meadows has been taken out within a year or two, spring up pontederias and lilies, proserpinaca, polygonums, *Ludwigia palustris*, etc., etc. *Nasturtium hispidum* still in bloom, and will be for some time. I think I hear a red-eye. Rudbeckia,—the small one,—still fresh.

The *Poa hirsuta* is left on the upper edge of meadows (as at J. Hosmer's), as too thin and poor a grass, beneath the attention of the farmers. How fortunate that it grows in such places and not in the midst of the rank grasses which are cut! With its beautiful fine purple color, its beautiful purple blush, it reminds me and supplies the place of the rhexia now about done. [Leaving off, though I see some pretty handsome Sept. 4th.] Close by, or held in your hand, its fine color is not obvious,—it is but dull,—but [at] a distance, with a suitable light, it is exceedingly beautiful. It is at the same time in bloom. This is one of the most interesting phenomena of August. [The name of the grass appears in Excursions as *Eragrostis pectinacea*.]

I hear these afternoons the faint, cricket-like note of the *Rana palustris* squatting by the side of the river, easily confounded with that of the interrupted cricket, only the last is more ringing and metallic. How long has it been heard? The choke-cherry leaves the are, some of them, from scarlet inclining to crimson. Radical leaves of the yellow thistle spot the meadow.

Opened one of my snapping turtle's eggs. The egg was not warm to the touch. The young is now larger and darker-colored, shell and all, more than a hemisphere, and the yolk which maintains it is much reduced. Its shell, very deep, hemispherical, fitting close to the shell of the egg, and, if you had not just opened the egg, you would say it could not contain so much. Its shell is considerably hardened, its feet and claws developed, and also its great head, though held in for want of room. Its eyes are open. It puts out its head, stretches forth its claws, and liberates its tail, though all were enveloped in a gelatinous fluid. With its great head it has already the ugliness of the full-grown, and is already a hieroglyphic of snappiness. It may take a fortnight longer to hatch it.

How much lies quietly buried in the ground that we wot not of! We unconsciously step over the eggs of snapping turtles slowly hatching the summer through. Not only was the surface perfectly dry and trackless there, but blackberry vines had run over the spot where these eggs were buried and weeds had sprung up above. If Iliads are not composed in our day, snapping turtles are hatched and arrive at maturity. It already thrusts forth its tremendous head, — for the first time in this sphere, — and slowly moves from side to side, — opening its small glistening eyes for the first time to the light, — expressive of dull rage, as if it had endured the trials of this world for a century. When I behold this monster thus steadily advancing toward maturity, all nature abetting, I am convinced that there must be an irresistible necessity for mud turtles. With what tenacity Nature sticks to her idea! These eggs, not warm to the touch, buried in the ground, so slow to hatch, are like the seeds of vegetable life.

Grapes ripe, owing to the hot dry weather.

Passing by M. Miles's, he told me he had a mud turtle in a box in his brook, where it had lain since the last of April, and he had given it nothing to eat. He wished he had known that I caught some in the spring and let them go. He would have bought them of me. He is very fond of them. He bought one of the two which Ed. Garfield caught on Fair Haven in the spring; paid him seventy-five cents for it. Garfield was in his boat and saw two fighting on the pond. Approached carefully and succeeded in catching both and getting them into the boat. He got them both home by first carrying one along a piece, then putting him down and, while he was crawling off, going back for the other. One weighed forty-three or forty-four pounds and the other forty-seven. Miles gave me the shell of the one he bought, which weighed forty-three or forty-four. It is fifteen and six eighths inches long by fourteen and a half broad, of a roundish form, broadest backward. The smaller ones I have seen are longer in proportion to their length [sic], and the points larger also. The upper shell is more than four and a half inches deep and would make a good dish to bail out a boat with. Above it is a muddy brown, composed of a few great scales. He said he had no trouble in killing them. It was of no great use to cut off their heads. He thrust his knife through the soft thin place in their sternum and killed them at once. Told of one Artemas (?) Wheeler of Sudbury who used to keep fifteen or twenty in a box in a pond-hole, and fat them and eat them from time to time, having a great appetite for them. Some years ago, in a January thaw, many came out on the Sudbury meadows, and, a cold snap suddenly succeeding, a great many were killed. One man counted eighty or more dead, some of which would weigh eighty to a hundred pounds. Miles himself found two shells on his river meadow of very large ones. Since then they have been scarce. Wheeler, he thought, used to go a-hunting for them the 2d (?) of May. It increases my respect for our river to see these great products of it. No wonder the Indians made much of them. Such great shells must have made convenient household utensils for them.

Miles once saw a large bullfrog jump at and catch a green snake ten inches long, which was running along the edge of the water, and hold it crosswise in its mouth, but the snake escaped at last.

Even the hinder part of a mud turtle's shell is scalloped, one would say rather for beauty than use.

Pigeons with their quivet dashed over the Dugan Desert.




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Hear by telegraph that it rains in Portland and New York.
In the evening, some lightning in the horizon, and soon after a little gentle rain, which —

CONTINGENCY

ALTHOUGH VERY MANY OUTCOMES ARE OVERDETERMINED, WE TRUST THAT SOMETIMES WE ACTUALLY MAKE REAL CHOICES. “THIS IS THE ONLY WAY, WE SAY, BUT THERE ARE AS MANY WAYS AS THERE CAN BE DRAWN RADII FROM ONE CENTRE.” 



August 27, Sunday: A deadly tornado touched down near the intersection of Jefferson and Twentieth Streets in Louisville, Kentucky, unroofing 21 buildings at the German Protestant Orphan Asylum and collapsing the 3d Presbyterian Church at Walnut and 11th Streets during its Sunday services. Boats in the Ohio River, including a steamboat, were blown loose of their moorings and landed on the falls. Out of the 55 worshippers the storm took some 18 to 20. The youngest dead churchgoer had been 9 years of age. Afterward a mother and her 3 children would be discovered grouped in death. During the cleanup after the catastrophe, a Mr. Joseph Bradley would have an eye cut out by a hatchet wielded by a nearby person, who was attacking fallen rafters. However, the rains were generally welcome as the region had been enduring a severe drought. The Louisville Daily Courier would describe this as having been “a whirlwind revolving leftwise.”

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went on the Turnpike and via Walden Pond to Pine Hill. At 4 PM [Bronson Alcott](#) went to Concord, intending to pass the Sunday with [Emerson](#) and [Thoreau](#).



(Aug. 27) I find next day has moistened the ground about an inch down only. But now it is about as dry as ever.

[Transcript]

P.M. — To Pine Hill via Turnpike and Walden.

Small *Bidens chrysanthemoides*, some time by Turnpike. The leaves of the smallest hypericum are very many of them turned to a somewhat crimson red, sign of the ripening year. What I have called the Castile-soap gall, about one inch in diameter, handsomely variegated with a dirty white or pale tawny on a crimson ground; hard and perfectly smooth; solid and hard except a very small cavity in the centre containing some little grubs; full of crimson juice (which runs over the knife, and has stained this page [[^]There is a brown stain on the page.] and blues my knife with its acid) for an eighth of an inch from the circumference, then lighter-colored. [[^]Vide pp. 482, 483.] Many red oak acorns have fallen. [[^]Were they not cast down?]. The great green acorns in broad, shallow cups. How attractive these forms! No wonder they are imitated on pumps, fence and bed posts. Is not this a reason that the pigeons are about? The yellow birch is yellowed a good deal, the leaves spotted with green. The dogsbane a clear yellow. The cinnamon ferns hardly begun to turn or fall. The lice on the birches make it very disagreeable to go through them. I am surprised to find the brook and ditches in Hubbard’s Close remarkably full after this long drought, when so many streams are dried up. Rice and others are getting out mud in the pond-hole opposite Breed’s. They have cut down straight through clear black muck, perfectly rotted, eight feet, and it is soft yet further. Button-bushes, andromeda, proserpinaca, hardback, etc., etc., grow atop. It looks like a great sponge. Old trees buried in it. On the Walden road some maples are yellow and some chestnuts

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brownish-yellow and also sere. From Heywood's Peak, I am surprised to see the top of Pine Hill wearing its October aspect, — yellow with changed maples and here and there faintly blushing with changed red maples. This is the effect of the drought. Among other effects of the drought I forgot to mention the fine dust, which enters the house and settles everywhere and also adds to the thickness of the atmosphere.

Fences and roadside plants are thickly coated with it.

I see much froth on alders. As I go up Pine Hill, gather the shrivelled *Vaccinium vacillans* berries, many as hard as if dried on a pan. They are very sweet and good, and not wormy like huckleberries. Far more abundant in this state than usual, owing to the drought. As I stand there, I think I hear a rising wind rustling the tops of the woods, and, turning, see what I think is the rear of a large flock of pigeons.

Do they not eat many of these berries? Hips of the early rose changed. Some *Viburnum Lentago* berries, turned blue before fairly reddening. Blue-stemmed goldenrod, a day or two.

When I awake in the morning, I remember what I have seen and heard of snapping turtles, and am in doubt whether it was dream or reality. I slowly raise my head and peeping over the bedside see my great mud turtle shell lying bottom up under the table, showing its prominent ribs, and realize into what world I have awaked. Before I was in doubt how much prominence my good Genius would give to that fact. That the first object you see on awakening should be an empty mud turtle's shell!! Will it not make me of the earth, earthy? Or does it not indicate that I am of the earth earthy? What life, what character, this has shielded, which is now at liberty to be turned bottom upward!

I can put specimens of all our other turtles into this cavity. This too was once an infant in its egg. When I see this, then I am sure that I am not dreaming, but am awake to this world. I do not know any more terrene fact. It still carries the earth on its back. Its life is between the animal and vegetable; like a seed it is planted deep in the ground and is all summer germinating.

Does it not possess as much the life of the vegetable as the animal?

Would it not be well to describe some of those rough all-day walks across lots? — as that of the 15th, picking our way over quaking meadows and swamps and occasionally slipping into the muddy batter midleg deep; jumping or fording ditches and brooks; forcing our way through dense blueberry swamps, where there is water beneath and bushes above; then brushing through extensive birch forests all covered with green lice, which cover our clothes and face; then, relieved, under larger wood, more open beneath, steering for some more conspicuous trunk; now along a rocky hillside where the sweet-fern grows for a mile, then over a recent cutting, finding our uncertain footing on the cracking tops and trimmings of trees left by the choppers; now taking a step or two of smooth walking across a highway; now through a dense pine wood, descending into a rank, dry swamp, where the cinnamon fern rises above your head, with isles of poison-dogwood; now up a scraggy hill covered with shrub oak, stooping and winding one's way for half a mile, tearing one's clothes in many places and putting out one's eyes, and find[ing] at last that it has no bare brow, but another slope of the same character; now through a corn-field diagonally with the rows; now coming upon the hidden melon-patch; seeing the back side of familiar hills and next not knowing them, — the nearest house to home, which you do not know, seeming further off than the farthest which you do know; in the spring defiled with the froth on various bushes, etc., etc., etc.; now reaching on higher land some open pigeon-place, a breathing-place for us.

I suppose that is a puffball, about two inches through (on the (,round), roundish, brownish, cracked, pale wash-leather color, with a handsome, variegated slate-color within, not yet dusty, contrasting with the outside.



August 28, Monday: Secretary of War [Jefferson Davis](#) would be traveling with President [Franklin Pierce](#) until September 4/5, and would speak in Virginia.

The Revolution of the Left against Espartero was defeated.

Nachtfalter op.157, a waltz by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#), was performed for the initial time, in Ungers Casino, Vienna.

The [Ticknor & Fields](#) firm's junior partner, [James Thomas Fields](#) had, more than a month prior to official publication, distributed advance copies of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), to prospective reviewers such as the Reverend John Sullivan Dwight, the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#), and T. Starr King. About three weeks prior to publication, Ticknor & Fields began sending advance sheets to the editors of major New-York and Boston papers. By this point the work had been praised in over 30 newspapers and magazines from



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Maine to Ohio. A few days prior to publication, Ticknor & Fields had placed advertisements for [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) in several Boston and New-York dailies. Under the banner headline “LIFE IN THE WOODS,” the ads had begun appearing on August 4th and had run for three, four, or even five days. A second series of ads had appeared in selected papers in late August, usually every other day for three days. [Waldo Emerson](#) was able to note that “All American kind are delighted with ‘Walden’ as far as they have dared say.”

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked through Great Meadows (Gleason D8) and Bedford meadows on the south side of the Concord River to Carlisle Bridge (Gleason A9), and there crossed the river and came back on its north side, the Carlisle and Concord side, across the lots to the schoolhouse.

Before August 29th a review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) appeared in the Philadelphia [Register](#):

This book was written because the author had something to say. “Walden” may be pronounced a live book—a sincere, hearty production.

[Quoted from advertisement in Boston [Advertiser](#), August 29, 2:7.]

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On this day, or one of the two following days (August 28-30), [Emerson](#) wrote George Partridge Bradford in London:

I do not know if the book has come to you yet; — but it is cheerful, sparkling, readable, with all kinds of merits, & rising sometimes to very great heights. We account Henry the undoubted King of all American lions. He is walking up & down Concord, firm-looking, but in a tremble of great expectation.



On the basis of this letter would you say that it can be established that [Emerson](#) did read [WALDEN](#)?



Aug. 28. Much cooler this morning, making us think of fire. This is gradually clearing the atmosphere, and, as it is about as dry as ever, I think that haze was not smoke; quite as dry as yesterday.

[Transcript]

P. M. — By Great Meadows and Bedford meadows to Carlisle Bridge; back by Carlisle and Concord side across lots to schoolhouse.

Improve the continued drought to go through the meadows. There is a cool east wind (it has been cast a good deal lately in this drought), which has cleared the air wonderfully, revealing the long-concealed woods tend hills in the horizon and making me drink of November even. Andnowthatlamgoii.(along the path to the meadow in the woods beyond Peter's, I perceive the fall shine on the leaves and earth; *i.e.*, a great deal of light is reflected

through the clearer air, which has also a vein of coolness in it. Some crotalaria pods are now black and dry, and rattle as I walk. The farmers improve this dry spell to cut ditches and dig mud in the meadows and pond-holes. I see their black heaps in many places. I see on the Great Meadows circular patches — the stubble of a coarse light-green sedge (apparently cut-grass) — of various dimensions, which look as if they had been brought from other places and dropped there in the spring. Yet they are very numerous and extensive, running into one another, yet with a rounded or coarsely crenate edge. In fact, they probably cover the greater part of the meadow. It must be that the cut-grass merely spreads in circles. There are some in the meadow near the Kibbe Place. It makes firm ground. Between these are the dark-colored patches of cranberries, ferns, and finer grasses (?) of such singular forms as are used in lace-work, like the spaces left between circles, suggesting that this is the groundwork on which the other is dropped. Or does the cut-grass (?) incline to grow in this circular manner?



The meadow is drier than ever, and new pools are dried up. The breams, from one to two and a half inches long, lying on the sides and quirking from time to time, a dozen together where there is but a pint of water on the mud, are a handsome but sad sight, pretty green jewels, dying in the sun. I saved a dozen or more by putting them in deeper pools. Saw a whole school of little pouts, hundreds of them one and a half inches long, many dead, all apparently fated to die, and some full-grown fishes. Several hair worms four or five inches long in this muddy water. The muddy bottom of these pools dried up is cracked into a sort of regular crystals. In the soft mud, the tracks of the great bittern and the blue heron. Scared up one of the former and saw a small dipper on the river. Just after entering the Bedford meadows (travelling north), for perhaps a mile in length and the width of the meadow, the surface on all sides had been lifted or tilted up, showing the blue edges of the soil, so that there was hardly a level square rod, — giving the aspect of waves two feet high or more with numerous holes and trenches, and making it very difficult to mow it, as well as to walk over it, and here and there permanent pools were made in it. I do not know why it should have happened there more than elsewhere. Found the *Ludwigia spærocarpa* down that way.

It seems that the upper surface of the *Victoria regia* is “a light green” and the under “a bright crimson,” according to Schomburgk, its discoverer. In this it is like our white lily pads.

We did not come to a fence or wall for about four miles this afternoon. Heard some large hawks whistling much like a boy high over the meadow.

Observed many of those Castile-soap galls from a tenth of an inch to an inch in diameter on a *Quercus ilicifolia*. They are attached to the outer edge of the cup, commonly filling the space between two acorns, and look as if they had merely lodged between them, dropping out readily, though they are slightly attached to one cup. I see some not much bigger than a pin’s head, in the place, and reminding me of those small abortive acorns which so often grow on the cup of the small chinquapin. May not these galls be connected with those and be also an abortive acorn? I have three, of medium size, on the edge of one acorn-cup, and not occupying more than one third its circumference, unsupported by any neighboring cup, the middle one the smallest, being apparently crowded. Apparently the insect deposits its egg in the edge of the cup, and this egg, as in all galls, is, I should say, at once the seed of vegetable and of animal life: it produces the vegetable gall, and is the seed of it, also the animal. May it not be regarded as the seed of the gall, as well as the ovum of the insect?

Moles make heaps in meadows.

In my experience, at least of late years, all that depresses a man’s spirits is the sense of remissness, — duties neglected, unfaithfulness, — or shamming, impurity, falsehood, selfishness, inhumanity, and the like.

From the experience of late years I should say that a man’s seed was the direct tax of his race. It stands for my sympathy with my race. When the brain chiefly is nourished, and not the affections, the seed becomes merely excremental.

Saw a bushel of hazelnuts in -their burs, which some boy had spread on the ground to dry behind Hodgman’s. Observed yesterday, in a pool in what was Heywood’s peat meadow south of, but near, Turnpike, apparently a utricularia, very small with minute forked green leaves, and bladders on bare threads, rooting in mud at bottom; apparently out of bloom. Also another kind with long stems, many black bladders, and no obviously green leaves, filling the pools in Hubbard’s Close.

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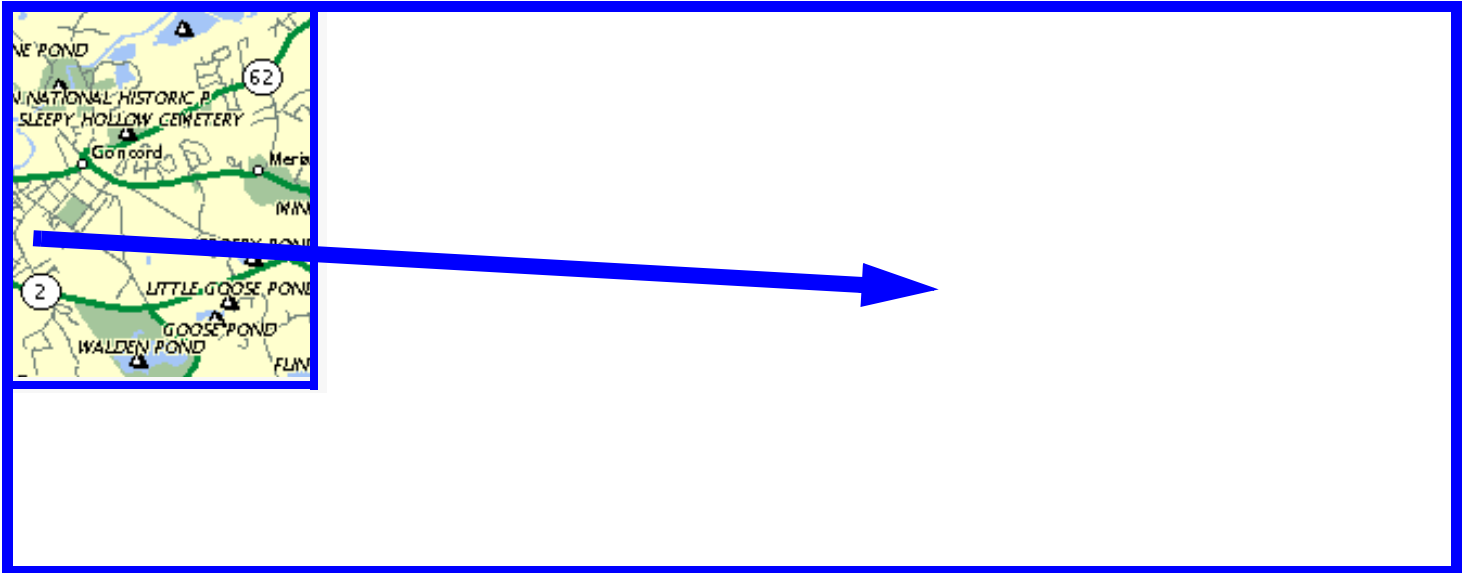
1854-1855

➡ August 29, Tuesday: Louis Moreau Gottschalk gave the 1st of 4 concerts in Santiago de Cuba.

Daniel Halladay patented a self-governing windmill.

An advertisement for WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS appeared in the Boston Daily Advertiser: [following screen]

In the afternoon Henry Thoreau went to the Derby's Bridge (Gleason F4) neighborhood



and the front of D. Tarbell's place (Gleason G4). Bronson Alcott and Thoreau dined together. What was the "threshing" process which Thoreau referred to in his journal on this day? It appears he was currently splitting "Walking, or the Wild" and adding journal entries in order to produce from this lecture a set of lectures which he would be able to deliver successively. He had selected a few passages about walking at night and about moonlight on the landscape to use as seed material for a new lecture about walking at night in the moonlight, and had assigned as a working title "The Moon."¹² Thoreau wrote two paragraphs in his journal (JOURNAL 6:486-7) that eventually found their way into the MH copy-text for an early version of the "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" lecture as paragraphs 1-2 (see facsimile transcriptions of the manuscripts in Dean, Bradley P., MA thesis "The Sound of a Flail: Reconstructions of Thoreau's Early 'Life without Principle' Lectures," pages 327-29, 330-32),¹³ but which he removed from that lecture while revising it for "LIFE

12. Four of the leaves of this work product are now in the Harkness Collection in the Manuscript Division of New York Public Library (Manuscript #21), one is at University of Virginia (File Access 6345-e), and another is at Middlebury College in Vermont.
13. Isn't "The Sound of a Flail" wonderfully descriptive for this work about the manner in which Thoreau prepared his materials?

1854-1855

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Life in the Woods.

TICKNOR & FIELDS

Have just published in 1 vol., 16mo., price \$1,

Mr. Henry D. Thoreau's New Book,

WALDEN;

OR,

Life in the Woods.

"When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only."

Contents :

ECONOMY,	THE PONDS,
WHERE I LIVED, AND	BAKER FARM,
WHAT I LIVED FOR,	HIGHER LAWS,
READING,	BRUTE NEIGHBORS,
SOUNDS,	HOUSE WARMING,
SOLITUDE,	FORMER INHABITANTS,
VISITORS,	WINTER VISITORS,
THE BEAN-FIELD,	THE POND IN WINTER,
THE VILLAGE,	SPRING,
	CONCLUSION.

This strikingly original and interesting book has been widely commended by the Press. A few extracts from notices are given below.

"This book was written because the author had something to say. 'Walden' may be pronounced a live book—a sincere, hearty production."—[Philadelphia Register.

"Full of eloquent thought and interest from beginning to end."—[New York Tribune.

"A remarkable book. There is nothing like it in literature. Strikingly original, singular, and most interesting."—[Salem Register.

"'Walden' is a prose poem. It is a book to be read, and re-read, and read again."—[Worcester Palladium.

"Thoreau writes almost as many *thoughts* as *words*. Indeed, his pages are more full of ideas than commas."—[Newark Advertiser.

"This is a remarkable history of remarkable experiences."—[New Bedford Mercury.

"This is one of the most singular, as well as one of the best of works."—[Lowell Courier.

august26

SatTu&Th

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MISSPENT”:

[Paragraph 1] Early for several mornings I have heard the sound of a flail. It leads me to ask, if I have spent as industrious a spring and summer as the farmer, and gathered as rich a crop. If so, the sound of my flail also will be heard, by those who have ears to hear it,¹ separating the kernel from the chaff all the fall and winter, and I trust that it will be a sound no less cheering than the former. If the drought has destroyed the corn let not all harvests fail.

[Paragraph 2] The lecturer must commence his threshing as early as August, that his fine flour may be ready for his winter customers. To him also fall rains will come to make full springs and raise his streams sufficiently to grind his grist. His flail will be heard early and late, even when farmers sleep. It must be made of tougher material than hickory, and tied together with resolution stronger than an eel-skin. For him, when he comes to deal with his native grain—his Indian wheat, there is no husking bee, but he works alone at evening, by lamp light, with the barn door shut, and only the pile of husks behind him for warmth. For him too, I fear, there is no patent corn-sheller, but he does his work, as it were, by hand, ear by ear, on the edge of a shovel over a bushel, on his hearth, often taking up a handful of the yellow grain, and

1. [MATTHEW 11:15](#) [MATTHEW 11:15](#) MATTHEW 13:9 MARK 4:9 MARK 4:23 LUKE 8:8 [LUKE 8:8](#) LUKE 14:35

**Brad Dean's
Commentary**

Thoreau decided to “winnow” material from his journals for lectures such as “What Shall It Profit?”:

Have you commenced to thresh your grain? The lecturer must commence his threshing as early as August, that his fine flour may be ready for his winter customers. (JOURNAL 6:486)

**Brad Dean's
Commentary**

[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) was reviewed on the 2d page of the Richmond, Virginia Enquirer.

WALDEN Print H

[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) was reviewed on the 2d page of the Boston Herald.

WALDEN Print H

[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) was reviewed under the heading “Notices of Books” in the New-

WALDEN Print H

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York Commercial Advertiser, 2:4.

Mr Thoreau is an eccentric genius who removed into the woods near the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and there built, with his own hands, a little hut, in which he lived solitarily two years and two months, avoiding all intercourse with his fellow-men as far as possible, and subsisting upon fish, berries and such other food as he could procure in the woods. During this period of solitude he wrote the essays which compose the interesting volume before us. Although so fond of solitude, he is by no means misanthropical, and he manifests an ardent love of nature, but he seems to have a remarkable contempt for the bustle and turmoil of life. See the following semi-serious passage about the popular eagerness for news:—

**[Reprints “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,”
pages 93.24-94.29.]**



Aug. 29. A cool morning with much fog, — more than yesterday. Have not had much during the warmer part of the drought, methinks.

Cattle are driven down from up-country. Hear the drovers' whoa whoa whoa or whay whay whay.

Where I walked yesterday it appeared as if the whole surface of the meadow had been at one time lifted up, but prevented by shores or bushes or ice from floating oil, then broken up by wind and waves, had and finally melted and sunk irregularly, near where it rose. I repeatedly stepped into the long crack-like intervals between the cakes.

When our meadows are flooded in the spring and our river is changed to a sea, then the gulls, the sea birds, come up here to complete the scene. Or are they merely on their way eastward?

Were not those large, and often pointed, rocks occasionally seen on the meadows brought there by the floating meadow, and so dropped broad end down?

P.M. — To Derby Bridge neighborhood and front of Tarbell's.

It is a great pleasure to walk in this clearer atmosphere, though cooler. How great a change, and how sudden, from that sultry and remarkably hazy atmosphere to this clear, cool autumnal one, in which all things shine, and distance is restored to us! The wind blew quite hard in the midst of that haze, but did not disperse it. Only this cooler weather with a steady east wind has done it. It is so cool that we are inclined to stand round the kitchen fire a little while these mornings, though we sit and sleep with open windows still. I think that the cool air from the sea has condensed the haze, not blown it off. The grass is so dry and withered that it caught fire from the locomotive four or five days ago near the widow Hosmer's, and the fire ran over forty or fifty rods, threatening the house, — grass which should have afforded some pasturage. The cymes of elder-berries, black with fruit, are now conspicuous.

Up railroad. Poison sumach berries begin to look ripe, — or dry, — of a pale straw-color. The zizania is pretty abundant in the river, in rear of Joseph Hosmer's. A small, what his father calls partridge hawk killed many chickens for him last year, but the slate colored hawk never touches them. Very many water-plants-pontederias, lilies, zizania, etc., etc. — are now going to seed, prepared to feed the migrating water-fowl, etc. Saw a hop-hornbeam (*Ostrya*) on which every leaf was curiously marked with a small rather triangular brown spot (eaten) in the axils of the veins next the midrib, oppositely or alternately. Under side lower leaves of *Lycopus Virginicus* lake-color. I see where the squirrels, apparently, have stripped the pitch pine cones, scattering the scales about. Many birds nowadays resort to the wild black cherry tree, as here front of Tarbell's. I see them continually coming and going directly from and to a great distance, — cherry-birds, robins, and kingbirds. I enjoy the warmth of the sun now that the air is cool, and Nature seems really more genial. I love to sit on the withered grass on the sunny side of the wall. My mistress is at a more respectful distance, for, by the coolness of the air, I am more continent in my thought and held aloof from her, while by the genial warmth of the sun I am more than ever attracted to her. I see a boy already raking cranberries. The moss rose hips will be quite ripe in a day or two. Found a new and erect euphorbia (*hypericifolia*) on the slope just east of his lizard ditches, still in bloom

[Transcript]

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and pretty, probably open first in July. At Clamshell Bank the barn swallows are very lively, filling the air with their twittering now, at 6 P.M. They rest on the dry mullein-tops, then suddenly all start off together as with one impulse and skim about over the river, hill, and meadow. Some sit on the bare twigs of a dead apple tree. Are they not gathering for their migration?

Early for several mornings I have heard the sound of a flail. It leads me to ask if I have spent as industrious a spring and summer as the farmer, and gathered as rich a crop of experience. If so, the sound of my flail will be heard by those who have cars to hear, separating the kernel from the chaff all the fall and winter, and a sound no less cheering it will be. If the drought has destroyed the corn, let not all harvests fail. Have you commenced to thresh your grain? The lecturer roust commence his threshing as early as August, that his title flour may be ready for his winter customers. The fall rains will make full springs and raise his streams sufficiently to grind his grist. We shall hear the sound of his flail all the fall, early and late. It is made of tougher material than hickory, and tied together with resolution stronger than an eel-skin. For him there is no husking-bee, but he does it all alone and by hand, at evening by lamplight, with the barn door shut and only the pile of husks behind him for warmth. For him, too, I fear there is no patent corn-sheller, but he does his work by hand, ear by ear, on the edge of a shovel over a bushel, on his hearth, and after he takes up a handful of the yellow grain and lets it fall again, while he blows out the chaff and he goes to bed happy when his measure is full.

Channing has come from Chelsea Beach this morning with *Euphorbia polygonifolia* in flower, bayberry in fruit, datura in flower, staghorn sumach fruit, chenopodium (it seems not to be made a distinct species, though very mealy), scarlet pimpernel still in flower, *Salsola Kali* (the prickly plant), and apparently *Solidago sempervirens*.



August 30, Wednesday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) paddled up the Sudbury River to Clamshell Bank or Hill (Gleason 23/G5) and meadows, and then to Conantum (Gleason J6).



Aug. 30. Another great fog this morning, which lasts till 8.30. After so much dry and warm weather, cool weather has suddenly come, and this has produced these two larger fogs than for a long time. Is it always so?

Hear a warbling vireo faintly in the elms.

P.M. — To Conantum via Clamshell Hill and meadows.

The clearness of the air which began with the cool morning of the 28th makes it delicious to gaze in any direction. Though there has been no rain, the valleys are emptied of haze, and I see with new pleasure to distant hillsides and farmhouses and a river-reach shining in the sun, and to the mountains in the horizon. Coolness and clarity go together. What I called *Solidago altissima*, a simple slender one with a small head, some time, — perhaps not to be distinguished. Crossed the river at Hubbard's Bath. Apparently as many clams lie up as ever. The two river polygonums may be said to be now in prime. The *hydropiperoides* has a peculiarly slender waving spike. The *Bidens Beckii* made the best show, I think, a week ago, though there may be more of them open now. They are not so widely open. Was not that a meadow-hen which I scared up in two places by the riverside, — of a dark brown like a small woodcock, though it flew straight and low?



I go along the flat Hosmer shore to Clamshell Hill. The sparganium seed bulls begin to brown and come off in the hind. The *Ammannia humilis* is quite abundant on the denuded shore there and in John Hosmer's meadow, now turned red and so detected, reddening the ground. Are they not young hen-hawks which I have seen sailing for a week past, without red tails?

I go along through J. Hosmer's meadow near the river, it is so dry. I see places where the meadow has been denuded of its surface within a few years, four or five rods in diameter, forming shallow platters, in which the *Lysimachia stricta*, small hypericums, lindernia, gratiola, pipes, ammannia, etc., grow. I walk dry-shod quite to the phalanxes of bulrushes of a handsome blue-green glaucous color. The colors of the rainbow rush are now pretty bright. The floating milfoil at Purple Utricularia Shore, with red stem. Blue-eyed grass still. Dogwood leaves have fairly begun to turn. A few small maples are scarlet along the meadow. A dark-brown or black shining, oval or globular, fruit of the skunk-cabbage, with prominent calyx, filaments, and style roughening it, is quite handsome like a piece of carved ebony (or dogwood?). I see its small green spathes already pushing up. The berries are about all dried up or wormy — I am on Conantum — though I still eat the dried blue-berries. There are now none to pluck in a walk, unless it be black cherries and apples. I see brown thrashers on the black cherry tree and hear their sharp click like a squirrel. Hazelnut time about a week ago, to be in advance of the

[Transcript]

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squirrels. I see the dried reddened burs and shells under every bush where they have been. The *Bidens frondosa*, some time; distinguished by its being fairly pinnate, with from three to five leaflets. Notice the radical leaves of primrose. The huckleberries are so withered and brown in many places, owing to the drought, that they appear dead and as if they were some which had been broken up by the pickers, or as if burnt. Some white ash trees have suffered more than any others I have noticed, on Cliffs their leaves being quite brown and sere. Minot Pratt here this evening. He tells me he finds a white hardback, bayberry in Holden's pasture, and, on the old Carlisle road, *Cornus florida*, near Bateman's Pond, and what Russell thought a rare hedysarum somewhere. Pratt once caught a mud turtle at Brook Farm which weighed forty-six pounds.



August 31, Thursday: Ariana Sanborn, 8 days the bride of [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), died of consumption.

[Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by [Richard F. Fuller](#) in Boston, to thank him for his copy of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) and to say that he had enjoyed it, and hoped Thoreau's fame would grow.¹⁴

Boston 31 Aug. 1854
Dear Thoreau
When I went out to rusti-
cate in Wayland some weeks since, I had seen a
notice of the forthcoming Walden, and regrett[ed]
that I could not obtain the book for my su[m-]
mer retreat. I was obliged to console myself
with the expectation of reading it on my
return to town. On first opening my des[k]
again here what should I see but that very
book and my name therein inscribed in a
very esteemed hand! He should leave it to
his friends to purchase his book, I thought,
and then--but how pleasant to obtain it
in a way that gives proof of kind remembrance.
So I got another copy for the town library
in Wayland, and kept yours for myself.
Let me congratulate you for the
hit you have made in this book. I am
glad the world opens a little to its appeal.

Page 2
I have read this book with great satis-
faction. I had expected sincerity and truth
and intimacy with nature in you: my ex-
pectation is surpassed. I congratulate
you on that heroic reliance and courageous

14. At some point during the autumn [Thoreau](#) penciled on his reading draft of "Walking, or The Wild," just below and to the right of the title, the following shattering remark:

I regard this as a sort of introduction to all that I may write hereafter.

Bradley P. Dean infers that Thoreau wrote this a few weeks after [WALDEN](#) was published.



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*trail of the leading[]of your own high in-
[s]tincts which have borne such fitting fruit.
I delight, too, in your affectionate nearness to
the bosom of nature and your family
[fe]eling for the pure objects of her fostering
care. You seem to have something of that tenderness toward them
which must pervade
the Father's care that cherishes all.
Your book is remarkable for
what I will call by an old name (for
I prefer old names, nothing being in substance
new) namely faith--faith in the heavenly
within you and the heavenly without you. I esteem
a noble quality which transcends common*

Page 3

*laws being a law unto itself. It transcends,
but (mark the distinction) it does not
transgress.*

*Your book must furnish gra-
tification to those appetites which still
relish nature; and I have one. It is a
fruit, too, which will keep and grow more
golden mellow and fragrant with the many
years.*

*Your book must do good mo-
rally by reproving the growing luxury [of]
the times. It has made me also sigh for my[-]
self that I have yielded so much to the
kingdom of man.*

*Having said some of the things which
your book is, I need not say what it is
not. For hardly all men and ages, and not
the single individual, make the man.*

*May your fame grow and de-
velop in your good fruit. Accept my con-
gratulations and thanks*

Yours R. F. Fuller

Page 4

Postage: PAID

Paid

Postmark: BOSTON

31

AUG

3 cts

Address: Henry D. Thoreau



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*Concord
Mass*

1854-1855

1854-1855**1854-1855**

He surveyed a Lincoln houselot between Tower Road and Lincoln Road for Marie Green. In the afternoon he did some surveying for William Peirce, after which Peirce brought him to Concord from Lincoln in his wagon.



JOSEPH SMITH.

Thoreau had obtained, from Stacy's Circulating Library in Concord, [Benjamin Gilbert Ferris](#)'s [UTAH AND THE MORMONS: THE HISTORY, GOVERNMENT, DOCTRINES, CUSTOMS, AND PROSPECTS OF THE LATTER-DAY](#)

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SAINTS, FROM PERSONAL OBSERVATION DURING A SIX MONTHS' RESIDENCE AT GREAT SALT LAKE CITY.



UTAH AND THE MORMONS
UTAH AND THE MORMONS



Aug. 31. Warmer this morning and considerably hazy again. Wormwood pollen yellows my clothes commonly.

Ferris in his "Utah," crossing the plains in '52, says that, on Independence Rock near the Sweetwater, "at a rough guess, there must be 35,000 to 40,000" names of travellers.

P.M. — To Lincoln.

Surveying for William Peirce¹⁵. He says that several large chestnuts appear to be dying near him on account of the drought. Saw a meadow said to be still on fire after three weeks; fire had burned holes one and a half feet deep; was burning along slowly at a considerable depth. P. brought me home in his wagon. Was not quite at his

[Transcript]



15. The surveying notebook says, a houseplot for Byron Peirce:



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ease and in his element; i.e., talked with some reserve, though well behaved, unless I approached the subject of horses. Then he spoke with a will and with authority, betraying somewhat of the jockey. He said that this dry weather was "trying to wagons; it loosened the ties," — if that was the word. He did not use blinders nor a check-rein. Said a horse's neck must ache at night which has been reined up all day. He said that the outlet of F[lint's] Pond had not been dry before for four years, and then only two or three days; now it was a month. Notwithstanding this unprecedented drought our river, the main stream, has not been very low. It may have been kept up by the reservoirs. Walden is unaffected by the drought, and is still very high. But for the most part silent are the watercourses, when I walk in rocky swamps where a tinkling is commonly heard. At nine this evening I distinctly and strongly smell smoke, I think of burning meadows, in the air in the village. There must be more smoke in this haze than I have supposed. Is not the haze a sort of smoke, the sun parching and burning the earth?

FALL 1854



Fall: [Brownson's Quarterly Review](#), No. 3

CATHOLICISM

- I. *Uncle Jack and His Nephew*
- II. *The Roman Revolution*
- III. *Native Americanism*
- IV. *Schools and Education*
- V. *The Turkish War*
- VI. **Literary Notices and Criticisms**

MAGAZINES

ORESTES AUGUSTUS BROWNSON



Fall: The parents of the racially intermixed child Edward Pindall were having their day in court, and were losing totally. Although their son appeared deceptively to be all white, since in fact he had some black and some red as well as white ancestry, he would need to be attending the segregated [Abiel Smith School](#) with the other students of color.



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 Fall: Due to the illness of his wife [Virginia Young Roberts](#), the Reverend [Issachar J. Roberts](#) 罗孝全 was forced to abandon his plan to proceed from [Shanghai](#) to Nanking. The family returned to the United States.


Chacón surrendered himself.

At the convention of the American Unitarian Association, the Reverend Samuel Joseph May was at the point of acknowledging that although he believed that Jesus had counseled nonresistance, the American institution of chattel servitude had brought him to a point at which he personally could no longer obey Jesus, or insist upon obedience by the oppressed.

In his newspaper [The Citizen](#), John Mitchel had the unwisdom to take on the Catholic hierarchy of New-York by averring that the Pope should not be allowed to return to power in [Rome](#), Italy — this newspaper was doomed.

SEPTEMBER 1854

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for September 1854 \(æf. 37\) in the 1906 version](#)

 September: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#).

CONSULT THIS ISSUE

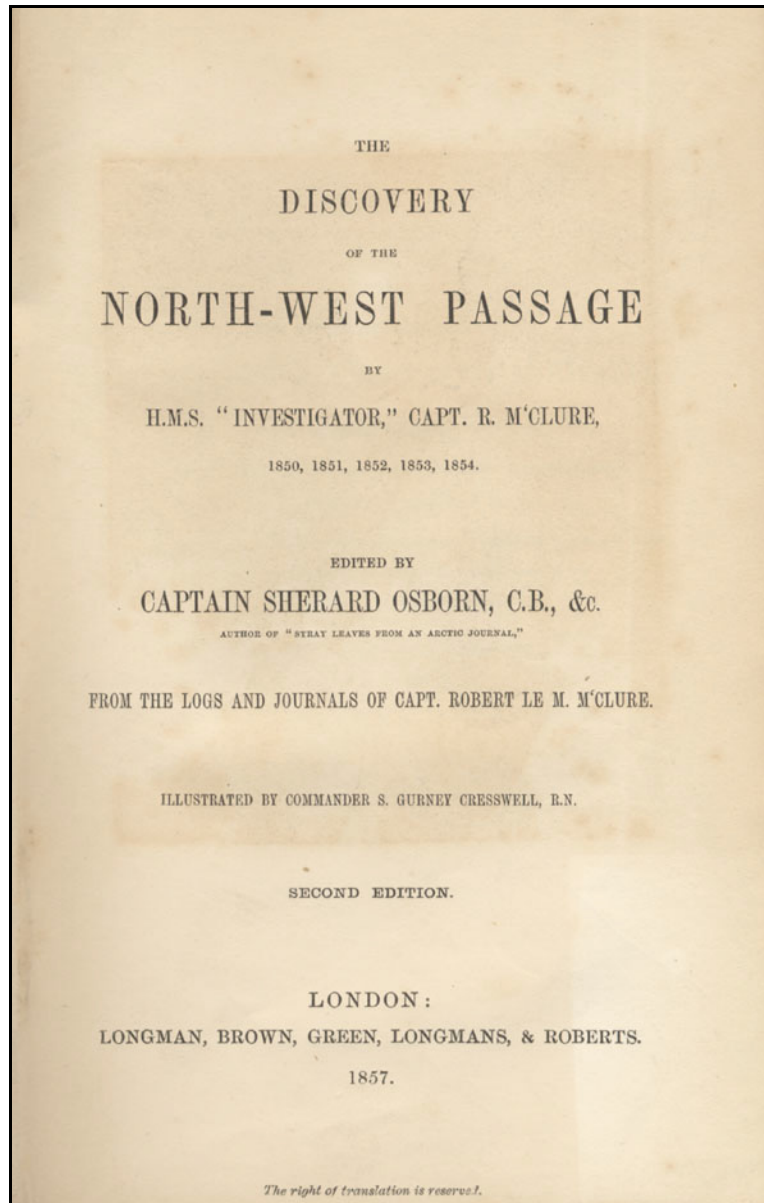


1854-1855

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September: After Captain Henry Kellett of *HMS Resolute* had sent Lieutenant Bedford Pim on foot across the ice and found Robert John Le Mesurier McClure and *HMS Investigator* suffering from malnutrition and scurvy, the *Resolute* in turn had become caught in the ice and everyone had been forced to spend a 4th winter in the Arctic. At this point the men arrived back in England without their ships. McClure would be court-martialed for having lost his ship, but then the British would figure that he was more useful as a hero of discovery, and promote him to captain and give him a knighthood. Parliament would vote the men of the expedition a reward of £10,000 for having discovered a Northwest Passage (Franklin's crew had four years earlier discovered another such passage but had perished without anyone learning of this).



(Note that it would not be until 1906 that the first ice-cutter ship, under Roald Amundson, would be able to

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make its way through the Northwest Passage that had here been discovered by Robert McClure.)



THE FROZEN NORTH

Arctic Explorations

Date	Explorer	Nation	Discovery
1501	Gaspar Corte Real	Portuguese	Newfoundland
1536	Jacques Cartier	French	St. Lawrence River, Gaspe Peninsula
1553	Richard Chancellor	English	White Sea
1556	Stephen Burrough	English	Kara Sea
1576	Martin Frobisher	English	Frobisher Bay
1582	Humphrey Gilbert	English	Newfoundland
1587	John Davis	English	Davis Strait
1597	Willem Barents	Dutch	Spitsbergen, Novaya Zemlya
1611	<u>Henry Hudson</u>	English	Hudson Bay
1616	William Baffin	English	Ellesmere and Devon Islands
1632	Thomas James	English	James Bay
1741	Vitus Bering	Russian	Alaska
1772	<u>Samuel Hearne</u>	English	Coppermine River to the Arctic Ocean
1779	James Cook	British	Vancouver Island, Nootka Sound
1793	<u>Alexander Mackenzie</u>	English	Bella Coola River to the Pacific
1825	Edward Parry	British	Cornwallis, Bathurst, Melville Islands
1833	John Ross	British	North Magnetic Pole
1845	John Franklin	British	King William Island



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Arctic Explorations

Date	Explorer	Nation	Discovery
1854	Robert McClure	British	Banks Island, Viscount Melville Sound

 September: Friend [William Henry Harvey](#) reached Victoria in [Australia](#). He would collect extensively on the beaches of Port Phillip, Westernport Bays, and Port Fairy.

Brooklyn's Washington Avenue Ferry went into operation, connecting Brooklyn Avenue to Washington Avenue in the Bronx, [New York](#).

Trains began running between Rochester and Avon on the Genesee Valley Railway.

 September: The [Reverend William Silsbee](#) returned to the United States from Europe.

The Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward took an opportunity to make a shore visit to Ireland, by crossing from Holyhead to Kingston. He spent a day or two there and at Dublin, and passed rapidly, by rail, from thence to Cork, where he spent a night, and hastened the next day, through Mallow, to Killarney:

I must beg the generous reader to indulge me in saying but little concerning the Emerald Isle. It is a country so full of interest, making such rapid strides of improvement, capable of such vast development, so rich in material and intellectual resources, so deficient in moral and spiritual cultivation, that it would be most unjustifiable presumption, in one who has spent but twenty clays there, ten of which were at Killarney, to attempt to speak of it intelligently. If God spare me, I shall know more of that island at some future day; then it will be time enough to speak of it at length.... We rode, walked, sailed, eat, drank, and slept, daily, with some degree of regularity and perseverance, each accomplishing his task to his own satisfaction. The rich romantic scenery, the beauty of the lakes, the fine old ruins of Mucruss Abbey and Ross Castle, the beautiful grounds of Mr. Herbert, the affability of the company we met, all gave us a variety of most pleasing sights and sounds; and, being favoured with extraordinarily fine weather, we could but be gratified with our short sojourn in that picturesque locality.

I must not forget, that Mr. Schiell, the gentlemanly master of the Killarney Junction Railway Hotel, understood as well as any man in that business ever did, the art and science of making his guests comfortable. I went there to rest – another name for being lazy. So did others. We accomplished what we went for. Now, please excuse my giving descriptions of what I saw, for I have no descriptive power or talent whatever. I can only say, that after having lived four-and-thirty years in America, I was not so well prepared to appreciate Irish lake or mountain scenery as those visitors who had never been out of this kingdom. I appreciated the falls on Mr. Herbert's place, on account of his very great kindness in suffering visitors to witness them; but to one who lives within three hours' sail of Niagara Falls, they

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certainly did not appear very wonderful. As to lakes, I live on Lake Ontario, and have frequently sailed upon Lake Erie and Lake Michigan. When I tell the reader that one of these is 160 and another 180 miles long, he will not wonder that I was not beyond measure astonished at Killarney lakes. Then, as to small and beautiful lakes, I beg to say, with great deference, but most certainly with truth, that Skaneateles Lake, Geneva Lake, Seneca Lake, and Crooked Lake, in New York State, are neither excelled nor equalled by anything it has been my good fortune to see on this side of the Atlantic. Still I was pleased, greatly pleased, with the scenery of Killarney; and the above is introduced less by way of boasting, than apology for not being more perfectly captivated, charmed, delighted, overwhelmed, and "all that sort of thing," which some persons thought "as in duty bound" I ought to have been.


I met at Cork some friends and relations of my good neighbour, P.P. Hayes, Esq., of Toronto. Not having time to call upon Father Mathew, as I had promised, if I ever visited Cork, and having learned that he was about to proceed to Florence for his health, I had the melancholy pleasure of sending him my card, and an expression of best wishes for the speedy recovery of his wonted strength. I had met the venerable priest at Cleveland, Ohio, in 1851. He was in my native country, pursuing a most laudable work. Differences in religion were of no moment to me, as compared with the great work of philanthropy. I was but too happy, therefore, to receive the invitation of Father Mathew to visit him; and, had circumstances favoured it, should have been delighted to do so.

I had not the good fortune to hear the Rev. Dr. Urwick on the Sunday I was in Dublin; but, at Kingston, had the great pleasure of hearing that most indefatigable and most successful pastor, the Rev. Joseph Denham Smith, whom I had before met in England, and from whom I received the kindest attention. Mr. Smith is one of the English ministers who have gone to Ireland to do good, and have become most enthusiastically fond of Ireland and the Irish. I saw this in all whom it was my pleasure to meet, during both visits to that country. The singular devotion which the Independent ministers show to the people among whom they live, and their great admiration for the land of their labours, tend in no small degree to the almost incredible efficiency and success of their labours. Disconnected from the State, receiving not one penny of State pay, they make manifest to all the disinterestedness of their work; and show as well, that great good can be accomplished now, as in the days of the apostles, by voluntary, persevering, religious effort. In no country is this more manifest than in Ireland, where the class of ministers to which Mr. Smith and his co-labourers belong are obliged to compete with State Churchism in so many forms. This remark is not made offensively. I am giving utterance to my own religious opinions, without disguise; and repeat, that their correctness, in practical working, never struck me so forcibly as during my last visit to Ireland: nor can I bring myself to believe that any honest, honourable Christian, of whatever denomination, will find fault with my refusing so far to play the neutral, as to write as if I had no opinions or were too unmanly to express them.



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 September 1, Friday: Engelbert Humperdinck was born in Siegburg.

British and French troops assaulted the Russian defenders of Petropavlovsk on Kamchatka Island.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went along the river to [Edmund Hosmer](#)'s new place (Gleason E6).



Sept. 1. A misty morning followed by a still, cloudy, misty day, through which has fallen a very little rain this forenoon already. Now I notice a few faint chipping sparrows, busily picking the seeds of weeds in the garden. Are they the Savannah sparrows? They show no white in tail. Yet I see no yellow on brows. Small feathers on back, centred with black and edged with pale brown (?); inner vanes of wing-quills bay; crown without chestnut; brown dash from angle of mouth backward. Do not the sparrows now commonly begin to feed on seeds of weeds in gardens?

[Transcript]

P.M. — Along river to E. Hosmer's.


A very little mizzling. The *Aster Tradescanti* is perhaps *beginning* [*Vide* Sept. 14.] to whiten the shores on moist banks. I see a fine (reddish) topped grass in low lands, whitened like a thin veil with what it has caught of this dewy rain. It wets my feet much.

The *Cornus sericea* berries are now in prime, of different shades of blue, lighter or darker, and bluish white. They are so abundant as to be a great ornament to our causeways and riverside. The white-berried, too, is now in prime, but drops off. The *Viburnum dentatum* berries are smaller and duller. The *Viburnum Lentago* are just fairly begun to have purple cheeks.

Even this rain or mizzling brings down many leaves of elms and willows, etc.,—the first. to notice, since the fall of the birches which began so long ago. Saw two wild ducks go over. Another said they were large gray ducks; also that Simon Brown's boy had got a young wild duck which came home from the river with the tame ones.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



 September 2, Saturday: "Opened one of my snapping turtle's eggs [*sic??*]. The young alive, but not very lively, with shell dark grayish black; yolk as big as a hazelnut; tail curled round and is considerably longer than the shell, and slender; three ridges on the back, one at edges of plates on each side of dorsal, which is very prominent. There is only the trace of a dorsal ridge in the old. Eye open." Tortoise Eggs

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to the Purple Utricularia Shore on Fair Haven Bay (Gleason 102/ K7).

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading "Literature" in the New-York Churchman, 4:1-4.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

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ZOROASTER

[Walden; or, Life in the Woods is] The book of a humourist—a man of humours rather than of humour—and a lover of nature. Mr. THOREAU, living at Concord, is known among literary circles by his association with the good company of EMERSON and HAWTHORNE, and by his production of a book a few years since, "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers," which, with some unpleasant peculiarities of its school, savouring greatly of a species of irreverent egotism, contained many close and faithful observations of nature, and many shrewd reflections on life. Every man has his humour, though from the present pressure and overlaying of society it is not always easy to discover it. Mr. THOREAU brings his out into prominent relief. It is the stoic affectation of a lover of personal freedom, with a grudge against civilization for its restrictions. He looks upon all the trappings of society, of Church and State, of conventional usages, cities and towns, even clothes and houses, as so many impediments to the free growth of the unfettered man. The only concession he seems disposed to make to the social state is to work for it a sufficiently long time,—in his case it is a very short time,—to secure honestly a portion of the spoils adequate to keep body and soul in company, that the former, strengthened by toil, may enjoy a vigorous sense of existence, and the latter be free to watch its own motions and imbibe the simple thoughts of primitive poetry and philosophy. In all our modern reading, unlike as the situation and circumstances are, and different as Mr. THOREAU is from DIOGENES in many respects, we have not met with so complete a suggestion of what used to be considered, by the vulgar at least, a philosopher. He realizes the popular notion of an impracticable, a man who rails at society and is disposed to submit to as few of its trammels as possible, and who has the credit of resources within himself which the majority of people do not possess, and, in fact, do not much care for. The world is very ready to give the title, for it is of very little mercantile value, and the world can afford to part with it. On his part, the philosopher can return the compliment. He says to the hard workers about him, my friends, you are all wrong, shortening your lives in toil and vanities, working for that which does not profit, and reaping an endless harvest of failure and dismay. Ninety-seven out of every hundred merchants, he continues, according to an old calculation, fail in business, and it is pretty safe to put down the other three as rogues. As in merchandize, [*sic*] so in farming. People are toiling with real pain after imaginary pleasure. The true secret of life is to ask for little; to live on the minimum.

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Mr. THOREAU has made the experiment. Entering manhood with a good education and a vigorous frame, he has, after various attempts, come to the conclusion, recorded in his book, that, after all, "the occupation of a day labourer was the most independent of any, especially as it required only thirty or forty days in a year to support one." School-keeping he had tried; but that, as a trade, was a failure. There was no love in it, and it did not gratify the mind; beside, it was expensive:—he was "obliged to dress and train, not to say think and believe accordingly, and time was lost in the bargain." Trade was still worse. It was tried, but the experimentalist for freedom found "it would take ten years to get underway in that, and that then he should probably be on his way to the devil." He was "actually afraid that he might by that time be doing what is called a good business." At one time, when he was looking about to see what he could do for a living, some sad experience in conforming to the wishes of friends being fresh in his mind to tax his ingenuity, **"he thought often and seriously of picking huckleberries"**; which indeed would not be a very self-sacrificing occupation, and certainly has its agreeable features. The difficulty is, the season of huckleberries is short, the demand limited, and it requires so little capital of head or pocket that,—if it would pay,—it would soon be overstocked. We fear it would not be adequate to the support of a family in respectability, and that if it could be generally adopted, much of what is valuable in the present system of society, school-houses, churches, lyceums, architecture, opera, and generally all costly things, would go by the board. However this may be, for more than five years Mr. THOREAU supported himself by about six weeks' labor of his hands *per annum*; and the conclusion to which he came was "a conviction both by faith and experience, that to maintain one's self on this earth is not a hardship, but a pastime, if we will live simply and wisely, **as the pursuits of the simpler nations are still the sports of the more artificial,**" which is a point in illustration exceedingly well made, and is really a poetical defence of the author's theory. He adds, "It is not necessary that a man should earn his living by the sweat of his brow, unless he sweats easier than I do." Mr. THOREAU is thus at war with the political economy of the age. It is his doctrine that the fewer wants man has the better; while in reality civilization is the spur of many wants. To give a man a new want is to give him a new pleasure and conquer his habitual rust and idleness.

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The greater his needs and acquisitions, the greater his safety; since he may fall back from one advance post to another, as he is pressed by misfortune, and still keep the main citadel untouched. He may give up his couch and still keep his gig; resign his Madeira and retain at least his small beer; if he fails as an orator he may be eloquent in the parlor or the school-room; a condemned poet may cut down into a profitable prose-writer; the bankrupt citizen may become a proud villager. He has, by his devotion to luxury, the fostering of his spiritual appetites, his deference to the standards set up about him, interposed a long series of steps, which he may gradually descend, before he touches the bottom one, of starvation. As a general thing in the world, the people who aim at most get most. The philosophical negation keeps no account in the bank and starves. Nay, it keeps robbing itself till from him that hath not is taken away even that which he hath. In the woods, on the edge of a fine pond, aloof from markets and amusements, our author begins to doubt even of his favourite and ultimate resource of fishing. Life and reality seem oozing out of his feeble grasp, and he holds to the world only by the slender filament of a metaphysical whim. Says he in his chapter on the "higher laws":

[Reprints "Higher Laws," pages 213.33-214.35.]

With the preparation in his experiences which we have alluded to, Mr. THOREAU, in the spring of 1845, borrowed an axe, and set forth to level a few trees, for the site of a house, on the edge of Walden pond, in a wood near Concord. He did not own the land, but was permitted to enjoy it. He dropped a few pines and hewed timbers, and for boards bought out the shanty of JAMES COLLINS, an Irishman who worked on the Fitchburg railroad, for the sum of four dollars, twenty-five cents. From his allusion, he was assisted, we presume, in the raising, by EMERSON and other friendly literary celebrities of the region. Starting early in the spring, long before winter he had secured, with the labour of his hands, "a tight shingled and plastered house, ten feet wide by fifteen long, and eight feet posts, with a garret and a closet, a large window on each side, two trap doors, one door at the end and a brick fire-place opposite." The exact cost of the house is given:

[Reprints "Economy," page 49.3-26.]



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The rest of the account is curious, and will show "upon what meats CAESAR fed," that he has interested the world so greatly in his housekeeping:

[Reprints "Economy," pages 58.33-60.32.]

He had nothing further to do after his "family baking," which, the family consisting of a unit, could not have been large or have come round very often, than to read, think and observe. HOMER was his favourite book; the thinking was unlimited, and the observation that of a man with an instinctive tact for the wonders of natural history. On this last point we cannot give the author too high praise. He has a rare felicity of sight and description, which IZAAK WALTON would have approved of and ALEXANDER WILSON envied. To many of his moral speculations we could take exceptions. He carries his opposition to society too far. A self-pleasing man should have a more liberal indulgence for the necessities of others, and something more cheerful to tell the world than of its miseries. We should be sorry to think this a true picture of the "industrial classes":

[Reprints "Economy," pages 6.25-7.35.]

And again:

[Reprints "Economy," pages 37.17-38.11 and 38.27-32.]

We are all wrong, it seems, and had better go back to savage life. The "lendings" of society and civilization are all impediments. The railroad is a humbug, the post-office an absurdity, for there are really no letters worth reading, it is "a penny for your thoughts": all "mud and slush of opinion and prejudice and tradition and delusion and appearance,—alluvion which covers the globe, through Paris and London, through New York and Boston and Concord, through Church and State, through poetry, philosophy, and religion." Rising to transcendental emotion, our author exclaims,

**[Reprints "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,"
page 98.19-30.]**

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This excessive love of individuality and these constant Fourth-of-July declarations of independence, look very well on paper, but they will not bear the test of a practical examination. We say excessive, for there is no doubt there is such a thing as a neglect of a proper cultivation of a man's isolated, individual self. In many things "the world is too much with us"; the soul needs retirement, sequestration, repose. We are slaves to idle expenses, and "walk in a vain show." "Poor Richard" might come among us with profit and tell us how dearly we are paying for the whistle, and show us how much richer we might become, not by acquiring more but by wanting less. But let us look at Mr. THOREAU's contempt for the labouring of the harassed farmer. We may admit that the yoke is on his shoulder, as well as on the neck of his patient ox; but where is the condition of life which has not its yoke of some fashion or other? We cannot all be philosophers, or affect the pleasures of a hermit life in the wilderness. Even "the mean and sneaking fellows," whom THOREAU, in the kindness of his sublimated philanthropy, so tenderly describes, have their little compensations of pleasure and satisfaction, and no doubt frequently pitied the recluse of Walden at his lone habitation in the wood. **His** pleasure, stretched out on a piece of damp turf, displacing with his frame huge shoals of insect life, and gazing intently on space in an arduous endeavour to think that he is thinking; this sort of enjoyment would be simple misery to the "swinkt hedger," the poor unthinking clown, who

like a lackey, from the rise to set,
Sweats in the eye of Phoebus, and all night
Sleeps in Elysium; next day, after dawn,
Doth rise and help Hyperion to his horse;
And follows so the ever-running year,
With profitable labour, to his grave.

The man of toil, with all his woes, has probably the common permanent consolation of humanity, he does not toil always, and with the sterile harvest of his fields he reaps, too, some bounties of friendly countenances in his little sphere of society, the treasures, perhaps, of wife and children; and though he is sublimely unconscious of Eddas and Zendavestas, he can read his Bible—the best book which any sage has in his library—and learn from it that there is a felicity in labouring patiently and cheerfully in one's vocation, and doing one's duty in that state of life in which it has pleased GOD to call us. Retiring from civilized life, in a vain attempt to escape its ills, must be the casual chance experiment of the few, and those few will hardly prosecute the work with any great degree of consistency.

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Even Mr. THOREAU, who loves the society of lizards and mosquitos, and can eat an acorn with as much zest as any man, cuts the pleasing connection after awhile, and hastens back to civilization, to secure the admiration of the very vicious public whose unprofitable heart-aches and barren pursuits he had, for the moment, abandoned. Why was not Mr. THOREAU satisfied with carving his elegies on the bark of trees, mingling his philosophic ejaculations with the wild laugh of the loon, or swelling the brimming flood of Walden Pond with his sympathetic tears? We hold that in publishing he has given up the whole argument. Seriously, he cannot expect many people to follow his example; comically, his experience is published as a curiosity, a piece of quaintness, an affectation for the simple amusement of a wicked world.

Look where the author's principles would carry him were we to listen to his suggestions, and follow this instinct of our nature for idleness and the wilderness. This day, if any, would be a favourable one for putting this experiment in operation. It is sleepy, heavily laden mid August, with a sultry temperature, and we are writing, surrounded by bricks and mortar, in a city which strangers are just now avoiding on suspicion of the lugubrious pestilence lurking in its atmosphere. We should certainly, on his showing, neither stay here to earn money to buy his book, or earn money by reviewing it: yet these are duties which he challenges us to perform, and one or other of which some considerable number of people must execute; or there will be no sale of "Walden," and the philosophic soul of THOREAU will be shaken at Concord, and the face of FIELDS, most beneficent of publishers, will lengthen, and when the author presents himself in Washington street to receive his six months' profits, the results will be small, and, instead of cash, he will be entertained with that most bitter of all receptions for an author, when his publishers take to analyzing his book—a critical proceeding which they never think of attempting unless the book is a failure; when one partner will say it was the too much Zoroaster, and infidelity in it which killed it; another will doubt whether the public cares very much about the infinitesimals of insect life, or is disposed to be imaginative on mosquitos, and a third, taking up the "Barclays of Boston," will venture the suggestion that Mr. THOREAU had better, after all, emigrate to Beacon street and write a book that will sell like that. From this fearful fate, we say, may this author be preserved! Yet he will owe it to the tender mercies and degraded toil of the civilization he despises, if he is.

We are not disposed to throw any unnecessary obstacles in the way of this author, but The Churchman would be reckless of its duty if it were not to ask the question why Mr. THOREAU so frequently throws doubt over and suggests a spirit of disaffection to the sacred Scriptures.

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There is not so much of this as in his previous book, The Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, but a little of this nonsense is quite too much: for example, "Our manners have been corrupted by communication with the saints. Our hymn-books resound with a melodious cursing of GOD and enduring Him forever. One would say that even the prophets and redeemers had rather consoled the fears than confirmed the hopes of man. There is nowhere recorded a simple and irrepressible satisfaction with the gift of life, any memorable praise of GOD." If we may credit the quotations of the writer of this unhappy passage, he enjoys a privileged literary intimacy with CONFUCIUS; if it would not be taken as an impertinence, we should like to ask if he has ever perused the Psalms of DAVID. The fact is, that the great discoveries and revelations of Mr. THOREAU'S solitude turn out to be very familiar affairs after all. Wriggle as he may among his scraps of SHEIK SADI and the VISHNU PURANA, he will find it difficult to bring forward anything of a sacred character, or illustrating human life, which is not included with tenfold more effect in the Bible. His aphorisms from these old oriental sources are frequently very happy; but it is the most pitiful affectation to use them as he occasionally does. Humour is not the author's highest faculty, but we may suspect the exercise at least of an ingenious pleasantry, when he treats us to this significant quotation. "Says the poet Mîr Camar Uddîn Mast, **'Being seated to run through the region of the spiritual world, I have had this advantage in books. To be intoxicated by a single glass of wine; I have experienced this pleasure when I have drunk the liquor of the esoteric doctrines.'**"

We may, after all, be looking at this matter too seriously. The author, in spite of his sarcasm and denunciations, is only playing the part of an individual humourist. He knows as much as any one how much he is indebted to civilization; and is only taking a view of life dramatically, as an on-looker for the moment. In this view he carries out the humour admirably. A book was published some years since, entitled "The Hermit in London," which, though it was quite successful, had not half the humour or philosophical amusement of this volume. Who but a man who had projected himself as it were into another state of being could see so clearly the humours of the village life.

THE VILLAGE.

[Reprints "The Village," pages 167.22-168.33.]



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There is some geniality in this, as there is in the sketch of the Homeric or Paphlagonian man who came along from Canada, who is thus introduced.

A CHARACTER.

[Reprints “Visitors,” pages 144.13-145.36.]

We could add to these pleasant extracts many of the natural history observations, which, as we have said, are the writer's *forte*. The agriculture, the woods, the life of the pond, are all eminently well described. He was fortunate one day to witness that remarkable sight, a battle between two forces of red and black ants, of which a rather poetical account, rivalling the combats of Turks and Russians, was once given by a M. HANHART, an improvement upon HUBER which LEIGH HUNT has pleasantly commented upon and the original of which may be found in the Edinburgh Journal of Science for 1828.



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Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) in the New-York Home Journal, 2:1.

Walden is the history of a year passed on the shores of a quiet New England lake. It abounds in pleasant pictures of forest life, enlivened by such incidents and adventures as befall a contemplative dweller in the woods. Incidents which, unimportant in themselves, go to make up the life of almost hermit-like retiracy which our author labours to depict. The seasons have each their novelty and charm, and the ever-varying aspect of the lake furnishes an endless theme for reflection and comment. No utterance of nature is void and trivial when listened to and sympathized with in the spirit that inspires the recluse of Walden Pond. The water-fowl come with the glowing leaves of autumn, and sport on the waters of the lake, and wing their way southward, to return in the spring; the wild pigeons wheel along the mountains, and the jay screams among the shrubs in the clearing; the red squirrel scampers and chatters over the roof, and the large-eyed hare burrows under the floor of the hut where the author, regardless of seasons, (or rather kindly regarding each,) lives a sort of half dreamy, half active life—part philosopher, part hunter, and husbandman. There is a wealth of pure sentiment, and a graphic minuteness of narrative and description in this work, that renders it, beyond doubt, among the most delightful of books. As a companion for a country ramble, or a book for city reading, where rural longings make up for realities, we have seldom met a better.

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) in Concord, New Hampshire State Capital Reporter, page 2, column 5.

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"WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS." This work, written by HENRY D. THOREAU, and published by MESSRS. TICKNOR & FIELDS, of Boston, a few weeks since, is one of sterling literary merit. It has the merit of *originality*. The author does his own thinking, and uses his own style of expression, which is appropriate, vigorous and beautiful. "Walden" has in it the essential elements of a grand Poem of life spent in the solitude of forests and beside beautiful waters. It is a poem in all except the rythmical [*sic*] arrangement of its words. The author writes in the fullness of the inspiration of genius, and has stored every page of his work with *thoughts*, as well as *words*. A pond of water, a bean-field, and a fight between two species of ants in a door-yard, would not be reckoned by the heedless world as matters of much importance, but the thinking, observing and poetic mind of the author of "Walden," seems much in them, and has found in them themes for pages of most fascinating description. We have wondered at the acuteness of observation manifested by the writer, who seemed to see and hear *everything* in the world of nature around him, and which faculty seems equalled by his powers of expressing, with intelligibility, his ideas thus obtained by observation. The scene of this work is in the woods of Concord, Mass., upon the shores of Walden Pond, where, for two years and upwards, the author dwelt in a house built by his own hands, supporting himself by his own labor, and who chose this retiracy that he might the better commune with Nature in her own solitary retreats. This work will bear reading — indeed, we doubt, if many will be able by a single perusal to gain a full conception of its beauties. It can be found at any of the bookstores here, we presume.

We may presume that this very perceptive but anonymous review must have been composed by the editor of the paper, Cyrus Barton.

The following appears on an inside cover page of the manuscript journal volume that ends with this day's entry (no facsimiles of these prior manuscript pages have as yet been made available on the internet):

"My faults are: — Paradoxes, — saying just the opposite, — a style which may be imitated."



Sept. 2. The second still, misty, mizzling and rainy day. We all lie abed late. Now many more sparrows in the yard, larger than chip-birds and showing ashy under sides as they fly. A *part* the same as yesterday's. Are they Savannahs, or bay-wings, or both? I see but the *slightest touch* of white in the tail of any. Those clear ashy beneath are cinereous about the shoulders above. A tree sparrow too? though I do not see the spot. [Heard a faint warble from one the next afternoon at about 6P.M. on apple trees.]

Opened one of my snapping turtle's eggs. The young alive, but not very lively, with shell dark grayish-black; yolk as big as a hazelnut; tail curled round and is considerably longer than the shell, and slender; three ridges on back, one at edges of plates on each side of dorsal, which is very prominent. There is only the trace of a dorsal ridge in the old. Eye open. [*Vide* next page.]

[Transcript]





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P.M. — By boat to Purple Utricularia Shore.

Still and cloudy, all shut in, but no rain. The flags are turned yellow along the river, quite an autumnal scene, with commonly a strip of green left in their centres. The sparganium not changed. The pontederias, half of them, are brown and crisp. Of pads, only the white lily are conspicuous. The button-bushes are generally yellowing, *i.e.*, are of an autumnal yellowish green. The black willows are decidedly crisped and yellowish. The interrupted fern begins to yellow. The autumnal dandelion is conspicuous on the shore. How handsome ripe grapes with the bloom on them! This rubbed off, they show purple or black. I find some quite sweet which have ripened on a rock. They are a noble fruit to the eye. The waxwork is fairly yellow on all hands. Now is the time to gather it. Ivy leaves on some plants are yellow, scarlet, and dull-red besides green.

I see white lilies wide open at 2.30 P.M. They are half open even at 5 P.M. in many places this moist cloudy day and thus late in their season. Still a few pontederias also. I see dogbane still in flower. The *Bidens Beck-ii* is oftenest eaten (?) off just below the blossom. Saw what I think must be a solitary wood (?) duck. Started it several times, driving it before me up the river, getting within twenty rods. It uttered a shrill quacking each time. Bathed at Hubbard's. The water is surprisingly cold on account of the cool weather and rain, but especially since the rain of yesterday morning. It is a very important and remarkable autumnal change. It will not be warm again probably.

To my great surprise I find this morning (September 3d) that the little unhatched turtle, which I thought was sickly and dying, and left out on the grass in the rain yesterday morn, thinking it would be quite dead in a few minutes - I find the shell alone and the turtle a foot or two off vigorously crawling, with neck outstretched (holding up its head and looking round like an old one) and feet surmounting every obstacle. It climbs up the nearly perpendicular side of a basket with the yolk attached. They thus not only continue to live after they are dead, but begin to live before they are alive!

Are those large rigid green clusters the dried fertile flowers of the black ash? The keys are formed and appear ripe.

The moderate mizzling rain of yesterday and to-day is the first (excepting the slight shower in the eve of the 26th ult.) since that moderate one of August 4th. Yet this brings down leaves, cools the rivers and ponds, and brings back ducks and other migratory birds. I see two or three large plump sparrows hopping along on the button-bushes and eating the mikania blossoms, sometimes perching on the lower mossy stems and uttering a faint chip, with crown distinctly divided by a light line and another light line over eye, light throat and vent, ashy (?) breast and beneath, without spot. Is it not the white-throated sparrow?

Observed a large clam at the Bath Place, where they have not gone down, — apparently quite old, with a sort of wart-like protuberances, as if the shell were worn into hollows while the harder parts were prominent. The shell, where worn, green, the end shaggy with a kind of moss or alga. A sort of *Aster longifolius*, some days by Mill Brook on Lowell road, but with not long, loose, green-tipped scales, *i.e.* not squarrose. Call this *A. tenuifolius* for present. (It may be *carneus*.)

Two-leaved Solomon's-seal berries red.

I have not allowed enough probably for the smoke mixed with the haze in the late drought. The fires in woods and meadows have been remarkably numerous and extensive all over the country, the earth and vegetation have been so dry, especially along railroads and on mountains and pine plains. Some meadows are said to have been burned three feet deep! On some mountains it burns all the soil down to the rock. It catches from the locomotive, from sportsmen's wadding, and from burning brush and peat meadows. In all villages they smell smoke, especially at night. On Lake Champlain, the pilots of steamboats could hardly see their course, and many complained that the smoke made their eyes smart and affected their throats. Bears, it is said, have in some instances been compelled to migrate.

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September 3, Sunday: The 16th anniversary of [Frederick Douglass](#)'s freedom, which we may well elect to celebrate in lieu of **an unknown slave birthday**.

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

Sunday or not, when Chief Little Thunder, the successor to Brave Bear as headman of the Brulé band of approximately 250, gathered his tribespeople together as part of a surrender process, the troops under General William S. Harney were ordered to open fire on them and many of the band were slaughtered.

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"...the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions."

— Declaration of Independence



"To my great surprise I find this morning that the little unhatched turtle, which I thought was sickly and dying, and left out on the grass in the rain yesterday morn, thinking it would be quite dead in a few minutes — I find the shell alone and the turtle a foot or two off vigorously crawling, with neck outstretched (holding up its head and looking round like an old one) and feet surmounting every obstacle. It climbs up nearly perpendicular side of a basket with yolk attached. They thus not only continue to live after they are dead, but they begin to live before they are alive." Tortoise Eggs In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Minot Pratt](#) went into [Carlisle](#).



Sunday Sep. 3d '54 Fair weather & a clear atmosphere after 2 days of mizzling — cloudy & rainy weather — & some smart showers at daylight & in the night. The street is washed hard & white.

[Transcript]

Pm — With Minott Pratt into Carlisle. Woodbine berries purple. X Even at this season I see some flets of yellow butterflies in the damp road after the rain; as earlier. Pratt showed me a tobacco-flower long & tubular — slightly like a datura. In his yard ap. a new variety of sweet briar which he took out of the woods behind his house — larger bush & leaves — leaves less glandular & sticky beneath — the principal serrations deeper & much sharper — & the whole leaf perhaps less rounded. Saw some winged ants silvering a circular space in the pasture grass about 5 inches in diameter — ~~some~~ a few very large ones among them. Very thick & incessantly moving — one upon another — some without wings — all running about in great excitement — It seemed the object of the winged ones to climb to the top of the grass blades one over another & then take to wing — which they did. In the meadow SW of Hubbards Hill saw white polygala sanguinea, not described. Lambkill again in Hunt pasture. Close to the left hand side of Bridle road — about 100 rods S of the Oak a bay-berry bush without fruit — prob. a male one. It made me realize — that this was only a more distant & elevated sea beech — and that we were within reach of marine influences. My thoughts suffered a sea turn. N. of the oak (4 or 5 rods) on the left of the bridle road in the pasture next to Masons tried to find the white hardhack still out — but it was too late. Found the mt Laurel out again 1 flower close [[^]sessile] on end of this years shoot — There were numerous blossom buds expanding & they may possibly open this fall. Running over the laurel an amphicarpaea in bloom — some pods nearly an inch long — out prob. a week or 10 days at most. Epilobium molle [[^]linear] still in flower in the spruce swamp — near my path. A white hardhack out of bloom by a pile of stones on which I put another in Robbins' field & a little south of it a clump of red huckleberries.

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September 4, Monday: Italian soprano Giulia Grisi performed opera selections at [New-York](#)'s Castle Garden.

“I have provided my little snapping turtle with a tub of water and mud, and it is surprising how fast he learns to use his limbs and this world. He actually runs, with the yolk still trailing from him, as if he had got new vigor from contact with the mud. The insensibility and toughness of his infancy makes our life, with its disease and low spirits, ridiculous. He impresses me as the rudiment of a man worthy to inhabit the earth. He is born with a shell. That is symbolical of his toughness. His shell being so rounded and sharp on the back at this age. He [*sic*??] can turn over without trouble.” Tortoise Eggs In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to climbing fern, and at 7:30 PM he went by boat to Fair Haven Bay (Gleason J7).

Thoreau and other Concordians had lent [Michael Flannery](#) enough money to enable him to send for his wife Ann and children from Ireland, and Flannery was still repaying this advance by passing on to Thoreau three-quarters of the wages he was earning from Elijah Wood. On this day [Waldo Emerson](#) made an entry in his account book that the latest payment, of \$2.⁵⁰, left a balance due of \$2.⁵⁰ on the funds that Emerson himself had advanced:

Sept. 4 Recd. from Henry Thoreau on a/c of cash loaned
to Mr. Flanery [*sic*] last year 2.50
balance still due 2.50

THOREAU ON THE IRISH

Dr. Bradley P. Dean has expressed the considered opinion on the basis of his research, that “It is likely that Emerson and a few others who had signed the subscription paper Thoreau had circulated on October 12, 1853, had lent Flannery a sum of money that was insufficient for his need, and that Thoreau had lent Flannery the difference. There is evidence that Michael worked for Mr. Thoreau’s [graphite](#) business, and he very likely did so to earn money to pay off what must have been his substantial debts to Thoreau, Emerson, and his other neighbors. But Flannery’s debt to Thoreau was, of course, more than money alone could repay, and this debt continued to mount. When Ann Flannery and her brood arrived from Ireland, the first house they went to was the Thoreaus’ house on Main Street in Concord. There is no record of how long the Flannerys boarded with the Thoreaus before Michael was able to find accommodations for them elsewhere.”



Monday Sep 4th A multiflorus XXX Observed the undersides of a shrub willow by the river lit by the rays of the rising sun—shining like silver or dew drops— Yet when I stood nearer & looked down on them at a different angle they were quite dull.

[Transcript]

I have provided my little snapping turtle with a tub of water & mud—& it is surprising how fast he learns to use his limbs & this world. He actually runs [[^]with the yolk still trailing from him]. The insensibility & as if he had got new vigor from contact with the mud.

toughness of his infancy—make our life with its disease & low spirits ridiculous— He impresses me as the rudiment of a man worthy to inhabit the earth. He is born with a shell— That is symbolical of his toughness. His shell being so rounded & sharp on the back at this age he can turn over without trouble.

Pm to Flowering [written and then canceled in pencil: Climbing] Fern—

Polyg. articulatum ap 3 or 4 days— In the wood paths I find a great many of the cast-steel soap galls—more or less fresh—[[^]some are saddled on the twigs] They are now dropping from the shrub oaks. Is not Art itself a gall? Nature is stung by God & the seed of man planted in her— The artist changes the direction of nature—& makes her grow according to his idea. If the gall was anticipated when the oak was made—so was the canoe when the birch was made. Genius stings nature & she grows according to its idea.

7 1/2 To F.H.P by boat — full moon [vertical pencil line through word] — bats flying about. [[^]skaters &] water bugs? like sparks [3] of fire on the surface between us & the moon The high shore above the RR bridge was very simple & grand—1st the bluish sky with the moon & a few brighter stars—then {drawing} the near high level bank—like a distant mountain ridge or a dark cloud in the E horizon—then its reflection in the water—making it double—& finally the glassy water—& the sheen in 4 one spot on the white lily pads— Some willows for relief in the distance on the right. It was Ossianic.

(I noticed this afternoon that bubbles would not readily form on the water—& soon burst forth on account of

the late rains which have changed its quality. There is prob. less stagnation & scum scum— It is less adhesive [large bracketing mark around “adhesive”].)

A fine transparent mist Lily bay seemed as wide as a lake— you referred the shore back to the clam shell hills— The mere edge which a flat shore presents makes no [vertical pencil line from here through line beginning “moon &...”] [“in” blotted] distinct impression on the [vertical pencil line runs length of page] eye—& if seen at all appears as the base of the distant hills— Commonly a slight mist yet more conceals it. The dim [^low] shore but a few rods distant is seen as the base of the [^distant] hills whose distance you know— The low shore, if not entirely concealed by the low mist—is seen against the distant hills & passes for their immediate base. For the same reason hills near the water appear much more steep than they are. We hear a faint metallic chip from a sparrow on the button bushes or willows now & then. Rowse was struck by the simplicity of nature now— The sky the greater part [vertical pencil line through “part”]—then a little dab of earth— & after some water near you. Looking up the reach beyond Clam [“Clam” altered from lower case (see “Shell”)] Shell—the moon on our east quarter—its sheen was reflected for half a mile from the pads & the rippled water next them on that side—while the willows lined the shore in indistinct black masses—like trees made with India ink— (without distinct branches) & it looked like a sort of Broadway with the sun reflected from its pavements. Such willows might be made with soot or smoke merely—lumpish with fine edges. Meanwhile Fair H. Hill [horizontal pencil line under word runs into margin] *seen blue through the [11] [transparent] mist*—was as large & imposing as Wachusett—& we seemed to be approaching the Highlands of the river. A mt pass. Where the river had burst through mts. A high mt would be no more imposing.

Now I began to hear owls—screech (?) owls at a distance up stream—but we hardly got nearer to them as if they retreated before us— At length when off Wheelers grape & cranberry meadow we heard one near at hand. The rythm of it was *pe-pe-ou* [^this once or twice repeated] but more of a squeal— & somewhat human. Or do not all strange sounds thrill us as human—till we have learned to refer them to their proper source. They appeared to answer one another half a mile apart—could be heard from far woods a mile off.

The wind has risen & the echo is poor—it does not reverberate up & down the river— No sound of a bullfrog, but steadily the [^mole] cricket (like—*rana palustris*) along shore.

Rowse heard a whippoorwill at Sleepy Hollow tonight. No scent of muskrats.

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September 5, Tuesday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went up the Assabet River to Samuel Barrett’s Pond (Gleason D5), and bathed at the swamp white oak.



Sep 5th '54 Were those plump birds which looked somewhat like robins crossing the river yesterday Pm —Golden plover—? I heard the upland plover note at same time, but these were much stouter birds. The dangle-berries—are now the only Whortle berries which are quite fresh. The feverwort berries began to turn about a fortnight ago. Now quite yellow.

Pm Up Assabet to Sam Barrets Pond.

The river rising {distinctly} The river weeds are now much decayed—almost all pads but the white lily have disappeared[^& they are thinned]— As I wade I trod on the great roots only & in mid stream those dense beds of weeds of the yellow lily– are so much thinned (Potamogetons—heart-leaf—sparganium—&c &c—) as to give one the impression of the river having risen—though it is not more than 6 inches higher on ac— of the rain. I see now against the edge of the pads on each side of the stream a floating wreck—of weeds, [^at first] almost exclusively the sparganium (minor)— The 1st contribution to the river wrack! stood [^so thick] in mid stream. [^which]These ap. become rotten or loose—(though they are still green) and the wind & water wash them to one side. [“These ... side.” circled and canceled in pencil]

They form floating masses of wreck— & [“&” canceled in pencil] a few [^small siums & {I observe} that also] pontederias are already mixed

The Potamogetons are much decayed & washed & blown into a snarl with them. The stream must be fullest & no longer cover the surface with a smooth green shield—nor do the heartleaf of weeds & most verdurous—

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(Potamogetons heartleaf—sparganium &c) when the brin brink is in perfection. [pencil line begins over “phenomenon” on the next line and goes over “This is...” through rest of line]

This is a fall phenomenon. The river weeds [vertical pencil line through word][^become rotten—though many are still green] fall or are loosened.

the water rises—the winds [vertical pencil line from here through following line] come & they are drifted to the shore—& the water is cleared. [horizontal pencil line under this line runs width of page]

During the drought I used to see Sam Wheeler’s men carting hogsheads of water from the river to water his shrubbery. They drove into the river—& naked all but a coat & hat—they dipped up the water with a pail—though a shiftless, it looked like an agreeable labor that hot weather—

Bathed at the Swamp— white oak— [^The water warmer again than I expected] one of these [^larger] oaks is stript nearly bare by the caterpillars. Cranberry-raking is now fairly [pencil line through “fairly”] begun. The very bottom of the river there is loose & crumbly with saw dust. I bring up the coarse *bits* of wood (waterlogged) between my feet. I see much thistle down without the seed 20 floating on the river— Saw a humming bird about a cardinal flower—over the water’s edge— Just this side the rock the water near the shore & pads is quite white [^for 20 rods as with a white sawdust] with the exuviae of small insects mixed with scum & weeds about 1/8 of an inch long—[^ap. like the green lice on birches]—though they want the long antennae of the last— —Yet I suspect did not the rain destroy them? [^they are the same—] What others are so plenty? I see as often before, a dozen doves on the rock—ap for coolness— which fly before me. *Polyg amphibium* va *terrestre* ap. in prime. I find some *Zizania* grains ps almost black. See a chip bird. See many galls thickly clustered & saddled about the twigs of some young swamp white oaks— dome shaped [^hold on all winter] (with grubs in middle)— —



reddish green A pretty large tupelo on a rock behind Sam Barrets. some [pencil line through “some” and “brilliant scarlet” on following line] of its leaves a very deep & brilliant scarlet—equal to any leaves in this respect. Some waxwork [pencil line through “waxwork” and “green” on following line] leaves variegated greenish yellow & dark green— His Pond has been almost completely dry—more than he ever knew—& is still mostly so— The muddy bottom is exposed high & dry half a dozen rods wide & half covered with great drying yel— & white lily pads & stems— He improves the opportunity to skim off the fertile deposit for his compost heap— Saw some button bush balls going to seed which were really quite a rich red over a green base.— especially in this evening light. They are commonly greener—& much duller reddish— Barrett shows me some very handsome [vertical pencil line from here through line beginning “the common...”] pear-shaped cranberries not uncommon which may be a permanent var. dif. from the common rounded ones.



Saw two pigeons [American Passenger Pigeons *Ectopistes migratorius*] which flew about his pond & then lit on the elms over his [Samuel Barrett’s] house—he said they had come to drink from Brooks’ as they often did. He sees a blue heron there almost every morning of late— Such is the place for them. A soapwort gentian by river—remarkably early?— The top has been bitten off! I hear the tree-toad today.


Now at sundown A blue heron flaps away from his perch on an oak over the river before me just above the rock— Hear locusts after sundown.

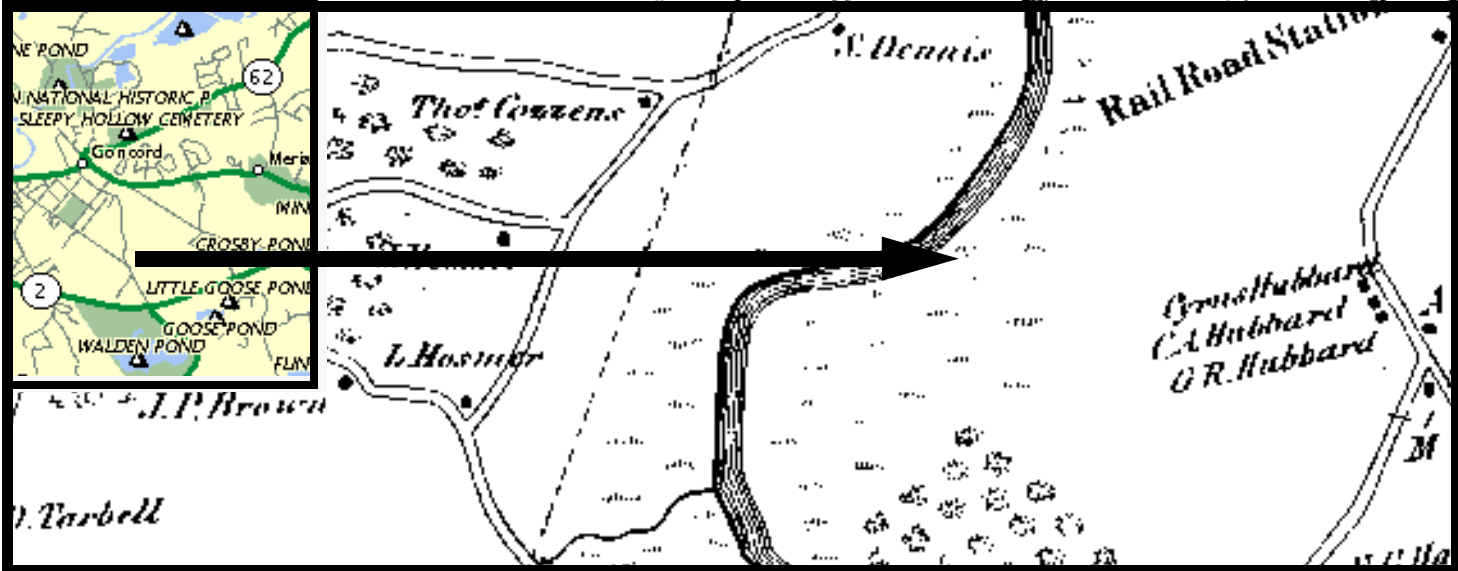
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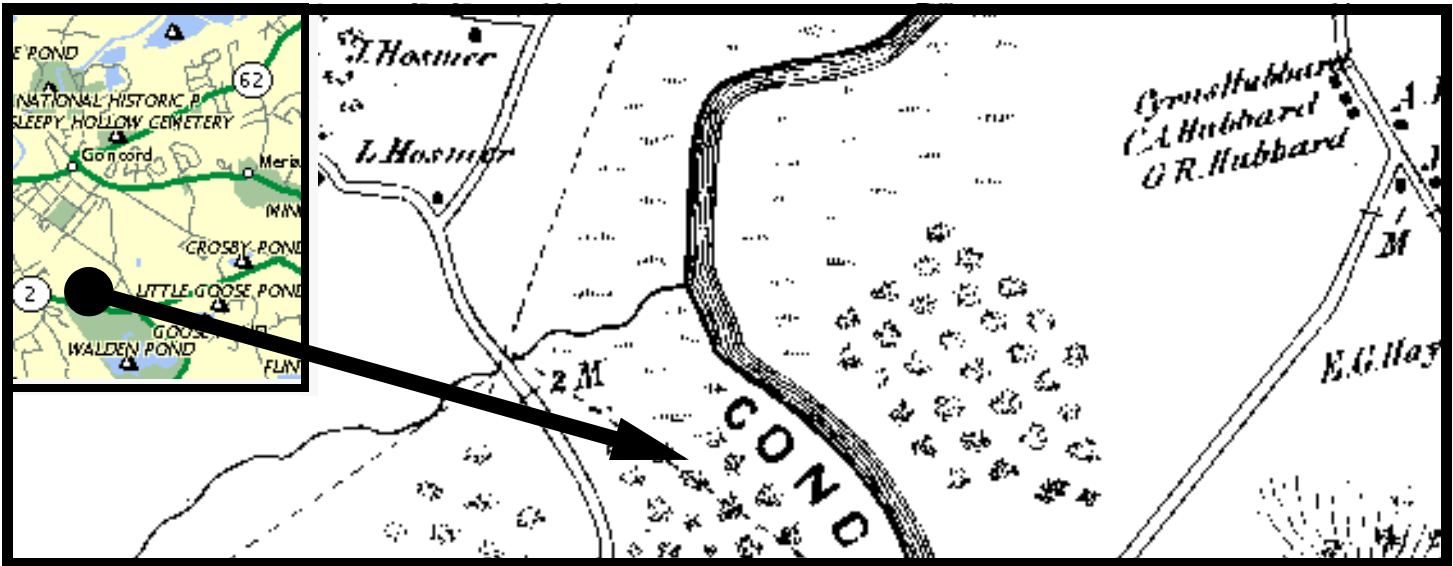
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 September 6, Wednesday: At 6 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Nawshawtuct or Lee's Hill (Gleason F6) and in the afternoon he went to Hubbard's Bath



and then crossed the river to the Hollowell Farm (Gleason 64/H5).



Under the heading "Recent Publications," a review of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS appeared on columns

3-4 of page 2 of the Dover NH Morning Star:



Messrs. Ticknor, Reed and Fields have issued a unique book, entitled, "Walden, or Life in the Woods." It is from the pen of Mr. Henry D. Thoreau, who built him a little cabin on the banks of Walden Pond, in Massachusetts, and for some two or three years pursued a very primitive style of living. The book is a record of his doings and thinkings during that time; and has a spice of style and genius which often beguiles the reader on, he can hardly tell why. It forcibly illustrates how fictitious and unreal are many of even our supposed necessities; and on this account is to be hailed as a valuable contribution to our literature. But it is wanting in any earnest purpose; life seems to him altogether a thing to be played with, and thrown away when it fails — as under circumstances it will, and besides contains some sentiments at war not only with society as it is, but as it should be. To those who are given to reflection, and who can properly both guard against error and sift out the wheat from the chaff, it will prove a profitable as well as pleasant book.

William M. White's version is:


*We feel the rush of the cool wind
While the thunder is yet scarcely audible.*

*The flashes are, in fact, incessant for an hour or more,
Though lighting up different parts of the horizon,—
Now the edges of the cloud,
Now far along the horizon,—
Showing a clearer golden space
Beneath the cloud where rain is falling,
Through which stream tortuously to earth
The brilliant bolts.
It is a visible striking or launching of bolts
On the devoted villages.*

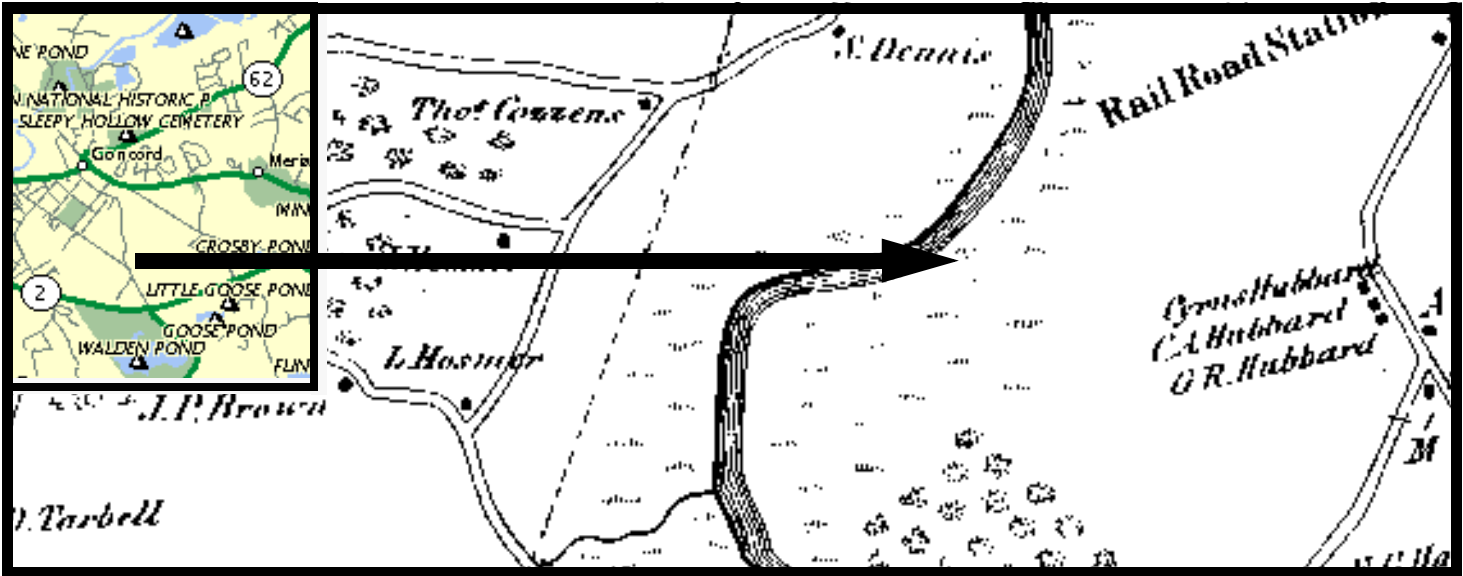
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Beneath the cloud where it rains,
Like fiery snakes or worms,.
Like veins in the eye.*

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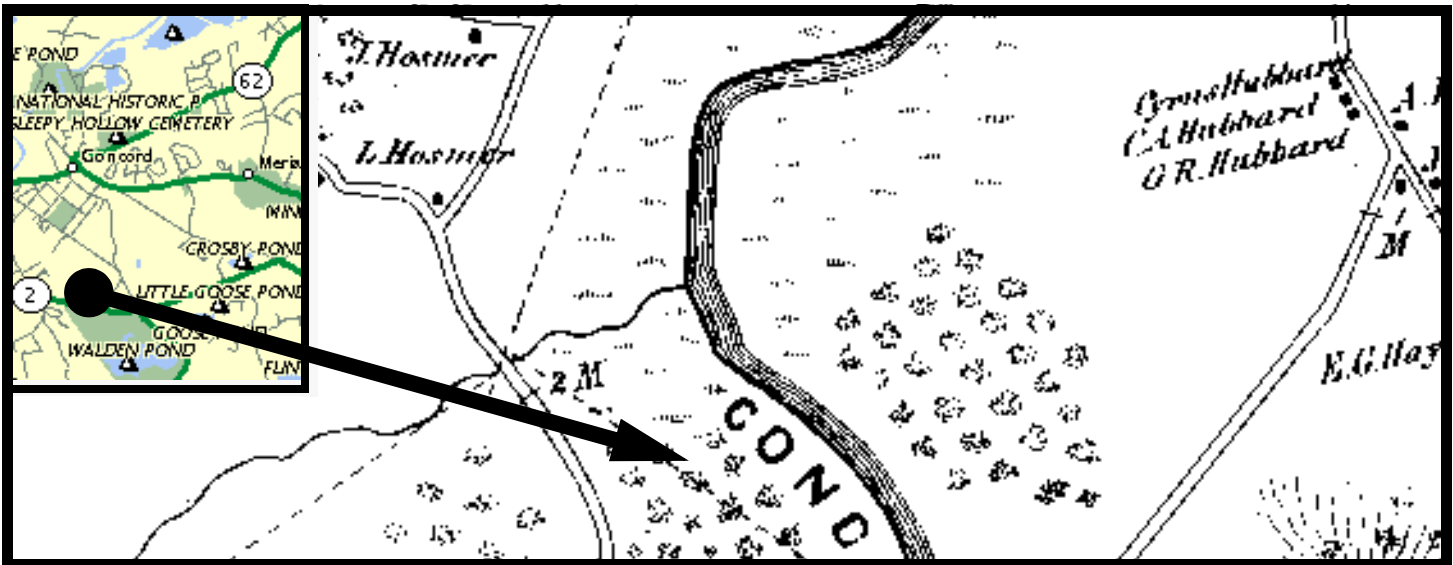
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 September 6, Wednesday: In Rochester, [New York](#), the flour merchant Wickens Killick, in his late 30s, died of [cholera](#) (within a 10-day period the disease would also claim his wife, sons 7 and 11 years of age, his father-in-law Mr. Watkins, his mother-in-law Mrs. Watkins, a brother, and a servant girl to the family.)

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*.It crinkles through the clear yellow portion
Beneath the cloud where it rains,
Like fiery snakes or worms,.
Like veins in the eye.*

WALDEN: O Baker Farm!

“Landscape where the richest element
Is a little sunshine innocent.” * *

“No one runs to revel
On thy rail-fenced lea.” * *

“Debate with no man hast thou,
With questions art never perplexed,
As tame at the first sight as now,
In thy plain russet gabardine dressed.” * *

“Come ye who love,
And ye who hate,
Children of the Holy Dove,
And Guy Faux of the state,
And hang conspiracies
From the tough rafters of the trees!”



Sep 6th 6 Am to Hill—the sun is rising directly over the E [^{mag. E}] end of the street. Not yet the Equinox. I hear a faint warbling vireo on the elms still—in the morning. My little turtle taken out of the shell Sep 2nd has a shell 1 7/40 inch long or 4/40 longer than the diameter of the egg shell—to say nothing of head & tail— Warm weather again & sultry nights the last 2. The last a splendid moon light & quite warm. I am not sure that I have seen bobolinks for 10 days—nor blackbirds since aug. 28th 9+ pm There is now approaching from the W. one of the heaviest thundershowers—apparently—& with the most incessant flashes that I remember to have seen. It must be 20 miles off at least for I can hardly hear the thunder at all. The almost incessant flashes reveal the form of the cloud—at least the upper & lower edge of it—but it stretches N & S along the horizon further than we see— Every minute I see the crinkled lightning intensely bright dart to earth—or forkedly along the cloud— It does not always dart direct to earth but sometimes [Followed by a mark that might be a canceled period or comma.] very crookedly like the bough of a tree {drawing} The forked thunderbolt [written as a caption under drawing] or along the cloud forkedly— It seems like a tremendous dark battery bearing down on us, with an incessant fire kept up behind it. And each time ap— it strikes the earth or something on it with terrific violence. We feel the rush of the cool wind while the thunder is yet scarcely audible. The flashes were in fact incessant for an hour or more though lighting up dif. parts of the horizon—now the edges of the cloud— now far along the horizon— showing a clearer golden space [^{beneath the cloud}] where rain is falling. through which stream tortuously to earth the brilliant bolts. It is a visible striking or launching of bolts on the devoted villages. It crinkles through the clear yellow portion beneath the cloud where it rains—like fiery snakes or worms —like veins in the eye. At first it was a small and very distant cloud in the SW horizon revealed by its own flashes 7 {th} —but it gradually advanced & extended— itself & united with others N & S along and the thunder began to be heard— & wind came &c the horizon²⁷ its rugged upper outline & its whole form revealed by the flashes—[^{& no thunder heard}] It seemed like a ship firing broad-sides²⁸ At last came the rain, but not heavy, nor the thunder loud—but the flashes were visible all around us.

[Transcript]

Before this in the Pm—to the Hollowell Place—via Hub— Bath crossing the river. A very warm day one of the warmest of the year— The water is again warmer than I should have believed—[^{say an average summer warmth}] yet not so warm as it has been. It makes me the more surprised that only that day & a half of rain should have made it so very cold when I last bathed here. Is not all our really hot weather always contained between the 20th of May & the middle of September?

The checker berries are just beginning to redden XXX The cinnamon ferns along the edge of woods next the meadow are [^{many}] yellow or cinnamon—or quite brown & withered.

The sarsaparilla leaves [vertical pencil line from here through line beginning “is yellow..”] —green—or reddish are spotted with yellow eyes centered with or dull reddish eye with yellow iris reddish.[^] They have a very pretty effect held over the forest floor—beautiful in their decay. The sessile leaved bell-wort is yellow green & brown all together or separately.



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Some white oak leaves are covered with dull yellow spots. Now ap. is the time to gather the clusters of shrub oak acorns before they drop. [^{to} adorn a shelf with] some however are ready to fall on account of the late drought— I see where the squirrels have eaten them (the ilicifolia) & left the shells on a stump. See galls on the chinquapin sessile on the stem spherical— & in ap. between that [“that” possibly altered from “the”] of yesterday on the swamp white oak & the cast steel-soap galls. I think I may say that large [pencil vertical line through line] sol-seal berries have begun to be red. I see no swallows now at Clam shell They have probably migrated. Still see the cracks in the ground, and no doubt shall till the snow comes. very few of the A undulatus this year & they late.

Some large roundish or [vertical pencil line through line] squarish vib. nudum berries—by fence bet. Hosmer spring & Lupine Hill near foot of hill—but I see no dif— bet the leaves &c & the others.

An A. longifolius like some days at Hosmer ditch with smaller flower[²⁷ rayed]—~~le~~ smaller scales—leaves A similar with flesh colored blossom & longer scales at [^A] Heywood ditch. ?A carneus for present^{rough} above & serrate & purple stem [^{rough}]—I will call it]. It may be a var of what I saw by Mill brook & called Tenuifolius—scales alike but that had smooth leaves.


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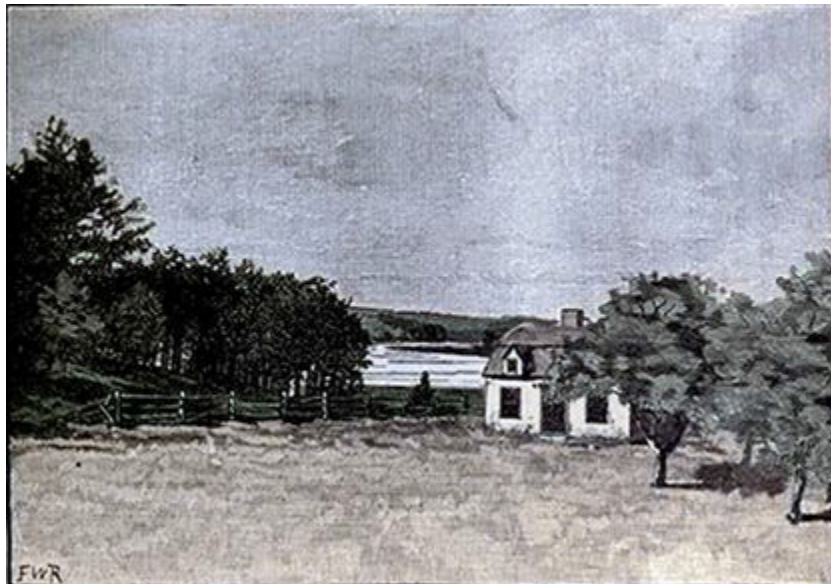
 September 7, Thursday: [Augustus Sabin Chase](#) got married with Martha Starkweather in Waterville, Ohio. The union would produce three sons and three daughters.

Senator Charles Sumner spoke on the slavery question at the Massachusetts state political convention in Worcester.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to J.B. Moore's swamp (Gleason E8) and [Walden Pond](#). Just after sunset,



by the light of an almost-full moon that had been full on the previous night, he and Ellery Channing paddled to [Baker Farm](#) (Gleason K7) and walked up to the old Baker house.



GOD IN CONCORD by Jane Langton © 1992

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*There are no larger fields than these, no worthier
games that may here be played.
Walden, "Baker Farm"*

Sarah Peel and her friends were homeless no longer. Seven trailers were quickly set up on the Hugh Cargill land, the

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Viking Penguin

Penguin Books USA Inc.

JAMES BAKER

WALDEN: O Baker Farm!

"Landscape where the richest element
Is a little sunshine innocent." * *

"No one runs to revel
On thy rail-fenced lea." * *

"Debate with no man hast thou,
With questions art never perplexed,
As tame at the first sight as now,
In thy plain russet gabardine dressed." * *

"Come ye who love,
And ye who hate,
Children of the Holy Dove,
And Guy Faux of the state,
And hang conspiracies
From the tough rafters of the trees!"



Sept. 7. Thursday. The rain of last night has brought down more leaves of elms and buttonwoods. P. M. - To Moore's Swamp and Walden. See some hips of the moss rose, very large and handsome, bright-scarlet, very much flattened globular. On the Walden road heard a somewhat robin-like clicking note. Looked round and saw one of those small slatecolored, black-tipped, white-rumped hawks skimming over the meadows

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with head down, at first. thirty feet high, then low till he appeared to drop into the grass. It was quite a loud clicketing sound.

Paddled to [Baker Farm](#) just after sundown, by full moon.

I suppose this is the Harvest Moon, since the sun must be in Virgo, enters Libra the 23d inst.

The wind has gone down, and it is a still, warm night, and no mist.

It is just after sundown. The moon not yet risen, one star, Jupiter (?), visible, and many bats over and about our heads, and small skaters creating a myriad dimples on the evening waters. We see a muskrat crossing, and pass a white cat on the shore. There are many clouds about and a beautiful sunset sky, a yellowish (dunnish?) golden sky, between them in the horizon, looking up the river. All this is reflected in the water. The beauty of the sunset is doubled by the reflection.

Being on the water we have double the amount of lit and dun-colored sky above and beneath. An elm in the yellow twilight loops very rich, as if moss- or ivy-clad, and a dark-blue cloud extends into the dun-golden sky, on which there is a little fantastic cloud like a chicken walking up the point of it, with its neck outstretched. The reflected sky is more dun and richer than the real one. Take a glorious sunset sky and double it, so that it shall extend downward beneath the horizon as much as above it, blotting out the earth, and [let] the lowest half be of the deepest tint, and every beauty more than before insisted on, and you seem withal to be floating directly into it. This seems the first autumnal sunset. The small skaters seem more active than by day, or their slight dimpling is more obvious in the lit twilight. A stray white cat sits on the shore looking over the water. This is her hour. A nighthawk dashes past, low over the water. This is what we had.

It was in harmony with this fair evening that we were not walking or riding with dust and noise through it, but moved by a paddle without a jar over the liquid and almost invisible surface, floating directly toward those islands of the blessed which we call clouds in the sunset sky. I thought of the Indian, who so many similar evenings had paddled up this stream, with what advantage he beheld the twilight sky. So we advanced without dust or sound, by gentle influences, as the twilight gradually faded away. The height of the railroad bridge, already high (more than twenty feet to the top of the rail), was doubled by the reflection, equalling that of a Roman aqueduct, for we could not possibly see where the reflection began, and the piers appeared to rise from the lowest part of the reflection to the rail above, about fifty feet.

We floated directly under it, between the piers, as if in mid-air, not being able to distinguish the surface of the water, and looked down more than twenty feet to the reflected flooring through whose intervals we saw the starlit sky.

The ghostly piers stretched downward on all sides, and only the angle made by their meeting the real ones betrayed where was the water surface.

The twilight had now paled (lost its red and dun) and faintly illumined the high bank. I observed no firefly this evening, nor the 4th. The moon had not yet risen and there was a half-hour of dusk, in which, however, we saw the reflections of the trees. Any peculiarity in the form of a tree or other object—if it leans one side or has a pointed top, for instance—is revealed in the reflection by being doubled and so insisted on. We detected thus distant maples, pines, and oaks, and they were seen to be related to the river as mountains in the horizon are by day.

Night is the time to hear; our senses took in every sound from the meadows and the village. At first we were disturbed by the screeching of the locomotive and rumbling of the cars, but soon were left to the fainter natural sounds,—the creaking of the crickets, and the little [Rana palustris](#) mole cricket (I am not sure that I heard it the latter part of the evening), and the shrilling of other crickets (?), the occasional faint lowing of a cow and the distant barking of dogs, as in a whisper. Our ears drank in every sound. I heard once or twice a dumping frog. This was while we lay off Nut Meadow Brook waiting for the moon to rise. She burned her way slowly through the small but thick clouds, and, as fast as she triumphed over them and rose over them, they appeared pale and shrunken, like the ghosts of their former selves. Meanwhile we measured the breadth of the clear cope over our heads, which she would ere long traverse, and, while she was concealed, looked up to the few faint stars in the zenith which is ever lighted. C. thought that these few faint lights in the ever-lit sky, whose inconceivable distance was enhanced by a few downy wisps of cloud, surpassed any scene that earth could show. When the moon was behind those small black clouds in the horizon, they had a splendid silver edging. At length she rose above them and shone aslant, like a ball of fire over the woods. It was remarkably clear to-night, and the water was not so remarkably broad therefore, and Fair Haven was not clothed with that blue veil like a mountain, which it wore on the 4th, but it was not till we had passed the bridge that the first sheen was reflected from the pads. The reflected shadow of the Hill was black as night, and we seemed to be paddling directly into it a rod or two before us, but we never reached it at all. The trees and hills were distinctly black between us and the moon, and the water black or gleaming accordingly. It was quite dry and warm. Above the Cliffs we heard only one or two owls at a distance, a hooting owl and a screech owl, and several whip-poor-wills. The delicious fragrance of ripe grapes was wafted to us by the night air, as we paddled by, from every fertile vine on the shore, and thus its locality was revealed more surely than by daylight. You might have thought you had reached the confines of Elysium. A slight zephyr wafted us almost imperceptibly into the middle of Fair Haven Pond, while we lay watching and listening. The sheen of the moon extended quite across the pond to us in a long and narrow triangle, or rather with concave sides like a very narrow Eddystone Lighthouse, with



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its base in the southwest shore, and we heard the distant sound of the wind through the pines on the hilltop. Or, if we listened closely, we heard still the faint and distant barking of dogs. They rule the night. Near the south shore disturbed some ducks in the water, which slowly flew away to seek a new resting-place, uttering a distinct and alarmed quack something like a goose.

We walked up to the old Baker house. in the bright moonlight the character of the ground under our feet was not easy to detect, and we did not know at first but we were walking on sod and not on a field laid down and harrowed. From the upland the pond in the moonlight looked looked blue, — as much so as the sky. We sat on the window-sill of the old house, thought of its former inhabitants, saw our bandit shadows down the cellar-way (C. had on a red flannel shirt over his thin coat, —since he expected it would be cold and damp,— and looked like one), listened to each sound, and observed each ray of moonlight through the cracks. Heard an apple fall in the little orchard close lay, while a whip-poor-will was heard in the pines.

Returning to the boat, saw a glow-worm in the damp path in the low ground. Returning later, we experienced better the weird-like character of the night, especially perceived the fragrance of the grapes and admired the fair smooth fields in the bright moonlight. There being no mist, the reflections were wonderfully distinct; the whole of Bittern Cliff with its grove was seen beneath the waves.

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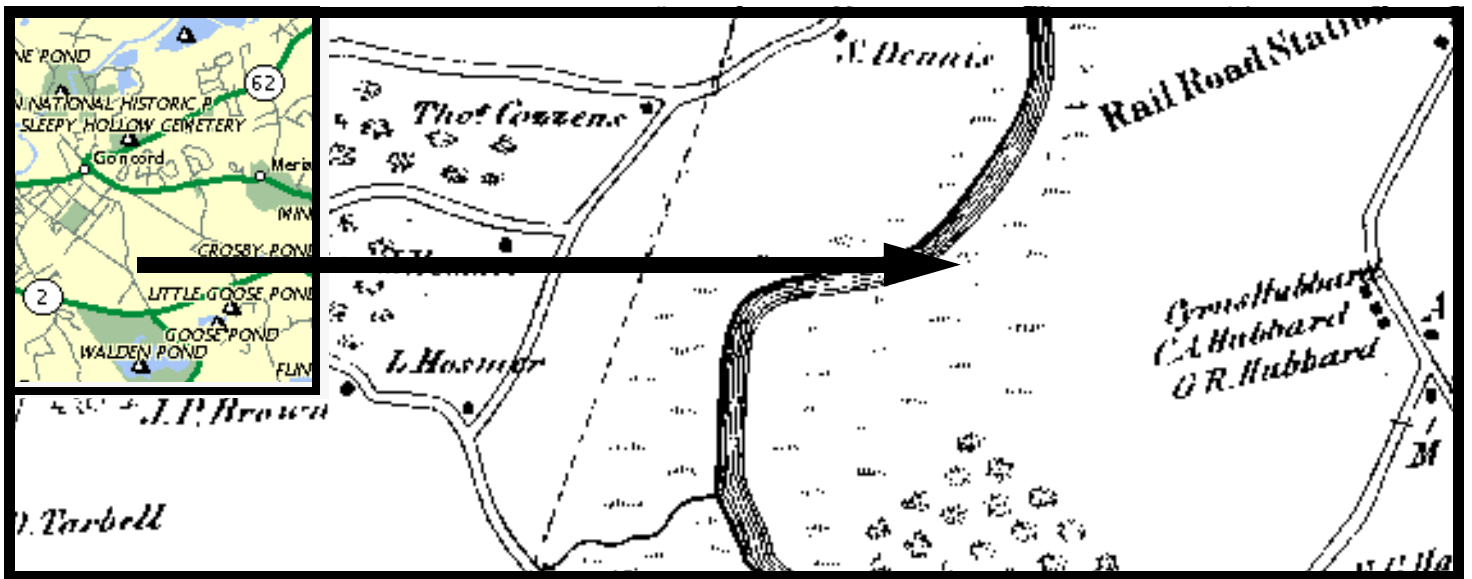
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September 8, Friday: After an assault lasting a week, Russian defenders of Petropavlovsk on Kamchatka repulsed a combined Anglo-French attack.

In the midst of a cholera epidemic in London, local officials removed the handle of a water pump on Broad Street. They had been convinced to do so by Dr. John Snow, whose epidemiological study concluded this was the source of the disease (Snow had been an advocate of the “bad water” theory as opposed to the prevailing “bad air” theory for the cause of cholera). The outbreak would subside.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went by boat to Hubbard’s Bath



and then, a-graping, under Fair Haven Hill (Gleason H7). He met and talked to Isaac Garfield, fishing off

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his shore. White's version of a journal entry is:

*Sometimes I crawl under low and thick bowers,
Where they have run over the alders
Only four or five feet high,
And see the grapes hanging
From a hollow hemisphere of leaves over my head.*

*At other times
I see them dark-purple or black
Against the silvery undersides of the leaves,
High overhead
Where they have run over birches or maples,
And either climb or pull them down
To pluck them.*

*The witch-hazel on Dwarf Sumach Hill
Looks as if it would begin to blossom in a day or two.*



Sept. 8. P.M. — To boat under Fair Haven Hill via Hubbard Bath, etc., a-graping.

The ivy at ivy tree is scarlet a quarter part. Saw one of my small slate-colored hawks of yesterday, sitting in the midst of the upland field beyond, like a crow. There is a great crop of *Viburnum nudum* berries this year. The green-briar berries not quite ripe. Clams still lie up.

The grapes would no doubt be riper a week hence, but I am compelled to go now before the vines are stripped. I partly smell them out. I pluck splendid great bunches of the purple ones, with a rich bloom on theca and the purple glowing through it like a fire; large red ones, also, with light clots, and some clear green. Sometimes I crawl under low and thick bowers, where they have run over the alders only four or five feet high, and see the grapes hanging from a hollow hemisphere of leaves over my head. At other times I see them dark-purple or black against the silvery undersides of the leaves, high overhead where they have run over birches or maples, and either climb or pull them down to pluck them. The witch-hazel on Dwarf Sumach Hill looks as if it would begin to blossom in a day or two.

Talked with Garfield, who was fishing off his shore. By the way, that shore might be named from him, for he is the genius of it, and is almost the only man. I ever see on that part of the river. He says that the two turtles, of one of which I have the shell, weighed together eighty-nine pounds. He saw one when he was a boy, which his father caught in Fair Haven Pond, which several who saw it thought would have weighed sixty pounds. That the biggest story he could tell. Referred to the year not long since when so many were found dead. There was one rotting right on that shore where we were, "as big as a tray." Once, he and another man were digging a ditch in a meadow in Waltham. (He thought it was the last of September or first of October -and that we did not see them put their heads out much later than this.) They found two mud turtles three feet beneath the surface and no hole visible by which they entered. They laid them out on the grass, but when they went to look for them again, one was lost and the other had buried himself in the meadow all but the tip of his tail.

He heard some years ago a large flock of brant go over "yelling" very loud, flying low and in an irregular dense flock like pigeons. He says the east shore of Fair Haven under the Hill is covered with Heron-tracks. One of his boys had seen marks where an otter had slid and eaten fish near the mouth of Pole Brook (my Bidens Brook). Remembered old people saying that this river used to be a great hunting-place a hundred years ago or more. A still stream with meadows, and the deer used to come out on it. Had heard an old Mr. Hosmer, who lived where E. Conant does, say that he had shot three dozen muskrats at one shot at Birch Island (the island at mouth of Fair Haven Pond). His father caught the great turtle while fishing and sent him up to the house on Baker's farm where a Jones lived, to get an axe to cut his head off. There were two or three risen - Luke Potter, who lived where Hayden does, for one - playing cards, and when they learned what he wanted the axe for, they came down



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to the shore to see him, and they judged that he would weigh sixty pounds. Two or three years ago he saw one caught that weighed forty-two pounds.

I saw a muskrat-cabin apparently begun on a small hummock for a core, now just before the first frost and when the river wreck had begun to wash about. Those fine mouthfuls appear to be gathered from the river-bottom, - fine pontederias, sium, fontinalis, etc., etc., decayed but somewhat adhesive. See fresh pontederia blossoms still. Started up ten ducks, which had settled for the night below the bath place, apparently wood ducks.

I doubt if I have distinguished the *Bidens cernua*. It may be the one I have thought a small *chrysanthemoides*. I find these last with smaller rays and larger outer involucre and more or less bristly stems, yet equally connate and as regularly serrate, and it looks like a difference produced by growing in a drier soil.

Many green-briar leaves are very agreeably thickly spotted now with reddish brown, or fine green on a yellow or green ground, producing a wildly variegated leaf. I have seen nothing more rich. Some of these curled leaves are five inches wide with a short point. It is a leaf now for poets to sing about, a leaf to inspire poets. Now, while I am gathering grapes, I see them. It excites me to a sort of autumnal madness. They are leaves for Satyrus and Faunus to make their garlands of. My thoughts break out like them, spotted all over, yellow and green and brown. The freckled leaf. Perhaps they should be poison, to be thus spotted. I fancied these brown were blood-red spots, by contrast, but they are not. Now for the ripening year! Even leaves are *beginning* to be ripe.

Garfield says he found a hen-hawk's nest near Holden's Swamp (the old ones had got his chickens), sixty feet up a white pine. He climbed up and set a trap in it baited with a fish, with a string ten feet long attached. The young, but just hatched, faced him, and he caught the old one by the legs thus.

I have brought home a half-bushel of grapes to scent my chamber with. It is impossible to get them home in a basket with all their rich bloom on them, which, no less than the form of the clusters, makes their beauty. As I paddled home with my basket of grapes in the bow, every now and then their perfume was wafted to me in the stern, and I thought that I was passing a richly laden vine on shore. Some goldfinches twitter over, while I am pulling down the vines from the birch-tops. The ripest rattle off and strew the ground before I reach the clusters, or, while I am standing on tiptoe and endeavoring gently to break the tough peduncle, the petiole of a leaf gets entangled in the bunch and I am compelled to strip them all off loosely.

"Yet once more ...

I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,

And with forc'd fingers rude,

Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year." [The Reverend [John Milton's Lycidas](#)]

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September 9, Saturday: A publication depicted Boston Harbor, and Lafayette's grave:



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September 9, Saturday: Senator Charles Sumner's speech of Thursday on the slavery question, at the state political convention in Worcester, was being reported in the newspapers:

THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

CHARLES SUMNER'S SPEECH,
At the State Convention at Worcester, Mass.,
Sept. 7.

From the Boston Traveller, Extra, Sept. 7.

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW CITIZENS OF MASSACHUSETTS:—After months of anxious, constant service in another place, away from Massachusetts, I am permitted again to stand among you, my fellow-citizens, and to draw satisfaction and strength from your generous presence. [Applause.] Life is full of changes and contrasts. From Slave-Soil I have come to Free-Soil. [Applause.] From the tainted breath of Slavery I have passed to this bracing air of Freedom. [Applause.] And the heated antagonism of debate, shooting forth its fiery cinders, is changed into this brimming, overflowing welcome, where I seem to lean on the great heart of our beloved Commonwealth, as it palpitates audibly in this crowded assembly. [Loud and long applause.]

Let me say at once, frankly and sincerely, that I have not come here to receive applause or to give occasion for any tokens of public regard; but simply to unite with my fellow citizens in new vows of duty. [Applause.] And yet I would not be thought insensible to the good-will now swelling from so many honest bosoms. It touches me more than I can tell.

(Review of [Henry Thoreau's WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)):

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

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“Notices of New Books,” Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer, p. 2, col. 4.



Half mad, but never silly; and the half that is not mad, full of truths which if they are not entirely new, have at least lain hidden under the crust of fashion, folly, and listlessness so long as to seem new on being dug out and placed boldly before us. Mr. THOREAU built himself with his own hands a hut, shanty, or cottage on the shores of Walden pond, near Concord, Mass., and lived there two years and two months doing all his own working and thinking. In this volume we have such of the results of his work and thought as can be put on paper; and to a reflecting, well trained mind it is a book full of matter for careful consideration. It is at times repulsively selfish in its tone, and might easily help a bad man to be worse; but to readers of an opposite character who peruse it, not with the intent of imitating the author in his mental or physical habits, but for its suggestiveness, it cannot prove other than an occasion for healthy mental exercise. In style it partakes of the characteristics of THOMAS CARLYLE and Sir THOMAS BROWNE: indeed had not the Clothes-Philosophy and the Pseudo-doxia Epidemica and the Urn Burial been written, Walden would probably never have seen the light. The author has CARLYLE'S hatred of shams and CARLYLE'S way of showing it: he has Sir THOMAS BROWNE'S love of pregnant paradox and stupendous joke, and utters his paradoxes and his jokes with a mysterious phlegm quite akin to that of the Medical Knight who "existed only at the periphery of his being." Walden is a book which should have many readers, if readers were always sound thinkers.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

A column entitled "The Canadian Wood-cutter" in the English Albion, n.s. 13:424, reprinted part of "Visitors," pages 144.13-150.28, followed by the words:

From "Walden; or Life in the Woods," by H. D. Thoreau.

Five pages farther along in Albion, n.s. 13:429:

One of those rare books that stand apart from the herd of new publications under which the press absolutely groans; moderate in compass but eminently suggestive, being a compound of thought, feeling, and observation. Its author, it seems, during 1845, 6, and 7, played the philosophic hermit in a wood that overlooks Walden Pond, in the neighbourhood of Concord, Massachusetts. Here he tested at how cheap a rate physical existence may healthfully be maintained, and how, apart from the factitious excitement of society and the communion of mind with mind, he could cultivate a tranquil and contemplative spirit, yet resolute withal. This experiment was undeniably successful; and he has here set forth the record of his sylvan life and the musings of his happy solitude. He probably errs in believing,

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that life in an isolated shanty, and the strict vegetarian system, could be made profitable or pleasant to the men and women of this age. But we shall not discuss the question with this voluntary and most practical hermit. We can admire, without wishing to imitate him; and we can thank him cordially for hints on many topics that interest humanity at large, as well as for page upon page of research and anecdote, showing how lovingly he studied the instincts and the habits of the dumb associates by whom he was surrounded. The choicest and most popular works on natural history contain no descriptions more charming than those that abound in this volume. A little humour and a little satire are the pepper and salt to this part of the entertainment that Mr. Thoreau serves up. Into it we advise the reader – of unvitiated taste and unpalled appetite – to dip deeply. We at least do not come across a Walden, every day.

Possibly our strong commendation may be borne out by the two lengthened and characteristic extracts that we quote. The first may well be called the "The Battle of the Ants."

[\["Brute Neighbors," 228.25-232.11\]](#)

We might have found something writ in gentler strain; but there is a point and a quaintness in the above warlike episode, that catches our fancy. Our second borrowing from this clever book – a sketch of character and a striking one – may be found on another page.

A favorable review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) appeared in [The National Anti-Slavery Standard](#).

"This morning I find a little hole, three quarters of an inch or an inch over, above my small tortoise eggs, and find a young tortoise coming out (apparently in the rainy night) just beneath. It is the *Sternothaerus odoratus* –already has the strong scent– and now has drawn in its head and legs. I see no traces of the yoke, or what-not, attached. It may have been out of the egg some days. **Only one** as yet. I buried them in the garden June 15th." Tortoise Eggs




Sept. 9. This morning I find a little hole, three quarters of an inch or an inch over, above my small tortoise eggs, and find a young tortoise coming out (apparently in the rainy night) just beneath. It is the *Sternothaerus odoratus* — already has the strong scent — and now has drawn in its head and legs. I see no traces of the yolk, or what-not, attached. It may have been out of the egg some days. *Only one* as yet. I buried them in the garden June 15th.

I am affected by the thought that the earth nurses these eggs. They are planted in the earth, and the earth takes care of them; she is genial to them and does not kill them. It suggests a certain vitality and intelligence in the earth, which I had not realized. This mother is not merely inanimate and inorganic. Though the immediate mother turtle abandons her offspring, the earth and sun are kind to them. The old turtle on which the earth rests takes care of them while the other waddles off. Earth was not made poisonous and deadly to them. The earth has some virtue in it; when seeds are put into it, they germinate; when turtles' eggs, they hatch in due time. Though the mother turtle remained and brooded them, it would still nevertheless be the universal world turtle which through her, cared for them as now. Thus the earth is the mother of all creatures.

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Garfield said that one of his sons, while they were haying in the river meadows once, found a hundred little pickerel, an inch or inch and a half long, in [a] little hole in the meadow not bigger than a bushel basket and nearly dry. He took them out and put them into the river. Another time he himself found many hundred in a ditch, brought them home, and put them into his large tub. They there lived a spell without his feeding them, but, small as they were, lived on one another, and you could see the tails sticking out their mouths. It would seem as if their spawn was deposited in those little muddy-bottomed hollows in the meadows where we find the schools of young thus landlocked.

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 September 10, Sunday: Just after dawn at the [North American Phalanx](#) intentional community in [New Jersey](#), a fire destroyed the mill and several workshops. The community's insurance company would declare bankruptcy and the association would not be able to deal with the \$10,000 in damages. In June 1855 the community would vote to put its assets on the open market. In early 1856 operations would cease. On January 1, 1857 the association would officially cease to exist. There is now a roadside sign on Phalanx Road in Colt's Neck, New Jersey to inform us:



**NORTH AMERICAN PHALANX
Site of the 1844 cooperative
agricultural community; founded by
Albert Brisbane and modeled after
the philosophy of French Socialist
Charles Fourier. This communal
experiment was a success until it was
destroyed by fire in 1854.**

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The Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) delivered his first sermon at the Unitarian church of [Washington DC](#). The church had had no permanent minister for the previous three years, while they had been looking to hire one who was adequately soft on the slavery issue. Conway to them looked right, because they were tired of searching, because he was obviously young and evidently malleable, because in this period he was not pressing his anti-slavery sentiments and appeared to be a gentleman of good sense, and because he was, after all, a Virginian to the manner born.



Sept. 10. Yesterday and to-day the first regular rain-storm, bringing down more leaves, — elms, button woods, and apple tree, — and decidedly raising the river and brooks. The still, cloudy, mizzling days, September 1st and 2d, the thunder-shower of evening of September 6th, and this regular storm are the first fall rains after the long drought. Already the grass both in meadows and on hills looks greener, and the whole landscape, this overcast rainy day, darker and more verdurous. Hills which have been russet and tawny begin to show some greenness.

On account of the drought one crop has almost entirely failed this year thus far, which the papers have not spoken of. Last year, for the last three weeks of August, the woods were filled with the strong musty scent of decaying fungi, but this year I have seen very few fungi and have not noticed that odor at all, — a failure more perceptible to frogs and toads, but no doubt serious to those whom it concerns.

As for birds: —

About *ten* days ago *especially* I saw many large hawks, probably hen-hawks and young, about.

Within a week several of the small slate-colored and black-tipped hawks.

August 20th, saw a sucker which I suppose must have been caught by a fish hawk.

Hear screech owls and hooting owls these evenings.

Have not noticed blue jays of late.

Occasionally hear the *phe-be* note of chickadees.

Partridges probably cease to mew for their young.

For about three weeks have seen one or two small dippers.

For ten days a *few* wood and probably black ducks.

Small flocks of bluebirds about apple trees.

Larks common, but have not heard them sing for some time.

Am not sure that I have seen red-wings or other blackbirds for ten days.

About three weeks ago a small flock of robins and pigeon woodpeckers.

Robins common, and still hear some faint notes of woodpeckers.

Saw a downy woodpecker as a rarity within a week.

Believe I hear no song sparrows sing nowadays.

See no *F. hyemalis*, hear no quails.

Heard my last phoebe August 26th.

See no *flocks* of white-in-tails.

I hear the nuthatch as a novelty within a week about street.

Saw first tree sparrow about a week since in first rain. [Probably a mistake. The date is too early.]

Have seen pigeons about a fortnight.

Have not distinguished rush sparrows for a long time, nor Savannah, nor yellow-winged.

Seen no snipe since August 16th.

Turtle doves for more than a month.

A chip-sparrow seen within a few days.

The warbling vireo still heard faintly in the morning.

For three weeks blue herons common on meadows and great bittern.

Green bittern rather earlier for most part.

Have not heard kingfisher of late, — not for three weeks methinks.

Methinks I heard a faint sound from a chewink within a week?

Seen no barn swallows for a week.

Heard no catbirds nor brown thrashers sing for long time, but seen the last at least within ten days.

Whip-poor-wills still common.

Think I saw white-throated (?) sparrows on button-bushes about a week ago, the mizzling day.

Hear no golden robins for the last fortnight.

Bats common.

Not sure I have seen bobolinks since August 20th.

Kingbirds seen within a day or two.

Hummingbird within a week.



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Goldfinches common.
Nighthawks still, but have not noticed the booming lately.
Cherry-birds common.
Cuckoo not heard lately.
Meadow-hen (?) seen August 30th.
Now generally ducks and other migratory birds are returning from north and ours going south. [It is significant that no warblers are included, even negatively, in this list. Compare entry of June 9, 1851.]

Diplopappus linariifolius and *Aster undulatus* apparently now in prime.

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September 11, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by an aspiring author Catharine V. Devero or Devereaux in Millbury, Massachusetts.

H.D. Thoreau.

Millbury, Mass.,

Sept. 11, 1854.

Henry D. Thoreau, Esq.:

My Dear Sir;—

Though personally unknown to you, I doubt not you will pardon any unbecoming liberty which I may be taking, in addressing you this line, for the purpose of kindly soliciting a favor at your hands.

Though you probably scarce recall to mind the name of so obscure a laborer, as myself, in the ranks of those who endeavor to serve their race, in some humble degree, in the walks of literature,—you will permit me to refer to a little work on which I am now engaged, the title of which, “The Rainbow around the Tomb: or Rays of Hope and Beauty for Those Who Mourn”, will foreshadow to you mind its scope and object;—and, to render its contents still better adapted to the end in view, I have thought you might not deem it an entirely ungracious exaction upon your time and courtesy, were I to ask of you the very special favor of a fragment—anything—from your own versatile and beautiful pen, pertinent to the use intended.

It is with no shadow of mere personal accretment in view, that I make this request (not a small one, I am quite sensible,) and crave your kind response.

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My little volume is divided into four departments: Death in the



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Springtime of Innocence,—Death in the Summer of Hope and Promise,—Death in the Autumn of Maturity and Wisdom,—Death in the Winter of Silvered Age;—in any one of which, I beg to assure you, I shall be sincerely grateful for a contribution, in prose or verse, from yourself.

Let me add that this is not a mercenary but an eleemosynary effort, on my part, induced by the bereavements which have stricken and saddened my own heart;—an offering of love, hope, sympathy and cheer, for all who mourn, and such an one as I have the utmost confidence you will approve. And yet I feel that I am making a formidable demand upon your good offices, knowing, as I do, that your mind is necessarily occupied with other and more important duties. But if, in some fragmentary moments of comparative leisure, you shall be willing to answer my desire, I will be very grateful to you for your pains-taking kindness, and will most cheerfully compensate you for your trouble.

Hoping, dear sir, that you are well, and that the dealings of providence may always be gently tempered to the necessities of your health and happiness,—I subscribe myself,

Yours,

With sincere respect and esteem,

(Mrs.) Catharine V. Devero.

Page 3

Postmark: MILLBURY

SEP

1x1

MASS.

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3

Address: *Henry D. Thoreau, Esq.,*

Concord,

Mass.

“Measured to-day the little *Sternotherus odoratus* which came September 9 out in the garden.” Tortoise Eggs: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed a woodlot near Great Meadows (Gleason D8) belonging to [Daniel Shattuck](#). His sketch shows the land of the Colonel Holbrook who lived opposite the Concord Free Public Library. Great Meadows land seems to have had numerous owners as the grasses were used to mulch crops.

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

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

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

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

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http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_surveys/110.htm



Sept. 11. Measured to-day the little *Sternothærus odoratus* which came out the ground in the garden September 9th. Its shell is thirty-two fortieths of an inch long, by twenty-five fortieths wide. It has a distinct dorsal ridge, and its head and flippers are remarkably developed. Its raised back and dorsal ridge, as in the case of the mud turtle, enable it to turn over very easily. It may have been hatched some time before it came out, for not only there was no trace of the yolk (?), but its shell was much wider than the egg, when it first came out of the ground. I placed a sieve over it, and it remained in the hole it had made mostly concealed the two rainy days, — the 9th and 10th, — but to-day I found it against the edge of the sieve, its head and legs drawn in and quite motionless, so that you would have said the pulses of life had not fairly begun to beat. I put it into the tub on the edge of the mud. It seems that it does not have to learn to walk, but walks at once. It seems to have no infancy such as birds have. It is surprising how much cunning it already exhibits. It is defended both by its form and color and its instincts. As it lay on the mud, its color made it very inobvious, but, besides, it kept its head and legs drawn in and perfectly still, as if feigning death—, but this was not sluggishness. At a little distance I watched it for ten minutes or more. At length it put its head out far enough to see if the coast was clear, then, with its flippers, it turned itself toward the water (which element it had never seen before), and suddenly and with rapidity launched itself into it and clove to the bottom. Its whole behavior was calculated to enable it to reach its proper element safely and without attracting attention. Not only was it made of a color and form (like a bit of coal) which alone almost effectually concealed it, but it was made, infant as it was, to be perfectly still as if inanimate and then to move with rapidity when unobserved. The oldest turtle does not show more, if so much, cunning. I think I may truly say that it uses cunning and meditates how it may reach the water in safety. When I first took it out of its hole on the morning of the 9th, it shrunk into its shell and was motionless, feigning death. That this was not sluggishness, I have proved. When to-day it lay within half an inch of the water's edge, it knew it for a friendly element and, without deliberation or experiment, but at last, when it thought me and all foes unobservant of its motions, with remarkable precipitation it committed itself to it as if realizing a long-cherished idea. Plainly all its motions were as much the result of what is called instinct as is the act of sucking in infants. Our own subtlest [*sic*] is likewise but another kind of instinct. The wise man is a wise infant obeying his finest and never-failing instincts. It does not so much impress me as an infantile beginning of life as an epitome of all the past of turtledom and of the earth. I think of it as the result of all the turtles that have been. The little snapping turtle lies almost constantly on the mud with its snout out of water. It does not keep under water long. Yesterday in the cold rain, however, it lay buried in the mud all day! Surveying this forenoon, I saw a small, round, bright-yellow gall (some are red on one side), as big as a moderate cranberry, hard and smooth, saddled on a white oak twig. So I have seen them on the swamp white, the chinquapin, and the white, not to mention the Castile-soap one on the *ilicifolia* acorn edge. This is a *cold* evening with a white twilight, and threatens frost, the first in *these respects* decidedly autumnal evening. It makes us think of wood for the winter. For a week or so the evenings have been sensibly longer, and I am beginning to throw off my summer idleness. This twilight is succeeded by a brighter starlight than heretofore.

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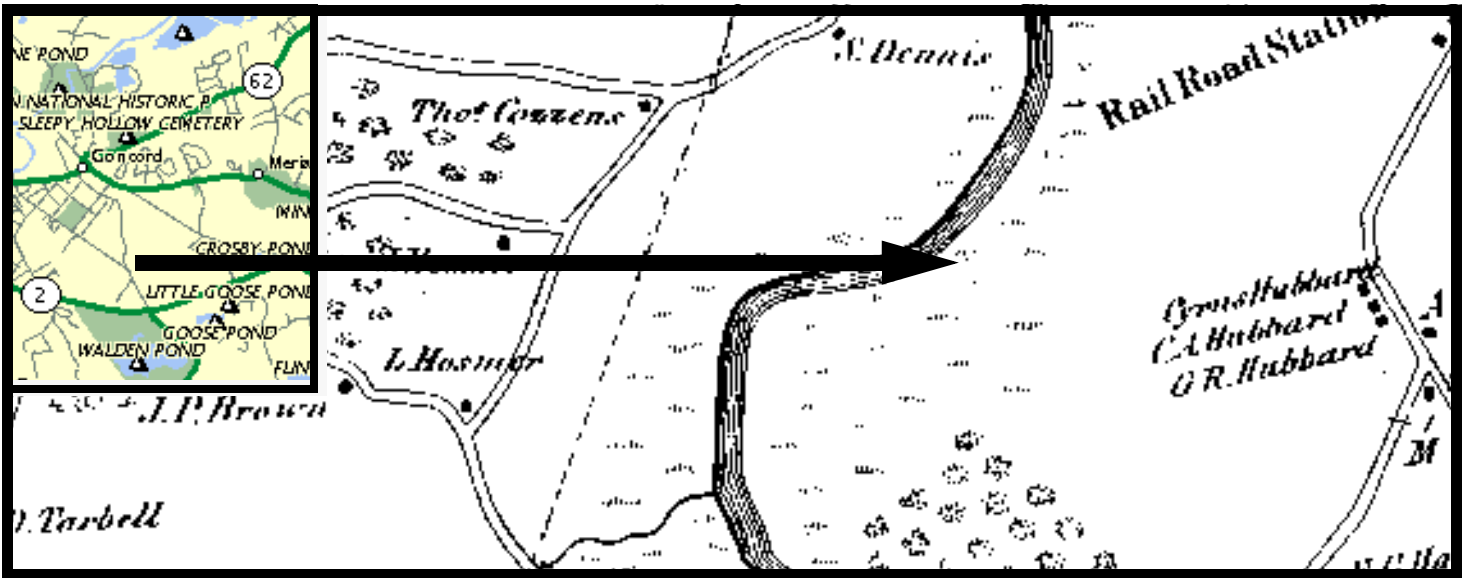
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September 12, Tuesday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Hubbard's Bath:



Sept. 12. Tuesday. A cool, overcast day threatening a storm. Yesterday, after the two days' cold rain, the air was very clear and fine-grained. This is a phenomenon we observe now after dog-clays, until it is summed up in Indian summer.

P.M. — To Hubbard Bath.

Methinks these cool cloudy clays are important to show the colors of some flowers, — that with an absence of light their own colors are more conspicuous and grateful against the cool, moist, dark-green earth, — the *Aster puniceus* (the most densely massed), the (now beginning to prevail) *Tradescanti*, purple gerardia, etc., etc. The river has at length risen perceptibly, and bathing I find it colder again than on the 2d, so that t stay in but a moment. I fear that it will not again be warm. The weeds in midstream are mostly drowned and are washing up to the shore, — much vallisneria and heart-leaf (with its threadlike stems) are added to the previous wreck. (*Vide* September 5th.)

A sprinkling drove me back for an umbrella, and I started again for Smith's hill *via* Hubbard's Close. I see plump young bluebirds in small flocks along the fences, with only the primaries and tail a bright blue, the other feathers above dusky ashy-brown, tipped with white. How much more the crickets are heard a cool, cloudy day like this! Is it not partly because the air is stiller? I see the *Epilobium molle* (?) (linear) in Hubbard's Close still out, but I cannot find a trace of the fringed gentian. I scare pigeons [Passenger Pigeons  *Ectopistes migratorius*] from Hubbard's oaks beyond. How like the creaking of trees the slight sounds they make! Thus they are concealed. Not only their *prating* or *quivet* is like a sharp creak, but I heard a sound from them like a dull grating or creaking of bough on bough. I see the small aster (?) in the woods with ink-black spots at the base of the leaves. (It looks like a *dumosus*, but has no flowers.) White oak acorns have many of them fallen. They are small and very neat light-green acorns, with small cups, commonly arranged two by two close together, often with a leaf growing between them; but frequently three, forming a little star with three rays,



looking very artificial. Some black scrub acorns have fallen, and a few black oak acorns also have fallen. The red oak began to fall first. Thorn apples are now commonly ripe and the prinos berries are conspicuous. Beside many white birch I now see many chestnut leaves fallen and brown in the woods. There is now at last some smell of fungi in the woods since the rains.

On a white oak beyond Everett's orchard by the road, I see quite a flock of pigeons, their blue-black droppings and their feathers spot the road. The bare limbs of the oak apparently attracted them, though its acorns are thick on the ground. These are found whole in their crops. They swallow them whole. I should think from the droppings that they had been eating berries. I hear that Weatherbee caught ninety-two dozen last week.

I see maple viburnum berries blue-black with but little bloom. No *full* cymes, and the cymes rather less spreading than the other kinds. Some time. Now, especially, the strong bracing scent of the delicate fern by the



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Saw Mill Brook path. Dicksonia? or a coarser? How long has the mitchella been ripe? I see many still perfectly green in the swamp. Fruit of the damp and mossy forest floor ripening amid the now mildewy and bracing fern scent of the damp wood. Medeola berries shining black (or perhaps dark blue-black?) on long peduncles; how long? The whorls of leaves now stand empty for most part like shallow saucers, with their purple centres and bare peduncles.


I hear that many upland plover have been seen on the burnt Brooks's meadow.
Marsh speedwell and yellow Bethlehem-star still out.

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September 13, Wednesday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Great Meadows (Gleason D8).

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.
— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11



The Allied Forces (Great Britain, France, Turkey, and Sardinia) landed at Calamita Bay in preparation for their invasion of Russia and their attempt to destroy the Russian naval base at Sevastopol.

The New-York [Tribune](#) reported that there had been a fire just after dawn on the previous Sunday, September 10th, at the mill of the [North American Phalanx](#) across the water in [New Jersey](#).



Sept. 13. Wednesday. P.M. — To Great Fields.

Many butternuts have dropped, — more than walnuts. A few raspberries still fresh. I find the large thistle (*Cirsium muticum*) out of bloom, seven or eight rods, perhaps, north of the potato-field and seven feet west of ditch, amid a clump of raspberry vines.

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September 14, Thursday: [Missa solemnis in B-flat minor for soloists, chorus, orchestra, and organ](#) by Anton Bruckner was performed for the initial time, for the installation of a new prior at St. Florian Priory.

An army of 60,000 British, French, and Turkish troops landed near Eupatoria (Yevpatoriya) in the [Crimea](#), northwest of Simferopol.

At 6 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Nawshawtuct or Lee's Hill (Gleason F6), and at 8 AM he and [Ellery Channing](#) went by boat to opposite Pelham's Pond. On their return they stopped at Fair Haven Hill (Gleason H7). In the course of the day they had rowed some 25 miles. The allied armies of Britain, France, and Turkey invaded the Crimea.

In a letter to [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#), the budding apologist, Father [Isaac Hecker](#), CSSR, summarized the contents of his new book of apologetics, QUESTIONS OF THE SOUL, an irenic treatise on the basic drives of the human emotional system which attempted to make itself attractive not only to the general run of non-Catholics inclined to mysticism and asceticism but also to New England Unitarians and Transcendentalists and others who had given up on Puritanism:



I take an occasion to break a lance with [Ralph Waldo] Emerson [William Ellery] Channing, etc whenever I meet them. There will be no want of boldness & aspiration in it.

WALDO EMERSON

This treatise, although non-traditional, was careful to portray [Roman Catholicism](#) as the only conceivable answer:

My object in view is to bring minds similarly constituted as my own to similar convictions & results, by the same process as I passed through.

The leading idea is to expose the wants of the heart and demand their proper objects, rather than a logical defense of the Church.

Father Thomas depicted the inner exigencies of the human soul as naturally oriented to receive an incarnational and historical revelation; humankind turns toward God as naturally as a field of flowers turn toward the sun. But a clear channel for these communication is mandatory; the sacramental channels of divine grace must be kept open by the necessary dredges of the Church, one of which is its infallible teaching authority.



Sept. 14. Thursday. 6 A.M. — To Hill.

I hear a vireo still in the elms. The banks have now begun fairly to be sugared with the *Aster Tradescanti*. I get very near a small dipper behind Dodd's, which sails out from the weeds fairly before me, then scoots over the surface crosswise the river, throwing the water high, dives, and is lost. A *Viola lanceolata* out on the meadow. The sun soon after rising has gone into a mackerel sky this morning, and, as I come down the hill, I observe a singular mirage (?). There is a large dense field of mackerel sky with a straight and distinct edge parallel with the southeast horizon and lifted above it, apparently about double the height of the highest hills there; beneath this a clear sky, and lower still some level bars of mist, which cut off the top of Pine Hill, causing it to loom. The top, fringed with pines on account of the intervening lower mist, is seen as it were above the clouds, appears much too high, being referred to a far greater distance than the reality. Our humble scenery appears on a grand scale. I see the fair forms of mighty pines standing along a mountain ridge above the clouds and overlooking from a vast distance our low valley. I think that the image is not really elevated, but the bars of mist below make me refer it to too great a distance and therefore it is seen as higher. The appearance of those fine-edged pines, a

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narrow strip of a mountain ridge half a mile in length, is stupendous and imposing. It is as if we lived in a valley amid the Himalaya mountains, a vale of Cashmere.

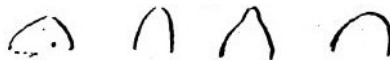
There was a fog last night which I think prevented a frost.

8 A.M. — To opposite Pelham's Pond by boat.

Quite cool, with some wind from east and southeast. Took a watermelon for drink. I see many new and perfect upright cobwebs on the sium gone to seed by the side of the river. Now, instead of haying, they are raking cranberries all along the river. The raker moves slowly along with a basket before him, into which he rakes (hauling) the berries, and his wagon stands one side. It is now the middle of the cranberry season. The river has risen about a foot within a week, and now the weeds in midstream have *generally* disappeared, washed away or drowned. The ranunculus stems and leaves are added to the floating wreck. Now our oars leave a broad wake of large bubbles, which are slow to burst. Methinks they are most numerous, large, and slow to burst near the end of a warm and dry spell, and that the water loses some of this tenacity in a rain. But now we have had rain. At any rate on the 4th, just after the first rains (of the 1st and 2d), they would not readily form to the hand. There is such a difference in the state of the water. As we go up the Clamshell Reach I see the reflections of oaks very much prolonged by the fine ripple. Perhaps it is re-reflected from ripple to ripple. The rainbow portion of the bayonet rush is just covered now by the rise of the river. This cooler morning methinks the jays are heard more. Now that the pontederias have mostly fallen, the polygonums are the most common and conspicuous flowers of the river. The smaller one has not shown more before. I see a stream of small white insects in the air over the side of the river. W. Wheeler is burning his hill by the Corner road, just cut over. I see the scarlet flame licking along the ground, not in a continuous rank, but upright individual tongues of flame, undulating, flashing, forked, - narrow erect waves about the size of a man or boy; next the smoke rising perpendicularly, blue against the pines and fuscous against the sky. Not till high in the sky does it feel the southerly wind. When I look round for those light under sides of the crisped leaves, which were so conspicuous in the drought three weeks and more ago, I see none. Methinks they have not so much flattened out again since the rains, but have fallen, and that thus there are two falls every year. Those leaves which are curled by the drought of July and August apparently fall with the first fall rains, about the first week of September, and those which remain are green as usual and go on to experience their regular October change. The only difference this year will be that there will not be so many leaves for the second fall. The first fall is now over. [For example, on the 17th I see that all those which lead changed on Pine Hill have fallen and many tree-tops, maple and chestnut, are bare.]

Crossing Fair Haven, the reflections were very fine, - not quite distinct, but prolonged by the fine ripples made by an east wind just risen. At a distance, entering the pond, we mistook some fine sparkles, probably of insects, for ducks in the water, they were so large, which when we were nearer, looking down at a greater angle with the surface, wholly disappeared. Some *large-leaved* willow- bushes in the meadow southeast of Lee's reflected the light from the under sides of a part of their leaves, as if frost-covered, or as if white asters were mingled with them. We saw, but two white lilies on this voyage; they are now clone. About a dozen pontederia spikes, no mikania (that is now white or gray), four or five large yellow lilies, and two or three small yellow lilies. The *Bidens Beckii* is drowned or dried up, and has given place to the great bidens, *the* flower and ornament of the riversides at present, and now in its glory, — especially at I. Rice's shore, where there are dense beds. It is a splendid yellow — Channing says a lemon yellow — and looks larger than it is (two inches in diameter, more or less). Full of the sun. It needs a name. I see tufts of ferns on the edge of the meadows at a little distance, handsomely tipped on edge with cinnamon brown. Like so many brown fires they light up the meadows. The button-bush everywhere *yellowing*. We see half a dozen herons in this voyage. Their wings are so long in proportion to their bodies that there seems to be more than one undulation to a wing as they are disappearing in the distance, and so you can distinguish them. You see another begin before the first has ended. It is remarkable how common these birds are about our sluggish and marshy river. We must attract them from a wide section of country. It abounds in those fenny districts and meadow pondholes in which they delight. A flock of thirteen telltales, great yellow-legs, start up with their shrill whistle from the midst of the great Sudbury meadow, and away they *sail in a flock*, — a *sailing* (or *skimming*) *flock*, that is something rare methinks, — showing their white tails, to alight in a more distant place. We see some small dippers and scare up many ducks, black mostly, which probably came as soon as the earliest. The great. bittern, too, rises from time to time, slowly flapping his way along at no great height above the meadow.

The small polygonum is first particularly abundant in the bend above the coreopsis, but it is [in] greatest abundance and perfection at three quarters through the great meadow, in great beds one to three rods wide, very dense and now rising but six or eight inches or so above the water. It is now apparently in perfection. See swallow *like* a barn swallow. Counted twenty haycocks in the great meadow, on staddles, of various forms, — tied round with hay ropes. They are picturesque objects in the meadow.



Little as the river has risen, these meadows are already wet. The phragmites is still green. Why does not that large typha above the Causeway bear fruit? [It does. *Vide* July 31, 1859.] Just above the Mill Village Bridge



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there is an interesting view of Nobscot, clad with wood, up the broad meadows on Larned Brook, which comes in there. Above the Pelham Pond Bridge, a short distance further, we dined; then went on. An interesting view and part of the river, — quite broad at the Great Chestnut house, — and a good landing just before on the left. Went half a mile or more above the Chestnut house. Plenty of hibiscus out of bloom just above the Chestnut house on the northeast side, and some opposite some elms where we had dined, — all in Wayland. What is than large, sharply triangular, hollow-sided sedge about four feet high (in the north edge of the river in middle of the great meadow, Coarse, grasslike somewhat. [Vide July.31 1859.]
 We went up thirteen or fourteen miles at least, and, as we stopped at Fair Haven Hill returning, rowed about twenty-five miles to-day.



September 15, Friday: The 1st proceedings of the [California](#) Academy of Sciences were published.

Bradley P. Dean indicates that it was in this timeframe probably that [Henry Thoreau](#) finished searching through his journal for passages about moonlit nights.



The Leavenworth, [Kansas Territory](#) [Herald](#) was 1st published (it would be generally pro-government, which is to say, pro-slavery).

[Thoreau](#) responded to a request by Sarah E. Webb, for a copy of his July 4th speech at Framingham MA, by informing her of the copies published by [The Liberator](#) and the [Times](#). In the afternoon he went by boat under Fair Haven Hill (Gleason H7) and down the river.



Sept. 15. P.M. — To boat under Fair Haven Hill and down river.

Desmodium (?) or lespedeza ticks cover my clothes. I know not when I get them. The witch-hazel has opened since the 8th; say 11th. [it was abundantly out the 14th (yesterday) on Wachusett Mountain, where it is probably more exposed to the sun and drier. Sophia was there.] Its leaves, a third or a half of them, are yellow and brown. *Solidago speciosa* at Clamshell out several clays. Goodwin, the one-eyed fisherman, is back again at his old business (and Haynes also). He says he has been to Cape Cod a-haying. He says that their "salt grass cuts about the same with our fresh meadow."

Saw a chewink.

Mrs. Mowatt, the actress, describes a fancy ball in Paris, given by an American millionaire, at which "one lady ... wore so many diamonds (said to be valued at two hundred thousand dollars) that she was escorted in her carriage by *gendarmes*, for fear of robbery." This illustrates the close connection between luxury and robbery, but commonly the *gendarmes* are further off.






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 September 16, Saturday: [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) and [Sophia Elizabeth Thoreau](#) returned from Wachusett.

In the afternoon Thoreau went to Fringed Gentian Meadow over the Assabet River and to Dugan Desert (Gleason 39/H4), where he found the mud turtle's eggs all hatched. Tortoise Eggs Review of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS under the heading "News" in the Portland ME [Transcript](#), 179:3.

Thoreau in his recently published work "Walden" thus hits off the popular eagerness for news:—

**[Reprints "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,"
pages 93.24-94.2.]**

The book was also reviewed on the second page of the Rochester NY [Daily American](#).

Commander David Glasgow Farragut assumed command of the Navy yard at Mare Island.

CALIFORNIA

Joshua Abraham Norton appeared in the office of the San Francisco [Call](#) attired in a comic-opera uniform, with

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a document in hand that proclaimed him to be the Emperor of the United States and the Protector of Mexico.¹⁶



16. Refer to ZANIES: THE WORLD'S GREATEST ECCENTRICS by Jay Robert Nash (New Century Publishers, 1982, pages 267-74).

"Son – they say there isn't any royalty in this country, but do you want me to tell you how to be king of the United States of America? Just fall through the hole in a privy and come out smelling like a rose."





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(Review of [Henry Thoreau's WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)): "Book Notices," Rochester Daily American, p. 2, col. 5.

The author of this is well known to those who sympathize with Reform and Reformers, and who keep track of the literary oddities that center at, or at least gyrate around Boston and its "notions." He lived in the woods a mile from Concord, and near Emerson, when he wrote this book, and passed his time as a sort of Hermit, at least so the denizens of that region thought. They wanted to know what he eat [sic], if he was lonesome, or afraid, if he was charitable, and if he supported poor children. What he did do, is here written out, not as an egotistic narrative, but rather as the experience and the views of life which a solitary thinker with Radical tendencies might have. Every way it is a capital book, and well worth perusal.

(Review of [Henry Thoreau's WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)): "News," Portland Transcript, p. 179, col. 3.

Thoreau in his recently published work "Walden" thus hits off the popular eagerness for news:-
[Reprints "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," pp. 93.24-94.2.]



Sept. 16. Sophia and mother returned from Wachusett. S. saw much bayberry in Princeton.

[Transcript]

P.M. — To Fringed Gentian Meadow over Assabet and to Dugan Desert.

I see a wood tortoise in the woods. Why is it there now — One man thinks there are not so many pigeons as last week, that it is too cold for them. There have been a few slight frosts in some places. The clematis is feathered. One *Asclepias Cornuti* begun to discount. I see many hardhacks in the lichen pasture by Tommy Wheeler's which are *leafing* out again *conspicuously*. I see little flocks of chip-birds along the roadside and on the apple trees, showing their light under sides when they rise.

I find the mud turtle's eggs at the Desert all hatched. There is a small hole by which they have made their exit some time before the last rain (of the 14th) and since I was here on the 4th. There is, however, one still left in the nest. As the eggs were laid the 7th of June, it makes about three months before they came out of the ground. The nest was full of sand and eggshells. I saw no tracks of the old one. I took out the remaining one, which perhaps could not get out alone, and it began slowly to crawl toward the brook about five rods distant. It went about five feet in as many minutes. At this rate it would have reached the water in a couple of hours at most. Then, being disturbed by my moving, stopped, and, when it started again, retraced its steps, crossed the hole which I had filled, and got into a rut leading toward another part of the brook, about ten rods distant. It climbed directly over some weeds and tufts of grass in its way. Now and then it paused, stretched out its head, looked round, and appeared to be deliberating, waiting for information or listening to its instinct. It seemed to be but a blundering instinct which it obeyed and as if it might be easily turned from its proper course. Yet in no case did it go wholly wrong. Whenever I took it up, it drew in its head and legs, shut its eyes, and remained motionless. It was so slow that I could not stop to watch it, and so carried it to within seven or eight inches of the water, turning its head inland. At length it put out its head and legs, turned itself round, crawled to the water, and endeavored as soon as it entered it to bury itself at the bottom, but, it being sand, it could not. I put it further into the stream, and it was at once carried down head over heels by the current. I think they come out in the night. Another little sternothærus has come out of the ground since eight this morning (it is now 11 A.M.). [Another, Sept. 17th, found in morning. Another the 18th, between 8 and 11 A.M. Another the 18th, between 11 A.M. and 1 P.M. Another between 1 and 3 P.M., the 18th. Another found out on the morning of the 19th. Another was dug



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out the 25th. (All hatched, then, but one egg which I have.)

A snapping turtle had come out on the morning of the 20th, one at least. Another on the morning of the 23d Sept. Another on the morning of the 26th.]

The first sternothærus has remained buried in the mud in the tub from the first, and the snapping turtle also for the last few days.

The locust sounds rare now. I make the oak at the southeast corner of the Agricultural Ground to be a scarlet oak, — not yellow-barked; leaf more deeply cut, lighter green, narrower at point; acorn more pointed, its upper scales not recurved off from the acorn like the black.

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September 17, Sunday: The Manifesto of the Liberal Union was issued in Spain.

[Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by Benjamin Marston Watson in Plymouth MA, asking that he lecture there and mentioning the postmaster's son [James Walter Spooner](#) who was staying at Watson's "Hillside" estate in Plymouth, and [Bronson Alcott](#), and suggesting an honorarium of at least \$10.⁰⁰.

Plymouth Mass

Sept 17.

My dear Sir—

Mr James Spooner

*and others here, your friends,
have clubbed together and raised
a small sum in hope of persuading
you to come down and read them
a paper or two some Sunday. They
can offer you \$10 at least. Mr
Alcott is now here, and I thought
it might be agreeable to you to
come down next Saturday and
read a paper on Sunday morning
and perhaps on Sunday Evening also,*

Page 2

*if agreeable to yourself. I can
assure you of a very warm reception
but from a small party only.*

Very truly yrs

B.M. Watson

*I will meet you at the Depot
on Saturday Evening, if you so advise me.
Last train leaves at 5—*

*This is not a "Leyden Hall Meeting" but
a private party—social gathering—almost
sewing circle. Tho' perhaps we may meet*



1854-1855

1854-1855

you at Leyden Hall.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR SEPTEMBER 17th]

1854-1855

1854-1855

September 18, Monday: [Moncure Daniel Conway](#)'s father wrote warning him not to attempt to return to his family home in Falmouth, Virginia until he was able to assent to the righteousness of enslavement.



After describing his son's views on religion as "horrible," he commended him to "the mercy of God, through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

AUTOBIOGRAPHY **VOLUME II**



His Lord and Savior was Jesus Christ.

[Henry Thoreau](#) observed that some potatoes had turned black, from frosts in the past few nights.




Sept. 18. Monday. Viburnum nudum flower again. Fringed gentian near Peter's out a short time, but as there is so little, and that has been cut off by the mowers, and this is not the leading stem that blooms, it may after all be earlier than the hazel. [Frost-bitten in Hubbard's Close the 21st (or before).] I see the potatoes all black with frosts that have occurred within a night or two in Moore's Swamp.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

1854-1855

1854-1855

 September 19, Tuesday: San Francisco began the paving of Montgomery Street at California Street.

CALIFORNIA

On this day and the following one, [Emily Dickinson](#) and her sister [Lavinia](#) again visited [Josiah Gilbert Holland](#) and [Elizabeth Holland](#) in Springfield, Massachusetts.



In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Conantum (Gleason J6). That day he mused on the writing of his new lecture “What Shall It Profit?”:

Thinking this afternoon of the prospect of my writing lectures and going abroad to read them the next winter, I realized how incomparably great the advantages of obscurity and poverty which I have enjoyed so long (and may still perhaps enjoy). I thought with what more than princely, with what poetical, leisure I had spent my years hitherto, without care or engagement, fancy-free... Ah, how I have thriven on solitude and poverty! I cannot overstate this advantage. I do not see how I could have enjoyed it, if the public

Thoreau completed his searching through the journal for passages about walking in the moonlight, and accepted Marston Watson’s invitation to deliver a lecture to “a small and private audience of friends” in Plymouth, Massachusetts on October 1st (scheduling difficulties caused postponement). The full title of the lecture he would deliver in Plymouth on October 8th would be “Moonlight (Introductory to an Intended Course of Lectures)” (this is part of a pencil jotting at the top of what is apparently the first leaf of Thoreau’s working draft of the lecture, preserved at Middlebury College in Vermont, evidently a part he did not read to his audience).

[Thoreau](#) wrote to Benjamin Marston Watson, accepting his invitation from to deliver on October 1st a lecture to “a small and private audience of friends” in Plymouth.

Concord Mass Sep 19th '54

Dear Sir

I am glad to hear from you & the Plymouth men again. The world still holds together between Concord and Plymouth, it seems. I should like to be with you while Mr Alcott is there, but I cannot come next Sunday. I will come Sunday after next, that is Oct 1st, if that will do, – and look out for you at the Depot.

1854-1855

1854-1855

I do not like to promise now more than one discourse. Is there a good precedent for 2?

Yrs Concordially
Henry D. Thoreau.

That evening, in Plymouth, [Bronson Alcott](#) read from a criticism of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) that he had entered in his journal of 1847, and read other passages of his diary from the family's "Hillside" period in Concord.



Sept. 19. Tuesday. P.M. — To Conantum.

Viburnum Lentago berries now perhaps in prime, though there are but few blue ones.

Thinking this afternoon of the prospect of my writing lectures and going abroad to read them the next winter, I realized how incomparably great the advantages of obscurity and poverty which I have enjoyed so long (and may still perhaps enjoy). I thought with what more than princely, with what poetical, leisure I had spent my years hitherto, without care or engagement, fancy-free. I have given myself up to nature, I have lived so many springs and summers and autumns and winters as if I had nothing else to do but *live* them, and imbibe whatever nutriment they had for me; I have spent a couple of years, for instance, with the flowers chiefly, having none other so binding engagement as to observe when they opened; I could have afforded to spend a whole fall observing the changing tints of the foliage. Ah, how I have thriven on solitude and poverty! I cannot overstate this advantage. I do not see how I could have enjoyed it, if the public had been expecting as much of me as there is danger now that they will. If I go abroad lecturing, how shall I ever recover the lost winter?

It has been my vacation, my season of growth and expansion, a prolonged youth.

An upland plover goes off from Conantum top (though with a white belly), uttering a sharp *white, tu white*. That drought was so severe that a few trees here and there — birch, maple, chestnut, apple, oak — have lost nearly all their leaves. I see large flocks of robins with a few flickers, the former keeping up their familiar peeping mid chirping.

Many pignuts have fallen. Hardhack is very commonly putting forth new leaves where it has lost the old. They are half in inch or three quarters long, and green the stems well. The stone-crop fruit has for a week or more had a purplish or pinkish (?) tinge by the roadside. Fallen acorns in a few days acquire that wholesome shining dark chestnut (?) color. Did I see a returned yellow redpoll fly by?

I saw, some nights ago, a great deal of light reflected from a fog-bank over the river upon Monroe's white fence, malting it conspicuous almost as by moonlight from my window.

Scarlet oak acorn (commonly a broader cup with more shelf). [*Vide* another figure in fall of '58.]



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September 20, Wednesday: In the 1st engagement in the [Crimea](#), British and French forces drove the [Russians](#) from their positions on the [Alma River](#) leaving 9,000 total casualties.

After recuperating for 3 months, David Livingstone began the return journey from St. Paul de Loanda (Luanda) to Linyanti, some 1,300 kilometers to the southeast.





1854-1855



Sept. 20. Windy rain-storm last night.

See to-day quite a flock of what I think must be rusty grackles about the willows and button-bushes.

1854-1855


[Transcript]

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1854-1855

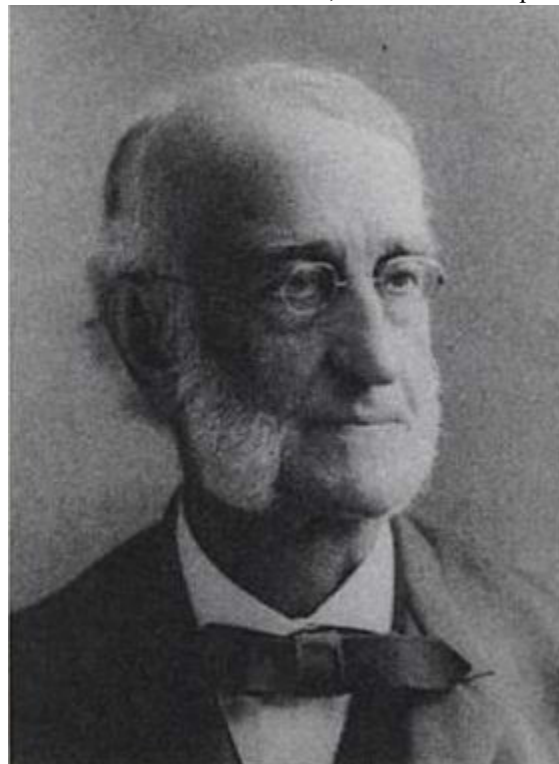
1854-1855

 September 21, Thursday: The USS *Porpoise*, a 10-gun brig with approximately 80 men on board, was somehow lost at sea sometime after this date. No trace has ever been found.

LOST AT SEA



By this date [Henry Thoreau](#) had asked his publisher to send a copy of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) to [H.G.O. Blake](#) in Worcester. He wrote Blake about this, and his letter helps us date the first delivery of his





1854-1855

1854-1855

“What Shall It Profit?” sermon:

I have agreed to go a-lecturing to Plymouth, Sunday after next (October 1) and to Philadelphia in November, and thereafter to the West, if they shall want me; and, as I have prepared nothing in that shape, I feel as if my hours were spoken for. (CORRESPONDENCE 339)

*Concord [S]ep 21st '54
Blake,
I have just read your
letter, but do not mean now to
answer it, solely for want of time
to say what I wish. I directed a
copy of Walden to you at Ticknor's on*

*Page 2
the day of its publication, and it should
have reached you before. I am encour-
aged to know that it interests you
as it now stands — a printed book —
for you apply a very severe test to
it — you make the highest de-
mand on me.*

*Page 3
[As for the excursion you
speak of, I should like it right
well, indeed I thought of pro-
posing the same thing to you &
Brown some months ago. Per-
haps it would have been better if
I had done so then, for in that
case I should have been able
to enter into it with that in-
finite margin to my views--
spotless of all engagements--*

*Page 4
which I think so necessary. A[s]
it is, I have agreed to go a-
lecturing to Plymouth Sunday af[ter]
next (Oct 1st) and to Philadelp[hia]
in November — and thereafter to
the [west,] if they shall want me,
and as I have prepared nothing
in that shape, I feel as if [my]*

Page 5

However, I think that after having been to Plymouth I may take a day or two. — if that date will suit you & Brown. At any rate, I will write to you then[.]
Henry D. Thoreau.

In the afternoon [Thoreau](#) went to Flint's, or Sandy, Pond (Gleason J10).



Sept. 21. Thursday. P.M. — To Flint's Pond.

[Transcript]

The first frost in our yard last night, the grass white and stiff in the morning. The muskmelon vines are now blackened in the sun. There have been some frosts in low grounds about a week. The forenoon is cold, and I have a fire, but it is a fine clear day, as I find when I come forth to walk in the afternoon, a fine-grained air with a seething or shimmering in it, as I look over the fields, — days which remind one of the Indian summer that is to come. Do not these days always succeed the first frosty mornings?

The woods generally may now be said to be fairly *beginning* to turn (this with the first noticeable frost). The red maples, especially at a distance, *begin* to light their fires, some, turning yellow, and within the woods many oak, *e.g.* scarlet and black and chestnut, and other leaves begin to show their colors. Those leaves of the young white oaks which have changed dull salmon, crimson, scarlet (many incline to crimson) are mostly within the tree and partially concealed by the green leaves. They are handsomest looking up from below, the light through them.

With this bright, clear, but rather cool air the bright yellow of the autumnal dandelion is in harmony and the heads of the dilapidated goldenrods. The gentian is already frost-bitten, [A question-mark in pencil is inserted here.] almost as soon as it is open. Those pretty little white oak acorn stars of three rays are now quite common on the ground.

Utricularia (the leafiness) abundant, and *Lobelia Dortmanna* still out at Flint's Pond. That small erect milfoil is very abundant now. The pond is low near the bathing-rock.

I hear many jays since the frosts began. The nuthatch is common in woods and on street. Hear the chewink and the cluck of the thrasher.

I sometimes seem to myself to owe all my little success, all for which men commend me, to my vices. I am perhaps more willful than others and make enormous sacrifices, even of others' happiness, it may be, to gain my ends. It would seem even as if nothing good could be accomplished without some vice to aid in it.

The leaves of the wild cherry, being sound and entire, are in some places a particularly handsome clear, uniform what you may call *cherry* red, perhaps inclining to crimson, — perhaps like the stain of cherry juice., [Vide Sept. 30.]

I am surprised to see how many leaves in the woods have been apparently eaten through on the edges by some insect, leaving only a faded network of veins there, contrasting with the green centres. In some places almost every leaf of the young white oaks (and black or shrub oak) and chestnuts has this very handsome and regular pale edging as of lace-work. It is about one twelfth of an inch in diameter, and is exceedingly regular, following strictly the outline of the leaf, however cut or lobed, by nature or accident, and preserving the same width. As these leaves (of young oaks, etc.) are commonly several together in one plane disposed ray-wise, — rosettes, — the effect of this edging is enhanced. These young leaves are still of a clear and delicate and now somewhat precious green. The extreme edge is left firm and entire, and the pulp of the leaf is eaten through only just within it.

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THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



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1854-1855



September 22, Friday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went over Nawshawtuct or Lee's Hill (Gleason F6).

[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) was scathingly condemned in "Notices of New Publications" in the pages of the [New-York Times](#). Its author, [Mr. Henry D. Thoreau](#) or "Thorrau" is erratic, impracticable, and apt to confuse rather than arrange the order of things mental and physical. He imagines himself a philosopher but presents us with no philosophy. He is not a Christian but, perhaps, is a Communist. His new manifesto is of



1854-1855

1854-1855

interest only as a contribution to the comic literature of America:

The author of this book—Mr. HENRY D. THOREAU—is undoubtedly a man of genius. It is not possible to open twenty pages without finding plentiful indications of that fact. Unfortunately, however, he is an erratic genius, thoroughly impracticable, and apt to confuse rather than arrange the order of things, mental and physical.

Mr. THOREAU, it will be remembered, was one of the earliest contributors to EMERSON'S remarkable transcendental publication, the Dial. His eccentricities constituted one of the features of that very eccentric journal, and were well suited to it. Subsequently he published a volume called [A] Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. A great deal of observation and quaintness were incorporated in the latter work, and obtained for it some popularity here and in Europe. Influenced by a peculiar philosophy of his own, Mr. THOREAU abandoned literature in 1845. He was probably disgusted with social life, and thought an experience of its savage phase might be agreeable. With this idea he "borrowed an axe" and went down to Walden Pond, in the vicinity of Concord, with the intention of building a house and living in it. The Cabin was constructed, and Mr. THOREAU occupied it for two years. Why he returned to society after that period he does not inform us. The present book was written in solitude, and occupied those spare moments when the author was not more profitably engaged in the labors of the field.

As a contribution to the Comic Literature of America, Walden is worthy of some attention, but in no other respect. The author evidently imagines himself to be a Philosopher, but he is not. He talks constantly of "vast cosmogonical themes," but narrows them all down to the nearest line of self. The mere fact of existence seems to satisfy Mr. THOREAU. He wonders why men aspire to anything higher than the cultivation of a patch of beans, when by that they may live—perhaps grow fat. Mr. THOREAU has been accused of communistic principles. This is his idea of communism: "I would rather sit on a pumpkin, and have it all to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion. I would rather ride on earth, in an ox cart, with a free circulation, than go to Heaven in the fancy car of an excursion train, and breathe a malaria all the way."

This is one of Mr. THOREAU'S "vast cosmogonical themes": "While civilization has been improving our houses, it has not equally improved the men who are to inhabit them. It has created palaces, but it was not so easy

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

Red!

WALDEN ; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS. Boston : TICK-
NOR, REED & FIELDS.

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Mr THORRAU denounces everything that indicates progress. Railroads, telegraphs, steam-engines, newspapers, and everything else which the world values, offend him. There is nothing estimable in his eyes but a log hut and a patch of beans. On the latter he dwells with infinite delight. It is one of the few things that does not disgust his philosophical mind. Ascetics who have a taste for beans will find comfort in this volume.

Mr. THOREAU is a good writer, possessed of great comic powers, and able to describe accurately many peculiar phases of nature. But the present work will fail to satisfy any class of readers. The literary man may be pleased with the style, but he will surely lament the selfish *animus* of the book.

—●—
THE GEOGRAPHY OF STRABO. Literally translated with notes. The first six books by H. C. ...

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1854-1855

1854-1855

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Sept. 22. Friday. Another hard frost this morning, notwithstanding some fog at same time, and another fine day after it.

[Transcript]

P.M. — Over Nawshawtuct.

The river is peculiarly smooth and the water clear and sunny as I look from the stone bridge. A painted tortoise with his head out, outside of the weeds, looks as if resting in the air in that attitude, or suggests it. — an angle of forty-five degrees, with head and flippers rs outstretched. I see no particular effects of frost on the pontederias; they have been falling steadily without regard to it. It would be worth the while to observe all the effects of the first frosts on vegetation, etc., etc., etc.

Celtis berries begin to yellow. As I look off from the hilltop, I wonder if there are any finer days in the year than these. The air is so fine and more bracing, and the landscape has acquired some fresh verdure withal. The frosts come to ripen the Year, the days, like fruits, — persimmons.

What if we were to walk by sunlight with equal abstraction and aloofness, yet with equally impartial observation and criticism. As if it shone not for you, nor you for it, but you had come forth into it for the nonce to admire it. In moonlight we are not of the earth earthy, but we are of the earth spiritual. So might we walk by sunlight, seeing the sun but as a moon, a comparatively faint and reflected light, and the day as a brooding night, in which we glimpse some stars still.

Some shrub oak acorns are prettily rayed, green and yellowish. Some white oak ones are turned salmon-color, or blushing like the leaves. Grape leaves in low grounds are frost-bitten and crisped before they have yellowed. [Vide Sept. 23]

Crossing the bill behind Minot's just as the sun is preparing to dip below the horizon, the thin haze in the atmosphere north and south along the west horizon reflects a purple tinge and bathes the mountains with the same, like a bloom on fruits. I wonder if this phenomenon is observed in warm weather, or before the frosts have come. Is it not another evidence of the ripe days? I saw it yesterday.

I am surprised to see balls on the scarlet oak. Its acorn and cup are peculiarly top-shaped, the point of the acorn being the bottom. The cup is broader than in the black oak, making a broader shelf about the acorn, and is more pear-shaped or prolonged at top. The acorn is not so rounded, but more tapering at point. And some scarlet oak leaves which I [see] have their two *main* veins and diverging ribs nearly opposite, while in a black oak leaf these veins, and hence lobes, are not nearly opposite.

By moonlight all is simple. We are enabled to erect ourselves, our minds, on account of the fewness of objects. We are no longer distracted. It is simple as bread and water. It is simple as the rudiments of an art, - a lesson to be taken before sunlight, perchance, to prepare us for that.

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September 23, Saturday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Gowing's Swamp (Gleason F9) and then Great Meadows (Gleason D8).

Frederick Billings officiated at the dedication of a schoolhouse in the Fifth District of San Francisco.

CALIFORNIA

(Review of [Henry Thoreau](#)'s [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)): "New Publications," New-York [Family Courier](#), p. 1, col. 3.

[Reprinted from the 9 September 1854 Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer.]

WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS was reviewed in the [Daily Alta California](#), 5:264.

Walden; or Life in the Wood. By Henry D. Thoreau. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. This is a very strange book, the history of a philosopher living in the woods, a sort of Robinson Crusoe life. It shows the simplicity with which life can be conducted, stripped of some of its conventionalities, and the whole narrative is imbued with a deep philosophic spirit. All together besides being beautifully written, it has an air of originality which is quite taking. We commend it to our reader.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

Father [Isaac Hecker](#), CSSR, wrote to [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#).



Arthur Martineau Alger was born at Roxbury. (He would study for the law at Boston University, and then in the office of the Honorable N.B. Bryant.)



Sept. 23. P.M. — To Great Meadows via Gowing's Swamp.

[Transcript]

I was struck with the peculiar and interesting colors of the naked arms of the buttonwood at the brick house, delicate tints seen from the ground, — whitish, greenish, and fawn-colored (?). They look as if recently bared by the scaling off of the old bark. The buttonwoods are in a flourishing condition thus year. The first time. My pink azaleas which had lost their leaves in the drought are beginning to leave out again.

The *Helianthus tuberosus* (Jerusalem artichoke) beyond Moore's shows a little yellow, but will not open there for some days yet. Low blackberry vines generally red. There are many lice on birches still, notwithstanding the frosts. The high blueberry bushes scattered here and there, the higher islands in Beck Stow's Swamp, begin to paint it bright-red. Now look out for redness on the face of the earth, such as is seen on the cheek of the sweet viburnum, or as [a] frosty morning walk imparts to a man's face. Very brilliant and remarkable now are the prinus berries, so brilliant and fresh when most things — flowers and berries — have withered. I gather pretty good wild pears near the new road, — now in prime. The *Cornus sericea* bushes along the edge of the Great Meadows are now turned mulberry, and here is an end of its berries then. The hard frosts of the 21st and 22d have put an end to several kinds of plants, and probably berries, for this year. This is the crisis when many kinds conclude their summer.

Bull says it is only the immature leaves of his new grape which are crisped by the frost as yet. Here, on the east edge of the Great Meadows, all the flowering fern is turned brown and withered (I am not sure but it began before the frost), and the common eupatoriums are a very dark brown or black for the same reason. All along

the river the upper half of the button-bushes is turned brown and withered in consequence of the frost, while many other plants in their midst are untouched. As it began late, it falls early. Its balls are equally browned, and may now be said to be ripened by frost. After those frosts a day's sun revealed what mischief the frost had done by the withering and blackened leaves. Many plants fall with the first frosts, — grapes, button-bushes; what else? Probably some asters and goldenrods.

Monroe has shot a loon to-day.

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September 24, Sunday: At 6 AM Henry Thoreau went to Nawshawtuct or Lee's Hill (Gleason F6), and in the afternoon went by boat to Grape Cliff. Bathing, he found the water chilling cold, and determined that it was time to give this up for the winter.



Thoreau was being written to by Benjamin Marston Watson in Plymouth.

{No transcript from TC—this transcript is an amalgamation of transcript from Plymouth Society and MS}

Page 1

Plymouth, Mass

Sept 27.

My dear Sir:

There is to be a meeting here on Oct 1st that we think will interfere with yours, and so if the Lord is willing and you have no objections we will expect you on the next Sunday 8th October.

I think [] that time.

I have been lately adding to my garden, and now have all that joins me — so I am ready

Page 2

to have it surveyed by you; a pleasure I have long promised myself. So, if you are at leisure and inclined to the field I hope I may be so fortunate as to engage your services.

Very truly yr

B.M. Watson

The survey might be before the Sunday or after as you please, and I will meet you at the Depot any time you say—

Page 3

Postmark: []

SEP

25

[]

Address: to H.D. Thoreau

Concord



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Mass



Sept. 24. Sunday. 6 A.M. — To Hill.

[Transcript]

Low fog-like veil on meadows.

On the large sassafras trees on the hill I see many of the handsome red club-shaped pedicels left, with their empty cups which have held fruit; and I see one or two elliptical but still green berries. Apparently the rest have ripened and fallen or been gathered by birds already, unless they fell prematurely. Gray says that the berries are dark-blue and ripen in September.

Catnep still in bloom. Hear the flicker note. See a song-sparrow-like bird singing a confused low jingle. Afterward hear from a willow by river a *clear strain* from a *song sparrow!*

Man identifies himself with earth or the material, just as he who has the least tinge of African blood in his veins regards himself as a negro and is identified with that race. Spirit. is strange to him; he is afraid of ghosts.

The *Viburnum Lentago* berries now turn blue-black in pocket, as the *nudum* did, which last are now all gone, while the *Lentago* is now just in season.

P.M. — By boat to Grape Cliff.

These are the stages in the river fall: first, the two varieties of yellow lily pads begin to decay and blacken (long ago), second, the first fall rains come after dog-days and arise and cool the river, and winds wash the decaying sparganium, etc., etc., to the shores and clear the channel more or less; third, when the first harder frosts come (as this year the 21st and 22d *inst.*), the button-bushes, which before had attained only a dull mixed yellow, are suddenly bitten, wither, and turn brown, all but the protected parts.

The *first* fall is so gradual as not to make much impression, but the last suddenly and conspicuously gives a fall aspect to the scenery of the river. The button-bushes thus withered, covered still with the gray, already withered mikania, suddenly paint with a rich brown the river's brim. It is like the crust, the edging, of a boy's turnover, done brown. And the black willows, slightly failed and crisped with age or heat, enhance my sense of the year's maturity. There, where the land appears to lap over the water by a mere edging, these thinner portions are first done brown. I float over the still liquid middle.

I have not seen any such conspicuous effect of frost as this sudden withering of the button-bushes. The muskrats make haste now to rear their cabins and conceal themselves.

I see still what I take to be small flocks of grackles feeding beneath the covert of the button-bushes and flitting from bush to bush. They seldom expose themselves long. The water begins to be clear of weeds, and the fishes are exposed. It is now too cold to bathe with comfort, yet the clams have not gone down. The river is still low. I scared up a duck (wood?) (white under side wings), which circled round four times, twice (middle times) high in the air a diameter of a hundred rods, and finally alighted with a long, slanting flight near where it rose. The sumachs (though I have not observed the poison (*venenata*)) ire. now turned before trees. Green-briar berries ripe, blue-black, or purplish, apparently with the frosts of 21st and 22d. The red maple leaves along the river are much curled and show their whitish under sides even more than a month ago, owing probably to their age as well as the summer's drought (from which last they had partly recovered a fortnight (?) ago).

Saw a warbler which inquisitively approached me creeper-wise along some dead brush twigs. It may have been the pine-creeping warbler, though I could see no white bars on wings. I should say all yellow-olivaceous above; clear lemon-yellow throat and breast — and vent (?); narrow white ring around eye; black bill, straight; clay-colored (?) legs; edge of wings white.

Young hickories, pretty generally, and some black oaks are frost-bitten, but no young white oaks. On the shrub oak plain under Cliffs, the young white oaks tire generally now tending to a dull inward red. The *ilicifolia* generally green still; with a few yellowish or else scarlet leaves. The young black oaks with many red, scarlet, or yellowish leaves. The chinquapin pretty generally a clear brilliant dark reel. The same will, a few twigs of the scarlet oat.; but not brilliant, *i.e. glossy*. The tupelo green, reddish, and brilliant scarlet, all together. The brightest hazel dim vermilion. Some red maple sprouts clear scarlet deepening to purplish. The panicked cornet green with a tinge of reddish purple. Only these young trees and bushes are yet conspicuously changed. The tupelo and the chinquapin the most brilliant of the above. The scarlet oak the clearest red.

But little *bright Solidago nemorosa* is left. It is generally withered or dim.

What name of a natural object is most poetic? That which he has given for convenience whose life is most nearly related to it, who has known it longest and best.

The perception of truth, as of the duration of time, etc., produces a pleasurable sensation.

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 September 25, Monday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went up the Sudbury River by boat to the Cliffs of Fair Haven Hill (Gleason 26/J7) and then opposite Bittern or Tupelo Cliff. (Gleason J6).

In San Francisco, A.J. Lafontaine started the German newspaper *Abend Zeitung*.

CALIFORNIA



Sept. 25. P.M. — To boat opposite Bittern Cliff *via* Cliffs.

[Transcript]

I suspect that I know on what the brilliancy of the autumnal tints will depend. On the greater or less drought of the summer. If the drought has been uncommonly severe, as this year, I should think it would so far destroy the vitality of the leaf that it would attain only to a dull, dead color in autumn, that to produce a brilliant autumn the plant should be full of sap and vigor to the last.

Do I see an *F. hyemalis* in the Deep Cut? It is a month earlier than last year.

I am detained by the very bright red blackberry leaves strewn along the sod, the vine being inconspicuous. How they spot it!


On the shrub oak plain, as seen from Cliffs, the red *at least*, balances the green. It looks like a rich, shaggy rug now, before the woods are changed. I see several smokes in the distance, of burning brush (?). The button-bush leaves are rapidly falling and covering the ground with a rich brown carpet. The pontederias, too, show decidedly the effect of the frost. The river is as low [as] ordinarily in summer, eight or nine inches below the long stone, and the stripe of the bayonet rush, now clear dark pink, eight or nine inches wide, is again exposed. Saw at a distance a fox or an otter withdrawing from the riverside. I think that if that August haze had been much of it smoke, I should have smelt it much more strongly, for I now smell strongly the smoke of this burning half a mile off, though it is scarcely perceptible in the air.

There was a splendid sunset while I was on the water, beginning at the Clamshell reach. All the lower edge of a very broad dark-slate cloud which reached up backward almost to the zenith was lit up through and through with a dun golden fire, the sun being below the horizon, like a furze plain densely on fire, a short distance above the horizon, for there was a clear, pale robin's-egg sky beneath, and some little clouds on which the light fell high in the sky but nearer, seen against the upper part of the distant uniform dark-slate one, were of a fine grayish silver color, with fine mother-o'-pearl tints unusual at sunset (?). The *furze* gradually burnt out on the lower edge of the cloud, changed into a smooth, hard pale pink vermilion, which gradually faded into a gray satiny pearl, a fine Quaker-color. All these colors were prolonged in the rippled reflection to five or six times their proper length. The effect was particularly remarkable in the case of the reds, which were long bands of red perpendicular in the water.



Bats come out fifteen minutes after sunset — and then I hear some clear song sparrow strains, as from a early spring.

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 September 26, Tuesday: On a warm and very pleasant afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) walked along the riverside in Merrick's pasture but did not attempt to swim.


[Richard Wagner](#) completed the full score of *Das Rheingold*.



Sept. 26. Took my last bath the 24th. Probably shall not bathe again this year. It was chilling cold. It is a warm and very pleasant afternoon, and I walk along the riverside in Merrick's pasture. I hear a faint jingle from some sparrows on the willows, etc., — tree or else song sparrows. Many swamp white oak acorns have turned brown on the trees. Some single red maples are very splendid now, the whole tree bright-scarlet against the cold green pines; now, when very few trees are changed, a most remarkable object in the landscape; seen a mile off. It is too fair to be believed, especially seen against the light. Some are a reddish or else greenish yellow, others with red or yellow cheeks. I suspect that the yellow maples had not scarlet blossoms. The bunches of panicked cornet are purple, though you see much of the gray under sides of the leaves. *Viburnum dentatum* berries still hold on.


[Transcript]

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 September 27, Wednesday: [Giacomo Meyerbeer](#) conducted a gala performance of his opera *Der Nordstern* (L'Etoile du nord) before the court of Württemberg in Stuttgart.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR SEPTEMBER 27th]

 September 28, Thursday: Review of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS (perhaps by [Gamaliel Bailey](#)) in the *National Era*, 8:155.



Sept. 28. R.W.E.'s pines are parti-colored, preparing to fall, some of them. The sassafras trees on the hill are now wholly a bright orange scarlet as seen from my window, and the small ones elsewhere are also changed. Sweet-briar hips ripe. As I complain that the voyager to arctic regions, in his description of the scenery, does not enough remind the reader directly or indirectly of the peculiar dreariness of the scene or of the perpetual twilight of the arctic night, so he whose theme is moonlight will find it difficult to illustrate it with the light of the moon alone.

[Transcript]

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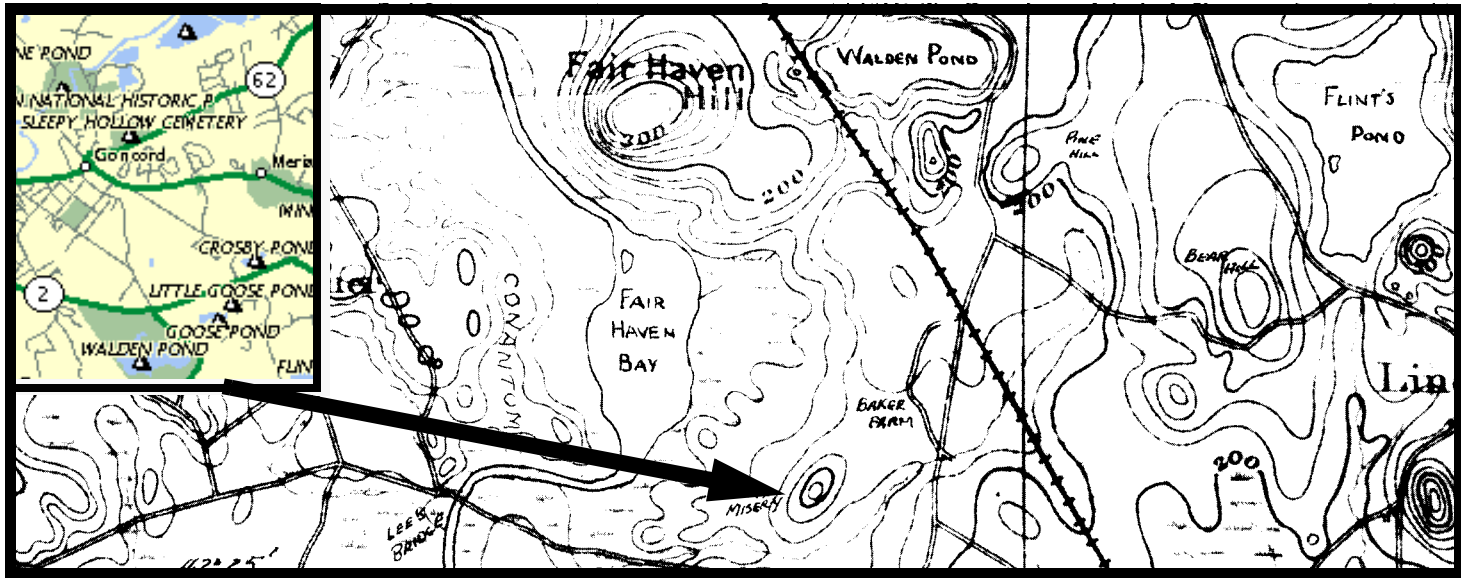
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September 29, Friday: The USS Albany, a 20-gun sloop of war with approximately 210 men on board, was somehow lost at sea sometime after this date. No trace has ever been found.

LOST AT SEA



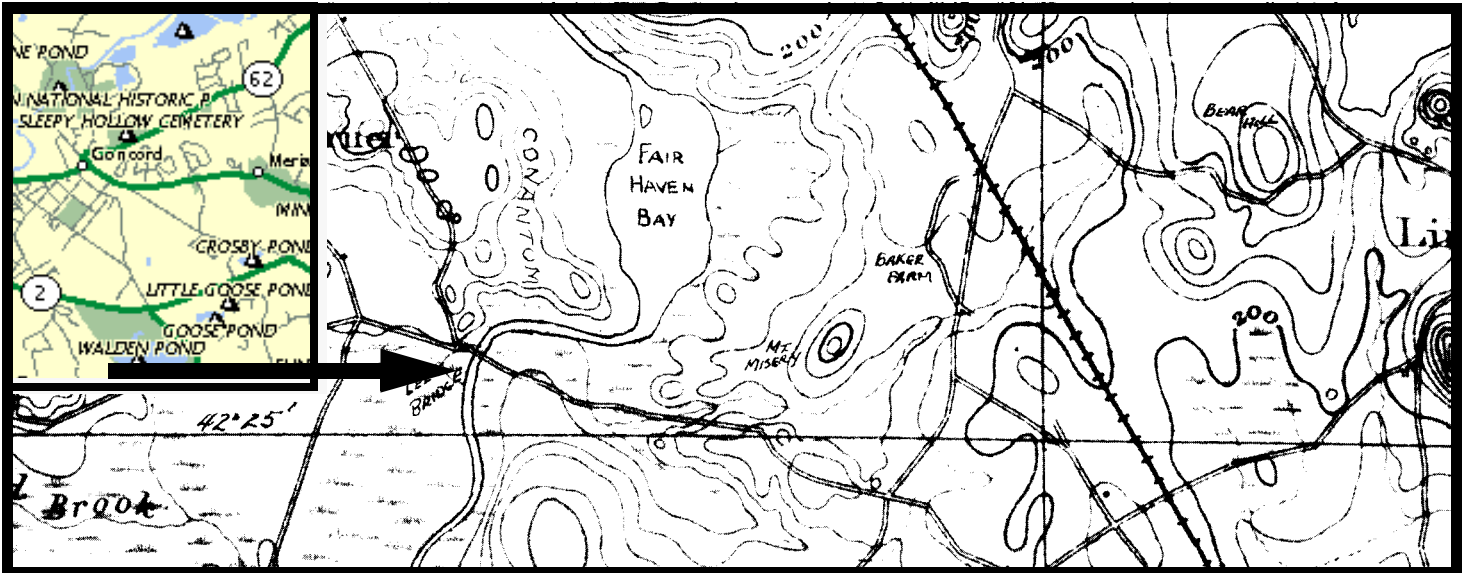
James Walter Spooner visited Henry Thoreau and ate at the Thoreau boarding house, and they went for a tramp to Mt. Misery:



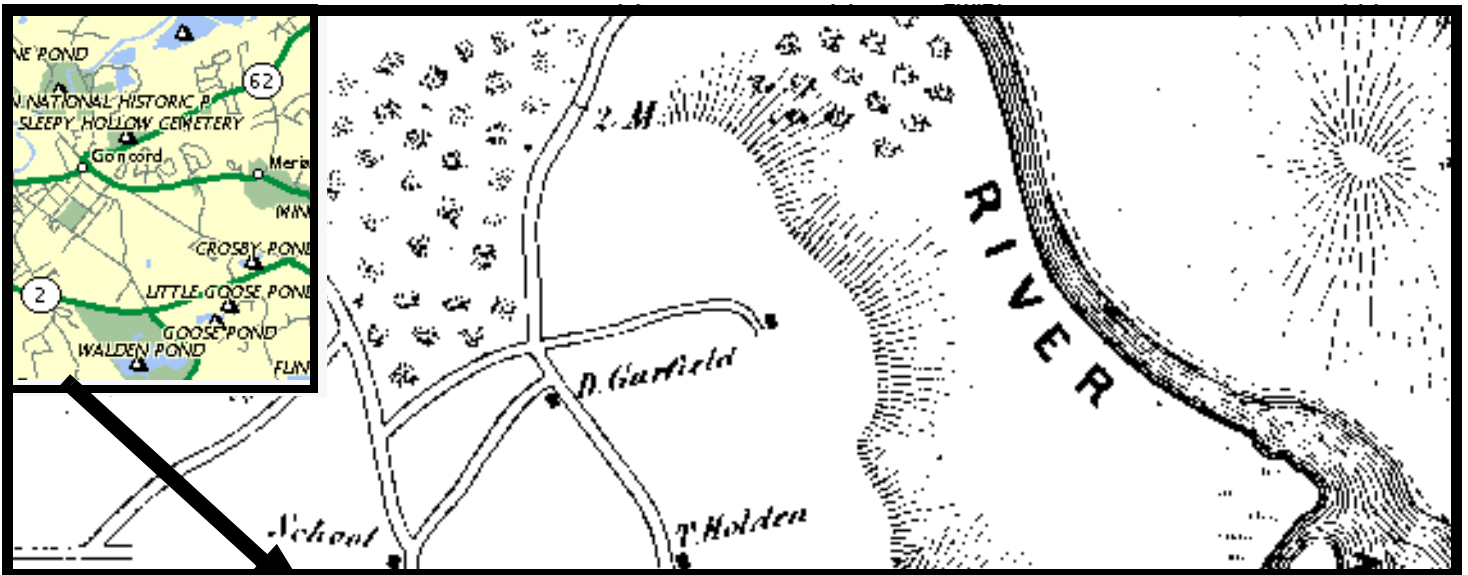
and then Lee's, or Corner, Bridge:

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returning by way of Conantum:



I dined at Mr. Thoreau's today. I went in and knocked gently, but as no one heard, for the family was in the next room, walked in & made myself at home reading Walden. There was an English Gentleman, with an unpronounceable name which I wish I had written just for curiosity, there. By going in so I had the opportunity of hearing Mr. Thoreau play upon his flute in the next room, which was very fine. He accompanied his sister upon the piano, Mrs. T. Says. They must be pretty well off by the look of things. Mr. T. showed me another large white two story house short distance over the fields which he said his father owned. He said he dug the cellar while he lived at Walden & stoned it. They lived there when it was built but his mother &

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sister preferred living down nearer & so they moved down. He said he didn't care where they lived, so long as it was in Concord, if he could only get off the back way into the woods, which you can do from almost every house by going across the fields or meadows.



Sept. 29. P.M. — To Lee's Bridge *via* Mt. Misery and return by Conantum.

[Transcript]

Yesterday was quite warm, requiring the thinnest coat. To-day is cooler. The elm leaves have in *some* places more than half fallen and strew the ground with thick rustling beds, — as front of Hubbard's, — perhaps earlier than usual. [In the margin against this paragraph the words "The dry year" are written in pencil.]

Bass berries dry and brown. Now is the time to gather barberries.

Looking from the Cliffs, the young oak plain is now probably as brightly colored as it will be. The bright reds appear here to be next the ground, the lower parts of these young trees, and I find on descending that it is commonly so as yet with the scarlet oak, which is the brightest. It is the lower half or two thirds which have changed, and this is surmounted by the slender, still green top. In many cases these leaves have only begun to be sprinkled with bloody spots and stains, — sometimes as if one had cast up a quart of blood from beneath and stained them. I now see the effect of that long drought on some young oaks, especially black oaks. Their leaves are in many instances all turned to a clear and uniform brown, having so far lost their vitality, but still plump and full-veined and not yet withered. Many are so affected and, of course, show no bright tints. They are hastening to a premature decay. The tops of many young white oaks which had turned are already withered, apparently by frost.

Saw two either pigeon or sparrow hawks, apparently male and female, the one much larger than the other. I see in *many places* the fallen leaves quite thickly covering the ground in the woods. A large flock of crows wandering about and cawing as usual at this season. I hear a very pleasant and now unusual strain on the sunny side of an oak wood from many — I think *F. hyemalis* (?) though I do not get a clear view of them. Even their slight jingling strain is remarkable at this still season. The catbird still mews. I see two ducks alternately (living in smooth water near the shore of Fair Haven Pond. Sometimes both are under at once. The milkweed down is flying at Clematis Ditch.

This evening is quite cool and breezy, with a prolonged white twilight, quite Septemberish.

When I look at the stars, nothing which the astronomers have said attaches to them, they are so simple and remote. *Their* knowledge is felt to be all terrestrial and to concern the earth alone. It suggests that the same is the case with every object, however familiar; our so-called knowledge of it is equally vulgar and remote.

One might say that all views through a telescope or microscope were purely visionary, for it is only by his eye and not by any other sense — not by his whole man — that the beholder is there where he is presumed to be. It is a disruptive mode of viewing as far as the beholder is concerned.

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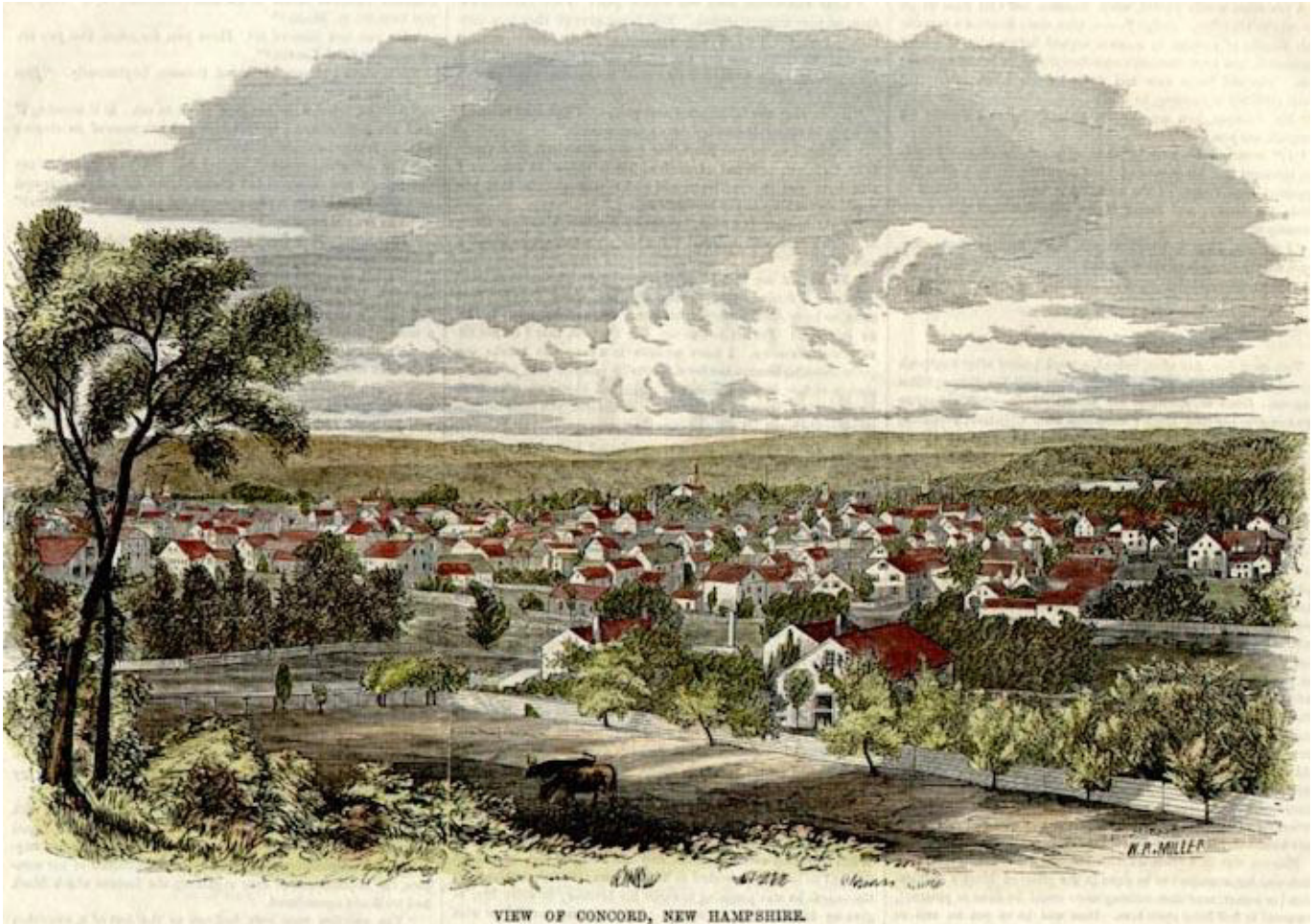


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 September 30, Saturday: [Gleason's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion](#) presented an image of [Concord, New Hampshire](#):



VIEW OF CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE.

CONSULT THE WIKIPEDIA

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went on the Assabet River to the monarda road.

(Review of [Henry Thoreau's WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)): "Walden; or, Life in the Woods," [Christian](#)



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Inquirer [New-York], p. 2, col. 6.

A gentleman who lives five [sic] years all alone by himself, by the side of a pond in the woods, in a house costing \$28.12, and whose yearly expenses for food, raiment, and luxuries, amount to \$19.44, and who thinks that is the best way of living, will hardly persuade his readers that he is free from all extravagance. If any one, however, thinks "this is some crazy man," he will find himself much mistaken if he reads his book. The great value of the work consists in the nice observation of nature which it shows. Its author has a rare gift not only of observing, but of describing all he saw and heard in the woods. He is also a scholar and a great admirer of the Greek and Latin classics. He keeps up his college studies, loves books, music, and pictures, though he lives in a shanty. Whatever may be thought of his oddities, no one can deny that he has written a work full of suggestion, and having here and there considerable wisdom. Almost every page is marked by a quaint humor which few can resist, and the style throughout is singularly nervous and racy.



Sept. 30. P.M. — *Via* Assabet to the monarda road.

[Transcript]

I am surprised to see that *some* red maples, which were so brilliant a day or two ago, have already shed their leaves, and they cover the land and the water quite thickly. I see a countless fleet of them slowly carried round in the still bay by the Leaning Hemlocks. I find a fine tupelo near Sam Barrett's now all turned scarlet. I find that it has borne much fruit - small oval bluish berries, those I see - and a very little not ripe is still left. Gray calls it blackish-blue. It seems to be contemporary with the sassafras. Both these trees are now particularly forward and conspicuous in their autumnal change. I detect the sassafras by its peculiar orange scarlet half a mile distant. Acorns are generally now turned brown and fallen or falling; the ground is strewn with them and in paths they are crushed by feet and wheels. The white oak ones are dark and the most glossy.

'rite clear bright-scarlet, leaves of the smooth sumach in many places are curled and drooping, banging straight down, so as to make a funereal impression, reminding me [of] a red sash and a soldier's funeral. They impress me quite as black crape similarly arranged, the bloody plants.

The conventional acorn of art is of course of no particular species, but the artist might find it worth his while to study Nature's varieties again.

The song sparrow is still about, and the blackbird. Saw a little bird with a distinct white spot on the wing, yellow about eye, and whitish beneath, which I think must be one of the wrens I saw last spring.

At present the river's brim is no longer browned with button-bushes, for those of their leaves which the frost had touched have already fallen entirely, leaving a thin crop of green ones to take their turn.

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[Giacomo Meyerbeer](#) was invested with the Order of the Württemberg Crown in Stuttgart, an honor which would allow him into the nobility if he should so desire (he would not pursue this).

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) under the heading “New Books” in the Harrisburg PA Morning Herald, 2:1.

“A Yankee Diogenes”—a review of Thoreau’s “Walden” [in the October Putnam’s]—comes up to our idea of that eccentric work.

Review of “Walden; or, Life in the Woods” in the New York Christian Inquirer, 2:6.

WALDEN Print H

A gentleman who lives five [*sic*] years all alone by himself, by the side of a pond in the woods, in a house costing \$28.12, and whose yearly expenses for food, raiment, and luxuries, amount to \$19.44, and who thinks that is the best way of living, will hardly persuade his readers that he is free from all extravagance. If any one, however, thinks “this is some crazy man,” he will find himself much mistaken if he reads his book. The great value of the work consists in the nice observation of nature which it shows. Its author has a rare gift not only of observing, but of describing all he saw and heard in the woods. He is also a scholar and a great admirer of the Greek and Latin classics. He keeps up his college studies, loves books, music, and pictures, though he lives in a shanty. Whatever may be thought of his oddities, no one can deny that he has written a work full of suggestion, and having here and there considerable wisdom. Almost every page is marked by a quaint humor which few can resist, and the style throughout is singularly nervous and racy.

From England, [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) had written to Ticknor & Fields asking for some “good,” “original” books “with American characteristics” to show to Monckton Milnes. Ticknor & Fields responded by sending [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) and [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#), and three other books.



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There was a treaty with the Chippewa:

Articles of a treaty made and concluded at La Pointe, in the State of Wisconsin, between Henry C. Gilbert and David B. Herriman, commissioners on the part of the United States, and the Chippewa Indians of Lake Superior and the Mississippi, by their chiefs and headmen.

ARTICLE 1.

The Chippewas of Lake Superior hereby cede to the United States all the lands heretofore owned by them in common with the Chippewas of the Mississippi, lying east of the following boundary line, to wit: Beginning at a point, where the east branch of Snake River crosses the southern boundary line of the Chippewa country, running thence up the said branch to its source, thence nearly north, in a straight line, to the mouth of East Savannah River, thence up the St. Louis River to the mouth of East Swan River, thence up the East swan River to its source, thence in a straight line to the most westerly bend of Vermillion River, and thence down the Vermillion River to its mouth.

The Chippewas of the Mississippi hereby assent and agree to the foregoing cession and consent that the whole amount of the consideration money for the country ceded above, shall be paid to the Chippewas of Lake Superior, and in consideration thereof the Chippewas of Lake Superior hereby relinquish to the Chippewas of the Mississippi, all their interest in and claim to the lands heretofore owned by them in common, lying west of the above boundary-line.

ARTICLE 2.

[Designation of boundary lines]

ARTICLE 3.

The United States will define the boundaries of the reserved tracts, whenever it may be necessary, by actual survey, and the President may, from time to time, at his discretion, cause the whole to be surveyed, and may assign to each head of a family or single person over twenty-one years of age, eighty acres of land for his or their separate use: and he may, at his discretion, as fast as the occupants become capable of transacting their own affairs, issue patents therefor to such occupants, with such restrictions of the power of alienation as he may see fit to impose. And he may also, at his discretion, make rules and regulations, respecting the disposition of the lands in case of the death of the head of a family, or single person occupying the same, or in case of its abandonment by them. And he may also assign other lands in exchange for mineral lands, if any such are found in the tracts herein set apart. And he may also make such changes in the boundaries of such reserved tracts or otherwise, as shall be necessary to prevent interference with any vested rights. All necessary roads, highways, and railroads, the lines of which may run through any of the reserved tracts, shall have the right of way through the same, compensation being made therefor as in other cases.



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ARTICLE 4.

In consideration of and payment for the country hereby ceded, the United States agree to pay to the Chippewas of Lake Superior, annually, for the term of twenty years, the following sums, to wit: five thousand dollars in coin; eight thousand dollars in goods, household furniture and cooking utensils; three thousand dollars in agricultural implements and cattle, carpenter's and other tools and building materials, and three thousand dollars for moral and educational purposes, of which last sum, three hundred dollars per annum shall be paid to the Grand Portage band, to enable them to maintain a school at their village. The United States will also pay the further sum of ninety thousand dollars, as the chiefs in open council may direct, to enable them to meet their present just engagements. Also the further sum of six thousand dollars, in agricultural implements, household furniture, and cooking utensils, to be distributed at the next annuity payment, among the mixed bloods of said nation. The United States will also furnish two hundred guns, one hundred rifles, five hundred beaver traps, three hundred dollars' worth of ammunition, and one thousand dollars' worth of ready made clothing, to be distributed among the young men of the nation, at the next annuity payment.

ARTICLE 5.

The United States will also furnish a blacksmith and assistant, with the usual amount of stock, during the continuance of the annuity payments, and as much longer as the President may think proper, at each of the points herein set apart for the residence of the Indians, the same to be in lieu of all the employees to which the Chippewas of Lake Superior may be entitled under previous existing treaties.

ARTICLE 6.

The annuities of the Indians shall not be taken to pay the debts of individuals, but satisfaction for depredations committed by them shall be made by them in such manner as the President may direct.

ARTICLE 7.

No spirituous liquors shall be made, sold, or used on any of the lands herein set apart for the residence of the Indians, and the sale of the same shall be prohibited in the Territory hereby ceded, until otherwise ordered by the President.

ARTICLE 8.

It is agreed, between the Chippewas of Lake Superior and the Chippewas of the Mississippi, that the former shall be entitled to two-thirds, and the latter to one-third, of all benefits to be derived from former treaties existing prior to the year 1847.

ARTICLE 9.

The United States agrees that an examination shall be made, and all sums that may be found equitably due to the Indians, for arrearages of annuity or other thing, under the provisions of former treaties, shall be paid as the chiefs may direct.



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ARTICLE 10.

All missionaries, and teachers, and other persons of full age, residing in the territory hereby ceded, or upon any of the reservations hereby made by authority of law, shall be allowed to enter the land occupied by them at the minimum price whenever the surveys shall be completed to the amount of one quarter section each.

ARTICLE 11.

All annuity payments to the Chippewas of Lake Superior, shall hereafter be made at L'Anse, La Pointe, Grand Portage, and on the St. Louis River, and the Indians shall not be required to remove from the homes hereby set apart for them. And such of them as reside in the territory hereby ceded, shall have the right to hunt and fish therein, until otherwise ordered by the President.

ARTICLE 12.

In consideration of the poverty of the Bois Forte Indians who are parties to this treaty, they having never received any annuity payments, and of the great extent of that part of the ceded country owned exclusively by them, the following additional stipulations are made for their benefit. The United States will pay the sum of ten thousand dollars, as their chiefs in open council may direct, to enable them to meet their present just engagements. Also the further sum of ten thousand dollars, in five equal annual payments, in blankets, cloth, nets, guns, ammunition, and such other articles of necessity as they may require.

They shall have the right to select their reservation at any time hereafter, under the direction of the President; and the same may be equal in extent, in proportion to their numbers, to those allowed the other bands, and be subject to the same provisions.

They shall be allowed a blacksmith, and the usual smith shop supplies and also two persons to instruct them in farming, whenever in the opinion of the President it shall be proper, and for such length of time as he shall direct.

It is understood that all Indians who are parties to this treaty, except the Chippewas of the Mississippi, shall hereafter be known as the Chippewas of Lake Superior. Provided, That the stipulation by which the Chippewas of Lake Superior relinquishing their right to land west of the boundary line shall not apply to the Bois Forte band who are parties to this treaty.

ARTICLE 13.

This treaty shall be obligatory on the contracting parties, as soon as the same shall be ratified by the President and Senate of the United States.

In testimony whereof, the said Henry C. Gilbert, and the said David B. Herriman, commissioners as aforesaid, and the undersigned chiefs and headmen of the Chippewas of Lake Superior and the Mississippi, have hereunto set their hands and seals, at the place aforesaid, this thirtieth day of September, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four.

Henry C. Gilbert,
David B. Herriman,
Commissioners



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OCTOBER 1854

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for October 1854 \(æf. 37\)](#)



October: Frost commenced in eastern France, and would endure there until April 28th. Mean temperatures for January in England would be 31° F and for February would be 29° F. The [Thames River](#) froze in London. In Paris there were 50 frost days, 17 of them being in succession. The weather was severe in southern [Russia](#), just as in Denmark, England, France, Spain, and Italy. The British army in the Crimea was suffering terribly.


[Henry Thoreau](#) was presumably written to by [Mary Moody Emerson](#) at this point:

If Mr. Thoreau took the least dislike at the close of his last visit to me – why it is not the home of genius to notice trifles. Why not have visited my deeper solitude? Why not bring me the Plymouth lecture? And a budget of literary news? Are you under no obligation to benefit or gratify your neighbours? Age loves the old fashion of catechising the young. Love to your parents & Aunts & forget not

MME

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 October: Review of [Henry Thoreau's WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), in "Review of New Books," [Peterson's Magazine](#) 26: 254.



The author of this volume would be called by some a modern Diogenes; but all will admit that he is a close, though somewhat eccentric observer of Nature. Disgusted with the ordinary conventional life, he retired to the shores of Walden Pond in Massachusetts, where building himself a log hut, he lived a sort of half hermit life for two years. The present book is a narrative of his experience during that period. The style is graceful, the reflections often profound, the thought always robust and healthy. On the excessive luxury of the homes the author makes war a la outrance, as a man who has lived on fifty dollars a year, we think, has a right. The book is so out of the beaten track that it cannot fail to set people to thinking; while no one, who once picks it up, will lay it down till he has finished it. The author, in his love of Nature, reminds us of old Isaa[k] Walton, as in other particulars he often recalls Sir Thomas Browne. Naturalists will learn many curious facts from the volume, while the poetical admirer of Nature will linger over its pages with delight. The publishers have issued it in their usual neat style.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE

"Literary Notices," in [Godey's Magazine and Lady's Book](#), Issue #49, page 370:

This ought to be a very profound and excellent book, a character which we think it will pretty fairly sustain among quiet and thoughtful readers. When he wrote it, the author says he lived a mile from any neighbor, in a house which he had built with his own hands, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned his living by the labor of his hands only. He lived there for the space of two years and two months, and, since his return to society, has prepared this volume of practical philosophy for the benefit of the world at large. It records his manner of life in his seclusion, and obstacles he met with, and the interesting reflections to which they gave birth in a mind disposed to make the most of every object brought under its observation.



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An anonymous review probably by the Reverend Andrew Preston Peabody, D.D. on page 536 of this month's issue of his [North American Review](#):

The economical details and calculations in this book are more curious than useful; for the author's life in the woods was on too narrow a scale to find imitators. But in describing his hermitage and his forest life, he says so many pithy and brilliant things, and offers so many piquant, and, we may add, so many just, comments on society as it is, that his book is well worth the reading, both for its actual contents and its suggestive capacity.

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)

An anonymous review "A Yankee [Diogenes](#)" by [Charles Frederick Briggs](#), on pages 443-48 of this month's issue of [Putnam's Monthly Magazine of American Literature, Science and Art](#).

[READ THE FULL TEXT](#)



October: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#).

[CONSULT THIS ISSUE](#)

[Louisa May Alcott](#), back from maid job with \$32.⁰⁰ saved over the course of the summer, re-opened her home parlor school.

In [Boston](#), the 1st issue of an anti-Catholic newspaper, [The Wide-Awake](#). We mustn't let those [Catholics](#) take over.

The Irish Columbian Artillery Company of [Boston](#) was proscribed. We mustn't let those [Irish](#) take over.

Charles Henry Branscomb conducted a 2d party of [anti-slavery](#) immigrants to Lawrence in the [Kansas Territory](#). We mustn't let those pro-slavery Southerners take over.



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October 1, Sunday: In Syracuse, New York, the 3d annual “Jerry Celebration” sponsored by the Unitarian congregation of the Reverend Samuel Joseph May, honoring the freeing of Jerry McHenry from the federal marshals who had been seeking to “return” him to his “owner” on October 1, 1851.



[RESISTING THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW](#)

Father [Isaac Hecker](#), CSSR, wrote to [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#).

The watch company Dennison, Howard & Davis that [Aaron Lufkin Dennison](#) had founded in 1850 in Roxbury, Massachusetts relocated to a new factory building in Waltham and named itself the Boston Watch Company (the name “Waltham Watch Company” is merely a generic term for any manufacturer located in Waltham who manufactures watches anywhere in the world; in fact many of the watches said to have been manufactured by a so-called “Waltham Watch Company” actually had been crafted in Birmingham, England).

Scheduling difficulties had forced the postponement of [Henry Thoreau](#)’s lecture in Plymouth, Massachusetts by one week. He responded to [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#)’s letter of August 12th, talking about visiting

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Middleboro Ponds and recommending [William Gilpin](#)'s books on nature, which he was just then reading.



Concord Mass, Oct 1st '54

Dear Sir,

I had duly received your very kind and frank letter, but delayed to answer it thus long because I have little skill as a correspondent, and wished to send you something more than my thanks.

I was gratified by your prompt and hearty acceptance of my book. Yours is the only word of greeting I am likely to receive from a dweller in the woods like myself, from where the whippoorwill and cuckoo are heard, and there are better than moral clouds drifting over, and real breezes blow.

Your account excites in me a desire to see the Middleboro Ponds, of which I had already heard somewhat; as also of some very beautiful

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*ponds on the Cape, in Harwich I think, near which I once passed. I have sometimes also thought of visiting that remnant of our Indians still living near you.— But then, you know there is nothing like ones native fields and lakes. The best news you send me is, not that Nature with you is so fair and genial, but that there is one there who likes her so well. That proves all that was asserted. Homer, of course, you include in your list of lovers of nature – and, by the way, let me mention here, – for this is “my thunder” lately – W^m Gilpin’s long series of books on the Picturesque, with their illustrations. If it chances that you have not met with these, I cannot just now frame a better wish than that you may one day derive as much pleasure from the inspection of them as I have. Much as you have told me of yourself, you have still I think a little the advantage of me in this correspondence, for I have told you still more in my book. You have therefore the broadest mark to fire at. A young English author, Thomas Cholmondeley, is just now waiting for me to take a walk with him – therefore excuse this very barren note from
Yrs, hastily at last,
Henry D. Thoreau*



Oct. 1. The young black birches about Walden, nest the south shore, are now commonly clear pale-yellow, very distinct at distance, like bright-yellow white birches, so slender amid the dense growth of oaks and evergreens on the steep shores. The black birches and red maples are the conspicuous trees changed about the pond . Not yet the oaks.

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



October 2, Monday: The Academy of Music in New-York opened at 14th street and Irving Place with a performance of Bellini’s “Norma.”

In San Francisco, John W. McKenzie was appointed as the City Marshal.

CALIFORNIA

William Jackman took a land patent for 40 acres, and for 123.89 acres, in St. Croix and Pierce Counties in Wisconsin. An existing undated handbill printed in River Falls, Wisconsin asserts:

“A Lecture by Wm. Jackman giving an account of His Shipwreck, Life among the Natives, their Manners and Customs, and his Final Escape”

...

Will deliver ___ Lecture AT ___ ON ___.

Admittance 25 cents.

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Children under 12 years, 15 cents.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 2d]



October 3, Tuesday: [Charles Wilkes](#) married again, this time to Mary H. Lynch Bolton. They would have four children.



Bronson Alcott wrote Abba Alcott in Boston from Benjamin Marston Watson's "The Hillside" mansion in Plymouth, Massachusetts, indicating that he planned to remain there until [Henry Thoreau](#) arrived and had an opportunity to deliver his talk so that he could then escort Thoreau back to Boston — therefore she and the girls would see him by Wednesday or Thursday of the following week.

Watson wrote [Thoreau](#) from Plymouth, mentioning [James Walter Spooner](#):
Plymouth Oct 30

*My dear Sir—
I am glad to learn
from Mr Spooner that you
are really coming down,
with the tripod too, which
is so good news that I hardly
dared to expect it.
It seems a little un-
certain whether you intend
to read in the morning as*

*Page 2
well as evening, and
so I write to enquire,
that there may be no
mistake in the announcement.
Please let me know by return
mail which will be in
time.
Very truly yr*



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B.M. Watson

Page 3

Postmark: []

OCT

3

[]

Postage: *PAID 3*

Address: *H. D. Thoreau*

Concord

Mass



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 3d]



October 4, Wednesday: [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) evaluated [Henry Thoreau](#)'s letter of October the 1st:



Received a letter from Henry D. Thoreau to-day in reply to mine to him. Letter hastily written and hardly satisfactory, evidently well meant though overcautious.

[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) was reviewed on the 2d page of the Louisville, Kentucky [Daily Courier](#).

The author of this was engaged in Emerson's Dial, a periodical devoted to transcendentalism. The work before us shows decided evidences that the author has not forgotten his early love. There are numerous sentences in the work, from which we have not been able to draw any satisfactory meaning. But there are also a multitude of charming pictures of natural scenery, which will repay the reader for searching after them. The book is beautifully printed in a style which does credit to the typographical taste and skill of Ticknor & Fields.

[Abraham Lincoln](#) made his 1st political speech, at the Illinois State Fair.

[Thoreau](#) wrote to Benjamin Marston Watson [BENJAMIN MARSTON WATSON](#).

Concord Oct 4th '54

Dear Sir,

I meant to read

to you but once;—in the eve-





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ning, if it is convenient for all parties. That is as large a taste of my present self as I dare offer you in one visit.

Yrs

Henry D. Thoreau.

Page 2

Postage: *p^d*

Address: *B.M. Watson Esq.*

Plymouth

Mass.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 4th]



October 5, Thursday: On this day a review of WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS was appearing in the Watchman and Reflector, a weekly gazette of the American Baptist Church, on its page 158:

WALDEN; OR LIFE IN THE WOODS. By Henry D. Thoreau. Author of "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers." Boston: Ticknor, Reed & Fields.

"A Life in the Woods," within twenty miles of Boston may strike the reader as hardly affording enough of material in the shape of incident and adventure, for a fair sized volume like the present. But he must read and learn his mistake, for this beyond dispute is one of the most original, eccentric and suggestive books which the season has brought out. The writer, in relating his own experience, which he does with naivete, shows much power of reflection, and a philosophic knowledge of men and things.

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We do not know on what date [Thomas Cholmondeley](#) had arrived at the Thoreau boardinghouse, but by this day he had been in residence long enough to have become acquainted with [Henry Thoreau](#), and for Thoreau to have invited him along on a planned climb of Mount Wachusett. One may wonder what sort of conversations Thoreau had with this Brit colonialist who was having so many interesting things to say, in his *ULTIMA THULE; OR, THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A RESIDENCE IN NEW ZEALAND* published in this year, about how “the true principle of imperial connection is *faith in the laws of nature and of man*”:¹⁷



Union may consist materially in a balance of interests; but yet it is not an interest; it represents the soul and intelligence, proceeding from men indeed, but which in its turn governs men; which confers a conscience upon the otherwise lifeless machinery of government, and gives it a life analogous to that of an organised living creature. The great law of organisation is well known; we may behold and study it, whether we look downwards at the flowers under our feet, or gaze upwards at the stars of heaven; from both we learn to take good heart, and have confidence in the kind intention of the great Creator and disposer of the universe, and the thorough goodness of the laws established by Him; one of the greatest of which may thus be interpreted in its application to men: **that as long as a tolerably good common Government exists, men will hold together and respect a common cause;** that it is **not** the nature and tendency of families or nations to fall into pieces, but that they do so from long-continued, unbearable misgovernment.

READ CHOLMONDELEY

Thoreau wrote [H.G.O. Blake](#) in [Worcester](#) telling about Cholmondeley being there in [Concord](#), and suggested that he bring him along on their trip to Mount Wachusett.

Concord Oct 5th '54

Mr Blake,

After I wrote to you Mr Watson postponed my going to Plymouth one week i.e. till next Sunday, and now he wishes me to carry my instruments & survey his grounds, to which he has been adding. Since I want a little money, though I contemplate but a short excursion, I do not feel at liberty to decline this work. I do not know exactly how long it will detain me — but there is plenty of time yet — & I will write to you again — perhaps from Plymouth—

There is a Mr Thomas Cholmondeley (pronounced Chumly) a young English author, staying at our house at present — who asks me to teach him botany — i.e. anything which I know — and also to make an excursion to some mountain with him. He is a well-behaved person, and possibly I may propose his taking that run to Wachusett with us — if it will be agreeable to you. Nay If I do not hear any objection from you I will consider myself at liberty to invite him.

In haste. H. D. Thoreau

17. The use of *italics* for emphasis is Cholmondeley's.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 5th]



October 6, Friday: In [San Francisco, California](#) "Honest Henry" Meiggs, prominent citizen accused of forging city warrants, "took it on the lam." Yeah. Bye-bye, Honest Henry.

Shortly after midnight, a great fire began in Newcastle and Gateshead, England that would produce 53 fatalities and hundreds of injuries.

["Henry D. Thoreaux"](#) was written to by William Thomas in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to set the date for a lecture as November 21st.

*Phil Oct. 6th. 1854[]
Henry D Thoreaux Esq
Dear Sir
You will please accept our thanks for your prompt response to our invitation. We have entered you for the 21st Nov.
Please inform us as early as possible upon what subject you will speak
Yours Truly
W^mB Thomas
Chairman*



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 6th]



October 7, Saturday: [Governor Andrew Horatio Reeder](#) established his office at [Fort Leavenworth](#) in the [Kansas Territory](#).

"Went to Plymouth to lecture and survey Watson's grounds."

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

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



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





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The arrangement was that [Thoreau](#) would share [Bronson Alcott](#)'s bedchamber. On the way, Thoreau stopped at Harvard Library to check out *BHAGVAT-GEETA; OR, DIALOGUES OF KREESHNA AND ARJOON*. When Thoreau arrived for supper, he and Alcott discussed the Genesis until bedtime. Review of *WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS* titled "Ticknor, Reed and Fields" in the New York [Home Journal](#), 7:3.

Then comes a unique volume, which might be called the æsthetics of country life; it is entitled "Life in the Woods," and records the experiences, physical and moral, of a hermit of Concord, Massachusetts, a friend of Emerson and Hawthorne—Henry D. Thoreau. The book is remarkable for its graphic descriptions, its original vein of reasoning, and its earnest introspection: a work derived from solitude and nature is a rarity in American letters; and no contemplative or imaginative reader can fail to discover in its pages refreshment and delight.

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Oct. 7. Went to Plymouth to lecture and survey Watson's grounds. Returned the 15th.

[Transcript]

The *Decodon verticillatus* (swamp loosestrife) very abundant, forming isles in the pond on Town Brook on Watson's farm, now turned (methinks it was) a somewhat orange (?) scarlet. Measured a buckthorn on land of N. Russell & Co., bounding on Watson, close by the ruins of the cotton-factory, in five places from the ground to the first branching, or as high as my head. The diameters were 4 feet 8 inches, 4-6, 4-3, 4-2, 4-6. It was full of fruit now quite ripe, which Watson plants. The birds eat it.

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Saw a small goldenrod in the woods with four very broad rays, a new kind to me. Saw also the English oak; leaf much like our white oak, but acorns large and long, with a long peduncle, and the bark of these young trees, twenty or twenty-five feet high, quite smooth. Saw moon-seed, a climbing vine. Also the leaf of the ginkgo tree, of pine-needles run together. Spooner's garden a wilderness of fruit trees. Russell is not sure but Eaton has described my rare polygonum.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



October 8, Sunday: The Reverend Albert Williams resigned as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of San Francisco, and delivered a farewell sermon.

CALIFORNIA

A review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), titled "Letter from a Lady Correspondent" and presumably by Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard, appeared in the [Daily Alta California](#), 5:279.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

In Plymouth, Massachusetts, [Henry Thoreau](#) for the 1st time delivered his lecture "MOONLIGHT". Well, actually, the full title of the lecture Thoreau delivered at Leyden Hall on this occasion was:



"Moonlight (Introductory to an Intended Course of Lectures)"

According to Pliny, there is a stone in Arabia called Selenites, "wherein is a white, which decreases and increases with the moon." My journal for the last year or two has been selenitic in this sense.

PLINY

In his "Moonlight" lecture, [Thoreau](#) made a reference to [Augustine](#):

As S Augustine says, "Deus regit inferiora corpora per superioria"



Although he would continue to work on this essay for a few days, Thoreau would begin to pay more attention to "Walking, or the Wild." The two new lectures he planned to generate from this earlier lecture presumably were to become the 2d and 3d lectures in his "Intended Course of Lectures" (refer to William L. Howarth's "Successor to WALDEN? Thoreau's 'Moonlight-An Intended Course of Lectures'," page 101).



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[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 8th]

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"MOONLIGHT"¹⁸

DATE	PLACE	TOPIC
July 4, Tuesday, 1854, about 3:30PM	Framingham, Massachusetts; Harmony (also "Framingham" and "Island") Grove	"Slavery in Massachusetts"
October 8, 1854, Sunday; 7:00 PM	Leyden Hall, Plymouth MA	"MOONLIGHT"
November 21, 1854, Tuesday; 7:30 PM	Spring Garden Institute, Philadelphia PA	"The Wild"

18. From Bradley P. Dean and Ronald Wesley Hoag's "THOREAU'S LECTURES AFTER WALDEN: AN ANNOTATED CALENDAR."



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NARRATIVE OF EVENT: On 17 September 1854, [Henry Thoreau](#)'s Plymouth friend and former Harvard schoolmate Benjamin Marston Watson sent him this invitation to lecture in Plymouth:

Mr James Spooner and others here, your friends, have clubbed together and raised a small sum in hope of persuading you to come down and read them a paper or two some Sunday. They can offer you \$10 at least. Mr Alcott is now here, and I thought it might be agreeable to you to come down next Saturday and read a paper on Sunday morning and perhaps on Sunday Evening also, if agreeable to yourself. I can assure you of a very warm reception but from a small party only.

In a postscript Watson added:

I will meet you at the Depot on Saturday evening, if you so advise me. Last train leaves at 5 –

This is not a "Leyden Hall Meeting" but a private party -social gathering- almost sewing circle. Tho' perhaps we may meet you at Leyden Hall. (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, pages 337-38)

Two days later, on 19 September, Thoreau responded to Watson with an acceptance and a question:

I am glad to hear from you & the Plymouth men again. The world still holds together between Concord and Plymouth, it seems. I should like to be with you while Mr Alcott is there, but I cannot come next Sunday. I will come Sunday after next, that is Oct 1st, if that will do, – and look out for you at the Depot.

I do not like to promise now more than one discourse. Is there a good precedent for 2? (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, page 338)

The acceptance is no surprise at all, but Thoreau's question is. In 1852, on both of his previous lecture trips to Plymouth, Thoreau had made two lecture presentations on each visit. Thoreau's concern over presenting the requested two lectures is understandable, however, as at that time he had only one lecture that he wished to use, and all indications are that it was not yet written.¹⁹

[Henry Thoreau](#) faced a larger problem at this time than the need to hurry a lecture into shape for a just-made engagement. He was, in fact, caught in a dilemma, on the one hand wanting to take advantage of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)'s publication to propel his career as a lecturer, on the other hand fearful of the loss of authentic life that stepped-up lecturing might entail. His journal entry for 19 September, the day of his acceptance message to Watson, conveys these two conflicting attitudes, one overtly and the other at least in

19. According to William L. Howarth, "Between 26 September and 7 October [1854] Thoreau labored constantly on the lecture, so constantly during the last five days that he wrote no Journal entries at all" ("Successor to WALDEN? Thoreau's 'Moonlight — An Intended Course of Lectures,'" [Proof](#), 2 [1972]: 101).



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part by implication:

Thinking this afternoon of the prospect of my writing lectures and going abroad to read them the next winter, I realized how incomparably great the advantages of obscurity and poverty which I have enjoyed so long (and may still perhaps enjoy). I thought with what more than princely, with what poetical, leisure I had spent my years hitherto, without care or engagement, fancy-free. I have given myself up to nature; I have lived so many springs and summers and autumns and winters as if I had nothing else to do but **live** them, and imbibe whatever nutriment they had for me; I have spent a couple of years, for instance, with the flowers chiefly, having none other so binding engagement as to observe when they opened; I could have afforded to spend a whole fall observing the changing tints of the foliage. Ah, how I have thriven on solitude and poverty! I cannot overstate this advantage. I do not see how I could have enjoyed it, if the public had been expecting as much of me as there is danger now that they will. If I go abroad lecturing, how shall I ever recover the lost winter? (JOURNAL, 7:46)

Between Thoreau's questioning, in his letter to Marston, of the precedent for a second Plymouth lecture and this same day's journal questioning of the unprecedented trade-offs demanded by a more ambitious career as lecturer, there is perhaps less distance than one would first assume. Despite these expressed doubts, however, one should not overlook in this journal lament for the impending loss of a personal Golden Age the suggested reasons for this loss. First, Thoreau presumed that the post-[WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) public would want to hear him speak; and, second, he apparently proposed to do so.

Indeed, on 21 September, two days after his message to Benjamin Marston Watson and his journal elegy for innocence, Thoreau elaborated on his predicament in a letter to H.G.O. Blake in Worcester. Here he made explicit his intention to pursue lecturing as never before.

I have just read your letter, but I do not mean now to answer it, solely for want of time to say what I wish. . . . As for the excursion you speak of [apparently to Mt. Wachusett]: I should like it right well, - indeed I thought of proposing the same thing to you and [Theo] Brown, some months ago. Perhaps it would have been better if I had done so then; for in that case I should have been able to enter into it with that infinite margin to my views, -spotless of all engagements, -which I think so necessary. As it is, I have agreed to go a-lecturing to Plymouth, Sunday after next (October 1) and to Philadelphia in November, and thereafter to the West, if they shall want me; and, as I have prepared nothing in that shape, I feel as if my hours were spoken for. (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, page 339)

While still reflecting his doubts, this letter clearly acknowledges his plan to go on the road as a lecturer, traveling a great deal elsewhere than in [Concord](#).

Pressed for time as he was, Thoreau must have been relieved by Benjamin Marston Watson's letter of 24



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September, postponing the lecture and, incidentally, commissioning a survey of his extensive garden.

There is to be a meeting here on Oct 1st that we think will interfere with yours, and so if the Lord is willing and you have no objections we will expect you on the next Sunday 8th October.

I think Mr. A. [Alcott] will stay till that time.

I have been lately adding to my garden, and now have all that joins me — so I am ready to have it surveyed by you; a pleasure I have long promised myself. So, if you are at leisure and inclined to the field I hope I may be so fortunate as to engage your services.

Benjamin Marston Watson added in a postscript, “The survey might be before the Sunday or after as you please, and I will meet you at the Depot any time you say —” (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, pages 339-40).

Watson’s next letter to [Henry Thoreau](#), written on 30 September (but misdated 30 October), acknowledges Thoreau’s acceptance through an intermediary of the new lecture date and the request for a survey:

I am glad to learn from Mr Spooner that you are really coming down, with the tripod too, which is so good news that I hardly dared to expect it.

It seems a little uncertain whether you intend to read in the morning as well as evening, and so I write to enquire, that there may be no mistake in the announcement. Please let me know by return mail which will be in time. (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, page 340)

The intermediary mentioned here was [James Walter Spooner](#), who had met Thoreau and heard him lecture in Plymouth on at least one previous occasion, recording their May 1852 contact in his diary (see lecture 40 in the “Before WALDEN” calendar). Spooner, who became an ardent admirer, was one of the sponsors of Thoreau’s upcoming lecture. Spooner visited Thoreau in Concord MA ten days before the lecture, joining him in a lengthy walk on 29 September. Thoreau noted the walk in his journal but did not mention his companion, while Spooner’s own account, in a letter to his parents written that evening from [Concord](#)’s Middlesex House,

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is richly detailed.²⁰



The next day he returned to Plymouth and made his report to Benjamin Marston Watson.²¹

In a letter mis-dated Wednesday, October 3d, 1854 (Wednesday was the 4th), [Bronson Alcott](#) confirmed Watson's 24 September impression that he would stay in Plymouth to hear Thoreau lecture. Writing to his wife from Watson's home, "Hillside,"²² Alcott confessed his delinquency but gave several reasons for protracting his visit, among them that

as . . . Henry Thoreau is to be here surveying and to read something to a circle of Watson's neighbors on Sunday next, and so into the week, they have persuaded me somewhat against my sense of duty to you and the Girls, to remain and see him back to Boston sometime in the week, by Wednesday say, or Thursday at farthest, I should think; and you may then expect me, if you have or can get to send the \$1.50 . . . for road ticket, and 37 1/2 for hack to bring me and my copied reams to your board again.

On 4 October, Thoreau wrote again to Benjamin Marston Watson, clearing up once and for all the question of how many lectures he intended to give in Plymouth. His two-sentence letter declares, "*I meant to read to you but once; — in the evening, if it is convenient for all parties. That is as large a taste of my present self as I dare offer you in one visit.*"²³

Two letters to H.G.O. Blake, both involving the Plymouth trip and its impact on their planned excursion to

20. Anne Root McGrath, "As Long as It Is in Concord," [Concord Saunterer](#), 12, no. 2 (Summer 1977), pages 9-11.

21. Francis B. Dedmond, "James Walter Spooner: Thoreau's Second (Though Unacknowledged) Disciple," [Concord Saunterer](#), 18, no. 2 (December 1985), page 38; see also Dedmond, "Thoreau as Seen by an Admiring Friend: A New View," [American Literature](#), 56 (October 1984): 334-43

22. THE LETTERS OF A. BRONSON ALCOTT, ed. Richard L. Herrnstadt (Ames: Iowa State UP, 1969), pages 185-86.

23. Although the Thoreau Textual Center, CU-SB, has a photocopy and a typescript of this letter, the location of the original letter is unknown. We quote here from the typescript.

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Mt. Wachusett, complete the extant correspondence relating to this lecture. On 5 October, Thoreau wrote:

After I wrote to you Mr. Watson postponed my going to Plymouth one week i.e. till next Sunday, and now he wishes me to carry my instruments & survey his grounds, to which he has been adding. Since I want a little money, though I contemplate but a short excursion, I do not feel at liberty to decline this work. I do not know exactly how long it will detain me -but there is plenty of time yet- & I will write to you again -perhaps from Plymouth -

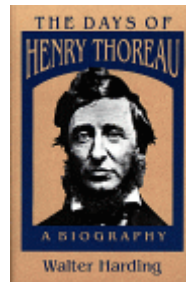
[Henry Thoreau](#) then mentioned his new friend Thomas Cholmondeley and told H.G.O. Blake, “He is a well-behaved person, and **possibly** I may propose his taking that run to Wachusett with us — if it will be agreeable to you” (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, pages 342-43). In a letter from [Concord, Massachusetts](#) dated Saturday PM, October 14, Thoreau wrote again to Blake, saying in part:

I have just returned from Plymouth, where I have been detained surveying much longer than I expected.

What do you say to visiting Wachusett next Thursday? (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, page 344)

H.G.O. Blake must have said yes as Thoreau’s journal entry for Thursday, 19 October, records his trip to the mountain, where the next day they “saw the sun rise from the mountain-top” (JOURNAL, 7:65).

Thoreau gave his lecture to a small audience of friends, among them [Alcott](#), [James Walter Spooner](#), Benjamin Marston Watson and his wife, Mary Russell Watson, in whom Thoreau had had a romantic interest in the early 1840s and for whom he wrote the poem “To the Maiden in the East”²⁴ (Walter Roy Harding’s THE DAYS OF HENRY THOREAU: A BIOGRAPHY, page 107).



In view of the duration of his Plymouth lecture trip and the correspondence it generated, [Thoreau](#)’s journal record is a disappointment. His entry dated 7 October begins, “Went to Plymouth to lecture and survey Watson’s grounds. Returned the 15th.” His brief account mentions a few botanical encounters on or near Watson’s property and calls “Spooner’s garden a wilderness of fruit trees” (JOURNAL, 7:63-64), but says nothing of the lecture or anything else. While the apparent misdating of his return from Plymouth (see 14 October letter to Blake) perhaps suggests a belated journal entry, the sparseness of information here is indicative of the time shortage he faced that fall.

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

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



[Alcott](#)’s diary entries²⁵ add more information but do not include the entire time of Thoreau’s stay.

24. Quoted in Walter Roy Harding, THE DAYS OF HENRY THOREAU (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), page 143.

25. [Alcott](#), “Diary for 1854,” entries of 7-11 October, MH (*59M-308).



1854-1855

1854-1855

Wrote [Alcott](#):

Saturday 7 [October 1854].... Evening, Thoreau arrives to supper and we discuss the Genesis till bed time, Thoreau sleeping with me in my chamber.

Sunday 8. We walk about Hillside, and ride around Billington Sea after dinner.

Evening, Thoreau reads an admirable paper on "Moonlight" to a small circle at Leyden Hall.

Monday 9. I help Thoreau survey Hillside, also discuss matters generally.

Tuesday 10. Again survey with Thoreau and Watson.

Evening, Company at Hillside and a conversation on Health, Thoreau and some of the ladies, Mrs Watson, the Misses Kendall's, taking part.

Wednesday 11. Carry Chain in surveying "the Orchard" with Thoreau: also, about Hillside Walks. Orchard contains 6 1/3 acres.

ADVERTISEMENTS, REVIEWS, AND RESPONSES: The growing importance of lyceum-style lectures in America, and of Henry Thoreau as a lecturer, is indicated by a notice in the 20 September 1854 New-York Daily Tribune, which reads in part:

THE LECTURE SEASON.

Our advices by letter and otherwise justify the inference that the Lecture Season of 1854-5 will be more brilliant than any of its predecessors – that there will be more Popular Lectures delivered, and to larger audiences, than during any preceding autumn and winter. Nearly every City in the Free States, with many of the Southern, will have its regular Course or Courses; some of them as many as three; while at least half the considerable villages throughout the North and West will have at least one Course. The most acceptable lecturers are overrun with invitations, and are proffered compensation at much higher rates than were current a few years ago. The largely increased attendance last winter over that of any former season justified this advance; and, even at the highest rate, two or three of those most in request will be unable to answer all the demands upon their time.

We proceed to give, as last year, the names and post office address of those hitherto widely invited as Lecturers, for the convenience of those who are now making out their lists and addressing invitations. . . .

We believe the popular taste for this sort of exercise has sensibly increased of late, and that buffoonery and clap-trap are at considerable discount from the early quotations, while solid information and grave, practical suggestion are more generally sought and appreciated. We believe this tendency will be more and more evinced, until the Winter Course of Lectures of each city and village shall come to be truly regarded as an important and beneficent instrumentality for dispelling intellectual stagnation and training the American Mind to habits of healthful activity, fearless investigation, and generous, manly thought.



1854-1855

1854-1855

Included in this notice was a list of thirty-one lecturers available for the coming season, one of whom was “HENRY D. THOREAU, Concord, Mass.” While [Henry Thoreau](#)’s friendships with New-York [Daily Tribune](#) editor [Horace Greeley](#) and the influential [Waldo Emerson](#) may have influenced his inclusion here, his own past lecturing experience coupled with the recent publication of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), his second book, presumably would have warranted his initial listing in any case. Updated and expanded annually, this list thereafter included Thoreau’s name till 1861, the year he became too ill for lecturing.

Other than [Alcott](#)’s above-mentioned comment that Thoreau’s lecture was “admirable,” the only recovered response to this October 8, 1854 lecture is the implied praise in this undated letter from [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#), presumably from later that same month. Miss Emerson, who apparently had heard some favorable report of Thoreau’s talk, wryly addressed her envelope to “Mr H. D. Thoreau[,] Professor of lectures.” She wrote:²⁶

If Mr. Thoreau took the least dislike at the close of his last visit to me – why it is not the home of genius to notice trifles. Why not have visited my deeper solitude? Why not bring me the Plymouth lecture? And a budget of literary news? Are you under no obligation to benefit or gratify your neighbours? Age loves the old fashion of catechising the young. Love to your parents & Aunts & forget not

MME

DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC: Anticipating that he would be able to capitalize on the success of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) by lecturing around New England and in the Midwest, Thoreau began a wholesale revision of his earlier “WALKING, OR THE WILD” lecture manuscript, a portion of which involved moonlit walks (see lectures 31-32 and 40-41 in the “Before [WALDEN](#)” calendar). He extracted this portion of the lecture manuscript, tentatively titled the selection “The Moon,” and began searching through his journal of 1850-54 for passages about his nighttime excursions. When he located such passages, he wrote brief, descriptive citations of them on sheets of paper and used these “indexes” to arrange the passages before transcribing the passages from his journal to form a preliminary draft of the lecture, the title of which he decided would be “Moonlight (Introductory to an Intended Course of Lectures).” William L. Howarth has asserted that Thoreau originally transcribed passages from his journal in a mensal order but, encountering difficulties with such an unorthodox structure, soon changed to a more orthodox topical structure.²⁷ In any case, based on the now widely scattered manuscript leaves surviving from this project and from other projects Thoreau was working on during the fall and winter of 1854, the lectures Thoreau had in mind for his “Intended Course” were not all related to walks at night; instead, he appears to have wanted to assemble a course of lectures relating to the various topics in his earlier 163-page draft of “Walking, or the Wild.” His published essay “WALKING” retains 2 such topics: the joys and other benefits to be derived from sauntering, and the bracing effect that the tonic of wildness has upon human beings. Another lecture that grew out of “WALKING, OR THE WILD” and that [Henry Thoreau](#) apparently intended to include in his “Intended Course of Lectures,” the lecture that would eventually be published as “LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE” (see lecture 46 below), elaborated the consequences of our failure to enjoy the benefits of periodically sauntering into the wild.²⁸ In [“MOONLIGHT”](#) Thoreau explored the realm that the English poet [John Milton](#) in his epic [PARADISE LOST](#) referred to as “Chaos and Old Night.” The lecture describes the salutary effects on the saunterer of nocturnal excursions into familiar territory that had become de-familiarized by the perspective-altering light of the moon on the landscape, a light that compels the saunterer to experience what [Waldo Emerson](#) in [NATURE](#) called “an original relation to the universe.”

26. THE SELECTED LETTERS OF MARY MOODY EMERSON, ed. Nancy Craig Simmons (Athens: U of Georgia P, 1993), page 551. Based on Thoreau’s lecture at Plymouth on 22 February 1852 (see lectures 35-36 in the “Before [WALDEN](#)” calendar) and on Thoreau’s visits to Miss Emerson on 13 November 1851 and 8 January 1852, Simmons conjectures that this letter was written in 1852 rather than in 1854.

27. Howarth, “Successor to [WALDEN?](#),” 94, 98.

28. Bradley P. Dean found that Thoreau drew 19 of the paragraphs used in his 1st lecture version of “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” from his earlier “WALKING, OR THE WILD” lecture manuscript; see Dean, “Reconstructions of Thoreau’s Early ‘Life without Principle’ Lectures,” [STUDIES IN THE AMERICAN RENAISSANCE](#) 1987, PAGE 291.



1854-1855

1854-1855



After October 8: On the basis of the following undated letter from [Mary Moody Emerson](#) to [Henry Thoreau](#), Thoreau may have given a private reading of his “Moonlight” piece which he had delivered in Plymouth on October 8th, for her benefit, at some point during this month, at the Emerson home “Bush” in Concord.

If Mr. Thoreau took the least dislike at the close of his last visit to me – why it is not the home of genius to notice trifles. Why not have visited my deeper solitude? Why not bring me the Plymouth lecture? And a budget of literary news? Are you under no obligation to benefit or gratify your neighbours? Age loves the old fashion of catechising the young. Love to your parents & Aunts & forget not

MME



October 9, Monday: [Thomas Carlyle](#) shaved for the last time (from this point forward he would save himself half an hour each day by affecting the appearance of the sage). In an entirely unrelated piece of news, the siege of Sevastopol began.


Joshua Stoddard of Worcester, Massachusetts received a patent for the 1st calliope.

Anton Bruckner, improvising a double fugue, passed an organ examination in Vienna.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 9th]

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1854-1855****1854-1855**

 October 9, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) checked out, from [Harvard Library](#), [Charles Wilkins](#)'s translation of the *BHAGVAT-GEETA*, OR DIALOGUES OF *KREESHNA* AND *ARJOON* (London: Nourse, 1785).



BHAGVAT-GEETA



1854-1855

1854-1855



October 9, Monday-13, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Plymouth to lecture, and to survey for Benjamin Marston Watson, with [Bronson Alcott](#) carrying the chain (refer to L.D. Geller's BETWEEN CONCORD AND PLYMOUTH regarding Thoreau's Plymouth friends). Although he continued to work on the "Moonlight" lecture for a few days after he first delivered it, his attention was primarily on the "Walking, or the Wild" lecture. Presumably, the two new lectures he would generate from this earlier lecture would become the second and third in his "Intended Course of Lectures."



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

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



October 10, Tuesday: In [New-York City](#), a US Assay Office opened.

Meanwhile, news of the horrific loss of the steamship *Yankee Blade* was arriving in San Francisco, California. There had been the loss of so much treasure! Presumably a lot of lives, as well!

FAST TRAVELLING. — A.S. Beatty, Esq., proprietor of the Mansion House, despatched a messenger from San Jose, with news of the loss of the steamer *Yankee Blade* to Adams & Co., San Francisco. The express, rode by Capt. Joseph Tuera, of Ravenswood, left San Jose at 12 h. 40 m., A.M., and arrived at San Francisco at 4 h. 30 m., A.M. Two horses; time 3 hours 50 minutes.

... These are some of our dark days, but it is no time for us to sit down and wring our hands, and wail and moan. Action is demanded of us, and we that have been so many times destroyed by fire, and our city, which has risen Phœnix like so often, will with the help of our energies and determination soon recover from the temporary difficulties in which our late disasters have thrown us....

SEARCH FOR THE LOST TREASURE. — The *Carolina*, steam-tug, leaves this morning for the wreck of the *Yankee Blade*. She goes prepared with submarine armor and practised men, expecting to secure the treasure. The amount was \$153,000, all shipped by Page, Bacon & Co., and fully insured in London offices.

Messrs. Smith Brothers & Co. have requested us to state that the wife of one of their firm was not lost on the *Yankee Blade*, as she was not on board the ill-fated vessel.

RELIEF FOR THE WRECKED PASSENGERS. — Mr. Garrison ordered the Nicaragua steamer *Brother Jonathan* to be got in readiness, and dispatched her yesterday evening to the relief of the passengers that were left at San Diego. She will return with them to this city.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 10th]



1854-1855

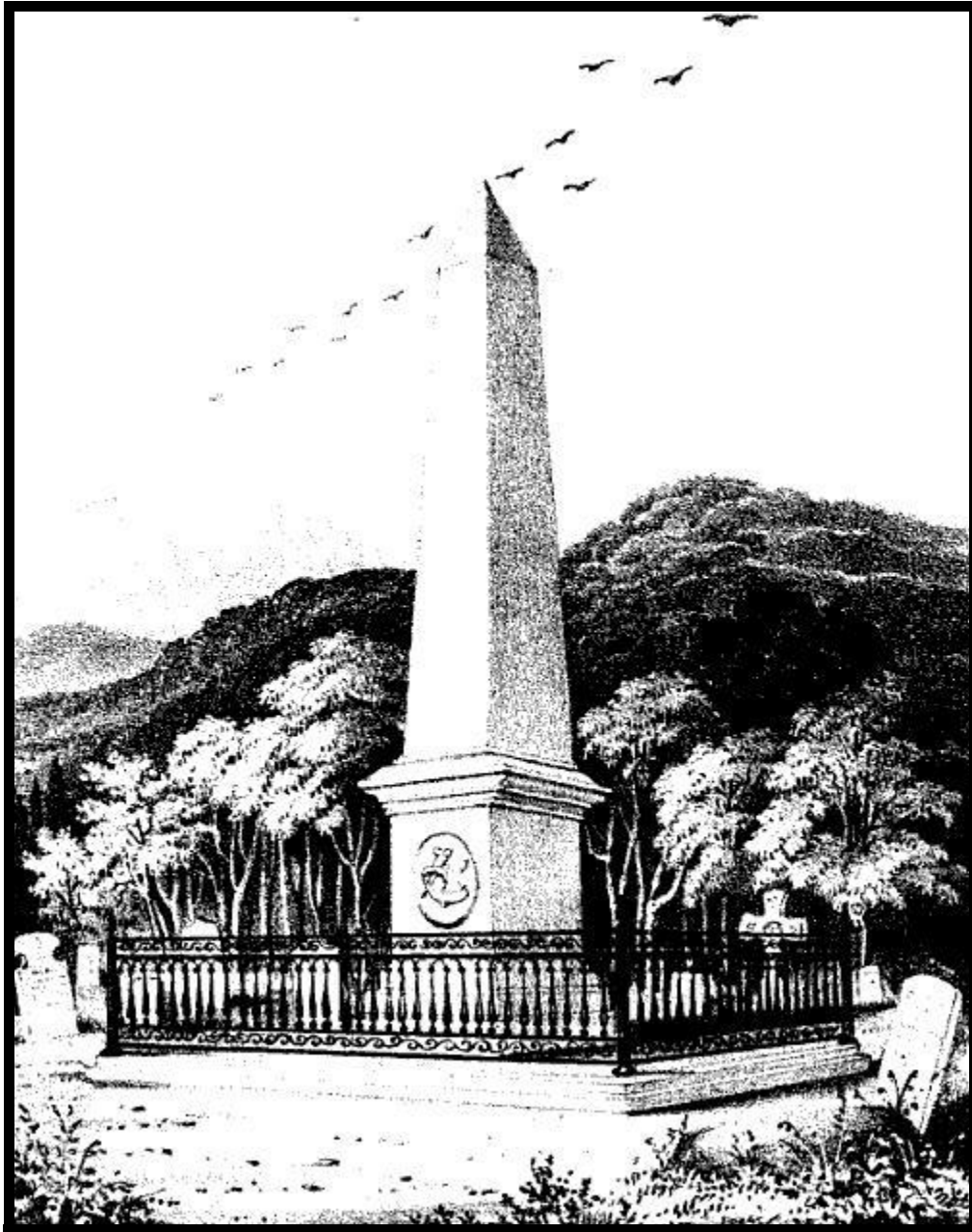
1854-1855

1854-1855

1854-1855



October 11, Wednesday: In [Walpole](#), New Hampshire, the [Unitarian](#) Reverend [Henry Whitney Bellows](#) dedicated a monument in honor of founding father Colonel [Benjamin Bellows](#).



COL. BENJ. BELLOWS

1854-1855

The medallion on the west side:



The medallion on the east side:



1854-1855



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 11th]

1854-1855

1854-1855

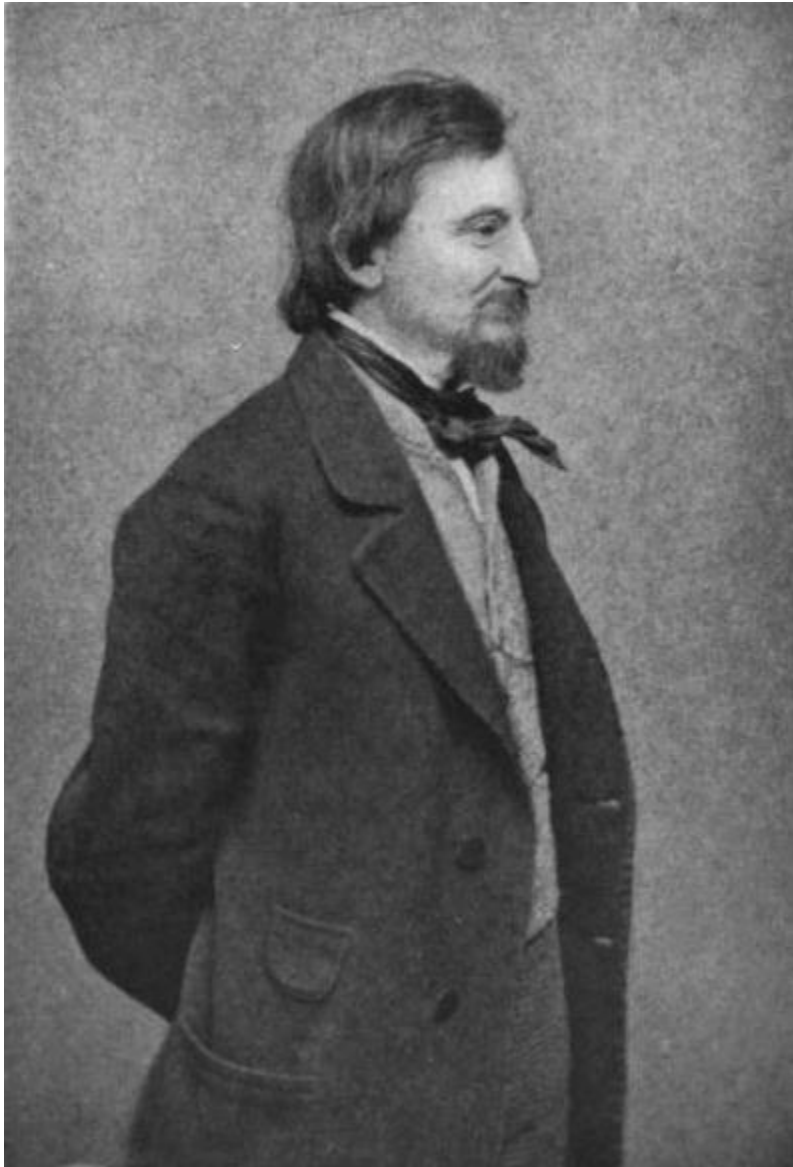
➡ October 12, Thursday: “Napoleon-Marsch op.156” by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in Schwender’s Collosseum, Vienna.

In Pennsylvania, an “Ashmun Institute” was founded (this would become Lincoln University).

[Henry Thoreau](#) was again being written by [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) in New Bedford.



Wrote an invitation to H.D. Thoreau of Concord, author of Walden, and sent a letter which I had on hand some time.



*Brooklawn, near New Bedford
Oct. 12th. 1854
Dear Mr Walden,*

1854-1855

1854-1855

Your long delayed, but very acceptable acknowledgement of the 1st Inst. came duly to hand. It requires no answer ~~I am aware~~ and I trust you will not esteem this as such. I simply wish to say, that it will afford me pleasure to show you the Middle boro ponds as well as the other Indian water spoken of by you, which I conclude to be what is called "Wakeby Pond" at Marshpee near Sandwich. Since I first wrote you my rough board shanty which I then inhabited & from which I now ~~as then~~ write,

Page 2

has been partially forsaken, the house of which I spoke to you ~~I think~~ as being built, having been completed & my family moved into it — so the shanty is somewhat shorn of its beams to the public or vulgar eye at least but none the less prized by me — here I spent a considerable part of my time in study & meditation, and here I also entertain my best & most welcome friends. Now friend Walen, if ~~you~~ it should be agreeable to you to leave home at this pleasant season, I shall be happy to receive you as my guest. Making my farm which lies about three miles north of New Bedford head quarters we can sally forth into the adjoining country — to the fine ponds in question and

Page 3

visit other objects of interest hitherround. I am just now quite busily engaged in the improvements of my grounds near my house but expect to conclude them by the end of next week, when should it meet your pleasure I shall be very happy to see you here. I am quite a tramper as well as yourself, but have ~~also~~ horseflesh & carriages at hand if preferable, which,

1854-1855

1854-1855

*certainly for long distances, with
all my ante-diluvian taste, I deem
to be.*

*Perhaps your young English friend &
author Mr Cholmondeley would
like to accompany you ~~if~~ should
you conclude to come, if so please
extend the invitation to him should
you deem it proper. I do not wish*

Page 4

*to push matters at all, but am
of the opinion, if you are not
too learned we shall affiliate
nicely in our rustic feelings
at any rate it will do no harm
to try.*

*Your short & hastily written note
embarrasses me & I hardly know
whether it best or no to send what
I have now written & so conclude
whether this shall reach you
or not*

*Your friend & fellow worshipper
at Nature's great shrine
Daniel Ricketson*



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 12th]

1854-1855

1854-1855



October 13, Friday: A chunk of gold was exhibited in Sacramento, California, that had been taken from a lead tunneled into a hill. It had been found after 160 feet of tunneling. It weighed 56 ounces (by way of contrast, the regular daily total washings from a single sluice, when water was available, would tend to be between 30 and 50 ounces).

After the disaster that had happened to the *Yankee Blade*, which was seen to have been entirely preventible, the local newspaper was opinioning that the steamship's owner "Cornelius Vanderbilt is morally and mentally insane, and ought to be incarcerated in an insane hospital.... Some of these steamboat millionaires treat passengers as if they were so many cattle — so many brutes — and C. Vanderbilt is one of the number whenever, in his opinion, his interest can be promoted by so doing." A correspondent to the newspaper wrote in to add, that if such Captains "were huug [sic], as a penalty, there would soon be an end put to running fine steamers ashore in the day time."



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 13th]



October 14, Saturday: [Japan](#) concluded a treaty with Great Britain.

Captain E.O.C. Ord got married with Mary Mercer Thompson in San Francisco.

CALIFORNIA

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [H.G.O. Blake](#).

Concord Sat. Pm. Oct 14th '54
Blake,

*I have just returned
from Plymouth, where I have
been detained surveying much
longer than I expected.
What do you say to visiting
Wachusett next Thursday?
I will start at 7. 1/4 A.m. unless
there is a prospect of a stormy day,
go by cars to Westminster, & thence
on foot 5 or 6 miles to the
Mt top, where I may engage to*

Page 2
meet you at (or before) 12.M.
If the weather is unfavorable,
I will try again—on Friday,—&
again on Monday.
If a storm comes on after starting,
I will seek you at the tavern

1854-1855

1854-1855

*in Princeton Center, as soon
as circumstances will permit.
I shall expect an answer [at once]
to clinch the bargain.
Yrs*

Henry D. Thoreau. <not HDT>

Thoreau, who had at this point arrived back in Concord, was being written to by an abolitionist and businessman and abolitionism coordinator, [Asa Fairbanks](#), in [Rhode Island](#), representing the [Providence](#) Lyceum:



Providence Oct 14[.] [1854]

Henry D Thoreau

Dear Sir

*Our Course of Independent[,] or
reform Lectures (ten in number) we propose
to commence [N]ext [M]onth. Will you give me
the liberty to put your name in program, and
say when it will suit your [convenience] to come.
every Lecturer will choose his own subject,
but we expect all[,] whether [Anti[S]lavery] or
what else, will be of a reformatory [Character]
who*

*We have engaged Theodore Parker[,] ^will give
the Introductory Nov. 1st[.] (Garrison, W. Phillips
[Thomas] W. Higginson Lucy Stone (Mrs Rose of New York[]
Antoinett L[.]Brown and hope to [have] Cassius [M.]*

1854-1855

1854-1855

Clay, & Henry Ward Beecher, (we had a course of these lectures last year and the receipts from [] tickets at a low price paid expenses and [æ] fifteen to twenty dollars to the Lecturers — we think we shall do as well this year as last, and perhaps better[,] the Anthony [Burns affair] and the of [S]lavery Nebraska bill, and other outrages has done much to awaken the feeling of a class of [M]inds heretofore [quiet,] on all questions of reform

Page 2

In getting up these popular Lectures [we] thought [at] first, it would not do us well to have [them] too radical, or it would be best to have a part of the speakers of the conservative class, but experience has shown us [St] in Providence surely, that the [M]asses who attend such Lectures are better suited with reform lectures than with the old school conservatives[.] I will thank you for an early reply

Yours Respectfully for [true freedom]

A. Fairbanks

<miscellaneous nature notes on remainder of page, reading from opposite direction>

THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON

THEODORE PARKER



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 14th]



October 15, Saturday: The Lawrence, [Kansas Territory](#) [Kansas Tribune](#) appeared (it would be generally antigovernment and [anti-slavery](#)).

[Judge Phisic Rush Elmore](#) would serve on the [Kansas Territory](#) supreme court from this day until September 13th, 1855, when he would be removed by [President Franklin Pierce](#), along with Judge Saunders W. Johnston and Governor Andrew H. Reed, due to allegations of unlawful purchases of Kansas Indian lands (the charges were later demonstrated to be unfounded, and he would be reappointed by President James Buchanan as an associate judge on August 13th, 1858, a position in which he would serve until February 9th, 1861).

[Florence Nightingale](#) was solicited to organize nurses for service in the [Crimea](#).

1854-1855

1854-1855



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 15th]

YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT EITHER THE REALITY OF TIME OVER THAT OF CHANGE, OR CHANGE OVER TIME — IT'S PARMENIDES, OR HERACLITUS. I HAVE GONE WITH HERACLITUS.



October 16, Sunday: [Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde](#) was born in Dublin.

The Sheriff of [San Francisco](#), William R. Gorham, auctioned off the College House at the Mission Dolores to satisfy its debts. John Nobile was the high bidder.

CALIFORNIA



Oct. 16. In the streets the ash and most of the elm trees are bare of leaves; the red maples also for the most part, apparently, at a distance. The pines, too, have fallen.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL




October 17, Monday: British and French troops began a 2-day bombardment of Sevastopol in the [Crimea](#), and a siege.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 17th]

1854-1855

1854-1855

 October 18, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#)'s plan for his "Course of Lectures" changed when he received the letter from [Asa Fairbanks](#) asking him to permit his name to appear in a program of reform lectures scheduled to commence in [Providence, Rhode Island](#) on November 1st. Fairbanks advised Thoreau that:

every Lecturer will choose his own Subject, but we expect all, whether Antislavery or what else, will be of a reformatory Character



After a week of meetings in Belgium, the American ambassadors to Great Britain, France and Spain issued the Ostend Manifesto urging their government to annex [Cuba](#) if Spain was unwilling to cede it.

[Hector Berlioz](#) wrote Chapter 59 of his Mémoires, which included a description of Harriet Smithson's death and funeral.

La nonne sanglante, an opéra by Charles Gounod to words of Scribe and Delavigne after Lewis, was performed for the initial time, at the Paris Opéra. This would ultimately fail.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 18th]

1854-1855

1854-1855



October 19, Wednesday: [Hector Berlioz](#) got married with Marie-Geneviève Recio in a civil ceremony by a notary in the Mairie of the 2me arrondissement of Paris, and then followed this up with a religious ceremony in L'Eglise de la Trinité. Among the guests was [Giacomo Meyerbeer](#).

The *Revue et gazette musicale* published a letter from Olympe Pélissier denying persistent rumors that her husband Gioachino Rossini had become insane.

Review of [Henry Thoreau](#)'s WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS, on the first page of the Boston Evening Transcript:

WALDEN Print H

A very remarkable book; one which appeals to the loftiest instincts of man, and which, we are sure, is already making a deep impression on some souls.... The influence of Mr. Thoreau exerts will not at once spread over a large surface, but it will reach far out into the tide of time, and it will make up in depth for what it wants in extent.

[Thoreau](#) left home in Concord at 7:15 AM to catch the train to Westminster. "Thence on foot to Wachusett Mountain, four miles to Foster's, and two miles thence to mountaintop by road." [Thoreau, Thomas Cholmondeley](#), and [H.G.O. Blake](#) spent the night at [Daniel Foster](#)'s farm in Princeton, Massachusetts (the former Congregationalist minister of Concord, unfortunately, wasn't at home to chat with them) but were at the summit of Wachusett for dawn of the following day.



October 19: 7.15 A.M. — To Westminster by cars; thence on foot to Wachusett Mountain, four miles to Foster's, and two miles thence to mountain-top by road.

The country above Littleton (plowed ground) more or less sugared with snow, the first I have seen. We find a little on the mountain/top. The prevailing tree on this mountain, top and all, is apparently the red oak, which toward and on the top is very low and spreading. Other trees and shrubs which I remember on the top are beech, *Populus tremuliformis*, mountain/ash (looking somewhat like sumach), witch-hazel, white and yellow birch, white pine, black spruce, etc., etc. Most of the deciduous woods *look as if* dead. On the sides, beside red oak, are rock maple, yellow birch, lever/wood, beech, chestnut, shagbark, hemlock, striped maple, witch/hazel, etc., etc.

With a glass you can see vessels in Boston Harbor from the summit, just north of the Waltham hills.

Two white asters, the common ones, not yet quite out of bloom,— *A. acuminatus* and perhaps *cordifolius* (hearted, with long sharp teeth). The *Geranium Robertianum* in bloom below the woods on the east side.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



October 20, Thursday: Jean Nicholas Arthur Rimbaud was born.



Oct. 20: Saw the sun rise from the mountain-top. This is the time to look westward. All the villages, steeples, and houses on that side were revealed; but on the east all the landscape was a misty and gilded obscurity. It was worth the while to see westward the countless hills and fields all apparently flat, now white with frost. A little white fog marked the site of many a lake and the course of the Nashua, and in the east horizon the great pond had its own fog mark in a long, low bank of cloud.

Soon after sunrise I saw the pyramidal shadow of the mountain reaching quite across the State, its apex resting on the Green or Hoosac Mountains, appearing as a deep/blue section of a cone there. It rapidly contracted, and its apex approached the mountain itself, and when about three miles distant the whole conical shadow was very distinct. The shadow of the mountain makes some minutes' difference in the time of sunrise to the inhabitants



1854-1855

1854-1855

of Hubbardston, within a few miles west.

F. hyemalis, how long?

Saw some very tall and large dead chestnuts in the wood between Foster's and the mountain. Wachusett Pond appeared the best place from which to view the mountain (from a boat). Our host had picked thirty-four bushels of shagbarks last year. *For the most part* they do not rattle out yet, but it is time to gather them. On account of squirrels now is the time.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL
THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



October 21, Friday: The severest earthquake since 1851 struck San Francisco at 7:30 PM.

CALIFORNIA

The Lawrence, [Kansas Territory Herald of Freedom](#) appeared (it would be generally antigovernment and [anti-slavery](#)).

Florence Nightingale was posted to the Crimean War with a staff of 38 nurses.

Review of [Henry Thoreau's WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), by "D'A" on the 1st page of the Boston [Atlas](#):

It is a sorrowful surprise that a constant communion with so much beauty and beneficence was not able to kindle one spark of genial warmth in this would-be savage. Pithy sarcasm, stern judgement, cold condemnation – all abound in the pages of this volume.... There is not a page, a paragraph giving one sign of liberality, charitableness, kind feeling, generosity, in a word – heart.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 21st]



October 22, Sunday: Mary Katherine Monroe was born to [Professor and Mrs. James Wilbur Monroe and Elisabeth Maxwell Monroe](#) in [Oberlin, Ohio](#).



Oct. 22. This and the last two days Indian-summer weather, following hard on that sprinkling of west of Concord.

[Transcript]

Pretty hard frosts these nights. Many leaves fell last night, and the Assabet is covered with their fleets. Now they rustle as you walk through them in the woods. Bass trees are bare. The redness of huckleberry bushes is past its prime. I see a snapping turtle, not yet in winter quarters. The chickadees are picking the seeds out of




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pitch pine cones.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 October 23, Monday: William Wells Brown spoke with great sarcasm at West Chester, Pennsylvania: “You welcomed the fugitive from European oppression, and, after shaking hands with him and congratulating him on his escape, you turn to catch the fugitive from American oppression and return him to his chains. And when you could find no better man to welcome, you welcomed John Mitchel, who is ready to join in the chase with you.”

The 2d and 3d movements of the Piano Sonata no.3 op.5 of [Johannes Brahms](#) were performed for the initial time, in Leipzig.

In an intriguing aspect of the Crimean War, the English newspaper “The Times of London” began to offer to the general public precise information as to British military positions in Crimea (oh, weren’t those the good old days).

The brass star of the [Boston](#) police was exchanged for a silver octagon oval plate badge. The men were issued a 14-inch club in replacement of the watchhook which had been in use for 154 years.

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [Thaddeus William Harris](#).

Concord Oct 23^d '54

Sir,


I return herewith the “Bhagvat Geeta”. Will you please send me the “Vishnoo Purana” a single volume — translated by Wilson.

Yrs respec^{tl}

Henry D. Thoreau.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 23d]

 October 24, Tuesday: Traveling from London to his post in Madrid, US ambassador to Spain Pierre Soulé was refused entry into France at Calais, and turned around and went back to London (France must have been irritated at the Ostend Manifesto of October 18th).



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 24th]

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October 25, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) checked out, again, from [Harvard Library](#), the [Horace Hayman Wilson](#) translation from Sanskrit into English of THE LAWS OF *MENU*, OR THE *VISHNU PURANA* (London, 1840). Then, back in Concord, he went sailing on the Assabet River.

Prince Menshikov of Crimea occupied the British base at Balaclava.

The 7th Earl of Cardigan, Major General James Thomas Brudenell, leading a charge across the face of batteries of cannons near Balaklava just south of Sevastopol in the [Crimea](#), left 2 out of 3 of the soldiers in his Light Cavalry Brigade lying on the ground (400 of 607), and became a popular hero in Britain. The result was the cardigan sweater and “Charge of the Light Brigade” by Alfred, Lord Tennyson.



Oct. 25. On Assabet.

The maples being bare, the great hornet nests are exposed. A beautiful, calm Indian-summer afternoon, the withered reeds on the brink reflected in the water.

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



October 26, Thursday: In San Francisco, there was a public auction by Selover & Sinton at 11 AM, to sell the interest of the state of [California](#) in water lot property, by order of the California Land Commission. Another earthquake shock was felt. This was followed, around midnight, by a swell in San Francisco Bay.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Conantum.

C.B. Bernard of Akron, Ohio wrote to [Thoreau](#) as a potential lecturer — if and when he got that far west.

Akron Oct 26, 1854

Henry D. Thoreau Esq

Concord Mass— Dear Sir

Seeing your name announced as a Lecturer, I write you a line to see if your services could be secured to give a Lecture before the Library Association of this place.



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*We can give #50—
Thinking you might have other calls this way, we thought we would add our so-
licitation with the rest
Yours Respectfully
C B Bernard
Cor Sec*



Oct. 26. P.M. — To Conantum.

[Transcript]

As warm as summer. Cannot wear a thick coat. Sit with windows open. I see considerable gossamer on the causeway and elsewhere. Is it the tree sparrows whose jingles I hear? As the weather grows cooler and the woods more silent, I attend to the cheerful notes of chickadees on their sunny sides. Apple trees are generally bare, as well as bass, ash, elm, maple.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



October 27, Friday: [Robert Schumann](#)'s Piano Concerto in A Minor was performed in Weimar, with Clara Schumann at the piano and Franz Liszt conducting.

Showman P.T. Barnum signed a contract with the [New-York](#) publishing house of J. S. Redfield, calling for delivery of a manuscript on the following day.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 27th]



October 28, Saturday: A 2d edition of [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s *MOSSES FROM AN OLD MANSE* was published by Ticknor and Fields of Boston.

Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) on page 3 of William Mathews's [Yankee Blade](#):

WALDEN; or Life in the Woods. By Henry D. Thoreau. Boston: Ticknor & Fields. — This is a charming volume by a writer who reminds us of Emerson by his philosophy — of the Elizabethan writers by his quaintness and originality — and by his minuteness and acuteness of observation, of Gilbert White, the author of the *Natural History of Selborne*. Mr. Thoreau lived alone in the woods for two years, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which he had built himself in Concord, Mass., on the shore of Walden Pond. In the present volume he relates in a lively and sparkling, yet pithy style, his experiences during that period — describing the various natural phenomena, the sights and sounds, as well as the different phases of humanity, that fell under his observation, and favoring us with exact statistics of the cost of supporting his hermit life. It is rarely that one finds so much originality and freshness in a



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modern book -such an entire absence of conventionality and cant- or so much suggestive observation on the philosophy of life. Almost every page abounds in brilliant and piquant things, which, in spite of the intellectual pride of the author -the intense and occasionally unpleasant egotism with which every line is steeped- lure the reader on with bewitched attention from title-page to finis. Mr. Thoreau has an odd twist in his brains, but, as Hazlitt says of Sir Thomas Browne, they are "all the better for the twist." The best parts of the book, to our mind, are those which treat of Sounds, Solitude, Brute Neighbors, Winter Animals, The Pond in Winter, and Reading; the poorest, the Conclusion, in which he tries to Emersonize, and often ["]attains" triumphantly to the obscurity which he seems to court.




Oct. 28. Saturday. The woods begin to look bare, reflected in the water, and I look far in between the stems of the trees under the bank. Birches, which began to change and fall so early, are still in many places yellow.

[Transcript]

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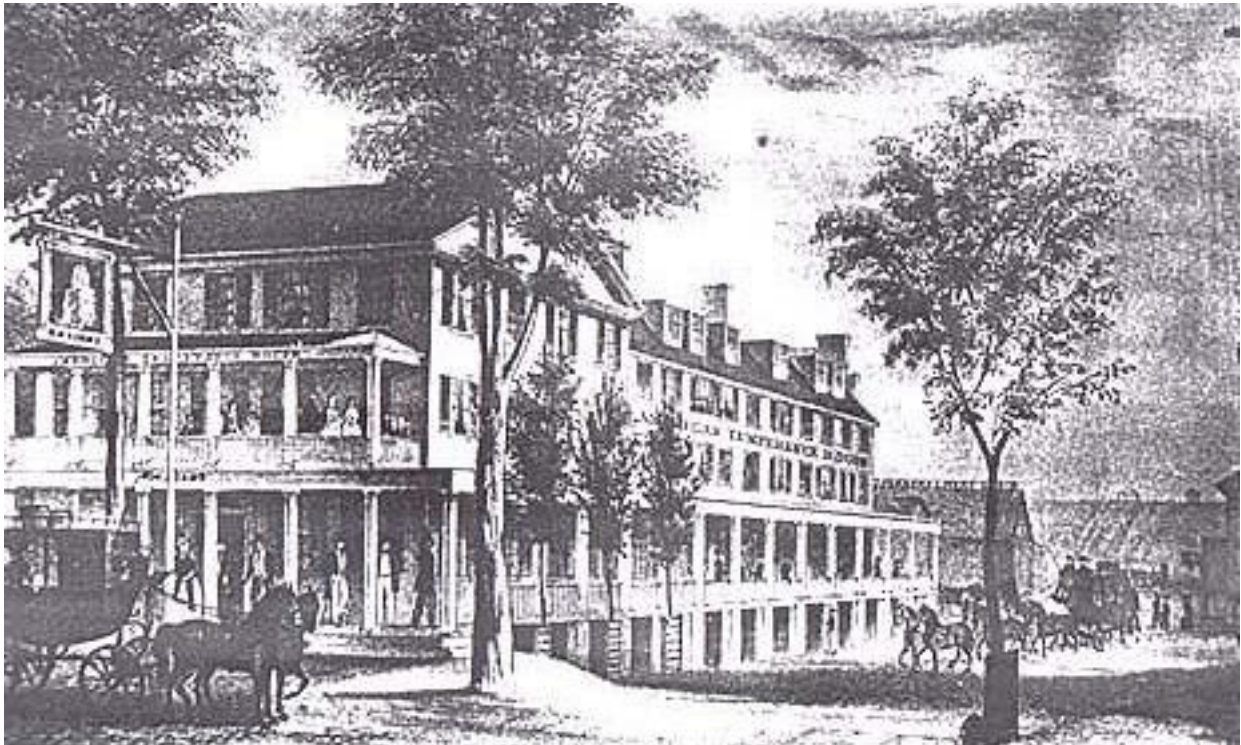
 October 29, Sunday: [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) was elected to be the minister of the [Unitarian](#) church in [Washington DC](#).²⁹

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

VOLUME II

[Henry Thoreau](#) seems to have decided, by this point in late October, that he was going to write a lecture of the “reformatory Character” on “Art of Life” that had been requested by [Asa Fairbanks](#) in the letter he received on October 18th. (This would begin as “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” and continued through “LIFE MISSPENT” to become what we know as “LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE”.)

Also, in late October, in [Worcester](#), a heavy-set man registered at the American Temperance House Hotel at the intersection of Main Street and Foster Street.³⁰



He was a lawman, he was the US Marshall [Asa O. Butman](#) who had arrested the young presser [Anthony Burns](#) in Boston in May, and he was back from escorting Burns to the custody of his owner in Virginia. What was such a man up to in Worcester, and what was to be done about it? As a nonresistant, [Stephen](#)

29. While a minister in [Washington DC](#), Conway would become special friends with [Helen Fiske](#), who after two husbands, as [Helen Hunt Jackson](#), would relocate to Southern [California](#) and plead in a novel titled RAMONA for the rights of Native Americans.

30. President Martin Van Buren had stayed a night at this hotel in 1845 and another night in 1848. At various times General Sam Houston of Texas and John Greenleaf Whittier were also guests of this famous hotel.

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[Symonds Foster](#) had of course not become a member of the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#)'s



“Worcester Vigilance Committee,” so, while that vigilance committee was going around passing out its LOOK OUT FOR KIDNAPPERS handbills and trying to drum up a mob so they could throw a “tar and feathers party” in Butman’s honor, Foster and some fifty of his nonresistant friends, white and black, took direct action. They assembled in front of the American House and kept ringing the doorbell and arguing with the landlord, long into the night, until finally Butman appeared in the doorway with pistol in hand and threatened them. They promptly swore out a complaint and had the marshal arrested. The next morning, at Butman’s arraignment, the courtroom and surrounding streets were jammed with spectators. At a brief adjournment in the proceedings, about six black men got into the room with Butman, and commenced beating on him. Although the city marshal did manage to arrest one of the assailants, there were too many common citizens present and clearly the forces of law and order –which flourish best in the dark– were not in charge of that day and that place. There was a conference between community leaders and city officials, and, as a result of this negotiation, Butman, Higginson, Foster, and some others left the courthouse in a tight group. The promise that had been made was that Butman could have safe passage out of [Worcester](#) if he would agree never to return there. The tight group managed to get Butman to the downtown train station more or less intact, at the expense of his having received in transit from the members of the crowd one blow of the fist, one thrown egg, and miscellaneous kicks, but the train had just left. So Butman was unceremoniously locked in the depot privy for an hour while the members of the escort committee made speeches to the crowd and waited nervously for the arrival of a hack that could get the man safely back to Boston.

When the entire affair was over and Butman was safe, Foster, his friend Joseph Howland, and some other nonresistants and some black men who had allegedly beat on Butman were placed under arrest on the charge of inciting to riot. Foster refused to post bail and demanded that his wife [Abby Kelley Foster](#) be permitted to act as his lawyer. Which was unheard of, no female had ever appeared in court as a lawyer in the history of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts! At the end of it the grand jury indicted the black defendants for assaulting Butman, but acquitted the nonresistants.

[Thoreau](#) received a written request from [Mary Moody Emerson](#), asking that he repeat his Plymouth lectures of February 22, 1852 and October 8, 1854 for the benefit of his neighbors.



Father [Isaac Hecker](#), CSSR wrote to [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#), noting how easy it was for him to see right through the pretensions of his friend the author, [Henry Thoreau](#):

Under his seeming trustfulness and frankness ... he conceals an immense amount of pride, pretension and infidelity.

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About [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), he commented that he had not read “all his book through” but doubted that “anyone else will except as a feat.” All in all [Henry Thoreau](#)’s literary accomplishment he depicted as inferior to his own as-yet-unfinished, as-yet-untitled production. Although he here suggested that [Brownson](#) take a shot at this new book by Thoreau in [Brownson’s Quarterly Review](#), Brownson would not in fact ever venture so to do:



Do give in yr next Review a notice of “Thoreau’s Life in the woods”. He places himself fairly before the public and is a fair object of criticism. I have not read all his book through, and I don’t think any one will except as a feat. I read enough in it to see that under his seeming truthfulness & frankness he conceals an immense amount of pride, pretention & infidelity. This tendency to solitude & asceticism means something, and there is a certain degree of truthfulness & even bravery in his attempts to find out what this something is; but his results are increased pride, pretention & infidelity, instead of humility, simplicity, & piety. He makes a great ado about the cheapness of his house, and gives us a list of his articles of diet as something to be looked at & admired; but why a house at all? Why this long list of luxuries? The Hermit Fathers did without all these. They dwelt in holes & caves & lived on roots & water. Thoreau lives a couple of years in the midst of [Walden Woods] – with the help of his friends, and lo he sets to crowing to wake up his neighbors. The Hermit Fathers lived 60 100 years & upwards in perfect solitude & silence & when discovered plunge deeper into the desert, and die as they lived in solitude & silence. The poor man Thoreau does not know what cheap stuff his heroism is made of. He wants waking up. He brags of not having committed himself in not having purchased a farm, he forgets that he takes a deed for his book in the shape of a copy right. His recontre with the Catholic Canadian shows according to his own account to every other mind except his own, that of the two, the Canadian was the truer, braver, & greater man. You can give him a good notice, for he was a young friend of yours. What has all his efforts & struggling done for him? What would these efforts not do inside & under the divine influence of the H Church. The time is coming when our young, earnest, and enterprising American youth will find that it is the Church of God they seek – and they will find in her bosom the sphere for their activities & the true objects of their search & aspirations.... I put into the hands of Appleton to-day or to-morrow the first 12 chapters of my book. Including “The Model Man” & “The Model Life” two chapters which I have written since I saw you. I think I have been successful in doing what I intended these two chapters which I considered the most difficult task from the beginning.



1854-18



1854-1855

Oct. 29. Sunday. Detected a large English cherry in Smith's woods beyond Saw Mill Brook by the peculiar *fresh* orange-scarlet color of its leaves, now that almost all leaves are quite dull or withered. The same in gardens. The gooseberry leaves in our garden and in fields are equally and peculiarly fresh scarlet.

[Transcript]

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NEVER READ AHEAD! TO APPRECIATE OCTOBER 29TH, 1854 AT ALL ONE MUST APPRECIATE IT AS A TODAY (THE FOLLOWING DAY, TOMORROW, IS BUT A PORTION OF THE UNREALIZED FUTURE AND IFfy AT BEST).



October 30, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to Charles Sumner [CHARLES SUMNER](#).

*Concord Oct. 30th '54
Charles Sumner Esq.
Dear Sir,
At this late
date I would acknowledge
the receipt long ago of three
speeches by yourself, and the
Coast Survey Report for '52,—
and lately of the 2^d Report
on the Amazon. I heartily
thank you for them all, and
assure you that they have
not in any sense been mis-
sent. I am quite greedy
for the information which
they contain. [These] faithful
reports[,] with their admirable
maps and plates, are some
atonement for the misdeeds
of our Government.
Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau.*



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR OCTOBER 30th]



October 31, Tuesday: [Jefferson Davis](#) visited the United States Military Academy at West Point.

[Henry Thoreau](#) was being written a bread-and-butter note by Charles Sumner in Boston, in appreciation of the author having provided him a gift copy of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#).

Boston 31st Oct[.] '54
My dear Sir,
I am glad to send books where they are so well appreciated as in your chamber. Permit me to say that the courtesy of[y'] letter admonishes me of my short-coming in not sooner acknowledging the gift of[y'] book. [Believe] me I had not forgotten it; but I proposed to write you,
Henry D. Thoreau [esq.]

Page 2
when I had fully read & enjoyed it. At present I have been able to [peruse] only the early chapte[rs], & [some] detached parts, — enough, however, to satisfy me that you have made a [contribution] to the [permanent] [literature] of our mother tongue, [&] to make me happy in your success.
[Believe me], dear Sir,
Sincerely Yours,
Charles Sumner



Oct. 31. Rain; still warm.
Ever since October 27th we have had remarkably warm and pleasant Indian summer, with frequent frosts in the morning. Sat with open window for a week.

[Transcript]

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NOVEMBER 1854

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for November 1854 \(æf. 37\) in th 1907 version](#)


 November: Letter from [David Lee Child](#) and [Lydia Maria Child](#) to Ellis Gray Loring: Crichtlow as rogue; Buddhist tracts.


LETTERS FROM NEW YORK

 November: [Bronson Alcott](#) visited George Washington Briggs “concerning [Louisa](#)’s book of ‘Flower Fables’ which he is printing as a child’s Christmas gift.”


THE ALCOTT FAMILY


The type of photograph which became known as the *carte-de-visite* –because the same size as and often used in a similar manner to a visiting card (2½" x 4", on which the image is sized 2¼" x 3½")– was introduced in Paris by André-Adolphe-Eugène Disdéri (1819-1890). In this albumen-prints-from-wet-collodion-negatives process, because of the lens that was used, eight to ten images could be made on one standard-size glass plate, so that the positive prints made from this plate could then be cut apart with scissors and presented on eight to ten different occasions to eight to ten different people. The exposures could be made either simultaneously, for identity and convenience, or consecutively, to obtain different poses, at the customer’s choice.

 November: During this month and the following one, the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#) was writing and rewriting and rewriting a 125,000-word sermon in his own defense, which he intended to deliver in court. (This effort would eventually be published as THE TRIAL OF THEODORE PARKER FOR THE “MISDEMEANOR” OF A SPEECH IN FANEUIL HALL AGAINST KIDNAPPING, BEFORE THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES, AT BOSTON, WITH THE DEFENCE.)

 November: This month’s issue of [Harper’s New Monthly Magazine](#).

CONSULT THIS ISSUE

 [Aaron Dwight Stevens](#), an Army bugler, son of a Connecticut church choirmaster, wrote a breathless letter home to his sister Lydia Stevens about riding out West with the horse soldiers of the [1st US Regiment of Dragoons](#) in New Mexico Territory. Their activities had prevented him from writing since April when the patrols began. Company F, his unit, had already experienced “two fights with the Patches [Apaches], this year and had 9 men killed & 10 wounded ... and as luck would have it, I have got off safe so far, but they may get me yet.” Within a few months he and more than a dozen of his comrades would riot against their severe [Major George Alexander Hamilton Blake](#) in the dusty Taos Plaza. This bugler and 3 other soldiers would escape execution only because President [Franklin Pierce](#) and Secretary of War [Jefferson Davis](#), would commute their sentences by citing mitigating circumstances. In a unique turn of events, the US Army would cashier its company commander for chronic intoxication, order the demotion and transfer of his company’s noncommissioned officers, and transfer all its enlisted men to other New Mexico units, subjecting the company’s 1st lieutenant and the squadron’s commanding officer to courtmartial and, for good measure, exiling [Major Blake](#) from New Mexico Territory.

 November 1, Wednesday: [Sojourner Truth](#)’s \$300 mortgage on her home at 31 Park Street in [Northampton](#) was marked paid in full.

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Nov. 1. It is a little cooler.

1854-1855

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

➡ November 1, Wednesday: The personal library of [Francis Sales](#) was sold at auction (Harvard Library has an inventory of the volumes).

[Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by [Abbé Adrien-Emmanuel Rouquette](#) of [New Orleans](#), appreciating [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) and asking for a copy of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#).



Mandeville, St. Tammany, La. 1.^e Nov 1854
Mr Henry D. Thoreau.
Monsieur—,
En lisant le numero dans
Novembre de la Revue de Putnam, je fut
frappé par la courte notice sur [n]otre
ouvrage intitulé: Walden; or, Life in the Woods.
J'ai eu le bonheur de le trouver chez in libraire
de la Nouvelle Orléans, et je l'ai lu presque
en entier. Avant meme de l'avoir fini,
j'éprouve le besoin de vous exprimer ma
sincéré et cordiale admiration. Votre livre

1854-1855

m'a immensément intéressé; il m'a rappelé le "Voyage autour de ma chambre" du fam[eux] Xavier de Maistre; mais il est plus séri[eux] et plus philosophique. J'ose, Monsieur, vous prier de m'envoyer, si vous le pouvez (par la poste) un exemplaire de "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack rivers": vous me feriez le plus grand plaisir. Je vous pria d'accepter trois de mes ouvrages: Wild-Flowers—La Thébaéde en Amérique—et Un Discours—qui je vous envoie en memé temps que cette lettre.

Page 2

Mon adresse est: Rev^d. Adrian Rouquette,
Mandeville, St. Tammany, Louisiana.

Croyez, Monsieur, é tous les sentiments
du respect et du sympathie avec lesquels
je suis votre

tout dévigné Serviteur

A Rouquette

P.S. C'est par l'intermédiaire de Ticknor
& Fields que je vous envoie cette lettre et les
livres qui l'accompagnent.

1854-1855

1854-1855**1854-1855**

November 2, Thursday: [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) was presented by [Waldo Emerson](#) with a copy of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)³¹ and these quite elevated gentlemen (6 foot 5; 6 foot 0) walked to [Walden Pond](#). On their walk they encountered a 3d quite elevated gentleman, [Thomas Cholmondeley](#).³²



31. [Emerson](#) was encouraging [Sanborn](#) to start a school in [Concord](#).

32. We may be forgiven for presuming in the absence of any record, that the Thomas Cholmondeley of the 19th Century was in all likelihood approximately of the altitude of the 21st Century's Thomas Cholmondeley, Lord Delamere, which is to say, the bloke was very approximately six foot six.



1854-1855

1854-1855

One may wonder how the wandering conversations might have turned, had this Brit colonialist [Thomas Cholmondeley](#) tried out on Emerson and Sanborn an idea such as this one on race from his *ULTIMA THULE; OR, THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A RESIDENCE IN NEW ZEALAND* published in this year:



Race is one of the chiefest elements of national greatness which can be conceived, for we all know that there is no making a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Educate the Negro, the Esquimaux, or even the Calmuc, to the highest degree, you never can make him the equal of the Englishman. In this respect the British colonies have been highly favoured. They have been peopled from some of the best races which the world contains.

Would [Emerson](#) and [Sanborn](#) have been horrified at this sort of race attitude, or would they have thrilled at the altitude of such an attitude?

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) was paddling up the Sudbury River to Clamshell Bank or Hill (Gleason 23/G5).



Nov. 2. Thursday. P.M. — By boat to Clamshell.

[Transcript]

I suspect the clams are partly gone down. May not this movement contribute to compel the muskrats to erect their cabins nearer the brink or channel, in order still to be near their food? Other things being equal, they would have to swim further than before to get the clams in the middle, but now, in addition, the water is beginning to rise and widen the river.

I see larks hovering over the meadow and hear a faint note or two, and a pleasant note from tree sparrows (?). Sailing past the bank above the railroad, just before a clear sundown, close to the shore on the east side I see a second fainter shadow of the boat, sail, myself, and paddle, etc., directly above and upon the first on the bank. What makes the second? At length I discovered that it was the reflected sun which cast a higher shadow like the true one. As I moved to the west side, the upper shadow rose, grew larger and less perceptible: and at last when I was so near the west shore that I could not see the reflected sun, it disappeared; but then there appeared one upside down in its place!

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Table of Altitudes



Yoda	2' 0 "
Lavinia Warren	2' 8 "
Tom Thumb, Jr.	3' 4 "
Lucy (Australopithecus Afarensis)	3' 8 "
Hervé Villechaize ("Fantasy Island")	3' 11"
Charles Proteus Steinmetz	4' 0 "
Mary Moody Emerson per FBS (1)	4' 3 "
Alexander Pope	4' 6 "
Benjamin Lay	4' 7 "
Dr. Ruth Westheimer	4' 7 "
Gary Coleman ("Arnold Jackson")	4' 8 "
Edith Piaf	4' 8 "
Queen Victoria with osteoporosis	4' 8 "
Linda Hunt	4' 9 "
Queen Victoria as adult	4' 10 "
Mother Teresa	4' 10 "
Margaret Mitchell	4' 10 "
length of newer military musket	4' 10"
Charlotte Brontë	4' 10-11"
Tammy Faye Bakker	4' 11"
Soviet gymnast Olga Korbut	4' 11"
jockey Willie Shoemaker	4' 11"
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec	4' 11"
Joan of Arc	4' 11"
Bonnie Parker of "Bonnie & Clyde"	4' 11"
Harriet Beecher Stowe	4' 11"
Laura Ingalls Wilder	4' 11"
a rather tall adult Pygmy male	4' 11"
Gloria Swanson	4' 11"1/2
Clara Barton	5' 0 "
Isambard Kingdom Brunel	5' 0 "
Andrew Carnegie	5' 0 "
Thomas de Quincey	5' 0 "
Dorothy Wordsworth	5' 0 "
Stephen A. Douglas	5' 0 "
Danny DeVito	5' 0 "
Immanuel Kant	5' 0 "
William Wilberforce	5' 0 "



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Dollie Parton	5' 0 "
Mae West	5' 0 "
Pia Zadora	5' 0 "
Deng Xiaoping	5' 0 "
Dred Scott	5' 0 " (±)
Captain William Bligh of HMS <i>Bounty</i>	5' 0 " (±)
Harriet Tubman	5' 0 " (±)
Mary Moody Emerson per FBS (2)	5' 0 " (±)
John Brown of Providence, Rhode Island	5' 0 " (+)
John Keats	5' 3/4 "
Debbie Reynolds (Carrie Fisher's mother)	5' 1 "
Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher)	5' 1 "
Her Royal Highness The Princess Margaret	5' 1 "
Bette Midler	5' 1 "
Dudley Moore	5' 2 "
Paul Simon (of Simon & Garfunkel)	5' 2 "
Honoré de Balzac	5' 2 "
Sally Field	5' 2 "
Jemmy Button	5' 2 "
Margaret Mead	5' 2 "
R. Buckminster "Bucky" Fuller	5' 2 "
Yuri Gagarin the astronaut	5' 2 "
William Walker	5' 2 "
Horatio Alger, Jr.	5' 2 "
length of older military musket	5' 2 "
the artist formerly known as Prince	5' 2 ¹ / ₂ "
typical female of Thoreau's period	5' 2 ¹ / ₂ "
Francis of Assisi	5' 3 "
Voltaire	5' 3 "
Mohandas Gandhi	5' 3 "
Kahlil Gibran	5' 3 "
Friend Daniel Ricketson	5' 3 "
The Reverend Gilbert White	5' 3 "
Soviet First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev	5' 3 "
Sammy Davis, Jr.	5' 3 "
William Laws Calley, Jr.	5' 3 "
Truman Capote	5' 3 "
Kim Jong Il (North Korea)	5' 3 "
Stephen A. "Little Giant" Douglas	5' 4 "
Francisco Franco	5' 4 "
President James Madison	5' 4 "





1854-1855

1854-1855

Iosef Vissarionovich Dzugashvili "Stalin"	5' 4 "
Alan Ladd	5' 4 "
Pablo Picasso	5' 4 "
Truman Capote	5' 4 "
Queen Elizabeth	5' 4 "
Ludwig van Beethoven	5' 4 "
Typical Homo Erectus	5' 4 "
typical Neanderthal adult male	5' 4 ¹ / ₂ "
Alan Ladd	5' 4 ¹ / ₂ "
comte de Buffon	5' 5 " (-)
Captain Nathaniel Gordon	5' 5 "
Charles Manson	5' 5 "
Audie Murphy	5' 5 "
Harry Houdini	5' 5 "
Hung Hsiu-ch'üan 洪秀全	5' 5 "
Marilyn Monroe	5' 5 ¹ / ₂ "
T.E. Lawrence "of Arabia"	5' 5 ¹ / ₂ "
average runaway male American slave	5' 5-6 "
Charles Dickens	5' 6? "
President Benjamin Harrison	5' 6 "
President Martin Van Buren	5' 6 "
James Smithson	5' 6 "
Louisa May Alcott	5' 6 "
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe	5' 6 ¹ / ₂ "
Napoleon Bonaparte	5' 6 ¹ / ₂ "
Emily Brontë	5' 6-7 "
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	5' ? "
average height, seaman of 1812	5' 6.85 "
Oliver Reed Smoot, Jr.	5' 7 "
minimum height, British soldier	5' 7 "
President John Adams	5' 7 "
President John Quincy Adams	5' 7 "
President William McKinley	5' 7 "
"Charley" Parkhurst (a female)	5' 7 "
President, General Ulysses S. Grant	5' 7 "
Dr. Sigmund Freud	5' 7 "
Henry Thoreau	5' 7 "
the average male of Thoreau's period	5' 7 ¹ / ₂ "
Edgar Allan Poe	5' 8 "
President Ulysses S. Grant	5' 8 "
President William H. Harrison	5' 8 "





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President James Polk	5' 8"
President Zachary Taylor	5' 8"
average height, soldier of 1812	5' 8.35"
President Rutherford B. Hayes	5' 8 ¹ / ₂ "
President Millard Fillmore	5' 9"
President Harry S Truman	5' 9"
President Jimmy Carter	5' 9 ¹ / ₂ "
Herman Melville	5' 9 ³ / ₄ "
Calvin Coolidge	5' 10"
Andrew Johnson	5' 10"
Theodore Roosevelt	5' 10"
Thomas Paine	5' 10"
Franklin Pierce	5' 10"
Abby May Alcott	5' 10"
Reverend Henry C. Wright	5' 10"
Nathaniel Hawthorne	5' 10 ¹ / ₂ "
Louis "Deerfoot" Bennett	5' 10 ¹ / ₂ "
Friend John Greenleaf Whittier	5' 10 ¹ / ₂ "
President Dwight David "Ike" Eisenhower	5' 10 ¹ / ₂ "
Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots	5' 11"
Sojourner Truth	5' 11"
President Stephen Grover Cleveland	5' 11"
President Herbert Hoover	5' 11"
President Woodrow Wilson	5' 11"
President Jefferson Davis	5' 11"
President Richard Milhous Nixon	5' 11 ¹ / ₂ "
Robert Voorhis the hermit of Rhode Island	< 6'
Frederick Douglass	6' (-)
Anthony Burns	6' 0"
Waldo Emerson	6' 0"
Joseph Smith, Jr.	6' 0"
David Walker	6' 0"
Sarah F. Wakefield	6' 0"
Thomas Wentworth Higginson	6' 0"
President James Buchanan	6' 0"
President Gerald R. Ford	6' 0"
President James Garfield	6' 0"
President Warren Harding	6' 0"
President John F. Kennedy	6' 0"
President James Monroe	6' 0"
President William H. Taft	6' 0"



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President John Tyler	6' 0 "
Captain John Brown	6' 0 (+)"
President Andrew Jackson	6' 1"
Alfred Russel Wallace	6' 1"
President Ronald Reagan	6' 1"
Venture Smith	6' 1 ¹ / ₂ "
John Camel Heenan	6' 2 "
Crispus Attucks	6' 2 "
Franz Liszt	6' 2 "
President Chester A. Arthur	6' 2 "
President George Bush, Senior	6' 2 "
President Franklin D. Roosevelt	6' 2 "
President George Washington	6' 2 "
Gabriel Prosser	6' 2 "
Dangerfield Newby	6' 2 "
Charles Augustus Lindbergh	6' 2 "
President Bill Clinton	6' 2 ¹ / ₂ "
President Thomas Jefferson	6' 2 ¹ / ₂ "
President Lyndon B. Johnson	6' 3 "
Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.	6' 3 "
Richard "King Dick" Seaver	6' 3 ¹ / ₄ "
President Abraham Lincoln	6' 4 "
Marion Morrison (AKA John Wayne)	6' 4 "
Elisha Reynolds Potter, Senior	6' 4 "
Thomas Cholmondeley	6' 4 " (?)
William Buckley	6' 4-7"
Franklin Benjamin Sanborn	6' 5 "
Peter the Great of Russia	6' 7 "
William "Dwarf Billy" Burley	6' 7 "
Giovanni Battista Belzoni	6' 7 "
Thomas Jefferson (the statue)	7' 6"
Jefferson Davis (the statue)	7' 7"
Martin Van Buren Bates	7' 11 ¹ / ₂ "
M. Bihin, a Belgian exhibited in Boston in 1840	8'
Anna Haining Swan	8' 1"



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November 2, Thursday: The city of San Francisco began to pave Washington Street, between Dupont Street and Kearny Street, with cobblestones.

CALIFORNIA

Felix Mendelssohn's incomplete oratorio Christus to words of von Bunsen after the Bible was performed for the initial time, in Leipzig 2 days before the 7th anniversary of the composer's death.

November 3, Friday, and 4, Saturday: Henry Thoreau surveyed on the "Homestead" farm of the old General James Colburn.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 3d]

November 4, Saturday: A lighthouse went into operation on Alcatraz (Pelican) Island in San Francisco Bay.

Florence Nightingale and 38 nurses arrive at the Barrack Hospital at Scutari in the Crimea, near Constantinople. They began to introduce sanitary conditions.



Nov. 4. Saw a shrike in an apple tree, with apparently a worm in its mouth. The shad-bush buds have expanded into small leafets already. This while surveying on the old Colburn farm.

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



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HISTORY'S NOT MADE OF WOULD. WHEN SOMEONE REVEALS, FOR INSTANCE, THAT A PARTICULAR INFANT WOULD INVENT THE SEWING MACHINE, S/HE DISCLOSES THAT WHAT IS BEING CRAFTED IS NOT REALITY BUT PREDESTINARIANISM. THE HISTORIAN IS SETTING CHRONOLOGY TO "SHUFFLE," WHICH IS NOT A PERMISSIBLE OPTION BECAUSE IN THE REAL WORLD SUCH SHUFFLE IS IMPOSSIBLE. THE RULE OF REALITY IS THAT THE FUTURE HASN'T EVER HAPPENED, YET. THERE IS NO SUCH "BIRD'S EYE VIEW" AS THIS IN THE REAL WORLD, FOR IN THE REAL WORLD NO REAL BIRD HAS EVER GLIMPSED AN ACTUAL HISTORICAL SEQUENCE.



November 5, Sunday: In the [Crimea](#), the Battle of the Inkerman heights. The [Russian](#) army surprised the British when they attacked east of Sevastopol. A combined British and French defense managed to stave off the assault but the fighting left 15,000 total casualties. Both sides would settle in for a long siege.

Antonín Dvořák was apprenticed to a butcher in Zlonice, Bohemia.

Eugene V. Debs was born.

[Henry Thoreau](#) and [Charles Wheeler](#) went past the mouth of John [Hosmer](#)'s hollow near the river (Gleason G5), met Hosmer and Anthony Wright there investigating the pit left by somebody's recent "pirate-treasure" digging in the sand, and went on to White Pond (Gleason J4).³³



Nov. 5. Sunday. To White Pond with Charles Wheeler.

Passing the mouth of John Hosmer's hollow near the river, was hailed by him and Anthony Wright, sitting there,

[Transcript]

[Cadwallader Colden](#)

["Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project](#)

33. NOTE: Not the same person as the [Charles Stearns Wheeler](#) classmate who at this point had been dead for over a decade. Refer to Albert Gallatin Wheeler, Jr.'s THE GENEALOGICAL HISTORY OF THE WHEELER FAMILY IN AMERICA (Boston 1914). Also: Willett, Martha Miller: CONCORD TO WAUKESHA: THE ANCESTRY OF PAUL HOLLAND WHEELER AND AMANDA WHEELER ROSE. Brooklyn NY: M.M. Willett, 1983. Wheeler, Henry Warren. WHEELER AND WARREN FAMILIES DESCENDANTS OF GEORGE WHEELER, CONCORD, MASS., 1638, THROUGH DEACON THOMAS WHEELER, CONCORD, 1696, AND OF JOHN WARREN, BOSTON, MASS., 1630, THROUGH EBENEZER WARREN, LEICESTER, MASS., 1744. Albany NY: J. Munsell's Sons, 1892. Tolman, George. THE WHEELER FAMILIES OF OLD CONCORD, MASS. Concord Antiquarian Society, 1970. Molyneaux, Myrtelle W. THE WHEELER FAMILY OF CRANFIELD, ENGLAND, AND CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS, AND SOME DESCENDANTS OF SGT. THOMAS WHEELER OF CONCORD. Long Beach CA : M.W. Molyneaux, 1992. Wheeler, Henry Martyn. GENEALOGY OF SOME OF THE DESCENDANTS OF OBADIAH WHEELER OF CONCORD. Worcester MA, F.P. Rice, 1898. Wheeler, Joseph Lewis. SOME DE[S]CENDENTS OF SERGEANT THOMAS WHEELER OF CONCORD, MASS., 1640-1969. Benson VT, 1969.

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to come and see where they had dug for money. There was a hole six feet square and as many deep, and the sand was heaped about over a rod square. Hosmer said that it was dug two or three weeks before, that three men came in a chaise and dug it in the night. They were seen about there by day. Somebody dug near there in June, and then they covered up the hole again. He said they had been digging thereabouts from time to time for a hundred years. I asked him why. He said that Dr. Lee, who lived where Joe Barrett did, told him that old Mr. Wood, who lived in a house very near his (Hosmer's), told him that, one night in Captain Kidd's day, three pirates came to his house with a pair of old-fashioned deer-skin breeches, both legs full of coin, and asked leave to bury it in his cellar. He was afraid, and refused them. They then asked for some earthen pots and shovels and a lanthorn, which he let them have. A woman in the house followed the pirates at a distance down the next hollow on the south, and saw them go along the meadow-side and turn up this hollow, and then, being alone and afraid, she returned. Soon after the men returned with the tools and an old-fashioned hat full of the coin (holding about a quart), which they gave to Wood. He, being afraid, buried it in his cellar, but afterward becoming a poor man, dug it up and used it. A bailiff made some inquiry hereabouts after the pirates.

Hosmer said that one thing which confirmed the diggers in their belief was the fact that when he was a little boy, plowing one day with his father on the hillside, they found three old-fashioned bottles bottom upward but empty under the plow. Somebody consulted Moll Pitcher, who directed to dig at a certain distance from an apple tree on a line with the bottles, and then they would find the treasure.

I think it is the fox-colored sparrow I see in flocks and hear sing now by wood-sides.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 November 6, Monday: John Philip Sousa was born in Washington DC, 3d of 10 children (only 6 would survive infancy) of John Antonio Sousa, a Portuguese immigrant and trombonist in the [U.S. Marine Band](#), with Marie Elisabeth Trinkaus, an immigrant from Bavaria where her father was a small town mayor.

[Henry Thoreau](#) completed surveying the farm of the old General James Colburn. This farm of approximately 130 acres was near the Lee or Elwell Farm (Gleason E5) bordering on the Assabet River. Thoreau mentioned that there was a "haunted house" in this area.



Nov. 6. Surveying on Colburn place.

It is suddenly cold. Pools frozen so as to bear, and ground frozen so that it is difficult, if not impossible, to force down a stake in plowed ground. Was that a fish hawk I saw flying over the Assabet, or a goshawk? White beneath, with slender wings.

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

[Thoreau](#) was being written to again by this [Asa Fairbanks](#) of [Providence, Rhode Island](#) in regard to the proposed lecture of a "reformatory Character":

Providence Nov. 6. 1854

Mr Henry D Thore[a]u

Dear Sir

I am in receipt of yours of the 4th inst. Your stating explicitly that the 6th December would suit you better than any other time, I altered other arrangements on purpose to accommodate you, and notified you as soon as I was able to accomplish them. had you named the last Wedn[e]sday in Nov. or the second Wednesday in December, I



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could have replied to you at once—or any time in Janu[a]ry or Feb[ruary] it would have been the same[.] I shall regret the disappointment very Much but must submit to it if you have Made such overtures as you can not avoid— I hope however you will be able to come at the time appointed[.]

Truly

A. Fairbanks

The Reverend [Daniel Foster](#) was writing [Thoreau](#) from his farm in East Princeton MA that he and friends had been reading [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) aloud “with pauses for conversation.”

East Princeton Nov. 6. 1854.

Friend Thoreau,

On my return from a lecturing tour in the Mystic Valley Dom informed me of your call with your English [c]ompanion on your way to a meeting on the summit of Mt. Wachusett. I am glad you called but sorry that I was not at home. I hope you will come & see us while we are here & get acquainted with our pond “old crow hill,” “redemption rock” “Uncle William” now nearly 90 [years] old, bonnie Charlie & other notables of the place justly considered worthy the notice of a philosopher. I shall not tell you that you will be welcome as long as you can stay with us for if you don't know that fact the usual polite phrase of invitation will not assure you. I have read your “Walden” slowly, aloud with constant

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pauses for conversation thereon, & with very much satisfaction & profit. I like to read aloud of evenings a book which like this one provokes discussion in the circle of [hearers] & reader. I was the more interested in your book from the personal & strong interest felt for you & for your own sake in my soul. My intercourse with you when I lived in Concord & since at times when I have been in



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*Concord has been uncommonly useful in
aiding & strengthening my own best
purpose. Most thoroughly do I respect
& reverence a manly self-poised mind.
My own great aim in life has ever been
to act in accordance with my own convictions.
To be destitute of bank stock & rail road
shares & the influence which wealth
& position bestow through the folly
of the unthinking multitude is
no evil to that one who seeks
truth & immortal living as the greatest
& the best inheritance. In the scramble
for money in which most men engage*

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*one may fail but whoever travels the
road of patient study & self control
reaches the goal & is crowned with
the immortal wealth. I would not
be understood in this to depreciate
the value of wealth. I am working in
the hope of being rich in this world's
[gear] sometime through the ownership
of a piece of land on which shall
stand my own illuminated & happy
home. But if I do not reach the
accomplishment of this hope I will
nevertheless bate no jot of my cheer-
fulness joy & energy till the end.
I will deserve success & thus of course
I shall succeed in all my hopes
some time or other. I have enjoyed
the ponds the hills & the woods of
this vicinity very greatly this year.
We have nothing quite equal to
your Walden or Concord, but aside
from these our natural attractions
exceed yours. I have been farming &
preaching this summer, have reared*

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*to maturity & harvested 90 bushels
of corn one bushel beans, 8 bushels
potatoes, 20 bushels squashes &*

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*20 bushels of apples. I cannot tell
with the same precision how
many thoughts I have called into
exercise by my moral husbandry
tho I hope my labor herein has not been
in vain.
Dom wishes to be remembered with
sisterly greetings to Sophia & yourself &
with filial affection to your father
& mother. We enjoyed the visit your
mother & sister repaid us very much indeed
& only regretted that Mr. Thoreau & yourself
were not with us at the same time[.]
I hope your "Walden" will get a wide
circulation, as it deserves, & replenish
your bank, as it ought to do. I thank
you for the book & will hold myself
your debtor till opportunity offers for
securing a receipt in full
Yours truly
Daniel Foster*

By way of radical contrast, when [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) read [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#), he didn't think much of the book as a guide to life. On this day he was listing his objections for [Waldo Emerson](#)'s benefit:

1. That it hasn't optimism enough ...
2. That one couldn't pursue **his** Art of Living and get married.
3. That one hasn't time to spend or strength to spare from what is his work to take care of such universal rebellion.

It is clear that Conway had not been reading [WALDEN](#) "with pauses for thought." To this minister, whose ideal of Nature was frankly that it should be like a garden where everything is in its place and under control and serving a purpose, [Thoreau](#) seemed like the kind of guy who couldn't live "unless snakes are coiling around his leg or lizzards perching on his shoulders." (Conway all his life had a morbid fear of and a morbid fascination with snakes: during his childhood he even had a slave walking in front of him to beat the ground with a stick and scare away these snakes. Obviously, if Thoreau wasn't afraid of snakes, there must be a whole lot of other things that were wrong with him as well!)³⁴

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

VOLUME II

34. Conway's criticism of Thoreau to Emerson, that Thoreau hadn't optimism enough, sounds very strange if you bear in mind that later on in life Conway would repudiate Emerson on the grounds that Emerson was so optimistic that he was entirely unable to deal with the dark things in life!

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November 7, Tuesday: Henry Thoreau again surveyed, for Waldo Emerson, the sawmill woodlot in Lincoln near Sandy Pond Road leading to Flint's, or Sandy, Pond (Gleason J10) that he had surveyed on May 23, 1849 and March 15, 1850 and had enticed Emerson to purchase by taking him to a water-fall and rare flowers.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 7th]

November 8, Wednesday: Henry Thoreau raked clams.

The Constituent Cortes opened in Spain.



Nov. 8. I can still rake clams near the shore, but they are chiefly in the weeds, I think. I see a snipe-like bird by riverside this windy afternoon, which goes off with a sound like creaking tackle. [Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

November 9, Thursday: Franz Liszt conducted his symphonic poem Festklänge in its 1st performance, with Schiller's play Huldigung der Künste.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 9th]

November 10, Friday: In the afternoon Henry Thoreau and Ellery Channing sailed to Ball's Hill (Gleason D9).



Nov. 10. P.M. — Sail to Ball's Hill with W.E.C. See where the muskrats have eaten much pontederia root. Got some donacia grubs for Harris, but find no chrysalids. The sight of the masses of yellow hastate leaves and flower-buds of the yellow lily, already four or six inches long, at the bottom of the river, reminds me that nature is prepared for an infinity of springs yet. [Transcript]

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November 11, Saturday: The Siberian Hunters, a romantic opera by Anton Rubinstein to words of Zherebtsov, was performed for the initial time, in the Weimar Hoftheater, directed by Franz Liszt.

A story by Louisa May Alcott appeared in Boston's Saturday Evening Gazette, "The Rival Prima Donnas" by "Flora Fairfield."



Henry Thoreau received the package of 3 books, and letter in French, that had been posted by the Abbé Adrien-Emmanuel Rouquette in New Orleans on the 1st of the month. Total travel time from the Louisiana port to the Massachusetts port, plus pickup and delivery in Boston to the publishing firm of Ticknor, and forwarding to Concord, had been a remarkably short 10 days! The books in the package were, presumably:

- Rouquette's LA THÉBIADE DE L'AMÉRIQUE
- Rouquette's WILD FLOWERS
- Rouquette's LES SAVANES, POESIES AMERICAINES



Nov. 11. Minott heard geese go over night before last, about 8 P.M. Therien, too, heard them "yelling like anything" over Walden, where he is cutting, the same evening. He cut down a tree with a flying squirrel on it; often sees them. Receive this evening a letter in French and three "ouvrages" from the Abbe Rouquette in Louisiana.

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

November 12, Sunday: Henry Thoreau's "SLAVERY IN MASSACHUSETTS" appeared in The National Anti-Slavery Standard.



In San Francisco, William H. Mantz & Company began publication of Town Talk.

CALIFORNIA



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 12th]



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November 13, Monday: George Whitefield Chadwick was born in Lowell, Massachusetts, the youngest of 2 children born to Alonzo Calvin Chadwick, a carpenter in the Massachusetts Mills, with Hannah Godfrey Fitts who came from a family of musicians (the mother would die within a week, of puerperal fever).

[Edward Dickinson](#) was defeated in his bid to retain his seat representing Hampshire County in the US House of Representatives.

In England, [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) was confiding to Monckton Milnes, asking that he not be quoted, that although [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) and [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) were by “a very remarkable man,” he hardly hoped that Milnes would read the books, “unless for the observation of nature in them which is wonderfully accurate.” Hawthorne’s evaluation was that these, like other American books, did not carry the reader away, requiring some effort –and not by a man of weak resolution– to read through to the end.

[TIMELINE OF WALDEN](#)

[TIMELINE OF A WEEK](#)



Nov. 13. It has rained hard the 11th, 12th, and 13th, and the river is *at last* decidedly rising. On Friday, 10th, it was still at summer level. [Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

This is frequently controverted — but some allege that [Mr. Henry D. Thoreau](#) was a guest on a mid-19th-Century television talk show. Here is the surviving transcript evidence:

[AB=Ainsworth Brown; HT=Henry Thoreau]

AB: Good afternoon. This is “The Ainsworth Brown Show” and I am Ainsworth Brown. We are privileged to have as our guest this afternoon Henry David Thoreau who has written a book, [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#). Henry, come on out [Applause from studio audience as Thoreau enters] Welcome, welcome. Glad you could come.... Have a seat....

HT: Thank you.

AB: Henry, I have not had a chance to read your book yet but I do know that it is, in the popular parlance, “hot, hot, hot.” [Graham’s Magazine](#) has called it “always racy and stimulating,” the product of a “powerful and accomplished mind”.... So what’s this [WALDEN](#) about?

HT: It’s the story of the two years, two months, and two days I spent living alone in a cabin by Walden Pond, near Concord, Massachusetts.

AB: What happened?

HT: I built the cabin. That first summer I grew some beans as a cash crop. In the book I talk about the food I ate, the plants and animals I saw, and the changing of the seasons.

AB: So what did you eat?

HT: I ate wild berries and grapes. I occasionally caught some fish or a wild animal –I once trapped and butchered a woodchuck who was bothering my bean plants– but mostly I ate rice, bread



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made from rye and cornmeal with molasses as sweetening, potatoes, and peas.

AB: Frankly, Henry, except for the woodchuck, it sounds pretty boring.

HT: I can see why you might think so, Mr. Brown. But, as I contend in the book, the external circumstances in which one finds one's self are far less important than one's inner life. I wanted to simplify my material needs to a point where I could spend just a few hours each day satisfying them and have all the rest of my time free for contemplation and self-improvement. Most men are slaves to their possessions and to the jobs they are forced to perform in order to pay for them.

AB: I get it – a Marxist/capitalist kind of thing....

HT: I'm not sure I know what you mean....

AB: What were the results of your contemplations?

HT: I have recorded many of my thoughts in the book, but I don't really think of contemplation as a means for book-creation, or as a means to anything at all, but rather as an end in itself.

AB: I see ... so it's like meditation, TM, that kind of thing....

HT: Yes, it is meditation.

AB: But you would meditate for like –what –ten hours a day?

HT: Yes, it might frequently have been that long.

AB: Wow! ... Did you spend all your time at the pond or did you go other places too?

HT: I have always walked wherever I've wanted to. Individual men may think they own particular pieces of property but, in a truer sense, trees, mountains and animals can not be owned; they belong to Nature and to the men who would love and protect them.

AB: [Turning to the camera] So, there you have it. Henry David Thoreau, Marxist eco-warrior. He has regularly spent ten hours a day in meditation and once killed, butchered with his own hands, and ate a woodchuck who was devouring his bean plants. His book [holding a copy up to the camera] is WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS. Thank you, Henry. Please tune in tomorrow when my guest will be...

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November 13, Monday: [Henry Thoreau](#) replied, with the requested copy of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#), to the [Abbé Adrien-Emmanuel Rouquette](#).



TIMELINE OF A WEEK

Rev^d Adrian Rouquette

Concord Mass. Nov. 13th 1854.

Dear Sir

I have just received your letter and the 3 works which accompanied it — and I make haste to send you a copy of “A Week — on the Concord & Merrimack Rivers” — by the same mail with this— I thank you heartily for the interest which you express in my ~~book~~ “Walden” — and also for the gift of your works — Though I have not had time to preuse ~~the~~ your books I have looked far enough to ~~last~~ attentively— ~~and I am glad~~ not all ~~those in ou~~ to be convinced that ~~there are more than~~ ~~knew~~ ~~I supposed~~ in your section of ~~our~~ union any ~~more than~~ in my own are ~~broad country~~ devoted to ~~something~~ alone The very locality assigned to some of your ~~better—than~~ trade poems—~~suggest~~ poetry appeals to the muse in me especially I am ~~particularly~~ pleased to receive so cordial ~~heartly~~ a greeting ~~from~~ in French— which was the language of my paternal Grandfather— I assure you — it is ~~Altogether~~ not a little affecting to be thus reminded of the breadth & the destiny of our common country—

I am sir yrs sincerely

Henr D Thoreau

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November 14, Tuesday: A great hurricane struck the region of the Black Sea. The Allied supply fleet had been forced to anchor outside the harbor of Sevastopol because the Russians has strewn the harbor with mines. These mines they had decided to contract for with a Swedish inventor name of [Alfred B. Nobel](#) who detonated such mines chemically rather than with an American inventor name of Samuel Colt assisted by another inventor name of [Samuel F.B. Morse](#) who detonated such mines electrically. The hurricane devastated this vulnerably anchored supply fleet, sinking the pride of the French navy, the *Henri IV*, and destroying the winter supplies of the army ashore (30 ships full of food, medical supplies, and armaments — in reaction to this the Emperor Napoleon III would call for the initiation of a national weather forecasting service).

The [Concord River](#) rose slightly over the meadows (it would not subside until December 5th). [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote the first draft of his “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” lecture as proposed by [Asa Fairbanks](#). Presumably it was at this time that he added material of this nature:

[Paragraph 4] My text this evening is “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

MARK 8:36

So now I would say something similar to you, my readers. Since **you** are my readers, and I have not been much of a traveller, I will not talk about people a thousand miles off, but come as near home as I can. As the time is short, I will leave out all the flattery, and retain all the criticism.

[Paragraph 10] But when I come a little nearer to the facts, I find commonly that that relation to Nature which had so attracted me in the farmer’s life, exists only in my imagination, and that she is insignificant to him;—that his boasted independence is merely a certain slight independence on the market, and not a moral independence,—that he is a speculator,—not in the old sense of an observer, or contemplator, but in the modern sense which is yet, for the most part, ashamed to show itself in the dictionary, and his speculum or mirror, is a shining dollar. In short, considering his motives and his methods, his life is coarse and repulsive, and liable to most of the objections which have been urged against trade and commerce. What odds does it make whether you measure tape or measure milk? He thinks that he must live near a market. Just as the publisher, when I complain that his magazine is too worldly, tells me that it must have a large circulation. But I think that the must in the case is that

[Paragraph 15] One might sometimes wonder that this class of men do not send up a petition to have five minutes added to the length of human life.
 [Paragraph 16] This may be enterprising, as we call it, but it is not wise—neither the saints nor the heroes live in such a desperate hurry.
 [Paragraph 17] It is no better with the old fashioned farmer. I fear that his contentment is commonly stagnation.

[Paragraph 26] What are the mechanics about—whose hammers we hear on all sides—building some lofty rhyme?—or only houses, barns, and woodsheds?

[Paragraph 100] “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”¹

1. MARK 8:36 Bradley P. Dean has emended the manuscript copy-text by supplying the last eight words and the question mark, which were apparently trimmed from the manuscript, and by supplying the quotation marks.

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[Paragraph 46] But why go to California for a text? She is the child of New England, bred at her own school and church.

[Paragraph 47] America is said to be the arena on which the battle of freedom is to be fought. But surely it cannot be freedom in a merely political sense that is meant. Even if we grant that the American has freed himself from a political tyrant, he is still the slave of an economical and moral tyrant. Now that the republic—the *res-publica*—has been settled, it is time to look after the *res-privata*,—the private state,—to see, as the Roman senate charged its consuls, “*ne quid res-PRIVATA detrimenti caperet*,” that the **private** state receive no detriment. [The quotation is from Marcus Tullius Cicero, *ORATIONES* (Boston, 1831), “*Oratio pro Milone*,” 26:70. Thoreau altered Cicero’s “*respublica*” to ‘*res-PRIVATA*’. Bradley P. Dean has emended what is

[Paragraph 57] Somebody has said that he who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, is a benefactor to mankind.¹ But how much greater a benefactor is he who makes a man grow where no man grew before!

[Paragraph 58] Of the West I commonly hear only that the corn grows so much higher than the men. When our explorers discover a country where carrots will grow quite through to the other side of the globe, as some report,² we think it becomes the chief duty of man to go and tax Nature’s carrot-producing power there to the utmost, and never her man-producing power—to draw out the great resources of that country in the shape of monstrous golden carrots, though we mannikins that raise them should tumble into the holes they come out of, and be lost.

[Paragraph 59] Where is the government whose policy it is to satisfy, or even recognize, nay, avoid outraging, the higher wants of our nature? It is the ruling policy of our own government, as every-body knows, to convert man directly into a brute, or a piece of property. We are compelled to say that anything that works that way is a mere pretension.³ Perhaps the government is such. The Secretary of State or of the Treasury is a real person enough, but what a shadow is the Chaplain of the House? Under the present circumstances he is the best chaplain who makes the shortest prayers—because any prayer is out of place there. It is only a wooden gun to scare the devil away. But if the truth were known, he was the inventor of it—he himself suggested it to keep up

1. Jonathan Swift, *GULLIVER’S TRAVELS*, 1726, “Voyage to Brobdingnag,” Chapter 7.

2. This “report” has not been located.


3. This and the following sentence are interlined on the copy-text manuscript in very faint, hastily-written pencil and are therefore difficult to recover. The readings ‘anything’ and ‘works’ in this sentence, and ‘is such’ in the next sentence must remain conjectural.

[Paragraph 68] In some lyceums they tell me that they have voted to exclude the subject of religion! But how do I know what their religion is—and when I am near to or far from it?



Nov. 14. The river is slightly over the meadows. The willow twigs on the right of the Red Bridge causeway are bright greenish-yellow and reddish as in the spring. Also on the right railroad sand-bank at Heywood’s meadow. Is it because they are preparing their catkins now against another spring? The first wreck line — of pontederia, sparganium, etc. — is observable.

[Transcript]

 November 15, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote letters of introduction for [Thomas Cholmondeley](#), to [Bronson Alcott](#) and to [Thaddeus William Harris](#).



Concord Nov. 15th 1854

Dr Harris

Dear Sir,

Will you allow me to introduce to you the bearer — Thomas Cholmondeley, who has been spending some months with us in Concord. He is an English country gentleman, and the author of a political work on New Zealand called “Ultima Thule”. He wishes to look round the Library.

If you can give him a few moments of your time, you will confer a favor on both him & me.

I have taken much pains, but in vain, to find another of those locusts for you —

I have some of the grubs from the nuphar buds in spirits.

Yrs truly

Henry D. Thoreau.

Concord Nov. 15 1854

Mr. Alcott,

I wish to introduce to you Thomas Cholmondeley, an English man, of [whom] and his work in new Zealand I have already told you. He proposes to spend a part of the winter in Boston, pursuing his literary studies, at the same time that he is observing our institutions.

He is an English country gentleman of simple habits and truly liberal mind, who may one day take a part in the government of his country.

I think that you [will] find you[r] account in comparing notes with him.



Nov. 15. The first snow, a mere sugaring which went off the next morning.

[Transcript]

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 November 16, Thursday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) sailed to Hubbard’s Bridge (Gleason H6) across the Sudbury River.



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Nov. 16. P.M. — Sailed to Hubbard’s Bridge.

Almost every muskrat’s house is covered by the flood, though they were unusually high, as well as numerous, and the river is not nearly so high as last year. I see where they have begun to raise them another story. A few cranberries begin to wash up, and rails, boards, etc., may now be collected by wreckers.

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[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL
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November 17, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to a lyceum representative, William Evarts Sheldon.³⁵

Concord Nov 17th 1854.

W^m E. Sheldon Esqr

Dear Sir—

Thinking it possible that [your] might be expecting me [to] lecture befor [^without further correspondence] your Society on the 5th of December as I offered—I write to ask if it is so.

I am still at liberty for that evening—and will read you a lecture either on The Wild or on Moosehunting as you may prefer.

Yrs respectfully HD

XV—348

In a man walk in the woods for love of them & see his fellows with impartial eye afar—for half his days, he is esteemed a loafer—but if he spends his whole day as a speculatoer shearing off those woods & making earth [hard] before her time—he esteemed an industrious & enterprising citizen.

XVII—249

The other day I saw some gentlemen [] & ladies sitting at anchor in boats on a lake in middle of a calm afternoon under parasols—making use of nature—but plainly not accumulating money—

35. William Evarts Sheldon had been born on October 22, 1832 to Julius Sheldon and Harriet Newell Sheldon in Dorset, Vermont and had matriculated at Middlebury College in 1853, becoming during this year a teacher and principal of the high school in East Abington, Massachusetts. In this year, also, he got married with Mary Ames Soule (1831-1928), daughter of Josiah Soule and Sophronia Jenkins Soule. He would in 1858 relocate to the Boston area, to teach at a grammar school in West Newton until 1865, and then at Hancock School until 1870. He would succeed as an administrator and advocate of improvements in education, in 1887 becoming president of the National Education Association. On April 16, 1900 in West Newton he would die, “being suddenly summoned while signing a business letter.” He would be survived by Mary Ames Soule Sheldon, one surviving daughter, and a deceased daughter’s two daughters.



1854-1855

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On that raw, cloudy afternoon [Thoreau](#) paddled up the Sudbury River to Clamshell Bank or Hill (Gleason 23/G5), and sailed home.



Nov. 17. Paddled up river to Clamshell and sailed back.

[Transcript]

I think it must have been a fish hawk [[Osprey](#) [Pandion haliaetus](#)] which I saw hovering over the meadow and my boat (a raw cloudy afternoon), now and then sustaining itself in one place a hundred feet or more above the water, intent on a fish, with a hovering or fluttering motion of the wings somewhat like a kingfisher. Its wings were very long, slender, and curved in outline of front edge. I think there was some white on rump. It alighted near the top of an oak within rifle-shot of me and my boat, afterward on the tip-top of a maple by waterside, looking very large.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



November 18, Saturday: Geese began flying south for the winter.

In England, [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) confided again in Richard Monckton Milnes, suggesting that he do something to make [Henry Thoreau](#) known to the English public. He described Thoreau as “a true man and full of true thought” but added that his judgment was that in spite of these good traits Thoreau “despises the world, and all that it has to offer, and, like other humorists, is an intolerable bore.” Hawthorne communicated to his noble friend the 1st Baron Houghton that Thoreau was not of their sort, “not an agreeable person, and in his presence one feels ashamed of having any money, or a house to live in, or so much as two coats to wear, or of having written a book that the public will read – his own mode of life being so unsparing a criticism on all other modes, such as the world approves.”³⁶

Milnes should not think that they were particular friends, as “I do not speak with quite this freedom of my friends. We have never been intimate, though my house is near his residence.”

He [Thoreau] despises the world, and all that it has to offer, and, like other humorists, is an intolerable bore. I shall cause it to be known to him that you sat up till two o'clock reading his book; and he will pretend that it is of no consequence, but will never forget it.... He is not an agreeable person, and in his presence one feels ashamed of having any money, or a house to live in, or so much as two coats to wear, or having written a book that the public will read – his own mode of life being so unsparing a criticism on all other modes, such as the world approves.

– [Hawthorne](#)'s letter to

36. In reading through Hawthorne's materials, I have been awestruck with the extent to which he was deploying the categories “agreeable,” “not agreeable,” and “disagreeable.” Circumstances are repeatedly categorized as in one of precisely these three diagnostic categories. The persons whom he encountered are repeatedly categorized as in one of precisely these three diagnostic categories. This seems to have been for him the utterly fundamental categorization of all reality. As a flaming sexist, everything female was of course beyond the pale. As a flaming racist, everything black and everything connected in any way with blackness (such as Republicanism or abolitionism) was also “disagreeable.” However, I have been forced to the conclusion upon close reading that the distinction being made between the first two of these categories (“agreeable” versus “not agreeable”) was more of a class thing, and that that distinction had been different in kind from the disjunction he had been attempting between the outside two of these categories (“agreeable” versus “disagreeable”). It is almost as if he had been attempting a triage, a triage between the grand souls of Heaven with the more dicey souls floating somehow in Purgatory, versus demonic evils forever consigned to an Outer Darkness. It seems significant, therefore, that in the case of this communication with a British noble, Thoreau is merely allowed to float in limbo as “not agreeable,” one of the souls held in a Purgatory, rather than being utterly condemned.



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Richard Monckton Milnes,
1st Baron Houghton (1809-1885),
page 334 in Edward Mather's
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: A MODEST MAN
(NY: Crowell, 1940)



Nov. 18. Saw sixty geese go over the Great Fields, in one waving line, broken from time to time by their crowding on each other and vainly endeavoring to form into a harrow, honking all the while. [Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



November 19, Sunday: [Sam Houston](#) was baptized into the [Baptist Church](#) in Independence, [Texas](#).



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 19th]



November 20, Monday: In [Boston](#), [Unitarian](#) Reverend Orville Dewey delivered a lecture "The Civilization of the Future" in which he called for an end to [human slavery](#). As part of this lecture, however, he took occasion to deny persistent slanders circulated by the pro-slavery people, that he would be willing to sacrifice his own mother if that would bring an end to the peculiar institution. Of course he wasn't as extreme as all that, of course he loved his own white mommy above these black Americans who weren't even relatives of his!

The initial meeting of the Neu-Weimar-Verein took place at the Russischer Hof. Charter members included Franz Liszt and Peter Cornelius, plus some out-of-town members [Hector Berlioz](#), Hans von Bülow, Joseph Joachim, and [Richard Wagner](#). The purpose of the association was to further the music of the more radical Romantics: Berlioz, Wagner, Liszt, and others.



November 20, Monday: At 7 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) boarded the train to [Boston](#) on his way to Philadelphia, via [New-York](#) and Newark, to deliver "Moose Hunting" and "The Wild."³⁷

TIMELINE OF THE MAINE WOODS

The trip would consume 15 hours and he evidently composed some letters while traveling.



Nov. 20th. To Philadelphia. 7 Am — to Boston — 9 Am Boston to New York, by express train, land route— [Transcript]

See the reddish soil (red sandstone?) all through Connecticut. Beyond Hartford a range of rocky hills crossing the State on each side the RR, the E one very precipitous, and apparently terminating at E rock at N. Haven. Pleasantest part of the whole route between Springfield and Hartford, along the river; perhaps include the hilly region this side of Springfield. Reached Canal Street at 5 Pm, or candle-light. Started for Philadelphia from foot of Liberty Street at 6 Pm, via Newark, etc., etc., Bordentown, etc., etc., Camden Ferry, to Philadelphia, all in the dark. Saw only the glossy panelling of the cars reflected out into the

37. This version of his early "Walking" lecture he produced in the preceding weeks by splitting "Walking" in half and supplementing one of the halves with new material and material from his journal. He used the same process on the other half of his earlier reading draft in December to create a separate lecture for which he retained the title "Walking."





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dark, like the magnificent lit facade of a row of edifices reaching all the way to Philadelphia, except when we stopped and a lanthorn or two showed us a ragged boy and the dark buildings of some New Jersey town. Arrive at 10 Pm; time, 4 hours from NY, 13 from Boston, 15 from Concord. Put up at Jones's Exchange Hotel, 77 Dock Street; lodgings 37½ per night, meals separate; not to be named with French's in New York; next door to the fair of the Franklin Institute, then open, and over against the Exchange, in the neighborhood of the printing offices.

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He replied to a letter from a lyceum representative, G.B. Bernard, and he wrote to J.D. Milner:

Concord Mass Nov. 20th

1854

John D. Milner Esq.

Dear Sir

I shall probably lecture the coming winter as near to Hamilton as Akron Ohio – & I shall be happy to read one or two lectures before your institute. My subjects are “The Wild” & “Moosehunting”. I will read one lecture for fifty dollars – or 2 within one week for seventy-five dollars— The neare together the better—

If my terms are agreeable to you, shall you be at liberty to hear me during the first week of January?— if not then will you please {MS torn} what evenings nearest to that date {MS torn} unengaged—

An immediate answer will oblige

Yours respectfully Henry D Thoreau

Upon his arrival he would put up at Jones's Exchange Hotel at 77 Dock Street, lodging which he would jot down cost him \$0.³⁷ 1/2 with meals extra.


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THE MAINE WOODS: There may be some truth in what he said about the moose growing larger formerly; for the quaint John Josselyn, a physician who spent many years in this very district of Maine in the seventeenth century, says, that the tips of their horns "are sometimes found to be two fathoms asunder," —and he is particular to tell us that a fathom is six feet,— "and [they are] in height, from the toe of the fore foot to the pitch of the shoulder, twelve foot, both which hath been taken by some of my sceptique readers to be monstrous lies"; and he adds, "There are certain *transcendentia* in every creature, which are the indelible character of God, and which discover God." This is a greater dilemma to be caught in than is presented by the cranium of the young Bechuana ox, apparently another of the *transcendentia*, in the collection of Thomas Steel, Upper Brook Street, London, whose "entire length of horn, from tip to tip, along the curve, is 13 ft. 5 in.; distance (straight) between the tips of the horns, 8 ft. 8 1/2 in." However, the size both of the moose and the cougar, as I have found, is generally rather underrated than overrated, and I should be inclined to add to the popular estimate a part of what I subtracted from Josselyn's.

JOHN JOSSELYN

Thoreau had been reading [John Josselyn](#) that spring. We note that the quotation Thoreau makes of AN ACCOUNT OF TWO VOYAGES TO NEW-ENGLAND ... BY JOHN JOSSELYN, GENT... is not all that precise. Josselyn had written that there are certain *transcendentia* "which are the indelible Characters of God" (rather than "are the indelible character of God"), and he had concluded with the enigmatic "there's a prudential for you, as John Rhodes the fisherman used to say to his mate, Kitt Lux." —Which is not to suggest that Thoreau's alterations in any way changed the sense of Josselyn's antique observation.

 November 21, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) climbed to the cupola of the State-House building in which the [Declaration of Independence](#) had been prepared, to see the view out over the rooftops of Philadelphia. He was able to obtain a "Fine view from Fairmount water-works."



So, while Henry was up there, did he do his usual trick to get perspective, of looking through his legs? According to a Miss Caroline Haven, who briefed the Reverend William Henry Furness on Thoreau's Philadelphia lecture when the Unitarian clergyman was unable to attend, the audience did not seem to appreciate what was being offered to them.



Nov. 21. Looked from the cupola of the State-House, where the Declaration of Independence was [Transcript]



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declared. The best view of the city I got. Was interested in the squirrels, gray and black, in Independence and Washington Squares. Heard that they have, or have had, deer in Logan Square. The squirrels are fed, and live in boxes in the trees in the winter. Fine view from Fairmount water-works. The line of the hypotenuse of the gable end of Girard College was apparently deflected in the middle six inches or more, reminding me of the anecdote of the church of the Madeleine in Paris.

Was admitted into the building of the Academy of Natural Sciences by a Mr. Durand of the botanical department, Mr. Furness applying to him. The carpenters were still at work adding four stories (!) of galleries to the top. These four (Furness thought all of them, I am not sure but Durand referred to one side only) to be devoted to the birds. It is said to be the largest collection of birds in the world. They belonged to the son of Masséna (Prince of Essling?), and were sold at auction, and bought by a Yankee for \$22,000, over all the crowned heads of Europe, and presented to the Academy. Other collections, also, are added to this. The Academy has received great donations. There is Morton's collection of crania, with (I suppose a *cast* from) an Indian skull found in an Ohio mound; a polar bear killed by Dr. Katie; a male moose not so high as the female which we shot; a European elk (a skeleton) about seven feet high, with Horns each about five feet long and *tremendously* heavy; grinders, etc., of the *Mastodon giganteum* from Barton County, Missouri; etc., etc. named as of the geological department. In Philadelphia and also New York an ornamental tree with bunches of seed-vessels supplying the place of leaves now. I suppose it the ailanthus, or Tree of Heaven. What were those trees with long, black sickle-shaped pods? I did not see Steinhauser's Burd family [A marble group entitled "The Angel of the Resurrection," erected to the memory of the children of Edward Shippen Burd.] at St. Stephen's Church. The American Philosophical Society is described as a company of old women.

In the narrow market-houses in the middle of the streets, was struck by the neat-looking women marketers with full cheeks. Furness described a lotus identical with an Egyptian one as found somewhere down the river below Philadelphia; also spoke of a spotted chrysalis which he had also seen in Massachusetts. There was a mosquito about my head at night. Lodged at the United States Hotel, opposite the Girard (formerly United States) Bank.



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“THE WILD”³⁸

DATE	PLACE	TOPIC
October 8, 1854, Sunday; 7:00 PM	Leyden Hall, Plymouth MA	“Moonlight”
November 21, 1854, Tuesday; 7:30 PM	Spring Garden Institute, Philadelphia PA	“THE WILD”
December 6, 1854	Providence, Rhode Island	“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT”

38. From Bradley P. Dean and Ronald Wesley Hoag’s “THOREAU’S LECTURES AFTER WALDEN:
AN ANNOTATED CALENDAR.”



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NARRATIVE OF EVENT: In a September 21, 1854 letter to H.G.O. Blake, [Henry Thoreau](#) noted his plan to lecture in Philadelphia and elsewhere during the approaching lecture season. He also indicated his unpreparedness to do so, “As it is, I have agreed to go a-lecturing to Plymouth, Sunday after next (October 1) and to Philadelphia in November, and thereafter to the West, **if they shall want me**; and, as I have prepared nothing in that shape, I feel as if my hours were spoken for” (THE CORRESPONDENCE OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, page 339). Philadelphia, then, was to be his first **extra-vagant** post-[WALDEN](#) jump over the cowed fence of his familiar New England lecturing territory. As it turned out, however, he would not lecture outside New England again until late in 1856, when he gave three lectures in New Jersey during his [Eagleswood](#) surveying venture.

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

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

Thoreau's uncertainty about his lecture material is reflected in an October 6, 1854 letter from William B. Thomas, chairman of the committee in charge of the lecture series at Philadelphia's Spring Garden Institute. Wrote Thomas:³⁹

You will please accept our thanks for your prompt response to our invitation. We have entered you for the 21st Nov.

Please inform us as early as possible upon what subject you will speak.

The Spring Garden Institute, located at the junction of Broad and Spring Garden Streets, was founded in 1850 to give technical training to young men. One of the earliest nineteenth-century mechanics' institutes, it helped fill a need created by the breakdown of the apprentice system in this country.⁴⁰

On November 19, [Waldo Emerson](#) wrote from [Concord](#), Massachusetts to his Philadelphia friend, the Reverend William Henry Furness, announcing Thoreau's impending visit and asking Furness to show Thoreau the Academy of Natural Sciences. He added that Thoreau would particularly like to see the Academy's collection of birds. Furness, who had attended school with [Emerson](#) in Boston, was at this time and for the rest of his life the minister of the Unitarian Church in Philadelphia.⁴¹ The following day [Bronson Alcott](#) noted in his journal, “*Evening, with Emerson at the American House till 10 o'clock. E. tells me that Thoreau left today for Philadelphia to lecture there.*”⁴²

Thoreau's journal entry for November 20 begins, “To Philadelphia. 7 A. M., to Boston; 9 A. M., Boston to New York, by express train, land route.” Ever the observer, he noted, “Pleasantest part of the whole route between Springfield MA and Hartford CT, along the river; perhaps include the hilly region this side of Springfield. Reached Canal Street at 5 P. M., or candle-light.” Quickly, he was on another train, where, despite

39. Thomas's letter is in the Sewall Collection at MCo; we quote from a typescript at the Thoreau Textual Center, CU-SB.

40. Charles Boewe, “Thoreau's 1854 Lecture in Philadelphia,” ENGLISH LANGUAGE NOTES, 2 (December 1964): 118.

41. [Emerson](#)'s letter to the Reverend William Henry Furness is summarized and its provenance discussed in Boewe, “Thoreau's 1854 Lecture,” 120-21.

42. [Alcott](#), “Diary for 1854,” entry of 20 November, MH (*59M-308).



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the invisibility of the nighttime landscape, he yet saw something worth recording:

Started for Philadelphia from foot of Liberty Street at 6 P. M., via Newark, etc., etc., Bordentown, etc., etc., Camden Ferry, to Philadelphia, all in the dark. Saw only the glossy panelling of the cars reflected out into the dark, like the magnificent lit facade of a row of edifices reaching all the way to Philadelphia, except when we stopped and a lanthorn or two showed us a ragged boy and the dark buildings of some New Jersey town. Arrive at 10 P. M.; time, four hours from New York, thirteen from Boston, fifteen from Concord. Put up at Jones's Exchange Hotel, 77 Dock Street; lodgings thirty-seven and a half cents per night, meals separate; not to be named with French's in New York; next door to the fair of the Franklin Institute, then open, and over against the Exchange, in the neighborhood of the printing-offices. (JOURNAL, 7:72-73)

On the day of his lecture, the 21st, the journal notes [Thoreau](#) observing Philadelphia "from the cupola of the State-House, where the [Declaration of Independence](#) was declared. The best view of the city I got." He also remarked the "Fine view from Fairmount water-works." [Emerson](#)'s request to the Reverend William Henry Furness did not go ignored, for the journal reports, "Was admitted into the building of the Academy of Natural Sciences by a Mr. Durand of the [botanical](#) department, Mr. Furness applying to him."⁴³ And, apropos of Emerson's mentioning the Academy's bird collection, Thoreau remarked in the journal, "It is said to be the largest collection of birds in the world." Other Academy holdings also are mentioned, including "a male moose not so high as the female which we shot" in Maine. Tucked between an attempt to identify an ornamental tree that he supposed "the alianthus, or Tree of Heaven" and a description of "the neat-looking women marketers with full cheeks" is the intriguing comment, "The American Philosophical Society is described as a company of old women." The day's entry continues with this unintentionally humorous juxtaposition of natural phenomena, "Furness described a lotus identical with an Egyptian one as found somewhere down the river below Philadelphia; also spoke of a spotted chrysalis which he had also seen in Massachusetts. There was a mosquito about my head at night." The entry concludes, "Lodged at the United States Hotel, opposite the Girard (formerly United States) Bank." For whatever reason, possibly the undistinguished accommodations at Jones's Exchange Hotel, Thoreau had changed addresses for his second night in Philadelphia (JOURNAL, 7:73-75).

The next morning, according to the journal, [Thoreau](#) "Left at 7:30 A. M. for New York, by boat to Tacony and rail *via* Bristol, Trenton, Princeton (near by), New Brunswick, Rahway, Newark, etc." He noted a few of the natural features he saw in passing but found the trip "Uninteresting, except the boat." In [New-York](#) he played the tourist, going to the Crystal Palace, where he saw a specimen of coal "fifty feet thick as it was cut from the mine, in the form of a square column." He also saw "sculptures and paintings innumerable, and armor from the Tower of London, some of the Eighth Century."

At Phineas Taylor Barnum's Museum he examined the camelopard, which he found not so tall as claimed, and a diorama of the houses of the world, which he found looked much alike. He spent part of the day with his friend Horace Greeley, who "appeared to know and be known by everybody." Greeley took him to the opera,

43. According to Charles Boewe, Elias Durand was a Philadelphia pharmacist and noted botanist ("Thoreau's 1854 Lecture," 119).



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where, Thoreau notes in his journal, Greeley “was admitted free” (JOURNAL, 7:75-76). Whether Thoreau too got in for nothing is not mentioned. The journal also does not mention his trip home from New York. By far the most important of Thoreau’s journal omissions, however, is his lecture itself. Despite the career significance of his Philadelphia engagement, he said nothing at all of the event that had brought him so far from [Concord](#).

Some three weeks after the lecture, [Alcott](#) noted in his diary entry for 11 December 1854, “*I pass the morning and dine with Thoreau, who read me parts of his new Lecture lately read at Philadelphia and Providence.*”⁴⁴ Alcott, however, was referring to Thoreau’s “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” lecture, which Thoreau had read only in [Providence](#) (*Moshasuck*), [Rhode Island](#) before December 11, the date of Alcott’s entry (see lecture 46 below).

44. [Alcott](#), “Diary for 1854,” entry of 11 December, MH (*59M-308).



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SPRING GARDEN INSTITUTE; PHILADELPHIA PA

Courtesy of Bradley P. Dean

ADVERTISEMENTS, REVIEWS, AND RESPONSES: The following advertisement appeared in the Philadelphia PUBLIC LEDGER AND DAILY TRANSCRIPT on November 21, 1854: “Spring Garden Institute Lectures — The Second Lecture will be delivered on Tuesday Evening, 21st instant, at 7 1/2 o’clock, at the Institute Building, Broad and Spring Garden Sts., by Henry D. Thoreau, Esq. of Concord, Mass. Subject ‘The Wild.’” The same advertisement, minus the location, appeared in the Philadelphia DAILY PENNSYLVANIAN on both 20 and 21 November.

The only known response to [Thoreau](#)’s lecture is that of Miss Caroline Haven, reported by the Reverend William Henry Furness in a 26 November 1854 letter to [Emerson](#). Caroline was the daughter of Charles E. Haven, one of Furness’s parishioners.⁴⁵ Furness wrote:⁴⁶

I was glad to see Mr. Thoreau. He was full of interesting talk for the little while that we saw him, & it was amusing to hear his intonations. And then he looked so differently from my idea of him He had a glimpse of the Academy [of Natural Sciences] as he will tell you — I could not hear him lecture for which I was sorry. Miss Caroline Haven heard him, & from her report I judge the audience was stupid & did not appreciate him.

This letter is especially noteworthy because it contains a small pencil sketch of Thoreau made by Furness. Interestingly, the aforementioned 19 November 1854 letter from [Emerson](#) to Furness contains, drawn on the last of its four pages, two pencil sketches of Thoreau’s head in profile that are very similar to this Furness drawing. Charles Boewe, who located the Emerson letter at the Academy of Natural Sciences, suggests that these impressions of Thoreau are also Furness’s work, the prototype from which he drew the image on his 26 November reply to Emerson.⁴⁷

DESCRIPTION OF TOPIC: Aside from having extracted the passages about moonlit walks (see lecture 44 above), Thoreau seems not to have done much more with the second part of his two-part, 163-page version of “WALKING, OR THE WILD” [“WALKING, OR THE WILD”](#) — the part on “THE WILD” which he had last delivered on the afternoon of 23 May 1852 in Plymouth, Massachusetts (see lectures 40-41 in the “Before

45. Charles Boewe, “Thoreau’s 1854 Lecture,” 121.

46. William Henry Furness, RECORDS OF A LIFELONG FRIENDSHIP, ed. Horace Howard Furness, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1910), pages 101-103.

47. Charles Boewe, “Thoreau’s 1854 Lecture,” 120-21n14.

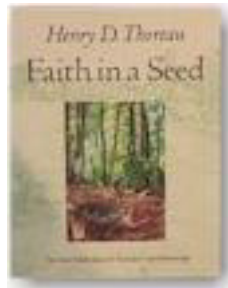
1854-1855

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WALDEN” calendar). Very likely, then, the text he read before the Spring Garden Institute was some seventy pages long, which would have taken him somewhat more than an hour to read. Interestingly, the title page of this draft of the lecture, acquired a few years ago by the library at the University of California, Santa Barbara, bears the following sentence, written in pencil, in Thoreau’s hand, in the upper-right corner: “I regard this as a sort of introduction to all I may write hereafter.” Bradley P. Dean has speculated that Thoreau wrote this highly provocative sentence sometime in late 1854 or early 1855, when Thoreau apparently began to contemplate more earnest, purposeful work on the natural history projects he would spend so much of his time on throughout the remainder of the 1850s and which resulted in such works as “AUTUMNAL TINTS”, “SUCCESSION OF FOREST TREES”, “WILD APPLES”, “HUCKLEBERRIES”, “THE DISPERSION OF SEEDS”, and WILD FRUITS.⁴⁸



48. For Bradley P. Dean’s speculations about the sentence Thoreau wrote in the upper-right corner of this lecture draft’s title-page, see his ““A Sort of Introduction,”” THOREAU RESEARCH NEWSLETTER, 1 (January 1990): 1-2. Dean published the first portion of Thoreau’s WILD FRUITS manuscript, which is housed in the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, NN, in his edition of Thoreau’s FAITH IN A SEED: THE DISPERSION OF SEEDS AND OTHER LATE NATURAL HISTORY WRITINGS (Washington: Shearwater Books, Island Press, 1993), pages 178-203. Dean had edited the remainder of the WILD FRUITS manuscript.



HDT

WHAT?

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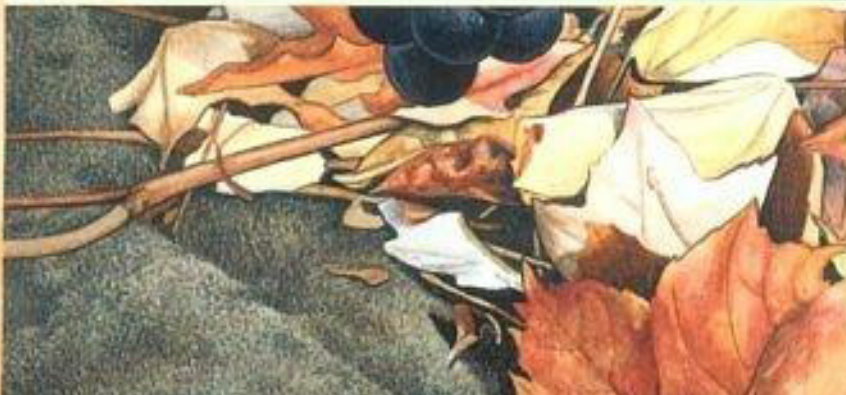
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Thoreau's Rediscovered Last Manuscript



HENRY DAVID
THOREAU

Wild Fruits



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November 22, Wednesday: When [Henry Thoreau](#) had returned from lecturing in Philadelphia, by boat to Tacony and by train through Bristol, Trenton, the vicinity of Princeton, New Brunswick, Rahway, and Newark, New Jersey to [New-York](#), he went to see the Crystal Palace of Industry on Reservoir Square and then “[Greeley](#) carried me to the new opera-house, where I heard Grisi and her troupe” (the performance of [Vincenzo Bellini](#)’s final opera *Lpuritani* featured dramatic soprano [Madame the Marquise Giulia Grisi](#) as the Puritan roundhead revolutionary daughter Elvira and her husband or consort the tenor [Sir Giovanni Matteo de Candia](#) as Lord Arthur Talbot, one of [King Charles I](#)’s cavalier loyalists; this is the only operatic performance Thoreau is known to have attended and he did not comment on the experience).



[CHARLES I](#)



Nov. 22. Left at 7.30 Am for New York, by boat to Tacony and rail via Bristol, Trenton, Princeton (near by), New Brunswick, Rahway, Newark, etc. Uninteresting, except the boat. The country very level, — red sandstone (?) sand, — apparently all New Jersey except the northern part. Saw wheat stubble and winter wheat come up like rye. Was that Jamestown-weed with a prickly bur? Seen also in Connecticut. Many Dutch barns.

[Transcript]



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Just after leaving Newark, an extensive marsh, between the railroad and the Kill, full of the *Arundo Phragmites*, I should say, which had been burnt over.

Went to Crystal Palace; admired the houses on Fifth Avenue, the specimens of coal at the Palace, one 50 feet thick as it was cut from the mine, in the form of a square column, iron and copper ore, etc. Saw sculptures and paintings innumerable, and armor from the Tower of London, some of the Eighth Century. Saw Greeley; Snow, the commercial editor of the Tribune; Solon Robinson; Fry, the musical critic, etc.; and others. Greeley carried me to the new opera-house, where I heard Grisi and her troupe. First, at Barnum's Museum, I saw the camelopards, said to be one 18 the other 16 feet high. I should say the highest stood about 15 feet high at most (12 or 13 ordinarily). The body was only about 5 feet long. Why has it horns, but for ornament? Looked through his diorama, and found the houses all over the world much alike. Greeley appeared to know and be known by everybody; was admitted free to the opera, and we were led by a page to various parts of the house at different times. Saw at Museum some large flakes of cutting arrowhead stone made into a sort of wide cleavers, also a hollow stone tube, probably from mounds.

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THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

In San Francisco, at a mass meeting of saloon keepers, a decision was reached to preserve their tradition of offering a free lunch despite the high expenses involved in this sort of business promotion.

CALIFORNIA

There's no such thing as a free lunch, except in 19th-Century San Francisco.



November 23, Thursday: In San Francisco, California, the Daily Alta California was notifying citizens that there would be an indignation meeting that afternoon in the Plaza, over the plan of the bar-room proprietors to abolish their time-honored tradition of free lunches:

INDIGNATION MEETING. — We understand that a meeting will be held on the Plaza, this afternoon, for the purpose of giving expression to the feelings of indignation aroused in the breasts and stomachs of the citizens generally at the proposed intention of the bar-room proprietors to abolish the free lunches. The people feel that an outrage is about being committed, that a time honored usage is to be annulled, and that bread is to be literally taken from the mouths of at least, three thousand persons; — that at such a time, party prejudices and personal feelings should be forgotten, and that with one united voice they should demand that their rights should not thus be infringed upon with impunity. Speeches may be expected from many prominent citizens, who will endeavor to show the intimate connection that exists between free lunches and a free people, and that one cannot long exist without the other. None will be permitted to take part in the meeting who have "regular board," as they are supposed to be in league with the bar-room proprietors, with a view of obtaining their money's worth by an abolition of the free lunches. Every citizen who attends the demonstration is expected to come provided with a supply of cheap refreshments, such as codfish and hard bread done up in a newspaper, which is intended to be emblematical of the fact that the citizens can live at



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a pinch without the aid of the lunches. The proprietors of the "lager-bier" cellars, have it is said generously offered to fill the cistern in the Plaza with that refreshing beverage, to be freely drank of by the citizens at the meeting. A spirited time may be expected.

THE STABBING AFFAIR AT THE OAK HOUSE. — An old negro named Patrick Holland, who stabbed a white man named Nevin, at the Oak House, on the Mission road, on Saturday last, yesterday underwent an examination before Recorder Waller. The evidence went to show that the old man had been teased and worried into a state bordering on frenzy, by a set of rowdies, until his passions were beyond control, and he had drawn a pocket knife and cut the man in the abdomen. Several witnesses testified to the general harmlessness and inoffensive disposition of the old man. The Recorder, however, said he would rather for the case to go before the Grand Jury. He was accordingly held to bail in the sum of \$1000.

YORK THE MURDERER. — From a reliable source we learn that York, who murdered McMickle at the Eureka Saloon, was seen walking about the streets in Honolulu, perfectly free and unrestrained. He arrived there in the schooner *Lady Jane*. Those who aided him to escape were as morally culpable as the murderer himself, whatever may be their ideas to the contrary.

THE COWHIDING AFFAIR. — A lady was arrested yesterday on a complaint made by a man named C.A. James, who states that she had cowhided him. If the lady's version of the story is correct, the fellow deserved all he got, and more besides. The case will undergo an examination before the Recorder tomorrow morning.


FIRE ARMS. — Peter Wilde, for discharging fire arms in the street, was yesterday tried before the Recorder, and fined \$5.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 23d]

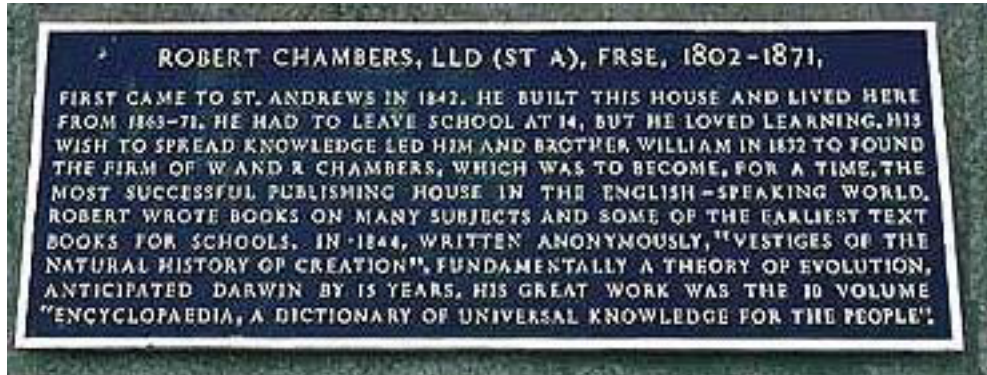
1854-1855

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 November 24, Friday: Mustafa Resid Pasha replaced Kibrisli Mehmed Pasha as Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

[Governor Andrew Horatio Reeder](#) moved his [Kansas Territory](#) office to the brick [Shawnee Methodist Mission](#) in Fairway.

A report by David Page, a disgruntled ex-employee of the Chambers publishing firm, appeared in the newspapers and would appear again on December 2, 1854. It was not clear that he could be believed in his assertion that [Robert Chambers](#) was the secret author of [VESTIGES OF THE NATURAL HISTORY OF CREATION](#).



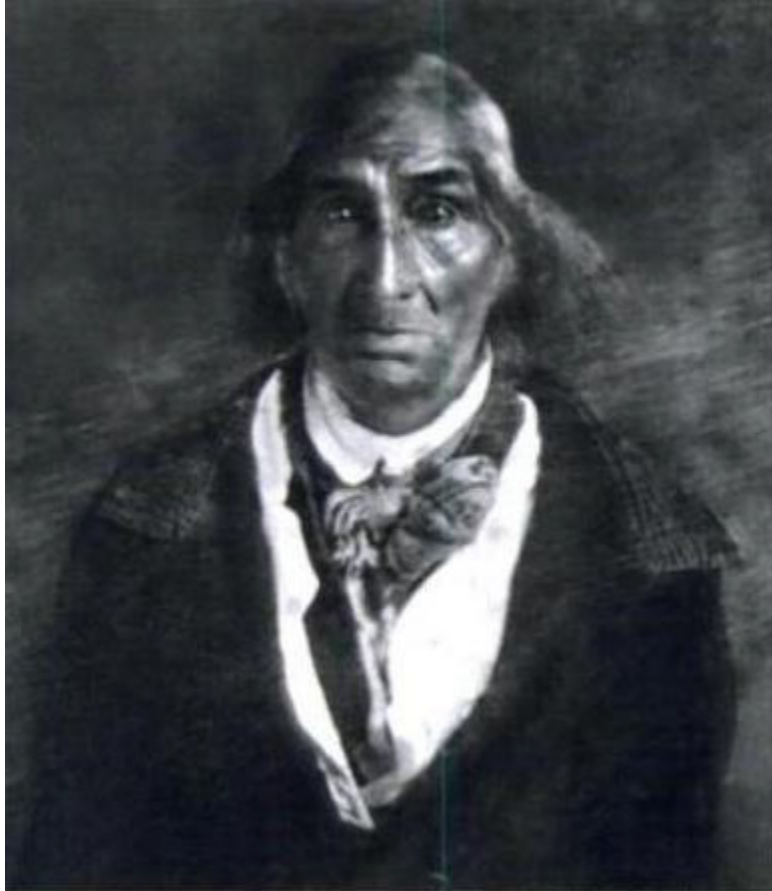
[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 24th]

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1854-1855



November 25, Saturday: Abram Quary, considered to be the last of the Nantucket native Americans, died. He had been born at Miacomet in 1769. He was, however, being considered to be the last only because of male-centric attitudes — for in fact Dorcas Esop, a woman Nantucket native American, yet survived.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 25th]



November 26, Sunday: The Reverend William Henry Furness wrote to [Waldo Emerson](#) about meeting in Philadelphia with [Henry Thoreau](#) and about the audience reaction to his lecture of Tuesday, November 21st, and incidentally sketched Thoreau's profile:



I was glad to see Mr. Thoreau. He was full of interesting talk for the little while that we saw him, & it was amusing to hear your intonations. And then he looked so differently from my idea of him.... He had a glimpse of the Academy [of Natural Sciences] as he will tell you — I could not hear him lecture for which I was sorry. Miss Caroline Haven heard him, & from her report I judge the audience

was stupid & did not appreciate him.



Nov. 26th 54. What that little long-sharp-nosed mouse I found in the Walden road to-day? Brown above, gray beneath, black incisors, 5 toes with claws on each foot, long snout with small blunt black extremity, many mustachios, eyes far forward, feet light or dirty white, tail 1½ inches long, whole length 3¾ inches; on causeway.

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



November 27, Monday: Henry Thoreau was written to by lyceum representative Andrew Whitney in Nantucket, Massachusetts.

Nantucket Nov 27, 1854

Dear Sir

Your favor of 25.th is at hand this evening.

We cannot have you between the 4 & 15.th of Dec. without bringing two lecturers in one week — which we wish to avoid if possible.

If you cannot come the 28.th of Dec. will the 2.^d week in January either the 9.th 10.th 11.th or 12.th of the month suit you? — if not, perhaps you can select a day in the 4.th week in Jan.^y, avoiding Monday and Saturday—

Write me as soon as possible and make the day as early as you can—

Yours truly,

Andrew Whitney.

H D. Thoreau Esq

Concord


Schnellpost-Polka op.159 by Johann Baptist Strauss II was performed for the initial time, in Schwender's Collosseum, Vienna.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 27th]

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1854-1855


 November 28, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) paddled up the Sudbury River to Clamshell Bank or Hill (Gleason 23/G5).



Nov. 28. Paddled to Clamshell.


[Transcript]

"Upriver," "To Fairhaven," and "To Clamshell" were other common opening phrases. This signified a southward trip up the lakelike Sudbury River, which zigzagged between rocky cliffs and lush meadows. Its current could be detected only at narrows and shallows. Parallel lines of sweet-scented lily pads, aquatic flowers rooted in shoreline mud, and buttonbush swamps flanked the river for much of its length. With a breeze from the north or east, he would usually sail. Otherwise he would row.
 — [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11




Still very clear and bright as well as comfortable weather. River not so high as on the 16th. Were those plover which just after sunset flew low over the bank above the railroad and alighted in the opposite meadow, with some white in tails like larks, gray birds, rather heavier than robins?

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 November 29, Wednesday: [John Wilkins Whitfield](#), a pro-government (pro-slavery) candidate, was elected as the [Kansas Territory](#) delegate to the federal Congress.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR NOVEMBER 29th]

 November 30, Thursday: First concession granted by Said Pasha, son of Mohammed Ali, to Ferdinand de Lesseps for the digging, and use for a period of 99 years, of a "[Suez Canal](#)" through the sands of Sinai.

EGYPT

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) sailed down the Concord River.

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Nov. 30. P.M. — Sail down river.

1854-1855

[Transcript]

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11



No ice, but strong cold wind; river slightly over meadows. Was that large diver which was on the edge of the shore and scooted away down-stream as usual, throwing the water about for a quarter of a mile, then diving, some time afterward flying up-stream over our head, the goosander [**Common Merganser** **Mergus merganser**] or red-breasted merganser? It was large, with, I should say, a white breast, long reddish bill, bright-red or pink on sides or beneath, reddish-brown crest, white speculum, upper part of throat dark, lower white with breast.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL


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



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WINTER 1854/1855

 Winter: [Brownson's Quarterly Review](#), No. 4

KNOW-NOTHINGS

CATHOLICISM

- I. *Uncle Jack and His Nephew*
- II. *The Know-Nothings*
- III. *Sumner on Fugitive Slaves*
- IV. *Works of Fisher Ames*
- V. *Church and State*
- VI. *Literary Notices and Criticisms*
- VII. *End of the Eleventh Volume*

ORESTES AUGUSTUS BROWNSON

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Winter: Thomas D. Bonner, a guest at the hotel created by [James Pierson Beckwourth](#) in Sierra Valley, [California](#), hearing in this hotel keeper's log cabin (it still exists, radically renovated) on the premises the story



of his active life, wrote it up and in the following year would offer it to Harper & Brothers in New York as a potential crowd-pleaser. A contract was created, in accordance with which Beckwourth was to receive half the royalties, and *THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF JAMES P. BECKWOURTH, MOUNTAINEER, SCOUT, AND PIONEER, AND CHIEF OF THE CROW NATION OF INDIANS. WITH ILLUSTRATIONS. WRITTEN FROM HIS OWN DICTATION, BY T.D. BONNER* would appear in 1856. Beckwourth would never receive a cent.

**LIFE AND ADVENTURES**

Winter: [Eli Thayer](#) again served in the Massachusetts Legislature, as a representative from [Worcester](#).

It was during his last term as a legislator that those events were born in our national history, which require just such a man to unravel and master them. The famous Kansas/Nebraska Bill having passed Congress, by the consequent repeal of the long-standing Missouri Compromise the young territories were forthwith thrown open for a hand-to-hand struggle between the forces of Free and Slave Labor. Whichever should win in that

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fight, was to possess those lands for all time. The Free State men were at a distance; their opponents were already, as it were, on the ground. The former were placed at a still greater disadvantage, that they either had to pass directly through a slave State to reach Kansas, or to make a circuitous and wearisome journey further to the north, through a free State. It was expensive to remove all the way to Kansas; little was known of the country at the East; men were extremely loth to take their families, one by one, so far beyond the frontier; and, with such a variety and force of opposition, the spirit of the friends of Free Labor began sensibly to flag, even while they saw and lamented that the prize might, with proper effort, be won. How to make that effort most effective was the problem. Eli Thayer sat in the State Capitol and thought the whole thing out. He caught the spirit of the hour, and conceived the magic plan that was to bring order out of chaos, dissipate the fears of the lovers of freedom, and rescue a young State from the curse, whose dark shadow was then passing over its plains. On the instant, he made known his plan. By many it was lightly thought of, because it was so simple. Others would rather wait to see how it was likely to work. The doubters were as plenty as they always are at such times. But Mr. Thayer possessed a wonderful power of **work**; and, as an Englishman would say, work generally accomplishes the end sought for. The first step he took was to procure the charter of an "Emigrant Aid Society" from the Legislature, having already enlisted the sympathy and co-operation of many of the leading men of the State. To show that this movement was, in no sense, a political, but rather a social and economic one, from the start, it is sufficient to state, that among the original incorporators to whom this grant was made by the Legislature, appear the names of Col. Isaac Davis, of Worcester; and Gen. J.S. Whitney, of Springfield. Hon. A.A. Lawrence, of Boston, likewise lent it his aid in a large and effective amount of ready money, as is well remembered by all. ... The secret of the free-labor success was, that by the rapidity and compactness of its emigration, under the scheme of Eli Thayer, the work was done before the other side had time to think of it. They invited a free contest, and they were beaten. ... So incensed were they, even before the deed was known to be done, they offered a reward for the head of Eli Thayer, the author and inventor of the scheme by which their game was thus blocked, and kept the reward standing for some time at the head of their newspapers! ... **Their** plan was based on force, absolute and brutal; Thayer sent forward the saw-mill and grist-mill as **his** pioneer, and men followed close after steam.

1854-1855**1854-1855**

Winter: [Charles Darwin](#) would later comment, in THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES, “I estimate that the winter of 1854-55 destroyed four-fifths of the birds in my own grounds.” It was not this terrible winter, however, that destroyed his hair — even at the tender age of 45, it was already long gone:



This winter was a terrible one for the soldiers of [Russia](#), Turkey, England, and France, fighting in the [Crimea](#) north of the Black Sea. During this emergency all opposition was overcome and [Florence Nightingale](#) was able for the first time to staff military hospitals with female nurses. In fact, her Reports of the sufferings of the British army in the Crimea, deprived of its supplies in that winter by the [Nobel mines](#) in the harbor of Sevastopol in conjunction with the great hurricane of November 14, 1854,  would lead not only to a new form of organization under the name of the Red Cross but also to the fall of a British government.

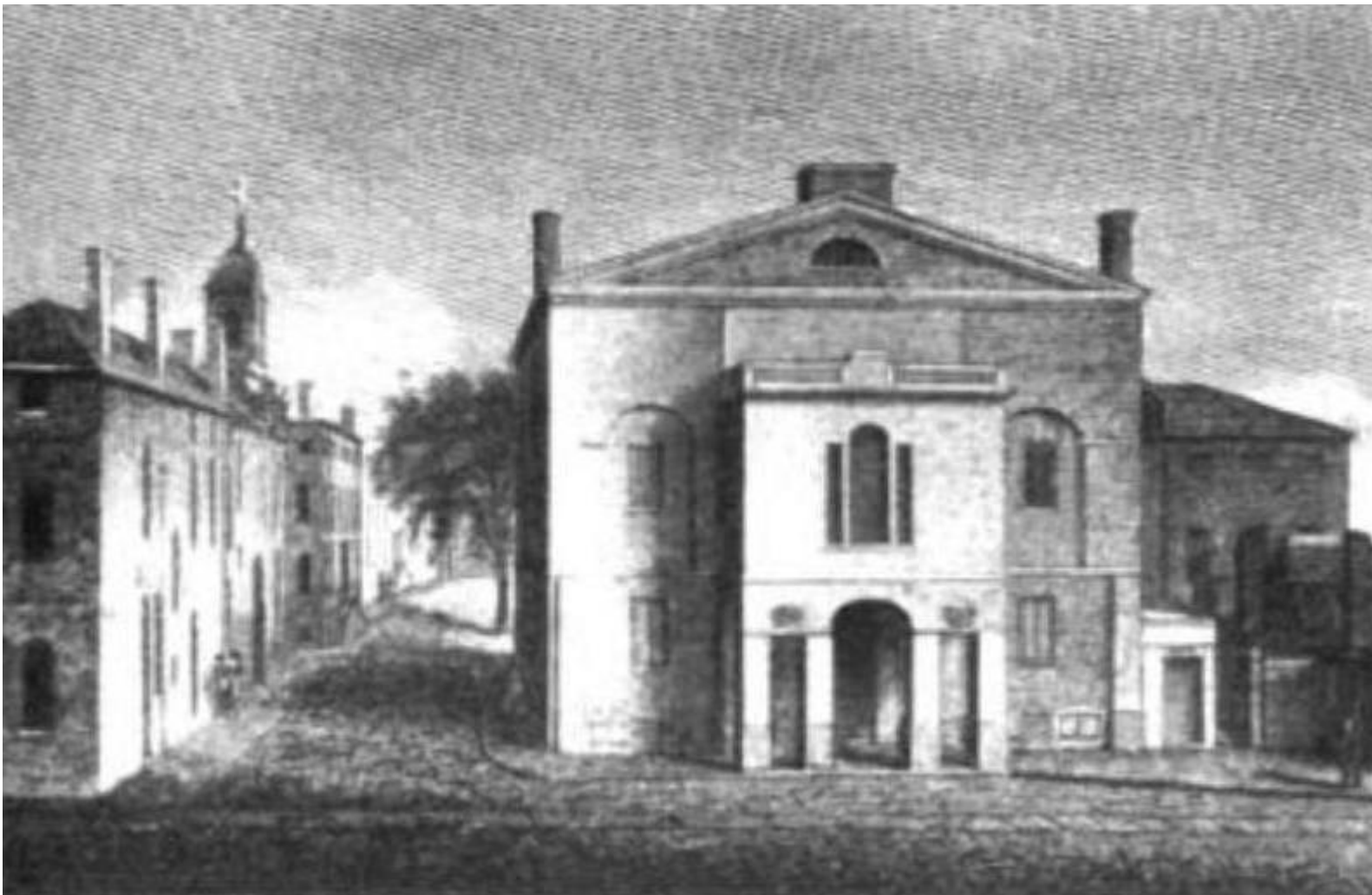
In the absence of Professor of Chemistry John Torrey, [Professor Isaac-Farwell Holton](#) was lecturing on the properties of mercury before the medical students of the College of Physicians and Surgeons when he suddenly came to a realization that the name of the white substance “calomel” derived from the Greek $\kappa\alpha\tau\omicron\sigma$, meaning “beautiful,” and *mel* meaning “black” (this etymology came to his mind as he touched a piece of mercurial chloride with potassa and noticed that it produced a black spot).

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Lecture Season of '54/55, at the [Odeon Hall](#) in [Boston](#):

16th Season of [The Lowell Institute](#)

Professor C.C. Felton. <i>On the Downfall and Resurrection of Greece</i>	12 lectures
Honorable John G. Palfrey. <i>New England History</i>	12 lectures
James Russell Lowell . <i>English Poetry</i>	24 lectures
Reverend Frederic Henry Hedge . <i>Mediæval History</i>	6 lectures



In the [Thoreau Research Newsletter](#) for January and April 1990, Dr. Bradley P. Dean would offer speculations about the health of [Henry David Thoreau](#):

Sometime during the late winter or early spring of 1855, Thoreau began suffering from a mysterious illness. When, exactly, did

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he start suffering from this illness? And might the illness have been psychosomatic? I will treat the first of these two questions here and deal with the second question in the next number of TRN.

In a letter to Blake on 27 June 1855, Thoreau wrote, "I have been sick and good for nothing but to lie on my back and wait for something to turn up, for two or three months." On 14 July 1855, in another letter to Blake, he wrote, "I trust you will excuse my infrequent and curt writing until I am able to resume my old habits, which for three months I have been compelled to abandon." In a journal entry dated 11 June 1855, but actually written 16 September 1855, Thoreau wrote, "Now ... after four or five months of invalidity and worthlessness, I begin to feel some stirrings of life in me."

These three remarks indicate that Thoreau became incapacitated by his illness sometime between 27 March and 16 May 1855, with mid-April, because it is common to all three remarks, being the likeliest period. But when did he first become ill?

Thoreau took day-long skating trips on 31 January and 1 February 1855, and he suggests in his journal that he skated each day from 30 January to 4 February. Severely cold weather set in on the latter day and continued almost unabated until a thaw set in on 12 February. Nine days later, on 21 February, Thoreau wrote in his journal about "invalids who have weak lungs, who think they may weather it till summer now," which strongly suggests he had been ill for some time, probably with a cold.

Thoreau probably contracted his illness of 1855 during the cold spell of early February. Apparently the illness lingered and somehow came to affect his legs. Probably not until his legs were affected, perhaps in mid April, did he regard himself as truly "sick and good for nothing but to lie on [his] back," for prior to that time he would have been able to carry on his "old habits" in spite of being ill.

In "Part 1" I presented a few facts which suggest that Thoreau contracted his illness of 1855 during a cold spell in early February and that his illness lingered until about mid April, when it apparently became more serious and began to affect his legs. On 16 September 1855 (see his journal entry dated 11 June 1855) he wrote that he began to feel some stirrings of life, which apparently presaged a recovery sufficient enough to enable him to resume the "old habits" his illness had compelled him to abandon in April. Nonetheless, he seems to have experienced some weakness in his legs for many months after the fall of 1855.

Two of the "old habits" affected by Thoreau's illness were his journalizing and, of course, his afternoon walks. By 15 May 1855 he seems to have fallen a few days behind in his journal writing, and shortly thereafter he apparently began saving the field notes that he usually transcribed into or amplified upon in his journal each day. His entries for August and most of September 1855 are brief and sporadic. Beginning with the entry of 24 September, he seems to have gotten back to normal so far as his journalizing is concerned. But since he was writing his entry for 11 June on 16 September, he probably didn't get caught up on his journal until sometime in early October. One other circumstance, which I will mention below, also suggests that this was the case.

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During the summers of 1851-54 and 1856-60, Thoreau took long walks almost every afternoon and usually wrote a great deal in his journal about the various botanical observations he had made on his walks. During the summer of 1855, however, he paid considerably less attention than usual to Concord's flora and relatively more attention to birds, perhaps because birds could come to him instead of him going to them. A particularly suggestive remark appears in his entry of 12 June: "A crow blackbird's nest high in an elm by riverside just below the Island. C[hanning] climbed to it and got it. I have it." Were he not ill, Thoreau would almost certainly have climbed the tree himself to retrieve the nest.

Might Thoreau's illness of 1855 have been psychosomatic? I think not. But although his illness was probably genuine or physiological, I suspect that a wide array of psychological factors may have been at least partially responsible for its length and severity, and perhaps for the strange turn it took by affecting his legs. (See Lebeaux's Thoreau's Seasons, pp.229-45, for a detailed discussion of this subject from a more complex and psychologically informed approach than I take below. Lebeaux remarks, "Whatever the organic component, it is highly likely that this strange, undiagnosed malady had a significant psychosomatic component" [p. 233]. The following observations may be regarded as an additional factor of the malady's "psychosomatic component" discussed by Lebeaux.)

Given that discussion of Thoreau's (or anyone else's) psychological state is inherently speculative, I suggest that Thoreau's illness may have been exacerbated by the high hopes he had for Walden's success and what turned out to be the book's modest sales. The case of "sympathetic lockjaw" that Thoreau suffered after his brother John's death indicates that he was susceptible to or capable of psychosomatic reactions to traumatic events, and he certainly had an enormous investment of time and emotion in Walden. Just prior to the book's publication, Emerson reported that Thoreau was walking around Concord "in a tremble of great expectation" and looking like "the undoubted King of all American lions." Since Walden did not sell nearly as well as Thoreau had expected it would, I believe its "failure" qualifies as a traumatic event for Thoreau.

Reports of Walden's sales conflict, as I point out in a separate note above (p. 5), but whether the first year's sales were less than 800 or more than 1,700, Thoreau clearly expected many more copies to have been sold. In his journal entry of 14 September 1855, he wrote, "It costs so much to publish, would it not be better for the author to put his manuscripts in a safe?" For Thoreau, a substantial portion of the cost to publish his Walden manuscript was no doubt emotional, and that cost almost certainly had not been redeemed by the book's sales at the time he wrote the sentence in his journal.

But when did he write the sentence in his journal? As I mentioned, he was three months behind on his journal entries in mid September, and he probably could not have gotten caught up till early October. I think it likely, therefore, that he wrote the sentence about the cost of publishing within a few days after receiving Ticknor and Fields's letter of 29 September 1855. That letter contained the firm's royalty payment of \$51.60 for the




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sale of 344 copies of *Walden*. It also contained the firm's assessment about the overall sale of the book: "We regret for your sake as well as ours that a larger number of *Walden* has not been sold." Surely Ticknor and Fields's regret was nowhere near as profound as Thoreau's own.

DECEMBER 1854


Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for December 1854 \(æf. 37\) in the 1906 version](#)

 December: This month's issue of [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#).

CONSULT THIS ISSUE

(Review of [Henry Thoreau's WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)): "New Books," [Harvard Magazine](#): 45.

Although this is a book some three months old, we cannot forbear to mention it in our list of new publications, so much are we pleased with it. The author is a Concord's man, a friend of Mr. Emerson's, whom some people accuse him of copying. But Mr. Thoreau is evidently a man of much originality, as this book, and his former one, —"A Week on the Concord and Merrimac[k],"— amply show. We shall notice the books and their author at greater length in a future number. We hope soon to announce the publication of a book by Mr. Emerson, — his long-expected work on England. Perhaps we may be able to speak of that also in our next.

 December: Documentation of the [international slave trade](#), per W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: "Reports of the Secretary of the Navy." —HOUSE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 33 Cong. 2 sess. I. pt. 2, No. 1, pt. 2, pp. 386-7; 34 Cong. 1 sess. I. pt. 3, No. 1, pt. 3, p. 5.⁴⁹

W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: A somewhat more sincere and determined effort to enforce the slave-trade laws now followed; and yet it is a significant fact that not until Lincoln's administration did a slave-trader suffer death for violating the laws of the United States. The participation of Americans in the trade continued, declining somewhat between 1825 and 1830, and then reviving, until it reached its highest activity between 1840 and 1860. The development of a vast internal slave-trade, and the consequent rise in the South of vested interests strongly opposed to slave smuggling, led to a falling off in the illicit introduction of Negroes after 1825, until the fifties; nevertheless, smuggling never entirely ceased, and large numbers

49. THE REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY are found among the documents accompanying the annual messages of the President.

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were thus added to the plantations of the Gulf States. Monroe had various constitutional scruples as to the execution of the Act of 1819;⁵⁰ but, as Congress took no action, he at last put a fair interpretation on his powers, and appointed Samuel Bacon as an agent in Africa to form a settlement for recaptured Africans. Gradually the agency thus formed became merged with that of the Colonization Society on Cape Mesurado; and from this union [Liberia](#) was finally evolved.⁵¹ Meantime, during the years 1818 to 1820, the activity of the slave-traders was prodigious. General James Tallmadge declared in the House, February 15, 1819: "Our laws are already highly penal against their introduction, and yet, it is a well known fact, that about fourteen thousand slaves have been brought into our country this last year."⁵² In the same year Middleton of South Carolina and Wright of Virginia estimated illicit introduction at 13,000 and 15,000 respectively.⁵³ Judge Story, in charging a jury, took occasion to say: "We have but too many proofs from unquestionable sources, that it [the slave-trade] is still carried on with all the implacable rapacity of former times. Avarice has grown more subtle in its evasions, and watches and seizes its prey with an appetite quickened rather than suppressed by its guilty vigils. American citizens are steeped to their very mouths (I can hardly use too bold a figure) in this stream of iniquity."⁵⁴ The following year, 1820, brought some significant statements from various members of Congress. Said Smith of South Carolina: "Pharaoh was, for his temerity, drowned in the Red Sea, in pursuing them [the Israelites] contrary to God's express will; but our Northern friends have not been afraid even of that, in their zeal to furnish the Southern States with Africans. They are better seamen than Pharaoh, and calculate by that means to elude the vigilance of Heaven; which they seem to disregard, if they can but elude the violated laws of their country."⁵⁵ As late as May he saw little hope of suppressing the traffic.⁵⁶ Sergeant of Pennsylvania declared: "It is notorious that, in spite of the utmost vigilance that can be employed, African negroes are clandestinely brought in and sold as slaves."⁵⁷ Plumer of New Hampshire stated that "of the unhappy beings, thus in violation of all laws transported to our shores, and thrown by force into the mass of our black population, scarcely one in a hundred is ever detected by the officers of the General Government, in a part of the country, where, if we are to believe the statement of Governor Rabun, 'an officer who would perform his duty, by attempting to enforce the law [against the slave trade] is, by many, considered as an officious meddler, and treated with

50. Attorney-General Wirt advised him, October, 1819, that no part of the appropriation could be used to purchase land in Africa or tools for the Negroes, or as salary for the agent: OPINIONS OF ATTORNEYS-GENERAL, I. 314-7. Monroe laid the case before Congress in a special message Dec. 20, 1819 (HOUSE JOURNAL, 16th Congress 1st session, page 57); but no action was taken there. 51. Cf. Kendall's Report, August, 1830: SENATE DOCUMENT, 21st Congress 2d session, I. No. 1, pages 211-8; also see below, Chapter X.

52. Speech in the House of Representatives, Feb. 15, 1819, page 18; published in Boston, 1849.

53. Jay, INQUIRY INTO AMERICAN COLONIZATION (1838), page 59, note.

54. Quoted in Friends' FACTS AND OBSERVATIONS ON THE SLAVE TRADE (ed. 1841), pages 7-8.

55. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 16th Congress 1st session, pages 270-1.

56. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 16th Congress 1st session, page 698.

57. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 16th Congress 1st session, page 1207.

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derision and contempt;' ... I have been told by a gentleman, who has attended particularly to this subject, that ten thousand slaves were in one year smuggled into the United States; and that, even for the last year, we must count the number not by hundreds, but by thousands."⁵⁸ In 1821 a committee of Congress characterized prevailing methods as those "of the grossest fraud that could be practised to deceive the officers of government."⁵⁹ Another committee, in 1822, after a careful examination of the subject, declare that they "find it impossible to measure with precision the effect produced upon the American branch of the slave trade by the laws above mentioned, and the seizures under them. They are unable to state, whether those American merchants, the American capital and seamen which heretofore aided in this traffic, have abandoned it altogether, or have sought shelter under the flags of other nations." They then state the suspicious circumstance that, with the disappearance of the American flag from the traffic, "the trade, notwithstanding, increases annually, under the flags of other nations." They complain of the spasmodic efforts of the executive. They say that the first United States cruiser arrived on the African coast in March, 1820, and remained a "few weeks;" that since then four others had in two years made five visits in all; but "since the middle of last November, the commencement of the healthy season on that coast, no vessel has been, nor, as your committee is informed, is, under orders for that service."⁶⁰ The United States African agent, Ayres, reported in 1823: "I was informed by an American officer who had been on the coast in 1820, that he had boarded 20 American vessels in one morning, lying in the port of Gallinas, and fitted for the reception of slaves. It is a lamentable fact, that most of the harbours, between the Senegal and the line, were visited by an equal number of American vessels, and for the sole purpose of carrying away slaves. Although for some years the coast had been occasionally visited by our cruisers, their short stay and seldom appearance had made but slight impression on those traders, rendered hardy by repetition of crime, and avaricious by excessive gain. They were enabled by a regular system to gain intelligence of any cruiser being on the coast."⁶¹ Even such spasmodic efforts bore abundant fruit, and indicated what vigorous measures might have accomplished. Between May, 1818, and November, 1821, nearly six hundred Africans were recaptured and eleven American slavers taken.⁶² Such measures gradually changed the character of the trade, and opened the international phase of the question. American slavers cleared for foreign ports, there took a foreign flag and papers, and

58. ANNALS OF CONGRESS, 16th Congress 1st session, page 1433.

59. Referring particularly to the case of the slaver "Plattsburg." Cf. HOUSE REPORTS, 17th Congress 1st session, II. No. 92, page 10.

60. HOUSE REPORTS, 17th Congress 1st session, II. No. 92, page 2. The President had in his message spoken in exhilarating tones of the success of the government in suppressing the trade. The House Committee appointed in pursuance of this passage made the above report. Their conclusions are confirmed by British reports: PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, 1822, Vol. XXII., SLAVE TRADE, Further Papers, III. page 44. So, too, in 1823, Ashmun, the African agent, reports that thousands of slaves are being abducted.

61. Ayres to the Secretary of the Navy, Feb. 24, 1823; reprinted in FRIENDS' VIEW OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE (1824), page 31.

62. HOUSE REPORTS, 17th Congress 1st session, II. No. 92, pages 5-6. The slavers were the "Ramirez," "Endymion," "Esperanza," "Plattsburg," "Science," "Alexander," "Eugene," "Mathilde," "Daphne," "Eliza," and "La Pensée." In these 573 Africans were taken. The naval officers were greatly handicapped by the size of the ships, etc. (cf. FRIENDS' VIEW OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE (1824), pages 33-41). They nevertheless acted with great zeal.



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then sailed boldly past American cruisers, although their real character was often well known. More stringent clearance laws and consular instructions might have greatly reduced this practice; but nothing was ever done, and gradually the laws became in large measure powerless to deal with the bulk of the illicit trade. In 1820, September 16, a British officer, in his official report, declares that, in spite of United States laws, "American vessels, American subjects, and American capital, are unquestionably engaged in the trade, though under other colours and in disguise."⁶³ The United States ship "Cyane" at one time reported ten captures within a few days, adding: "Although they are evidently owned by Americans, they are so completely covered by Spanish papers that it is impossible to condemn them."⁶⁴ The governor of Sierra Leone reported the rivers Nunez and Pongas full of renegade European and American slave-traders;⁶⁵ the trade was said to be carried on "to an extent that almost staggers belief."⁶⁶ Down to 1824 or 1825, reports from all quarters prove this activity in slave-trading.

The execution of the laws within the country exhibits grave defects and even criminal negligence. Attorney-General Wirt finds it necessary to assure collectors, in 1819, that "it is against public policy to dispense with prosecutions for violation of the law to prohibit the Slave trade."⁶⁷ One district attorney writes: "It appears to be almost impossible to enforce the laws of the United States against offenders after the negroes have been landed in the state."⁶⁸ Again, it is asserted that "when vessels engaged in the slave trade have been detained by the American cruisers, and sent into the slave-holding states, there appears at once a difficulty in securing the freedom to these captives which the laws of the United States have decreed for them."⁶⁹ In some cases, one man would smuggle in the Africans and hide them in the woods; then his partner would "rob" him, and so all trace be lost.⁷⁰ Perhaps 350 Africans were officially reported as brought in contrary to law from 1818 to 1820: the absurdity of this figure is apparent.⁷¹ A circular letter to the marshals, in 1821, brought reports of only a few well-known cases, like that of the "General Ramirez;" the marshal of Louisiana had "no information."⁷²

There appears to be little positive evidence of a large illicit importation into the country for a decade after 1825. It is hardly possible, however, considering the activity in the trade, that slaves were not largely imported. Indeed, when we note how the laws were continually broken in other respects, absence of evidence of petty smuggling becomes presumptive evidence that

63. PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, 1821, Vol. XXIII., SLAVE TRADE, Further Papers, A, page 76. The names and description of a dozen or more American slavers are given: PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, 1821, Vol. XXIII., SLAVE TRADE, Further Papers, A, pages 18-21.

64. HOUSE REPORTS, 17th Congress 1st session, II. No. 92, pages 15-20.

65. HOUSE DOCUMENT, 18th Congress 1st session, VI. No. 119, page 13.

66. PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, 1823, Vol. XVIII., SLAVE TRADE, Further Papers, A, pages 10-11.

67. OPINIONS OF ATTORNEYS-GENERAL, V. 717.

68. R.W. Habersham to the Secretary of the Navy, August, 1821; reprinted in FRIENDS' VIEW OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE (1824), page 47.

69. FRIENDS' VIEW OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE (1824), page 42.

70. FRIENDS' VIEW OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE (1824), page 43.

71. Cf. above, pages 126-7.

72. FRIENDS' VIEW OF THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE (1824), page 42.

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collusive or tacit understanding of officers and citizens allowed the trade to some extent.⁷³ Finally, it must be noted that during all this time scarcely a man suffered for participating in the trade, beyond the loss of the Africans and, more rarely, of his ship. Red-handed slavers, caught in the act and convicted, were too often, like *La Coste* of South Carolina, the subjects of executive clemency.⁷⁴ In certain cases there were those who even had the effrontery to ask Congress to cancel their own laws. For instance, in 1819 a Venezuelan privateer, secretly fitted out and manned by Americans in Baltimore, succeeded in capturing several American, Portuguese, and Spanish slavers, and appropriating the slaves; being finally wrecked herself, she transferred her crew and slaves to one of her prizes, the "Antelope," which was eventually captured by a United States cruiser and the 280 Africans sent to Georgia. After much litigation, the United States Supreme Court ordered those captured from Spaniards to be surrendered, and the others to be returned to Africa. By some mysterious process, only 139 Africans now remained, 100 of whom were sent to Africa. The Spanish claimants of the remaining thirty-nine sold them to a certain Mr. Wilde, who gave bond to transport them out of the country. Finally, in December, 1827, there came an innocent petition to Congress to *cancel this bond*.⁷⁵ A bill to that effect passed and was approved, May 2, 1828,⁷⁶ and in consequence these Africans remained as slaves in Georgia.

On the whole, it is plain that, although in the period from 1807 to 1820 Congress laid down broad lines of legislation sufficient, save in some details, to suppress the African slave

73. A few accounts of captures here and there would make the matter less suspicious; these, however, do not occur. How large this suspected illicit traffic was, it is of course impossible to say; there is no reason why it may not have reached many hundreds per year.

74. Cf. editorial in *Niles's Register*, XXII. 114. Cf. also the following instances of pardons: —

PRESIDENT JEFFERSON: March 1, 1808, Phillip M. Topham, convicted for "carrying on an illegal slave-trade" (pardoned twice). PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, I. 146, 148-9.

PRESIDENT MADISON: July 29, 1809, 15 vessels arrived at New Orleans from Cuba, with 666 white persons and 683 negroes. Every penalty incurred under the Act of 1807 was remitted. (Note: "Several other pardons of this nature were granted.") PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, I. 179.

Nov. 8, 1809, John Hopkins and Lewis Le Roy, convicted for importing a slave. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, I. 184-5.

Feb. 12, 1810, William Sewall, convicted for importing slaves. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, I. 194, 235, 240.

May 5, 1812, William Babbit, convicted for importing slaves. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, I. 248.

PRESIDENT MONROE: June 11, 1822, Thomas Shields, convicted for bringing slaves into New Orleans. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 15.

Aug. 24, 1822, J.F. Smith, sentenced to five years' imprisonment and \$3000 fine; served twenty-five months and was then pardoned. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 22.

July 23, 1823, certain parties liable to penalties for introducing slaves into Alabama. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 63.

Aug. 15, 1823, owners of schooner "Mary," convicted of importing slaves. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 66.

PRESIDENT J.Q. ADAMS: March 4, 1826, Robert Perry; his ship was forfeited for slave-trading. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 140.

Jan. 17, 1827, Jesse Perry; forfeited ship, and was convicted for introducing slaves. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 158.

Feb. 13, 1827, Zenas Winston; incurred penalties for slave-trading. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 161. The four following cases are similar to that of Winston: —

Feb. 24, 1827, John Tucker and William Morbon. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 162.

March 25, 1828, Joseph Badger. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 192.

Feb. 19, 1829, L.R. Wallace. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 215.

PRESIDENT JACKSON: Five cases. PARDONS AND REMISSIONS, IV. 225, 270, 301, 393, 440.

The above cases were taken from manuscript copies of the Washington records, made by Mr. W.C. Endicott, Jr., and kindly loaned me.

75. See SENATE JOURNAL, 20th Congress 1st session, pages 60, 66, 340, 341, 343, 348, 352, 355; HOUSE JOURNAL, 20th Congress 1st session, pages 59, 76, 123, 134, 156, 169, 173, 279, 634, 641, 646, 647, 688, 692.

76. STATUTES AT LARGE, VI. 376.




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trade to America, yet the execution of these laws was criminally lax. Moreover, by the facility with which slavers could disguise their identity, it was possible for them to escape even a vigorous enforcement of our laws. This situation could properly be met only by energetic and sincere international co-operation....⁷⁷

 December: [Bronson Alcott](#)'s English friend [Charles Lane](#) was almost jailed for refusal to pay poll tax.

 December 1, Friday-6, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#)'s new lecture "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" was advertised in [The Liberator](#) and in all 4 of [Providence, Rhode Island](#)'s major newspapers—the [Daily Post](#), [Daily Journal](#), [Bulletin](#), and [Daily Tribune](#).⁷⁸

The [Post](#) and the [Tribune](#) also ran brief articles in which Thoreau was described as

a young man of high ability, who built his house in the woods, and there lived five years [*sic*] for about \$30 a year, during which time he stored his mind with a vast amount of useful knowledge—setting an example for poor young men who thirst for learning, showing those who are determined to get a good education how they can have it by pursuing the right course.

[Providence [Daily Post](#), December 6, page 2, column 4. A slightly altered version of this sentence appeared in the Providence [Daily Tribune](#), December

A lengthy article in praise of Clara Schumann was published in the [Neue Zeitschrift für Musik](#), by Franz Liszt.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR DECEMBER 1st]

77. Among interesting minor proceedings in this period were two Senate bills to register slaves so as to prevent illegal importation. They were both dropped in the House; a House proposition to the same effect also came to nothing: SENATE JOURNAL, 15th Congress 1st session, pages 147, 152, 157, 165, 170, 188, 201, 203, 232, 237; 15th Congress 2d session, pages 63, 74, 77, 202, 207, 285, 291, 297; HOUSE JOURNAL, 15th Congress 1st session, page 332; 15th Congress 2d session, pages 303, 305, 316; 16th Congress 1st session, page 150. Another proposition was contained in the Meigs resolution presented to the House, Feb. 5, 1820, which proposed to devote the public lands to the suppression of the slave-trade. This was ruled out of order. It was presented again and laid on the table in 1821: HOUSE JOURNAL, 16th Congress 1st session, pages 196, 200, 227; 16th Congress 2d session, page 238. 78. [Liberator](#), December 1, page 3, column 2; Providence [Daily Post](#), December 5, page 3, column 1; Providence [Bulletin](#), December 5, page 3, column 1; Providence [Daily Journal](#), December 5, page 3, column 1, and December 6, page 3, column 1; Providence [Daily Tribune](#), December 6, page 3, column 5.

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December 2, Saturday: Father [Isaac Hecker](#), CSSR, wrote to [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#).

An alliance was concluded between Austria, France, and Great Britain.

The report by David Page, a disgruntled ex-employee, again appeared in the newspapers. It was not clear that he could be believed, that [Robert Chambers](#) was the secret author of [VESTIGES OF THE NATURAL HISTORY OF CREATION](#).



Since ice had formed about [Henry Thoreau](#)'s boat, he had to take it out of the water and house it for the winter.



Dec. 2. Got up my boat and housed it, ice having formed about it.

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



December 3, Sunday: When the richest gold field the world had ever known had been discovered in 1851 just outside of Melbourne, immigrants had poured in from all over the world to seek their fortune; in 3 years, the population of the colony of Victoria had risen from 80,000 to 300,000. On this the 40th Military Regiment launched a dawn assault upon a relatively undistinguished tax protest by disgruntled gold miners at a place known as "Eureka Stockade" — that subcontinent's sole armed insurrection against colonial tyranny — and Mark Twain, visiting Australia in 1895, searching desperately for cultural material which he might exploit for purposes of humor, would describe this stockade grandiloquently as: "The finest thing in Australia's history. It was a revolution small in size, but great politically; it was a strike for liberty, a struggle for principle, a stand against injustice and oppression... it is another instance of a victory won by a lost battle." What these tax rebels had done was erect their stockade, unfurl a nice-looking flag, and swear an oath: "We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other and to defend our rights and liberties." The soldiers, however, killed 22 of the miners at a loss of but 6 soldiers. The rebellion's spectacular failure might have ended there had the British been willing to rest on their laurels. However, they would put 13 surviving rebel leaders on trial for high treason, only to have the jury declare that this stockade protest had been a riot rather than a revolt. One by one, the defendants would be found not guilty of high treason, until the Governor would be forced to grant an amnesty to all rebels still in hiding.



Dec. 3. Sunday. The first snow of consequence fell in the evening, very damp (wind northeast); 5 or 6 inches deep in morning, after very high wind in the night.

[Transcript]



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Snowbirds in garden in the midst of the snow in the P.M.

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December 4, Monday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked along the Fitchburg Railroad tracks to Walden Pond.

The Berg Collection of the New York Public Library has a file “Letters to John and [Henry Thoreau](#) and [William D. Brown](#).” This includes a letter bearing this date from [Francis Monroe](#) in [Concord](#) to [William D. Brown](#), both of whom who were qualified to vote there in the election of 1856. This letter contains the information that a source for the Thoreau family’s ground graphite was Francis Monroe, and that this graphite was being ground by [Brown](#):

Concord Dec 4th 1854

Mr W^m D. Brown

I have sold to Mr Thoreau the Black Lead belonging to me that you have ground, for 27 cents pr pound, provided he takes it within ten days from the above date [sic]. You will please weigh it, receive the cash for it on delivery, and remit me the amount by Mail, directed to Manchester V.T. When I am next in town I will settle with you for grinding &c.

Respectfully yours

Francis Monroe



Dec. 4. P.M. — Down railroad to Walden.

Walden went down quite rapidly about the middle of November, leaving the isthmus to Emerson’s meadow bare. Flint’s has been very low all summer. The northeast sides of the trees are thickly incrusting with snowy shields, visible afar, the snow was so damp (at Boston it turned to rain). This had none of the dry delicate powdery beauties of a common first snow.

Already the bird-like birch scales dot the snow.

[Transcript]

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December 5, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to Charles Sumner, thanking him for some government pamphlets.

*Concord Mass Dec 5th
1854*

Mr Sumner,

Dear Sir,

Allow me to thank you once more for the Report of Sittgreaves, the Patent Office 2nd Part, and on Emigrant Ships.

At this rate there will be one department in my library, and that not

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*the smallest one, which I may call the Sumnerian—
Yours sincerely
Henry D. Thoreau.*



That evening he lectured, probably on “Moose Hunting,” at the Concord Lyceum.

[TIMELINE OF THE MAINE WOODS](#)



Dec. 5. Very cold last night. Probably river skimmed over in some places. The damp snow with water beneath (in all 5 or 6 inches deep and not drifted, notwithstanding the wind) is frozen solid, making a crust which bears well, This, I think, is unusual at this stage of the winter.

[Transcript]

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December 6, Wednesday: French land and naval forces attacked [Shanghai](#), which had been held for over a year by members of the Small Sword Society.



All week, [Henry Thoreau](#)'s new lecture "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" had been being advertised in [The Liberator](#) and in all four of [Providence, Rhode Island](#)'s major newspapers — the [Daily Post](#), [Daily Journal](#), [Bulletin](#), and [Daily Tribune](#).⁷⁹



The [Daily Post](#) and the [Daily Tribune](#) had also run brief articles in which the visiting lecturer had been being described as

a young man of high ability, who built his house in the woods, and there lived five years [*sic*] for about \$30 a year, during which time he stored his mind with a vast amount of useful knowledge—setting an example for poor young men who thirst for learning, showing those who are determined to get a good education how they can have it by pursuing the right course.

[Providence [Daily Post](#), December 6, page 2, column 4. A slightly altered version of this sentence appeared in the Providence [Daily Tribune](#), December

On this day the lecturer arrived by train and, accompanied by Charles King Newcomb, visited the Reverend [Roger Williams](#)'s slate rock in the Blackstone estuary, and visited an old hilltop fort in Seekonk on the east side of the bay.



Beginning at 7:30 PM, at Railroad Hall, Thoreau delivered his lecture, or sermon, for the first time. Admission

79. [The Liberator](#), December 1, page 3, column 2; Providence [Daily Post](#), December 5, page 3, column 1; Providence [Bulletin](#), December 5, page 3, column 1; Providence [Daily Journal](#), December 5, page 3, column 1, and December 6, page 3, column 1; Providence [Daily Tribune](#), December 6, page 3, column 5.



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was 25 cents. Thoreau was impressed by the railroad depot in which he was lecturing, “its towers and great length of brick.” The only indication of how the audience responded is Thoreau’s journal entry of that evening:

After lecturing twice this winter I feel that I am in danger of cheapening myself by trying to become a successful lecturer, *i.e.*, to interest my audiences. I am disappointed to find that most that I am and value myself for is lost, or worse than lost, on my audience. I fail to get even the attention of the mass. I should suit them better if I suited myself less. I feel that the public demand an average man,—average thoughts and manners,—not originality, nor even absolute excellence. You cannot interest them except as you are like them and sympathize with them. I would rather that my audience come to me than that I should go to them, and so they be sifted; *i.e.*, I would rather write books than lectures. That is fine, this coarse. To read to a promiscuous audience who are at your mercy the fine thoughts you solaced yourself with

THOREAU’S SERMON

[Various versions of “LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE”, variously titled, would be delivered:

- “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on December 6, 1854 at Railroad Hall in [Providence](#)
- “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on December 26, 1854 in the [New Bedford](#) Lyceum
- “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on December 28, 1854 at the Athenaeum on [Nantucket Island](#)
- On January 4, 1855 in the [Worcester](#) Lyceum, as “The Connection between Man’s Employment and His Higher Life”
- “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on February 14, 1855 in the [Concord](#) Lyceum
- “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” on November 16, 1856 for the [Eagleswood](#) community
- “Getting a Living” on December 18, 1856 in the vestry of the Congregational Church of Amherst, [New Hampshire](#)
- “LIFE MISSPENT” on Sunday morning, October 9, 1859 to the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)’s 28th Congregational Society in Boston Music Hall
- “LIFE MISSPENT” on Sunday, September 9, 1860 at Welles Hall in Lowell.]



Dec. 6. To Providence to lecture.

I see [[^]thick] ice and boys skating all the way to Providence, but know not when it froze, I have been so busy writing my lecture; probably the night of the 4th.

In order to go to Blue Hill by Providence Railroad, stop at Readville Station (Dedham Low Plain once), 8 miles; the hill apparently 2 miles east. Was struck with the Providence depot, its towers and great length of brick. Lectured in it.

Went to R. Williams’s Rock on the Blackstone with Newcomb and thence to hill with an old fort atop in Seekonk, Mass., on the cast side of the Bay, whence a fine view down it. At lecture spoke with a Mr. Clark and Vaughn and Eaton.

After lecturing twice this winter I feel that I am in danger of cheapening myself by trying to become a successful lecturer, *i.e.*, to interest my audiences. I am disappointed to find that most that I am and value myself for is lost, or worse than lost, on my audience. I fail to get even the attention of the mass. I should suit them better if I suited myself less. I feel that the public demand an average man, — average thoughts and manners, — not originality, nor even absolute excellence. You cannot interest them except as you are like them and sympathize with them. I would rather that my audience come to me than that I should go to them, and so they be sifted; *i.e.*, I would rather write books than lectures. That is fine, this coarse. To read to a [[^]promiscuous] audience who are at your mercy the fine thoughts you solaced yourself with far away is as violent as to fatten geese by cramming, & in

[Transcript]



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this case they do not get fatter.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

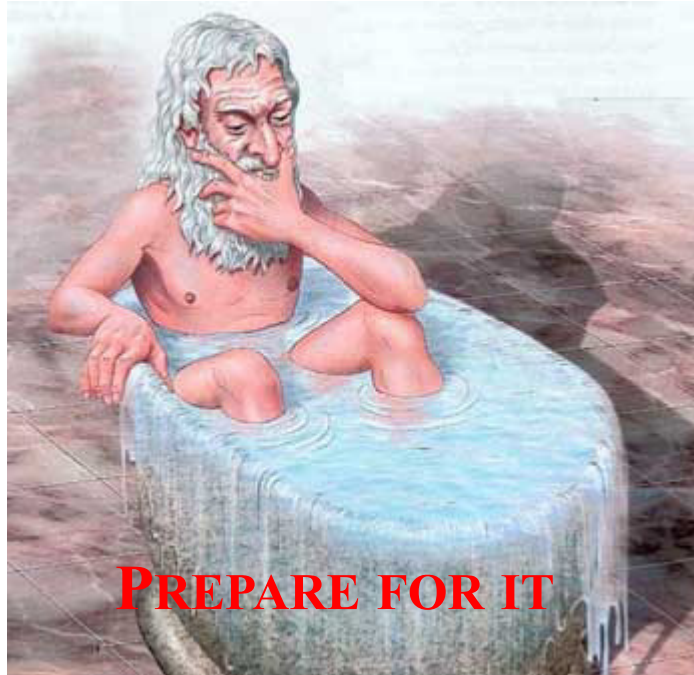
THE LIST OF LECTURES

1854-1855

1854-1855



December 7, Thursday: [Louis Pasteur](#) was appointed as Dean of the new Faculty of Sciences in Lille. The advice he offered in his inaugural address has been variously translated into the English as “In the fields of observation chance favors only the prepared mind” and “Chance favors the prepared mind” and “Fortune favors the prepared mind” and “In the field of observation, chance favors the prepared mind” and as “Where observation is concerned, chance favors only the prepared mind” and as “Prepare your mind so when your one big break come along, you will be ready to seize it” and as “Prepare yourself for opportunity.” I prefer a bumper-sticker-style: “Prepare for it.”



“Dans les champs de l’observation le hasard ne favorise que les esprits préparés.”

– [Louis Pasteur](#), at the University of Lisle on December 7, 1854



[Henry Thoreau](#) walked through Olneyville in Johnston, [Rhode Island](#), 2½ or 3 miles west of [Providence](#). On the way back from Providence to Concord he stopped at [Harvard Library](#) and checked out:

1854-1855

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— [John Dunn Hunter](#)'s MEMOIRS OF A CAPTIVITY AMONG THE INDIANS OF NORTH AMERICA, FROM CHILDHOOD TO THE AGE OF NINETEEN (Philadelphia, 1823)⁸⁰



MEMOIRS OF A CAPTIVITY

<http://www.merrycoz.org/adults.htm>

80. Thoreau would register his notes on this reading in his Indian Notebook #8 and in his Fact Book.

1854-1855

1854-1855

- the 4th volume of [Henry Rowe Schoolcraft](#)'s and Captain [Seth Eastman](#)'s HISTORICAL AND STATISTICAL INFORMATION RESPECTING ... THE INDIAN TRIBES OF THE UNITED STATES



THE INDIAN TRIBES, IV, 1854

- JESUIT RELATIONS FOR 1639⁸¹

<http://www.canadiana.org>

81. Thoreau presumably read each and every volume of the JESUIT RELATIONS that was available in the stacks at the [Harvard Library](#). We know due to extensive extracts in his Indian Notebooks #7 and #8 that between 1852 and 1857 he did withdraw or consult all the volumes for the years between 1633 and 1672. Thoreau took notes in particular in regard to the reports by [Father Jean de Brébeuf](#), [Father Jacques Buteux](#), [Father Claude Dablon](#), [Father Jérôme Lalemant](#), [Father Paul Le Jeune](#), [Father François Le Mercier](#), [Father Julien Perrault](#), [Father Jean de Quens](#), [Father Paul Ragueneau](#), and [Father Barthélemy Vimont](#).

Cramoisy, Sebastian (ed.). *RELATION DE CE QUI S'EST PASSÉ EN LA NOUVELLE FRANCE IN L'ANNÉE 1636: ENVOYÉE AU R. PERE PROVINCIAL DE LA COMPAGNIE DE JESUS EN LA PROVINCE DE FRANCE, PAR LE P. PAUL LE JEUNE DE LA MESME COMPAGNIE, SUPERIEUR DE LA RESIDENCE DE KÉBEC. A Paris: Chez Sebastian Cramoisy...*, 1637

He had already perused the volumes for 1633-1638 and 1640-1642. [Harvard Library](#) had just obtained this 1639 volume from Québec.

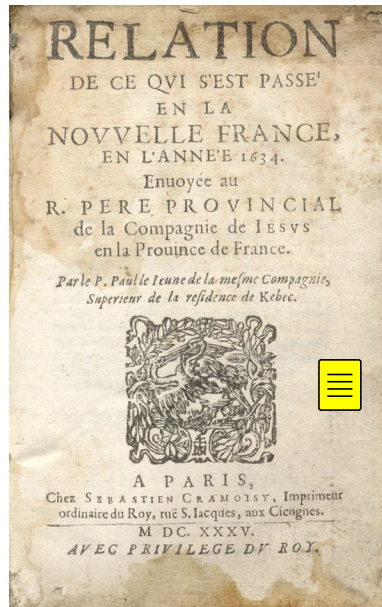
1854-1855

1854-1855

WALDEN: The Jesuits were quite balked by those Indians who, being burned at the stake, suggested new modes of torture to their tormentors. Being superior to physical suffering, it sometimes chanced that they were superior to any consolation which the missionaries could offer; and the law to do as you would be done by fell with less persuasiveness on the ears of those, who, for their part, did not care how they were done by, who loved their enemies after a new fashion, and came very near freely forgiving them all they did.

PEOPLE OF WALDEN

THE JESUITS



Dec. 7. Walked [^through] Olneyville in Johnston, 2½ or 3 miles west of Providence. Harris tells me that since he exchanged a duplicate Jesuit Relation for one he had not with the Montreal men, all theirs have been burnt. He has two early ones which I have not seen.


[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL
THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY

1854-1855

1854-1855

 December 8, Friday: The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was made an article of faith by Pope Pius.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went up the river and meadow on the ice to Hubbard's Bridge (Gleason H6) across the Sudbury and from there to Walden Pond. [Ellery Channing](#), walking at Fair Haven Bay, noted that it had already frozen over.



Dec. 8. P.M. — Up river and meadow on ice to Hubbard Bridge and thence to Walden.


[Transcript]

Winter has come unnoticed by me, I have been so busy writing. This is the life most lead in respect to Nature. How different from my habitual one! It is hasty, coarse, and trivial, as if you were a spindle in a factory. The other is leisurely, fine, and glorious, like a flower. In the first case you are merely getting your living; in the second you live as you go along. You travel only on roads of the proper grade without jar or running off the track, and sweep round the hills by beautiful curves.

Here is the river frozen over in many places, I am not sure whether the fourth night or later, but the skating is hobbly or all hobbled like a coat of mail or thickly bossed shield, apparently sleet frozen in water. Very little smooth ice. How black the water where the river is open when I look from the light, by contrast with the surrounding white, the ice and snow! A black artery here and there concealed under a pellicle of ice.

Went over the fields on the crust to Walden, over side of Bear Garden. Already foxes have left their tracks. How the crust shines afar, the sun now setting! There is a glorious clear sunset sky, soft and delicate and warm even like a pigeon's neck. Why do the mountains never look so fair as from my native fields?

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 December 9, Saturday: Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," to become incomparably more famous as a poem than his "Charge of the Heavy Brigade," which of course you've not so much as heard of, was published in The Examiner.



ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Also, on December 9th, [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed a 7 1/2 acre woodlot, belonging to Tilly Holden, that was part of the property near the north part of Nut Meadow Brook (Gleason H4) on Sudbury Road (Gleason H5) and Old Marlborough Road (Gleason H3) which he had surveyed for Amos and Noah Wheeler in November of 1853.



Dec. 9. Surveying for T. Holden.

[Transcript]

A cold morning. What is that green pipes on the *side-hill* at Nut Meadow on his land, looking at first like green-



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briar cut off? [*Equisetum hyemale* (scouring-rush, shave-grass)] It forms a dense bed [^about a dozen rods] along the side of the bank in the woods, a rod in width, rising to 10 or 12 feet above the swamp. White Pond mostly skimmed over. The scouring rush is as large round as a bulrush — forming dense green beds conspicuous and interesting above the snow, an evergreen rush.

C. says he saw 3 larks on the 5th.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

Also, [Louisa May Alcott](#) published the stories she had originally created while caring for [Ellen Emerson](#), as FLOWER FABLES, in time for the Christmas Book gift season, and took her essay “How I Went Out to Service” to [James Thomas Fields](#), the Boston publisher — but was informed she could not write.⁸²

“Pondering shadows, colors, clouds
Grass-buds, and caterpillar shrouds
Boughs on which the wild bees settle,
Tints that spot the violet’s petal.”
— Emerson’s WOOD-NOTES.

To
Ellen Emerson,
For whom they were fancied,
These flower fables
Are inscribed,
By her friend,
— The Author.

Boston, Dec. 9, 1854.

Chapter I:	The Frost King: or, The Power of Love
Chapter II:	Eva’s Visit to Fairy-Land
Chapter III:	The Flower’s Lesson
Chapter IV:	Lily-Bell and Thistledown
Chapter V:	Little Bud
Chapter VI:	Clover-Blossom
Chapter VII:	Little Annie’s Dream: or, The Fairy Flower
Chapter VIII:	Ripple, the Water-Spirit
Chapter IX:	Fairy Song


THE ALCOTT FAMILY

82. That’s “could not” as in “should not,” you understand. Good thing Thoreau had been born a Henry and not a Henrietta! Good thing our [Louisa](#) was not one to be so easily turned aside!

As long as THE SPREAD EAGLE paid her a dollar a column for her ‘rubbish,’ as she called it, Jo felt herself a woman of means, and spun her little romances diligently. But great plans fermented in her busy brain and ambitious mind, and the old tin kitchen in the garret held a slowly increasing pile of blotted manuscript, which was one day to place the name of March upon the roll of fame.

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 December 10, Sunday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went back to Nut Meadow (Gleason H4).

L'enfance du Christ, a trilogie sacrée for vocal soloists, chorus and orchestra by [Hector Berlioz](#) to his own words, was performed for the initial time, in the Salle Herz of Paris, directed by the composer on the eve of his 51st birthday. This was a great success.




Dec. 10. P.M. — To Nut Meadow.

Weather warmer; snow softened. Saw a large flock of snow buntings (quite white against woods, at any rate), though it is quite warm. Snow-fleas in paths; first I have seen. Hear the small woodpecker's whistle; not much else — only crows and partridges else— & chickadees. How quickly the snow feels the warmer wind— The crust which was so firm & rigid is now suddenly softened. There is much water in the road.

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL
THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 December 11, Monday: In the morning, [Henry Thoreau](#) read “parts of his new Lecture” to [Bronson Alcott](#).⁸³ In the afternoon he went to Bare or Pine Hill in Lincoln (Gleason J9), and noted that Flint's, or Sandy Pond (Gleason J10) was already frozen over.



Dec. 11. P.M. — To Bare Hill.

C. says he found Fair Haven frozen over last Friday, *i.e.* the 8th. [^How much before?] I find Flint's frozen to-day, and how long? We have now those early, still, clear winter sunsets over the snow. It is but mid-afternoon when I see the sun setting far through the woods, and there is that peculiar clear vitreous greenish sky in the west, as it were a molten gem. The day is short; it seems to be composed of two twilights merely; the morning and the evening twilight make the whole day. You must make haste to do the work of the day before it is dark. I hear rarely a bird except the chickadee, or perchance a jay or crow. A gray rabbit scuds away over the crust in the swamp on the edge of the Great Meadows beyond Peter's. A partridge goes off — & coming up, I see where she struck the snow first with her wing, making 5 or 6 as it were finger-marks.

[Transcript]


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83. Entry for December 11th in Alcott's "Diary for 1854" at the Houghton Library of Harvard University (*59M-308 [24:357]). Alcott assumed incorrectly that [Thoreau](#) had read this "new Lecture" in Philadelphia.

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December 12, Tuesday: There were 3 sharp raps on the door of [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#)'s college room, and in walked [Bronson Alcott](#), smiling. He wanted Sanborn to sup with him that night at the place of [Edwin Morton](#) of Plymouth, on Massachusetts Avenue. He said the Englishman [Thomas Cholmondeley](#) would be there. Morton was just then working up his article "Thoreau and His Books." [Bronson Alcott](#) said that when he'd encountered [Henry Thoreau](#) at [Waldo Emerson](#)'s house, early on after Thoreau's graduating from Harvard College, he'd been quite startled by a transformation that had taken place. He said Thoreau had become a beast, and that he now lived life, both by day and by night, under fate's control, just as the beasts do, living so close to nature that the brutes ought to choose him their king. Sanborn took special note that Alcott referred to [Henry Thoreau](#) as a "fine beast."

Peter Georg Bang replaced Anders Sandøe Orsted as prime minister of Denmark.

On a voyage from Liverpool to Melbourne, the clipper ship *Champion of the Seas* traveled 465 nautical miles in a 24-hour period.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR DECEMBER 12th]



December 13, Wednesday: Sometime prior to this date [Henry Thoreau](#) had accepted Andrew Whitney's invitation to deliver his "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" lecture at the Nantucket Atheneum on December 28th (below), because on this date an advertisement in the [Nantucket Island Inquirer](#) (page 3, column 7) announced such an appearance.

[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) met with [Thomas Cholmondeley](#) at Mrs. Manning's on Linden Street, near Harvard College. Later that day the two met again, warmed by a blazing fire in [Edwin Morton](#)'s room. In the course of a disquisition on life and men in England and America, [Sanborn](#) found, [Cholmondeley](#) presented himself with much sense and modesty. His consideration was that England's day of empire had expired and that what was now necessary was that she transform her empire into a commonwealth of states. He promised Sanborn a copy of his *ULTIMA THULE; OR, THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY A RESIDENCE IN NEW ZEALAND*.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR DECEMBER 13th]



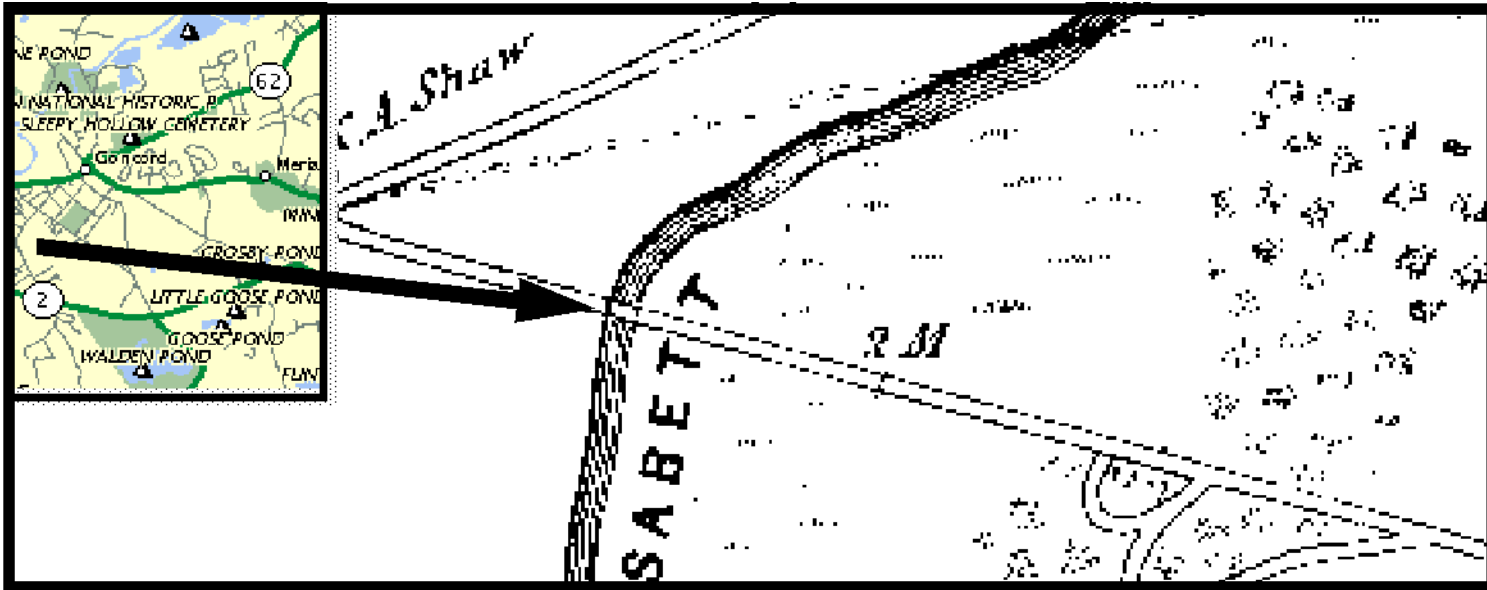
December 14, Thursday: [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) again came across [Thomas Cholmondeley](#), in [Edwin Morton](#)'s room. The trio walked into Boston at sunset to listen to a speech by [Wendell Phillips](#). — The view was beautiful as they crossed the bridge, [Sanborn](#) would recall, with in the west the sunset glowing above the Brookline hills and a few long slender clouds lying just above the hilltops. In the east they could view the magnificent city of Boston, topped by the golden dome of the State House. They parted at the Athenaeum, [Sanborn](#) setting out for the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)'s in hopes of getting a free pass so Cholmondeley could join them at the lecture by Phillips that night. However, according to the [Reverend Parker](#), Phillips had already given away the remaining tickets. When [Morton](#) came in [Sanborn](#) hit on an idea: [Cholmondeley](#) could attend with Miss Ednah Dow Littlehale and Miss Helen Morton. He was certain Helen would have a spare ticket. [Phillips](#) was advocating disunion (secession) as the only remedy for New England's present predicament, of disastrous submission to the slave power. After the lecture, [Sanborn](#) departed with [Morton](#) and [Cholmondeley](#)

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for the [Reverend Parker](#)'s, where he and [Cholmondeley](#) spoke together while [Morton](#) sang. — [Sanborn](#) would write that they came away with the echoes of “Lauriger Horatius” still in their ears. — It was hard upon 11PM when they got to the Albion where [Cholmondeley](#) invited them to join him for supper. They sat and chatted till midnight and when that hour had passed, [Morton](#) proposed a toast “To The Pilgrim Fathers!” [Cholmondeley](#) took this up, declaiming, “Yes! And may the spirit which brought them here, return again to England, and may we have a Commonwealth, if not as great as yours, at least as happy and as well ordered!” We drank the toast with applause. It was 2AM before he finally got to bed.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Ellery Channing](#) walked up the north bank of the Assabet River to the one-arch stone bridge:



From [New Bedford](#), [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) wrote to [Thoreau](#):



Wrote an invitation to H.D. Thoreau of Concord, author of Walden, and sent a letter which I had on hand some time.

All slaves belonging to the Portuguese state became free.

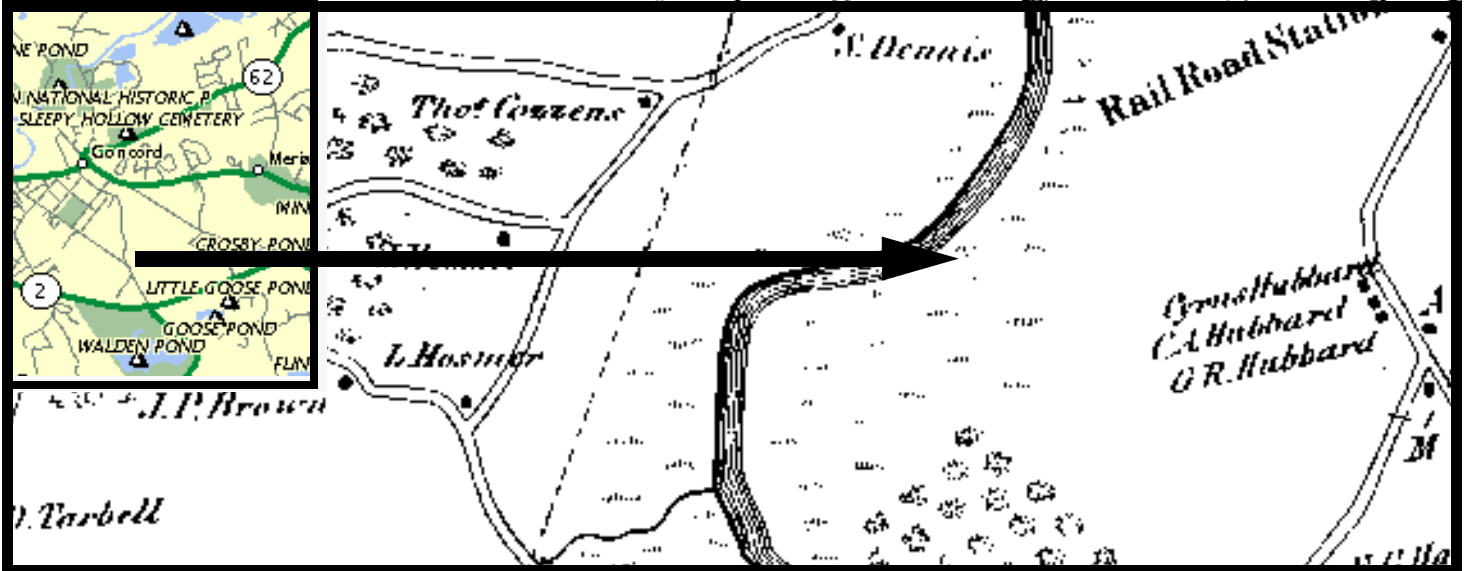
Anton Rubinstein gave a solo concert at the Leipzig Gewandhaus. The press was largely positive.

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December 15, Friday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went up the riverside by way of Hubbard Bath.



[Waldo Emerson](#) told George Partridge Bradford in London that [Thomas Cholmondeley](#) was talking about taking [Henry](#) with him to England.



December 15, Friday: When King Kamehameha III of [Hawaii](#) died in Honolulu, he was succeeded by a nephew as Kamehameha IV.

Colonel Sir Thomas Gore Browne, who had initiated the 1st village at Rupert's Bay, stepped down as governor of [St. Helena](#).



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December 16, Saturday: In a letter to Franz Liszt, [Richard Wagner](#) came up with the idea behind the opera *Tristan und Isolde*.

LISTEN TO IT NOW

At what would come to be known as the initial meeting of the Saturday Club, [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) recorded in his journal, he dined at the Albion Hotel “in a select company,” which is to say [Waldo Emerson](#), [James Russell Lowell](#), [Amos Bronson Alcott](#), a visiting lecturer Charles H. Goddard from Cincinnati, [Thomas Cholmondeley](#), [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), and the Boston attorney Horatio Woodman.⁸⁴ “Emerson is an excellent dinner table man, always a gentleman, never bores or preaches, or dictates, but drops & takes up topics very agreeably, & has even skill & tact in managing his conversation. So, indeed, has Alcott, & it is quite surprising to see these [transcendentalists](#) appearing well as men of the world.”

The [National Anti-Slavery Standard](#) suggested that neither [Henry Thoreau](#)’s [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) nor [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) had “received ... adequate notice in our Literary Journals.”

TIMELINE OF WALDEN
TIMELINE OF A WEEK



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR DECEMBER 16th]



December 17, Sunday: x



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR DECEMBER 17th]

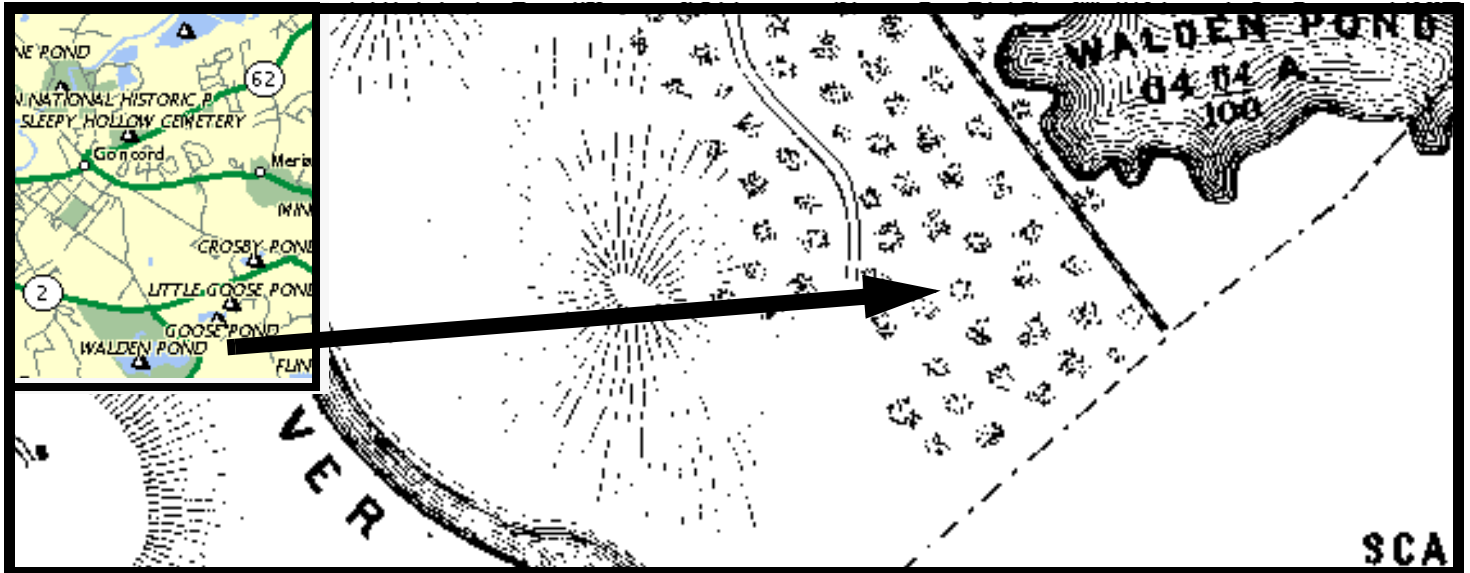
84. Woodman would be one of the small number purchasing [Thoreau](#)’s [WALDEN](#). Whether he would read it, we wish we knew.

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December 18, Monday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked down the Fitchburg Railroad tracks and reached the Sudbury River by way of Andromeda or Cassandra Ponds:



[Walden Pond](#) froze.

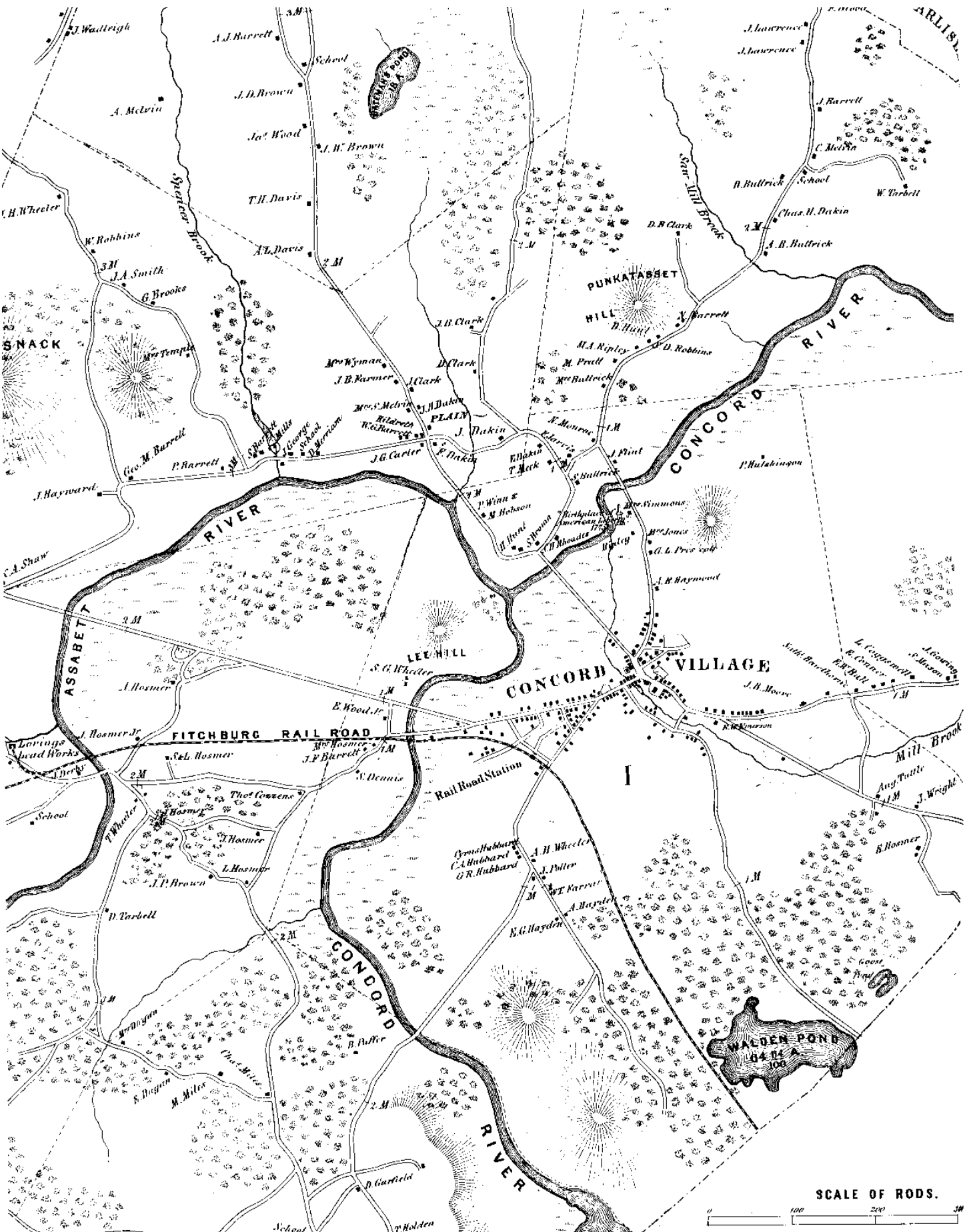
Just at this point in time for the holidays Phineas Taylor Barnum's autobiography *THE LIFE OF P.T. BARNUM, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF* was being brought onto the market, despite the fact that it had gone through the press bearing the date 1855. Incidentally, this author neither wrote, not to anyone's memory ever spoke, any expression such as the infamous

One a minute.

In this book, having a pretty close estimate of what would make a book sell, Barnum supplied a rather detailed woodcut of the famed "Feejee Mermaid" which he had used to carry around with him on his temperance lectures:

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SCALE OF RODS.

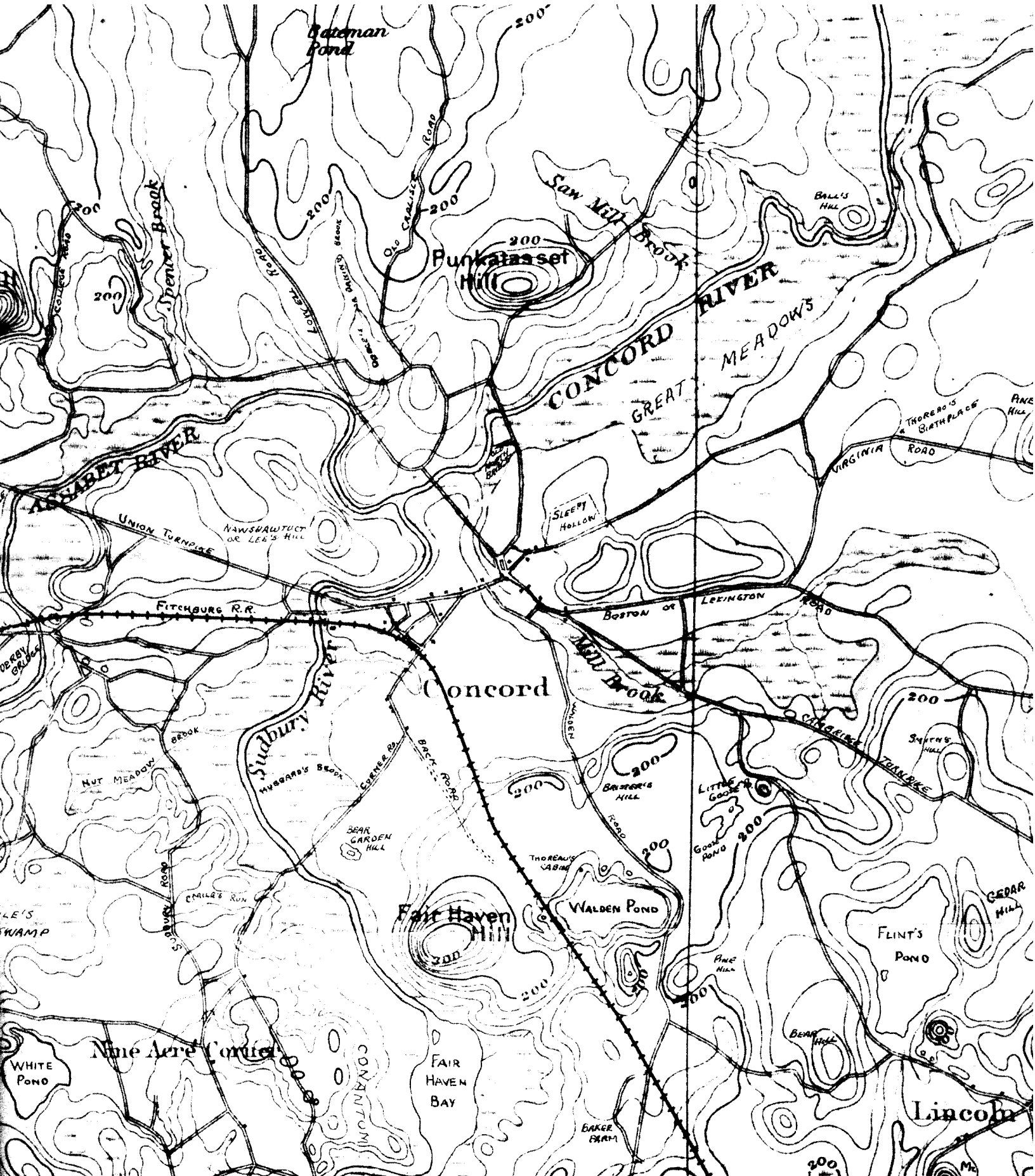
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WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS was reviewed on page 3 of the [National Anti-slavery Standard](#), presumably by [Lydia Maria Child](#), who described [Thoreau](#) as “one man whose aim manifestly is to live”:

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Reprinted in *CRITICAL ESSAYS ON HENRY DAVID THOREAU'S WALDEN*, ed. Joel Myerson (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1988), pages 37-9.



 December 19, Tuesday: George Washington Briggs stocked [Louisa May Alcott](#)'s FLOWER FABLES on the shelves of his bookstore on Washington Street in Boston in time for the [Christmas](#) season, as a potential child's [Christmas](#) gift item. He placed an advertisement for it in the Boston [Evening Transcript](#):⁸⁵

Flower Fables. this day published by Geo. W. Briggs & Co. the *most beautiful* Fairy book that has appeared for a long time, written *when in her sixteenth year*, by Louisa May Alcott, a young lady of Boston. It will be the most popular juvenile issued this season.

[THE ALCOTT FAMILY](#)

85. The young author would be rather disappointed with the cash proceeds of authorship: "I only got a very small sum for them owing to Mr Briggs' dishonesty." There seems to be no reason to suspect dishonesty, as the gross for the 550 copies that the book sold would have been approximately \$340 and [Louisa](#)'s cut would have been 10% or \$34, approximately what she did in fact receive from George Washington Briggs.

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In approximately this year of 1854 the Children's Aid Society was being founded and a Newsboy's Lodging House was being created so that the abandoned boys who were forced to hawk newspapers on the streets, referred to at the time as "newsies," would not have to find their night shelter on the street during the winters. This evidently began a tradition of treating newsboys with great kindness and consideration, as useful citizens of the commonwealth — as witness the following corporate communication from the pages of the Editor & Publisher:



Treat them well, that is, entertain them, give them help when they need it, and invite them to Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners and they will show their gratitude by selling your papers in preference of all others.

Henry Thoreau wrote to his new correspondent, Friend Daniel Ricketson to accept the hospitality of his home "Brooklawn" in New Bedford while lecturing there, and to ask his host to "warn Mr Mitchell that I accepted at once his invitation to lecture on the 26th of this month."

Concord Mass. Dec 19th 1854.

Dear Sir,

I wish to thank you again for your sympathy. I had counted on seeing you when I came to New Bedford, though I did not know exactly how near to it you permanently dwelt; therefore I gladly accept your invitation to stop at your house.

I am going to lecture at Nantucket the 28th, and as I suppose I must improve the earliest opportunity to get there from New Bedford, I will endeavor to come on Monday that I may see yourself and New Bedford before my lecture.

NANTUCKET ISLAND

I should like right well to see your ponds, but that is hardly to be thought of at present. I fear that it is impossible for me to combine such things with the business of lecturing. You cannot serve God and Mammon. However perhaps I shall have time to see something of your country. I am aware that you have not so much snow as we.

There has been excellent sleighing here ever since the 5th ult.

Mr Cholmondeley has left us; so that I shall come alone.

Will you be so kind as to warn Mr Mitchell that I accepted at once his invitation to lecture on the 26th of this month, for I do not know that he has got my letter.

Excuse this short note from Yours truly

Henry D. Thoreau.

Thoreau also wrote a nice long letter to H.G.O. Blake, in which he mentioned the Crimean War:

Concord Mass. Dec. 19th 1854.

Mr. Blake,

I suppose you have heard of my truly providential meeting with Mr Brown —providential because it saved me from the suspicion that my words had fallen

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altogether on stoney ground, when it turned out that there was some Worcester soil there. You will allow me to consider that I correspond with him thro you. I confess that I am a very bad correspondent, so far as promptness of reply is concerned, but then I am sure to answer sooner or later. The longer I have forgotten you, the more I remember you. For the most part I have not been idle since I saw you. How does the world go with you? or rather, how do you get along without it? I have not yet learned to live, that I can see, and I fear that I shall not very soon. I find however, that in the long run things correspond to my original idea—that they correspond to nothing else so much,—and thus a man may really be a true prophet

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without any great exertion. [The day] is never so dark, nor the night even, but that the laws, at least, of light still prevail, and so may make it light in our minds if they are open to the truth. There is considerable danger that a man will be crazy between dinner and supper—but it will not directly answer any good purpose that I know of, & it is just as easy to be sane. We have got to know what both life and death are before we can begin to live after our own fashion. Let us be learning our a b c s as soon as possible. I never yet knew the sun to be knocked down and rolled thro' a [mud puddle]; he comes out honor bright from behind every storm. Let us then take sides with the sun—seeing we have so much leisure[] [1]et us not put all we prize into a foot-ball to be kicked, when a bladder will do as well. When an Indian is burned, his body [may be] broiled, it may be no more than a beef-



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steak. What of that? They may broil his heart, but they do not therefore broil his courage,—his principles. Be of good courage! That is the main thing.

Page 3

If a man were to place himself in an attitude to bear manfully the greatest evil that can be inflicted on him, he would find suddenly that there was no such evil to bear; his brave back would go a-begging. When Atlas got his back made up, that was all that was required. (In this case a priv., not pleon., and τλήμι.) The world rests on principles. The wise gods will never make underpinning of a man. But as long as he crouches, and skulks, and shirks his work, every creature that has weight will be treading on his toes, and crushing him; he will himself tread with one foot on the other foot.

The monster is never just there where we think he is. What is truly monstrous is our cowardice and sloth.

Have no idle disciplines like the Catholic Church and others; have only positive and fruitful ones. Do what you know you ought to do. Why should we ever go abroad, even across the way, to ask a neighbor's advice? There is a nearer neighbor within us incessantly telling us how we should behave. But we wait for the neighbor without to tell us of some false, easier way.

They have a census-table in which they put down the number of the insane. Do you believe that they put them all down there? Why, in every one of these houses there is at least one man fighting or squabbling a good part of his time with a dozen pet demons of his own breeding and cherishing, which are relentlessly gnawing at his vitals; and if perchance he resolve at length that he will courageously combat them, he says, "Ay! ay! I will attend to you after dinner!" And, when that time comes, he concludes that he is good for another stage, and reads a column or two about the Eastern War! Pray, to be in earnest, where is Sevastopol? Who is Menchikoff? and Nicholas behind there? who the Allies? Did not we fight a little (little enough to be sure, but just enough to make it interesting) at Alma, at Balaclava, at Inkermann? We love to fight far from home. Ah! the Minié musket is the king of weapons. Well, let us get one then.

I just put another stick into my stove,—a pretty large mass of white oak. How many men will do enough this cold winter to pay for the fuel that will be required to warm them? I suppose I have burned up a pretty good sized tree to-night—& for

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*what? I settled with Mr Tarbell
for it the other day—but that
was'nt the final settlement.
I got off cheaply from him. At last,
One will say— “Let us see, how
much wood did you burn, Sir? And
I shall shudder to think that the
next question will be, “What did you
do while you were warm?”— Do
we think the ashes will pay for it?—
that God is an ash-man? It is a
fact that we have got to render [an]
an account for the deeds done in the
body.*

*Who knows but we shall be
better the next year than we have been
the past? At any rate, I
wish you a really new year—com-
mencing from the instant you read
this,—and happy or u[n]happy ac-
cording to your deserts.*

Henry D. Thoreau

Dec. 19, 1854.

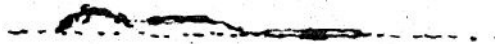
In the afternoon he enjoyed his “first tolerable skating” of the winter, going half a mile up the Assabet River past Clamshell Bank or Hill (Gleason 23/G5) and there walking to the foot of Fair Haven Hill (Gleason H7).




Dec, 19th pm Skated ½ mile up Assabet & then to foot of Fair Haven Hill.

[Transcript]

This is the first tolerable skating. Last night was so cold that the river closed up almost everywhere — and made good skating where there had been no ice to catch the snow of the night before. First there is the snow ice [on the sides] ~~the~~ somewhat rough & brown or yellowish spotted where the water overflowed the ice on each side yesterday — & next over the middle the new dark smooth ice — and, where the river is wider than usual, a [^thick] fine gray ice — marbled, where there was [^prob.] a thin ice yesterday — probably the top froze as the snow fell. I am surprised to find how rapidly & easily I get along, how soon I am at this brook or that bend in the river, which it takes me so long to reach on the bank or by water. I can go more than double the usual distance before dark. It takes a little while to learn to trust the new black ice. I look for cracks to see how thick it is. Near the island I saw a muskrat close by swimming in an open reach. He was always headed up-stream, a great proportion of the head out of water, and his whole length visible [^though the root of the tail is about level with the water.] Now & then it [stopped] swimming & floated down-stream still keeping it head pointed up with his



tail. It is surprising how dry he looks, as if that back was never immersed in the water. It is apt to be melted at the bridges about the piers & there is a flow of water over the ice there. There is a fine, smooth gray marbled ice on the bays — which apparently began to freeze when it was snowing night before last — there is a marbling of dark where there was clear water amid the snow. Now and then a crack crosses it, & the water, oozing out has frozen on each side of it 2 or 3 inches thick, and sometimes as many feet wide. These give you a slight jolt. Off Clamshell I heard and saw a large flock of *Fringilla linaria* [Common Redpoll]  *Carduelis flammea* over the meadow no doubt it as these I saw on the 15th. (But I saw then, & on the tenth a larger & whiter bird also; may have been the bunting.) Suddenly they turn aside in their flight and dash across the river to a large white birch 15 rods off, which plainly they had distinguished so far. I afterward saw many more in the Potter swamp up the river. They were commonly brown or dusky above, streaked with yellowish white or ash and more or less white or ash beneath. Most had a crimson crown or frontlet and a few crimson neck and breast.



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very handsome. Some with a bright-crimson crown and clear-white breasts. I suspect that these were young males. They keep up an incessant twittering, varied from time to time with some mewing notes and occasionally for some unknown reason, they will all suddenly dash away with that universal loud note (twitter) like a bag of nuts They are busily clustered in the tops of the birches picking the seeds out of the catkins! and sustain themselves in all kinds of attitudes, sometimes head downwards while about this. Common as they are now — and were winter before last — I saw none last winter.

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 December 20, Wednesday: At 7 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) skated to Nawshawtuct or Lee's Hill (Gleason F6). In the afternoon he and [Ellery Channing](#) skated to Fair Haven Pond or Bay (Gleason J7), and Thoreau noted that it was “killing work” for Channing not only because of his skates but also because he wasn't using an “easy” skating technique.

The Boston [Evening Transcript](#) carried on its 1st page a notice:

Messrs. George W. Briggs & Co. have published an illustrated work entitled *Flower Fables*, by [Louisa May Alcott](#). It contains several agreeable sketches, in prose and verse, adapted to the capacity of intelligent young persons.⁸⁶

[Thoreau](#) was being written to by [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) in New Bedford.

*H. D. Thoreau
Dear Sir,
Yours of the 19th came
to hand this evening.
I shall therefore look for
you on Monday next.
My farm is 3 mi. north
of New Bedford. Say to
the conductor to leave you
at the Tarkiln Hill station,
where I or some of my folks
will be in readiness for you*

*Page 2
on the arrival of the evening
train. Should you intend
coming earlier in the day
please inform me in time.
I will get word to the Com^e*

86. [Louisa May Alcott](#). FLOWER FABLES. Boston MA: George W. Briggs & Co., 1855



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*of the N B Lyceum as
you desire.
If I do not hear from
you again, I shall pre-
pare for your arrival
as before.*

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*In the meantime I remain
Yours very truly
Danl Ricketson
Brooklawn
near New Bedford
Wednesday eveg. Dec 20. '54*



Dec. 20. 7 A.M. — To Hill.

[Transcript]

Said to be coldest morning as yet. The river appears to be frozen everywhere. Where was water last night is a firm bridge of ice this morning. The snow which has blown on to the ice has taken the form of regular star-shaped crystals, an inch in diameter. Sometimes these are arranged in a spear 3 feet long quite straight. I see the mother-o'-pearl tints now, at sunrise, on the clouds high over the eastern horizon before the sun has risen above the low bank in the east. The sky in the eastern horizon has that same greenish-vitreous, gem-like appearance which it, has at sundown, as if it were of perfectly clear glass, — with the green tint of a large mass of glass. Here are some crows already seeking their breakfast in the orchard, and I hear a red squirrel's reproof. The woodchoppers are making haste to their work far off, walking fast to keep warm, before the sun has risen, their ears and hands well covered, the dry, cold snow, squeaking under their feet. They will be warmer after they have been at work an hour.

P.M. — Skated to Fair Haven with C.

C.'s skates are not the best, and beside he is far from an easy skater, so that, as he said, it was killing work for him. Tine and again the perspiration actually dropped from his forehead on to the ice, and it froze in long icicles on his beard. Yet he kept up his spirits and his fun, said he [had] seen much more suffering than I, etc., etc.

It has been a glorious winter day, its elements so simple, — the sharp clear air, the white snow everywhere covering the earth, and the polished ice. Cold as it is, the sun seems warmer on my back even than in summer, as if its rays met with less obstruction. And then the air is so beautifully still; there is not an insect in the air, and hardly a leaf to rustle. If there is a grub out, [^you are sure to detect it] on the snow or ice. The shadows of the clam shell hills are beautifully blue as I look back half a mile at them, and, in some places, where the sun falls on it, the snow has a pinkish tinge. I am surprised to find how fast the dog can run in a straight line on the ice. I am not sure that I can beat him on skates, but I can turn much shorter.

DOG

It is very fine skating for the most part. All of the river that was not frozen [^before] & therefore not covered with snow on the 18th is now frozen quite smoothly; but in some places for a quarter of a mile it is uneven like frozen suds, in rounded pancakes, as when bread spews out in baking. At sundown or before, it begins to belch. It is so cold that only in one place did I see a drop of water flowing out on the ice.

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December 21, Thursday: [Stephen Collins Foster](#) signed a new publishing contract with Firth, Pond, & Co. which denied them the exclusivity they had henceforth enjoyed.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Walden Pond and Fair Haven Bay or Pond (Gleason J7) and came back home by going down the Sudbury River. Thoreau wrote in his journal:



Dec. 21st. pm. To Walden and Fair H. Ponds & down river.

[Transcript]

It snowed slightly this morning, so as to cover the [ground] $\frac{1}{2}$ inch deep. Walden is frozen over, apparently about 2 inches thick. It must have frozen, the whole of it, since the snow of the 18th probably the night of the 18th. It is very thickly [covered with] what C. calls ice-rosettes, *i.e.* [^]those small pinches of crystallized snow — as thickly as if it had snowed in that form. I think it is a sort of hoar frost on the ice. It was all done last night, for we see them thickly clustered about our skate-tracks on the river, where it was quite bare yesterday.

We are tempted to call these the finest days of the year. Take Fair Haven Pond, for instance, a perfectly level plain of white snow, untrodden as yet by any fisherman, surrounded by snow-clad hills, dark evergreen woods, and reddish oak leaves, so pure and still. The last rays of the sun falling on the Baker Farm reflect a clear pink color. I see the feathers of a partridge strewn along on the snow a long distance, the work of some hawk perhaps for there is no track.

What a grovelling appetite for profitless jest and amusement our countrymen have! Next to a good dinner, at least, they love a good joke, to have their sides tickled — to laugh sociably — as in the E they bathe and are shampooed. Curators of lyceums write to me:— DEAR SIR,— I hear that you have a lecture of some humor — will you do us the favor to read it before the Bungtown Institute?

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December 22, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by another surveyor, William Davis Tuttle.

{Page(s) missing}

made a very small plan of it (about 2 rods to an inch I should judge) & cast it up making 14 A 22 rods— The plan was so small (& so unskillfully drawn) that I told Mr W that very little reliance could be placed upon it in computing areas. Since then I have computed the area several times by the aid of traverse tables finding the Lat & Dep both in chains & decimals of a chain & in rods & dec of a rod & obtaining answers varying from 13^a106,1/2r to 13^a 11,9r. By calling the bearing of the 3^d course N 57 E & taking out the Lat & Dep in rods & decimals of a rod I made the area to be 13^a 109,57r. I find but little (.01 of a rod) diff between the Eastings & Westings & but .19 of a rod between the Northings & Southings— & in ballancing the survey I subtracted the Diff between the North & Southings from the Southing of the 7th course.

Will you have the kindness to inform me by what method you computed the Lat in question: if by plotting to what scale your plan was drawn, or if by the traverse table whether you took out the distances in chains or rods & to how many decimal places you found the Lat & Dep. of each course



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What is your general method of computing areas?— & What is the present variation of the needle in Concord?

Yours very respectfully.

W^m D. Tuttle.

[Thoreau](#) wrote to [H.G.O. Blake](#).

Concord Dec. 22nd '54

Mr Blake

[I w]ill lecture for your

[Lyceum on the 4]th of January next;

and I hope that I shall have time for

that good day out of doors. Mr

Cholmondeley is in Boston, yet perhaps

I may invite him to accompany me.

I have engaged to lecture at New-

Bedford on the 26th inst[,] stopping

with Daniel Ricketson 3 miles out

of town; and at Nantucket on

the 28th; so that I shall be gone

all next week. They say there is some

danger of being weather-bound at

Nantucket, but I see that others

run the same risk.

You had better acknowledge the

receipt of this at any rate, though

you should write nothing else, other-

wise I shall not know whether you

get it; but perhaps you will not

wait till you have seen me

to answer my letter. I will tell you

what I think of lecturing when

I see you.

Did you see the notice of Walden

Page 2

in the last Anti-Slavery Standard?

You will not be surprised if I tell

you that it reminded me of you.

Yrs

[Henry D. Thoreau.]

Blake: Signature cut out July 9, 1886 for Mrs. Abby Hutchin-

son [Patton]. The beginning of the letter on the opposite side

of this sheet shd. read 'I will lecture for your Lyceum

on the 4th' &c.

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[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR DECEMBER 22d]



December 23, Saturday, 1854: An earthquake in the harbor at Shimoda, [Japan](#) produced a tsunami that severely damaged that community's residences and public buildings and after 12 hours and 38 minutes would register on the tide gauge of San Francisco.

CALIFORNIA

Meanwhile, guess what: [underground](#), what was going around was coming around:

RUNAWAY SLAVES.

THE elopement of two favourite slaves belonging to Mr. Ball, of Covington, on one night last week, excited considerable talk over the river. The runaways were a man and his wife, valued at \$2,000, and heretofore considered to be so well satisfied with their situation that they have very frequently been allowed to come to Cincinnati on errands or for their own pleasure. Of course, this, according to Judge Nelson's decision, makes them free people, as it was held in the case which he decided that whenever a negro came within our boundaries, he became subject to our laws. Slaves sometimes run away because they are apprehensive of being sold down the river, but in this case there could have been no such fears, as they were well treated and their master would on no account have parted with them.

We are informed, on good authority, that from two to twenty runaway slaves pass through this city every week upon the underground railroad. They are aided by the directors of that enterprise, but are occasionally caught by an association to recapture fugitives.

This last, we are told, has an agent even among the ultra-Abolitionists. They obtain early information from all sections of the South, and, acting in concert with parties in Kentucky, are able occasionally to catch runaways who chance to pass through Cincinnati.

By this means and the occasional kidnapping of free negroes, these associated negro-catchers make money. They have differed among themselves on two occasions recently, relative to the division of the spoils, and it is likely that so much has leaked out that their operations will hereafter be much thwarted. The managers of the underground railroad are so deeply in earnest that several of them have offered to give sums of from fifty to one hundred dollars for the detection of spies among them. As they would pay any amount of money for this information and the

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[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR DECEMBER 23d]



December 24, Sunday: Joseph Joachim visited [Robert Schumann](#) at the insane asylum near Bonn. He was heartened by what he found and rushed to Düsseldorf to tell the good news to Clara Schumann and [Johannes Brahms](#).

Jules Massenet was awarded a troisième accessit in piano at the Paris Conservatoire.

At the second performance of [Hector Berlioz](#)'s L'enfance du Christ in the Salle Herz, the audience included Giuseppe Verdi, [Heinrich Heine](#), and [Francesca Gaetana Cosima Liszt](#) and Blandine Liszt.



Dec. 24. Some 3 inches of snow fell last night and this morning, concluding with a fine rain, which produced a slight glaze, the first of the winter. This gives the woods a hoary aspect — & increases the stillness by making the leaves immovable even in considerable wind.

[Transcript]

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December 25: Pueblo, Colorado Territory was besieged by Utes and Jicarilla Apaches, and 15 of the white settlers were killed. The warrior bands would continue raiding and looting over the next several weeks.



December 25, Monday: In San Francisco, Bishop Kip led Episcopal services at Grace Church.

St. Mary's Church was dedicated on California Street at Dupont Street.

CALIFORNIA

The diary of Nathaniel Arbuckle, a farmer of Delhi, New York, indicates that [Christmas](#) day was just another workday:

25 On the 21th of this month James Came home from John Murray's Sick but he went to work this morning again this is Christmas and a mild Day it is Thomas an Margarete is going Over to uncles Walters on a Visit it is good Sleighing wind South Sold to Samuel S Smith this day 151 Bushells of Oats Price 5/ Per Bushell Need Payment

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[Henry Thoreau](#) visited his literary admirer and correspondent [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) at his home “Brooklawn,” stopping off at [Harvard Library](#) along the way to check out William Wood’s NEW-ENGLAND’S PROSPECT; BEING A TRUE, LIVELY, AND EXPERIMENTAL DESCRIPTION OF THAT PART OF AMERICA, COMMONLY CALLED NEW ENGLAND (London: John Dawson, 1639).



He also checked out Gabriel Sagard-Théodat’s *LE GRAND VOYAGE DU PAYS DES HURONS* (Paris: Denys Moreau, 1632).



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[Friend Daniel](#)'s estate "Brooklawn," with his shanty⁸⁷ to the left:

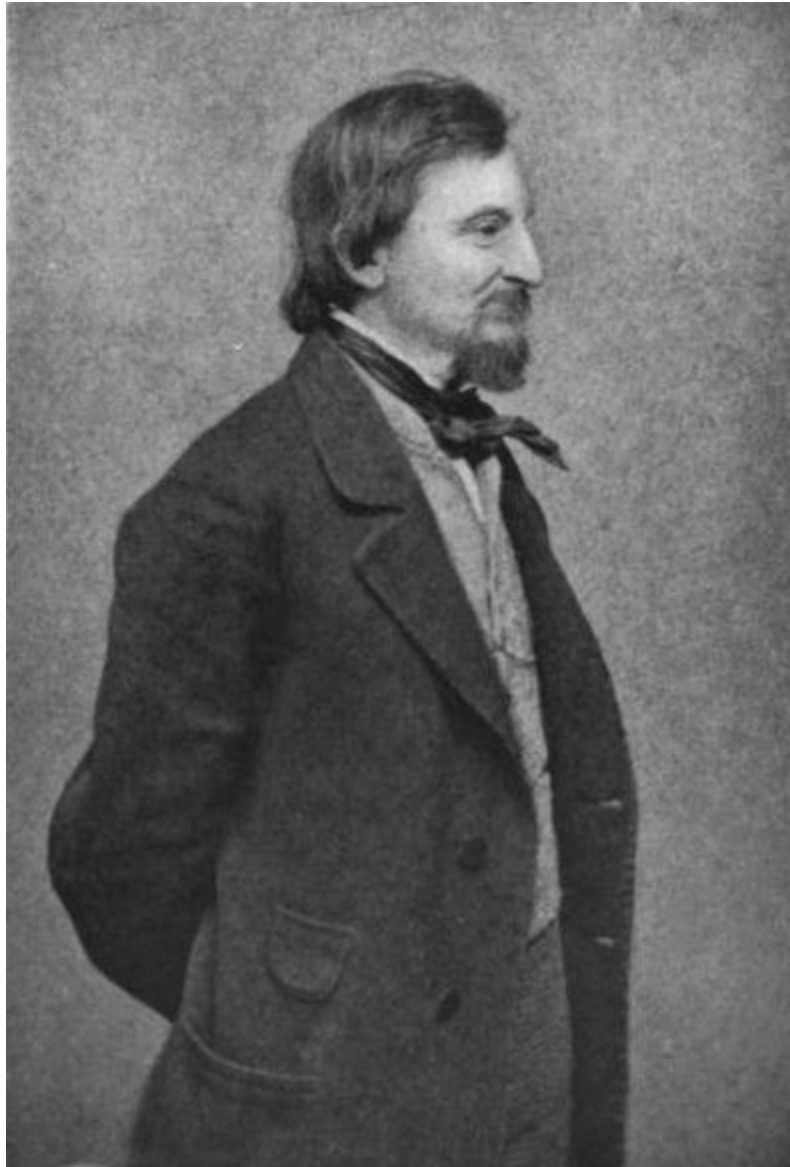


"There is no Frigate like a Book
To take us Lands away"
— Emily Dickinson

87. "D.R.'s Shanty is about half a dozen rods S.W. of his house ... is 12 x 14 feet, with 7 feet posts, with common pent roof. The roof is shingled, and the sides made of matched boards, and painted a light clay color, with chocolate colored blinds. Within it is not plastered and is open to the roof, showing the timbers and rafters. ... In front of the east window is a small box stove. ... Against the stove is a rude settle with a small cushion and pillow; and on the opposite side a large desk with some bookshelves above it. ... R. or one of his guests swept the Shanty each morning. The West and N.W. side is well-nigh covered with slips of paper on which are written some sentences or paragraphs from R.'s favorite books — many quotations celebrating retirement, country life, simplicity, humanity, sincerity etc. from Cowper and other English poets."

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By prearrangement, [Thoreau](#) was to be met at the Tarkiln Hill station in New Bedford, but evidently it was not [Friend Daniel](#) who met him, for on the following page is "By no means a bad likeness ... of the plain and upright Thoreau," a sketch by Ricketson of his first impressions of Thoreau coming up the walk at Brooklawn, while Ricketson was shoveling the snow off of it.



My first interview with him was so peculiar that I will venture to state it. The season was winter, a snow had lately fallen, and I was engaged in shovelling the accumulated mass from the entrance to my house, when I perceived a man walking toward me bearing an umbrella in one hand and a leather travelling-bag in the other. So unlike my ideal Thoreau, whom I had fancied, from the robust nature of his mind and habits of life, to be a man of unusual vigor and size, that I did not suspect, although I had expected him in the morning, that the slight, quaint-looking person before me was the Walden philosopher. There are few persons who had previously read his works that were not disappointed by his personal appearance. As he came near to me I gave him the usual salutation, and supposing him to be either a pedler or some way-traveller, he at once remarked, "You don't know me." The truth flashed on my mind, and concealing my own surprise I at once took him by the hand and led him to the room already prepared for him, feeling a kind of disappointment – a disappointment, however, which soon passed off, and never again obtruded itself to the philosopher's disadvantage. In fact, I soon began to see that Nature had dealt kindly by him, and that this apparently slender personage was physically capable of enduring far more than the ordinary class of men, although he had then begun to show signs of failure of strength in his knees.

According to [Friend Daniel](#)'s journal, from which he has abstracted above, they spent the evening chatting about various matters such as the climate, et cetera, of England and America, et cetera:

H.D. Thoreau arrived this P.M., spent evening conversing upon various matters, the climate, &c., of England and America, &c.



December 25: To New Bedford *via* Cambridge.

I think that I never saw a denser growth than the young white cedars in swamps on the Taunton and New Bedford Railroad. In most places it looked as if there was not room for a man to pass between the young trees. That part of the country is remarkably level and wooded. The evergreen prinus very commonly in the low ground. At New Bedford saw the casks of oil covered with seaweed to prevent fire; the weed holds moisture. Town not lively. Whalers abroad at this season.

Ricketson has Bewick's "British Birds," two vols.;

[Transcript]

HDT

WHAT?

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- " "[AE]sop's Fables," one vol.;
- " "Select Fables," one vol.,
larger (partly the same);
- " "Quadrupeds," one vol.

Has taken some pains to obtain them. The tail-pieces were the attraction to him. He suggested to Howitt his "Abodes of the Poets."



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December 26, Tuesday: Alliance-Marsch op.158 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in the Volksgarten, Vienna.

It was a fine, mild day, and [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) and [Henry Thoreau](#) walked through the woods to Tarkiln



Hill and then through Acushnet to the Friends Meeting House.



A fine mild spring-like day. Walked through the woods to Tarkiln Hill and through Acushnet to Friends' Meeting House with Henry D. Thoreau, author of Walden. Rode this P.M. with H.D.T. round White's factory. Louisa [Mrs. Louisa Sampson Ricketson] and the children, except Walton [son], attended Lyceum this evening. Lecture by Mr. Thoreau. Subject, "Getting a Living." I remained at home, not feeling well enough to attend.



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In the afternoon they rode around White's factory. In the evening Thoreau delivered "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" at the [New Bedford](#) lyceum but [Friend Daniel](#) didn't feel well enough to attend.

THOREAU'S SERMON

[Various versions of "LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE", variously titled, would be delivered:

- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on December 6, 1854 at Railroad Hall in [Providence](#)
- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on December 26, 1854 in the [New Bedford](#) Lyceum
- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on December 28, 1854 at the Athenaeum on [Nantucket Island](#)
- On January 4, 1855 in the [Worcester](#) Lyceum, as "The Connection between Man's Employment and His Higher Life"
- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on February 14, 1855 in the [Concord](#) Lyceum
- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on November 16, 1856 for the [Eagleswood](#) community
- "Getting a Living" on December 18, 1856 in the vestry of the Congregational Church of Amherst, [New Hampshire](#)
- "LIFE MISSPENT" on Sunday morning, October 9, 1859 to the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)'s 28th Congregational Society in Boston Music Hall
- "LIFE MISSPENT" on Sunday, September 9, 1860 at Welles Hall in Lowell.]



December 26, 1854: "Read not the Times. Read the Eternities."

THE  TIMES

GOD IN CONCORD by Jane Langton © 1992

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Read not the Times. Read the Eternities.
 “Life Without Principle”

The battle was joined. The news was out.
DEVELOPER EYES

ISBN 0-670-84260-5 — PS3562.A515G58

Viking Penguin

Penguin Books USA Inc.



December 26th at Ricketson's [[New Bedford](#)].

[Transcript]

I do not remember to have ever seen such a day as this in Concord. There is no snow here (though there has been excellent sleighing at Concord since the 5th ult.), but it is very muddy, the frost coming out of the ground as in spring with us. I went to walk in the woods with R.; it was wonderfully warm and pleasant, and the cockerels crowed just as in a spring day at home. I felt the winter breaking up in me, and if I had been at home I should have tried to write poetry. They told me that this was not a rare day there. That they had little or no winter such as we have, and it was owing to the influence of the Gulf Stream, which was only 60 miles from Nantucket at the nearest or 120 miles from them. In mid-winter when the wind was S.E. or even S.W. they frequently had days as warm and debilitating as in summer. There is a difference of a degree in latitude, between Concord and New Bedford, but far more in climate.

The American holly is quite common there, with its red berries still holding on, and is now their [Christmas](#) evergreen. I heard the lark sing, strong and sweet, and saw robins. R. lives in that part of N.B. 3 miles out of the town, called the Head of the River, *i.e.* the Acushnet River. There is a [Quaker](#) meeting-house there. Such an ugly shed without a tree or bush about it, which they call their meeting-house (without steeple of course), is altogether repulsive to me, like a powder-house or grave. And even the quietness and perhaps unworldliness of an aged Quaker has something ghostly and saddening about it — as it were a mere preparation for the grave.

R. said that pheasants from England (~~which~~ where they are not indigenous) had been imported to [Naushon](#), & were killed there.

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December 27, Wednesday: [Thomas Wilson Dorr](#) died in [Providence, Rhode Island](#).



[Henry Thoreau](#) took a steamer out of Hyannis port for [Nantucket Island](#) (becoming seasick on the rough waters), and spent the night at the home of Captain Edward W. Gardiner. The [New Bedford Evening Standard](#) (page 2, column 2) observed that the previous night's lecture, which it had advertised as being on the subject of "Getting a Living,"

displayed much thought, but was in some respects decidedly peculiar.



[Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) would later write to [Thoreau](#) to advise that he had

heard several sensible people speak well of your lecture

but would conclude that the lecture

was not generally understood.

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[Friend Daniel](#)'s attitude was shared by Charles W. Morgan, who had been present for the lecture and who afterward wrote in his journal:



*evening to the Lyceum where we had a lecture from the eccentric Henry J. [sic] Thoreau—
The Hermit author very caustic against the usual avocations & employments of the world
and a definition of what is true labour & true wages—audience very large & quiet—but I
think he puzzled them a little—*



Dec. 27. To Nantucket via Hyannis in misty rain.

[Transcript]

On Cape Cod saw the hills through the mist covered with cladonias. A head wind and rather rough passage of 3 hours to Nantucket, the water being 30 miles over. Captain Edward W. Gardiner (where I spent the evening) thought there was a beach at Barnegat similar to that at Cape Cod. Mr. Barney, formerly a Quaker minister there, who was at Gardiner's, told of one Bunker of Nantucket in old times, "who had eight sons, and steered each in his turn to the killing of a whale." Gardiner said you must have been a-whaling there before you could be married, and must have struck a whale before you could dance. They do not think much of crossing from Hyannis in a small boat, — in pleasant weather, that is, — but they can safely do it. A boy was drifted across thus in a storm in a rowboat about 2 years ago. By luck he struck Nantucket. The outline of the island is continually changing. The whalers now go chiefly to Behring's Straits, and everywhere between 35 N. and S. latitude and catch several kinds of whales. It was Edmund Gardiner of N.B. (a relative of Edward's) who was carried down by a whale, and Hussey of Nantucket who, I believe, was one to draw lots to see who should be eaten. As for communication with the mainland being interrupted, Gardiner remembers when 31 mails were landed at once, which, taking out Sundays, made 5 weeks & one day. The snow 10 days ago fell about 2 inches deep, but melted instantly.

At the Ocean House I copied from William Coffin's map of the town 1834. — this: 30,590 acres, including 3 isles beside. 1050 ac fresh ponds; about 750 peat swamp. Clay in all parts. But only granite or gneiss boulders. Population of island over 80

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December 28, Thursday: Commodore [Matthew Calbraith Perry](#), back from the Pacific, had expected to be greeted as a hero, and that hadn't happened, or at least hadn't happened to Perry's satisfaction. —So he had turned to [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#), the big-name ghostwriter of the era, asking for a book about the incredible intrepidity of his intimidation of the [Japanese](#), casting himself as the great white hope. On this day Hawthorne commented in his journal, "It would be a very desirable labor for a young literary man, or for that matter, an old one; for the world can scarcely have in reserve a less hackneyed theme than Japan." (Hawthorne, strangely reluctant to explore the mentality of the Great White Shark, would sic the stuffed-shirt wannabee on [Herman Melville](#), his transparent excuse being that Melville was great at writing that Pacific stuff, and then this commodious Commodore would attempt to himself author this book about himself — excreting what has been said to be a wooden monstrosity.)

US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS

On [Nantucket Island](#): Captain Gardiner carried [Henry Thoreau](#) in his carriage to Siasconset and they went up to the top of the lighthouse at Sancoty Head and then visited the Athenaeum's museum, seeing the "various South Sea implements, etc. etc., brought home by the whalers." In the evening Thoreau delivered "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" before the Athenaeum.



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THOREAU'S SERMON

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- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on December 6, 1854 at Railroad Hall in [Providence](#)
- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on December 26, 1854 in the [New Bedford](#) Lyceum
- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on December 28, 1854 at the Athenaeum on [Nantucket Island](#)
- On January 4, 1855 in the [Worcester](#) Lyceum, as "The Connection between Man's Employment and His Higher Life"
- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on February 14, 1855 in the [Concord](#) Lyceum
- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on November 16, 1856 for the [Eagleswood](#) community
- "Getting a Living" on December 18, 1856 in the vestry of the Congregational Church of Amherst, [New Hampshire](#)
- "LIFE MISSPENT" on Sunday morning, October 9, 1859 to the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)'s 28th Congregational Society in Boston Music Hall
- "LIFE MISSPENT" on Sunday, September 9, 1860 at Welles Hall in Lowell.]



Dec. 28th A misty rain as yesterday — Capt. Gardiner carried me to Siasconset in his carriage. He has got from 40 to 45 or 50 bushels of corn to an acre from his land. Wished to know how to distinguish guinea cocks from guinea hens — He is extensively engaged in raising pines on the island. There is not a tree to be seen, except such as are set out about houses. The land is worth commonly from 1 dollar to a dollar and a half. He showed me several lots of his — of different ages, — one tract of 300 acres sown in rows with a planter, where the young trees [[^]2 years old] were just beginning to green the ground, — & I saw one of Norway pine and our pitch mixed, 8 years old, which looked quite like a forest at a distance. ~~Some~~ The Norway pines had grown the fastest [[^]with a longer shoot] & had a bluer look at a distance more like the white pine. The am. pitch pines have a reddish, crisped look at top. Some are sown in rows, some broad-cast. At first he was alarmed to find that the ground moles had gone along in the furrows directly under the plants and so injured the roots as to kill many of the trees ~~xxx enough xxxxx~~ — & he ~~planted~~ [[^]sowed] over again. He was also discouraged to find that a sort of spindle-worm had killed the leading shoot of a great part of his neighbors' older trees. These plantations must very soon change the aspect of the island. His common pitch pine seed, obtained from the Cape, cost him about 20 dollars a bushel [[^]at least, about a dollar a quart] with the wings, and they told him it took about 80 bushels of cones to make one such bushel of seeds. I was surprised to hear that the Norway pine seed [[^]without the wings] imported from France, had cost not quite \$200 a bushel delivered at New York or Philadelphia. He has ordered 8 hogsheads (!!) of the last, clear wingless seeds, at this rate. I think he said it took about a gallon to sow an acre. He had tried to get white pine seed, but in vain. They [[^]cones] had not contained any of late (?).

[Transcript]

This looks as if he meant to sow a good part of the island, though he said he might sell some of the seed. It is an interesting enterprise.

Half-way to Siasconset I saw the old corn-hills where they had formerly cultivated, the authorities laying out a new tract for this purpose each year. This island must look exactly like a prairie, except that [[^]the view in clear weather] is bounded by the sea. Saw crows — saw and heard larks frequently — & saw robins — but most abundant, running along the ruts or circling about just over the ground in small flocks, what the inhabitants call snowbirds, a gray bunting-like bird about the size of the snow bunting. Can it be the seaside finch? or the Savannah sparrow? or the shore lark?

Gardiner said that they had pigeon — hen — and other haw[[^]k]s — but ~~when~~ there are no places for them to breed — also owls, which must breed, for he had seen their young. A few years ago some one imported a dozen partridges from the mainland, but ~~so that~~ though some were seen for a year or two, not one had been seen for some time, & they were thought to be extinct. He thought the raccoons, which had been very numerous, might have caught them. In Harrison days some coons were imported and turned loose, and they multiplied very fast and became quite a pest, killing hens, etc., and were killed in turn. Finally they turned out and hunted them with hounds and killed 75 at one time, since which he had not heard of any. There were foxes once, but none now, and no indigenous animal bigger than a "ground mole."

The nearest approach to woods that I saw was the swamps, where the blueberries, maples, etc., are higher than one's head. I saw, as I rode, high blueberry bushes [[^]& maple in the swamps] huckleberries, shrub oaks, uva-



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ursi (which he called mealy plum), gaultheria, beach plum, clethra, mayflower (well budded). Also withered poverty-grass — goldenrods — asters — In the swamps are cranberries, & I saw one carting the vines home to set out, which also many are doing. G. described what he made out to be “star-grass” as common. Saw at Siasconset perhaps fifty little houses, but almost every one empty. Saw some peculiar horse-carts for conveying fish up the bank, made like a wheelbarrow, with a whole iron-bound barrel for the wheel, a rude square box for the body, resting on the shafts, and the horse to draw it after him. The barrel makes a good wheel in the sand. They may get seaweed in them. A man asked 37 cents for a horsecart-load of seaweed carried a quarter of a mile from the shore. G. pointed out the house of a singular old hermit and genealogist [^over 70 years old] who, for 30 years at least, has lived alone and devoted his thoughts to genealogy. He knows the genealogy of the whole island, & a relative supports him by making genealogical charts from his dictation for those who will pay for them. ~~So that~~ He at last lives in a very filthy manner, & G. helped clean his house when he was absent about two years ago. They took up 3 barrels of dirt in his room. [^Ascended the lighthouse at Sancoty Head.] The mist still prevented my seeing off and around the island. I saw the eggs (?) of some creature in dry masses as big as my fist, like the skins of so many beans — on the beach. G. told me of a boy who, a few years since, stole near to some wild geese which had alighted, and, rushing on them, seized 2 before they could rise — & though he was obliged to let one go — secured the other. Visited the museum at the Athenæum. Various South Sea implements, etc., etc., brought home by whalers. The last Indian, not of pure blood, died this very month, & I saw his picture with a basket of huckleberries in his hand.

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THE ACTUAL JOURNAL
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December 29, Friday: At 7:30 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) left [Nantucket Island](#) on the return boat, heading back toward Concord.

[Robert Schumann](#) was cogent enough to receive Joseph Joachim at the asylum of Dr. Franz Richarz (1812-1887) near Bonn.

Rebels defeated Imperial forces at Whampoia near Canton.

The previous night in St. Paul, [Minnesota](#), the sleep of its citizens had been interrupted by frequent discharge of guns and pistols into the air in the vicinity of its jailhouse. A Dakota tribesman, U-hazy, was to be [hanged](#) on the outskirts of town despite an appeal made to Territorial Governor Willis A. Gorman by 40 of the “most respectable ladies of St. Paul,” including the wife of the previous governor. U-hazy had, in 1852 near Shakopee, according to the governor, murdered Mrs. Keener, a German woman, “without a shadow of excuse.” This white woman had been, the governor added, been “murdered by the side of a poor, but no doubt fond and devoted husband.” The governor explained that he was fearful that “others of his savage tribe might be tempted to hope for a like release, and commit a like offence; and the danger of such results would be far greater from Indians than from civilized man.” Therefore at 9:00AM Ramsey County Sheriff Abram M. Fridley began to erect his portable scaffold in one of the municipality’s most public places. “Crucify him!” the assembled Minnesota mob was shouting. Governor Gorman appeared, and declared that this execution was not going to take place within such a public venue. The sheriff disassembled the scaffold and, with the drunken crowd following after, relocated to an uninhabited prairie location in the vicinity of the town, St. Anthony Hill, where the scaffold was reassembled and at around 3:00PM the necessary business was concluded. The following day a local gazette, [The Daily Minnesotian](#) [*sic*], would fulsomely report on the scene:



Liquor was openly passed through the crowd, and the last moments of the poor Indian were disturbed by

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bacchanalian yells and cries. The crowd revealed the instincts of brutes and was composed of ruffians. A half drunken father could be seen holding in his arms a child, eager to see all; giddy, senseless girls and women chattered gaily with their attendants, and old women were seen competing with drunken ruffians for a place near the gallows.



Dec. 29th. Nantucket to Concord at 7½ Am. Still in mist. The fog was so thick that we were lost on the water; stopped and sounded many times. The clerk said the depth varied from 3 to 8 fathoms between the island & Cape. Whistled & ~~xxx~~ listened for the locomotive's answer, but probably heard only the echo of our own whistle at first, but at last the locomotive's whistle & the life-boat bell. I forgot to say yesterday that there was at one place an almost imperceptible rise not far west of Siasconset, to a slight ridge or swell running from Tom Never's Head northward to (John) Gibbs's Swamp. This conceals the town of Nantucket. (John Gibbs was the name of the Indian Philip came after.) This, seen a mile off through the mist which concealed the relative distance of the base and summit, appeared like an abrupt hill, though an extremely gradual swell. At the end of Obed Macy's History of Nantucket are some verses signed "Peter Folger, 1676." As for the sin which God would punish by the Indian war, —

[Transcript]

"Sure 't is not chiefly for those sins
that magistrates do name,"

but for the sin of persecution and the like, the banishing and whipping of godly men.

"The cause of this their suffering
was not for any sin,
But for the witness that they bare
against babes sprinkling."

x
x
x

"The church may now go stay at home,
there's nothing for to do;
Their work is all cut out by law,
and almost made up too.


x
x

"'T is like that some may think and say,
our war would not remain,
If so be that a thousand more
of natives were but slain.

"Alas! these are but foolish thoughts;
God can make more arise,
And if that there were none at all,
He can make war with flies."

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 December 30, Saturday: The case of Dred Scott v. Sandford was placed on the docket of the US Supreme Court.

It was argued at December term, 1855, and ordered to be reargued at the present term.




The Nantucket Weekly Mirror reported, on its page 2, that a corrective lecture by [Henry Thoreau](#) had not been well received by its intended audience:

That profound thinker Henry D. Thoreau, delivered a lecture last Thursday evening, which in point of originality has rarely been equalled. His object was to show man how to live; or perhaps we should better express it, by saying how not to live.— He condemned in toto, that mode of life which leads a man to labor for the gratification of bodily wants, regardless of the necessities of the soul. He would have the mind feed upon the works of nature, and not trouble itself about "the news." The manner in which men seek to accumulate wealth, was made the subject of some cutting sarcasms which excited much merriment among the audience; but probably no one will thereby be deterred from feasting his "greedy eye with gold" if an opportunity presents itself. We are inclined to the opinion that his views found few sympathizers among the audience; but his fearless independence cannot fail to secure him respect. Mr. T. never asks if a theory is popular, before identifying himself with it, but thinks and expresses his thoughts, leaving the croakers to annihilate him at their leisure.




[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR DECEMBER 30th]

 December 31, Sunday: At his [Unitarian](#) church in [Washington DC](#), the Reverend [Moncure Daniel Conway](#) delivered his sermon "The Old and the New."⁸⁸

AUTOBIOGRAPHY VOLUME II

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went on the Sudbury River to Fair Haven Bay or Pond (Gleason J7).

There was a great storm in northern Europe, causing considerable damage.

88.  [Moncure Daniel Conway](#). THE OLD AND THE NEW: A SERMON CONTAINING THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH IN WASHINGTON CITY. Preached on Sunday, December 31, 1854, by Moncure D. Conway, Minister of the Church. Pamphlet. Buell & Blanchard, Printers, Washington, 1855.

READ THE FULL TEXT



1854-1855



Dec. 31st 54 pm on river to F.H.P.

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[Transcript]

A beautiful, clear, not very cold day. The shadows on the snow are indigo-blue. The pines look very dark. The white oak leaves are a cinnamon-color, the black and red (?) oak leaves a reddish brown or leather-color. I see mice and rabbit and fox tracks on the meadow. Once a partridge rises from the alders and skims across the river at its widest part just before me; a fine sight. On the edge of A. Wheeler's cranberry meadow I see the track of an otter made since yesterday morning. How glorious the perfect stillness and peace of the winter landscape!

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December: Toward the end of the year, [Walter Savage Landor](#)'s sister Elizabeth died, and he wrote a memorial:

Sharp crocus wakes the froward year;
 In their old haunts birds reappear;
 From yonder elm, yet black with rain,
 The cushat looks deep down for grain
 Thrown on the gravel-walk; here comes
 The redbreast to the sill for crumbs.
 Fly off! fly off! I can not wait
 To welcome ye, as she of late.
 The earliest of my friends is gone.
 Alas! almost my only one!
 The few as dear, long wafted o'er,
 Await me on a sunnier shore.

Late in this year, ill and jobless, the [Reverend Charles Henry Appleton Dall](#) relocated with his wife [Caroline Wells Healey Dall](#), 9-year-old son William Healey Dall, and 5-year-old daughter Sarah Keene Healey Dall from Toronto, Canada to Newton, Massachusetts. While convalescing he would be told that Charles T. Brooks, just back from [India](#), had recommended to the American Unitarian Association the creation of a [Unitarian](#) mission there.

1854

January							February							March						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
29	30	31					26	27	28					26	27	28	29	30	31	
April							May							June						



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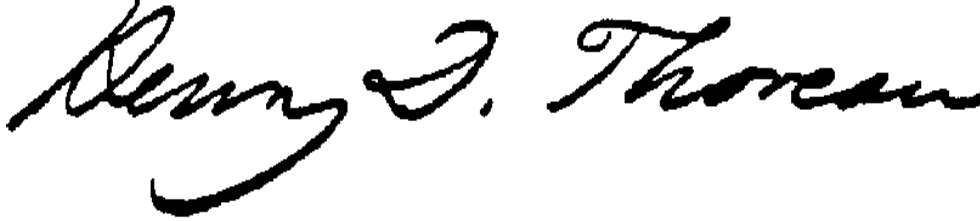
Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
July	August	September
Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
October	November	December
Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	Su Mo Tu We Th Fr Sa 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

[Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for January 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)
[Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for February 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)
[Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for March 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)
[Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for April 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)
[Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for May 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)
[Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for June 1854 \(æf. 36\)](#)
[Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for July 1854 \(æf. 36-37\)](#)
[Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for August 1854 \(æf. 37\)](#)
[Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for September 1854 \(æf. 37\)](#)
[Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for October 1854 \(æf. 37\)](#)
[Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for November 1854 \(æf. 37\)](#)
[Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for December 1854 \(æf. 37\)](#)

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 This was [Henry Thoreau](#)'s signature:



Thoreau noted in his journal that, as in the previous year, the water level in [Walden Pond](#) was dropping.

Here is the analysis made by Robert Milder in his REIMAGINING THOREAU (NY: Cambridge UP, 1995, page 119), of the revisions being made by Thoreau, during this 1852-1853-1854 timeframe, to drafts B and C of the [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) manuscript which had been laid by since 1849:

Unlike drafts B and C of 1849, which expand the initial manuscript written at the pond without substantively changing it, the revisions of 1852-1854 differ both from the 1849 WALDEN and, in subtle but important ways, from each other, though with considerable overlap. In draft D, for example, Thoreau elaborated his critique of getting and spending in "Economy," as he did at every stage of composition, but he also broke new ground in "The Ponds," which drafts E and F would develop with emphases peculiar to each of **those** stages. Sattelmeyer finds WALDEN the work of two Thoreaus, corresponding to its two phases of composition (1846-1849 and 1853-1854), with "an earlier self subsumed but still present, as it were, within the latter." I would divide the second period into identifiable substages and discriminate among three kinds of additions belonging to each: "dominant," "residual," and "emergent." "Dominant" refers to the pattern of the seasons that governed Thoreau's sense of structure and proportion throughout the period; "residual," to the amplification of existing chapters according to their original spirit; and "emergent," to those new and unforeseen elements reflective of Thoreau's development that intruded upon and modified his book within the framework of its seasonal plan.

In Boston, William Ticknor's publishing house became Ticknor & Fields by the addition of James T. Fields (1817-1881).

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The fusion of frog sperm and egg was observed under a microscope. For the first time we were getting a clue, as to just how it is that male and female share in the reproductive process.

The first “stereotypes” came into use in newspaper presses. That is, the type itself was no longer mounted upon the rotating cylinder of the press, but instead a cast replica of the type, termed a “stereotype,” was mounted. This achieved two efficiencies, it prevented type from working loose and flying into the press, and it freed up the type so that the setting of type for tomorrow’s newspaper could begin early. Another word for this semicircle of metal was “boilerplate.” (The use of the terms “stereotype” and “boilerplate” to refer, respectively, to hackneyed communication and to standardized communication, would develop in a later timeframe.)

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“Among all the manufactures which -for the mental and mechanical skill required in their prosecution, the remarkable steps by which they have attained their present rank, and the influence which they exert on society generally- claim our attention and admiration, none perhaps is more striking than the **manufacture of a book.**”



— George Dodd’s DAYS AT THE FACTORIES

HISTORY OF
THE BOOK

HISTORY OF
THE PRESS



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Speaking of stereotypes: Evidently there had been no cross-dressing in the [“The Institute of 1770”](#) predecessor of the Hasty Pudding club while Thoreau had been a member prior to 1837. For the cross-dressing which occurred in this year was evidently being considered an innovation:



The wearing of women's clothes continued to be explicitly forbidden through at least 1816; by 1825, with the list of infractions growing yearly longer, the prohibition in dress was characterized merely as “indecent in language, dress, or behaviour,” and this phrase recurs in the regulations for 1848. Conflict with the law, both university and civil, was probably inevitable for an undergraduate theater group whose increasing focus was on female impersonation. And, as we will see, in two specific instances the club's ambivalent attitude toward gender bending came to the fore. As early as 1854 some members of the Hasty Pudding had begun to specialize in female impersonation; Horace Furness '54 [who would later edit the Shakespeare Variorum] was the club's first diva, “The unparalleled Signorina Furness”; Charles Eliot Furness '63 kept up the family tradition.

Sometime during this year or the previous year, Thoreau made a fair copy of the penciled last part of his parable of the artist of Kouroo and made the final condensations and changes that would constitute the print H version. His parable of the unreality of temporality and of the unworthiness of the consequentialist attitude

was complete:



There was an artist ~~who lived~~ in the city of Kouroo who was ~~truly~~ disposed to strive after perfection. One day it came into his mind to make a staff. Having considered that in an imperfect work time is an ingredient, but into a perfect work time does not enter, he said to himself, It shall be perfect in all respects, though I should do nothing else in ~~all~~ my life. He proceeded instantly to the forest for wood, being resolved that it should not be made of unsuitable material; and as he searched for and rejected stick after stick, his friends gradually deserted him, for they grew old in their works and died, but ~~still~~ he grew not older by a moment. His singleness of purpose and resolution, and his elevated piety, endowed him, without his knowledge, with perennial youth. As he made no compromise with Time, Time kept out of his way, and only sighed at a distance because he could not overcome him. Before he had found a stock in all respects suitable the city of Kouroo was a hoary ruin, and he sat on one of its mounds to peel the stick. Before he had given it the proper shape the dynasty of the Candahars was at an end, and with the point of the stick he wrote the name of the last of that race in the sand, and then resumed his work. By the time he had smoothed and polished the staff Kalpa was no longer the pole-star; and ere he had put on the ferule and the head adorned with precious stones, Brahma had awoke and slumbered many times. But why do I stay to mention these things? When the finishing stroke was put to his work, it suddenly expanded before the eyes of the astonished artist into the fairest of all the creations of Brahma. He had made a new ~~universe~~ ^{^system} in making a staff, a world with full and fair proportions; in which, though the old cities and dynasties had passed away, fairer and more glorious ones had taken their places. And now he saw by the heap of shavings still fresh at his feet, that, for him and his work, the former lapse of time had been an illusion, and that no more time had elapsed than is required for a single scintillation from the brain of Brahma to fall on and inflame the tinder of a mortal brain. The material was pure, and his art was pure; how could the result be other~~wise~~ than wonderful?



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[Thomas Mayne Reid, Jr.](#)'s 1852 THE YOUNG VOYAGEURS; OR, THE BOY HUNTERS IN THE NORTH was reprinted in Boston by Ticknor, Reed, and Fields ([Henry Thoreau](#) would comment on his reading of this on March 9th in his journal, and make notes in his Indian Notebook #8 and Fact Book).



After this author's marriage to his publisher's young daughter there were any number of amusing incidents in and about London, as people continually presumed her to be his daughter (although she would fondly remember all these incidents, I will here relate but one):

The milliner, looking very much astonished, said: "I beg your pardon, sir, I thought the young lady was about returning to school, and that you were choosing a bonnet for her to take."

IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT IT IS MORTALS WHO CONSUME OUR HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS, FOR WHAT WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO DO IS EVADE THE RESTRICTIONS OF THE HUMAN LIFESPAN. (IMMORTALS, WITH NOTHING TO LIVE FOR, TAKE NO HEED OF OUR STORIES.)

Cadwallader Colden

"Stack of the Artist of Kouroo" Project

1854-1855

1854-1855





1854-1855

1854-1855



THE U.S. GRINNELL EXPEDITION IN SEARCH OF SIR JOHN FRANKLIN. A PERSONAL NARRATIVE. BY [ELISHA KENT KANE, M.D., U.S.N.](#) (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 329 & 331 Pearl Street, Franklin Square). [Henry Thoreau](#) would be able to consult this at the Concord Public Library, and it would figure in [WALDEN](#) and in "SUCCESSION OF FOREST TREES".

U.S. GRINNELL EXPEDITION

[WALDEN](#): What does Africa, -what does the West stand for? Is not our own interior white on the chart? black though it may prove, like the coast, when discovered. Is it the source of the Nile, or the Niger, or the Mississippi, or a North-West Passage around this continent, that we would find? Are these the problems which most concern mankind? Is Franklin the only man who is lost, that his wife should be so earnest to find him? Does Mr. Grinnell know where he himself is? Be rather the Mungo Park, the Lewis and Clarke and Frobisher, of your own streams and oceans; explore your own higher latitudes, -with shiploads of preserved meats to support you, if they be necessary; and pile the empty cans sky-high for a sign. Were preserved meats invented to preserve meat merely? Nay, be a Columbus to whole new continents and worlds within you, opening new channels, not of trade, but of thought. Every man is the lord of a realm beside which the earthly empire of the Czar is but a petty state, a hummock left by the ice. Yet some can be patriotic who have no *self-respect*, and sacrifice the greater to the less. They love the soil which makes their graves, but have no sympathy with the spirit which may still animate their clay. Patriotism is a maggot in their heads. What was the meaning of that South-Sea Exploring Expedition, with all its parade and expense, but an indirect recognition of the fact, that there are continents and seas in the moral world, to which every man is an isthmus or an inlet, yet unexplored by him, but that it is easier to sail many thousand miles through cold and storm and cannibals, in a government ship, with five hundred men and boys to assist one, than it is to explore the private sea, the Atlantic and Pacific Ocean of one's being alone.-

"Erret, et extremos alter scrutetur Iberos.
Plus habet hic vitæ, plus habet ille viæ."

Let them wander and scrutinize the outlandish Australians.
I have more of God, they more of the road.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

DR. ELISHA KENT KANE

LEWIS AND CLARK

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

MUNGO PARK




1854-1855

1854-1855

“SUCCESSION OF FOREST TREES”: In the planting of the seeds of most trees, the best gardeners do no more than follow Nature, though they may not know it. Generally, both large and small ones are most sure to germinate, and succeed best, when only beaten into the earth with the back of a spade, and then covered with leaves or straw. These results to which planters have arrived, remind us of the experience of Kane and his companions at the North, who, when learning to live in that climate, were surprised to find themselves steadily adopting the customs of the natives, simply becoming Esquimaux. So, when we experiment in planting forests, we find ourselves at last doing as Nature does. Would it not be well to consult with Nature in the outset? for she is the most extensive and experienced planter of us all, not excepting the Dukes of Athol.

DR. ELISHA KENT KANE
THE DUKES OF ATHOLL

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 [Asa Fitch](#) became the first professional [entomologist](#) of the New York State Agricultural Society (commissioned by the State of New York).



This made him the very 1st it's-my-day-job entomologist in the US of A (many of his notebooks are now at the Smithsonian Institution).

[Benedict Jaeger](#), assisted by [H.C. Preston, M.D.](#), produced a “valuable ornament for the parlor table” (that’s how he described it) entitled THE LIFE OF NORTH AMERICAN INSECTS ILLUSTRATED BY NUMEROUS COLORED

[HDT](#)[WHAT?](#)[INDEX](#)**1854-1855****1854-1855**

ENGRAVINGS AND NARRATIVES (Published for the Author. [Providence](#): Sayles, Miller and Simons, Printers).



NORTH AMERICAN INSECTS

This was initially issued in parts, six in all, each with a colored plate of insect illustrations prepared by [Dr. Washington Hoppin](#), and prefaced with a thumbnail biography of [Sir Hans Sloane, M.D.](#), who had founded the British Museum:



SIR HANS SLOANE, M.D.

Afterward the six parts were offered bound together as a book. What [Henry Thoreau](#) had in his personal library may have been this initial printing in six separate parts (and it would seem, out of good judgment or whatever, that he never made notes from this questionable source, in any of his Commonplace books or Indian notebooks, etc.). John D. Sherman's "Catalog 10 of Books on Insects" has characterized Professor Jaeger's volume as "famous as the most worthless of all American Insect books," presumably due to its lack of organization, lack of detailed information, egregious blunders, and "semi-philosophical meanderings."

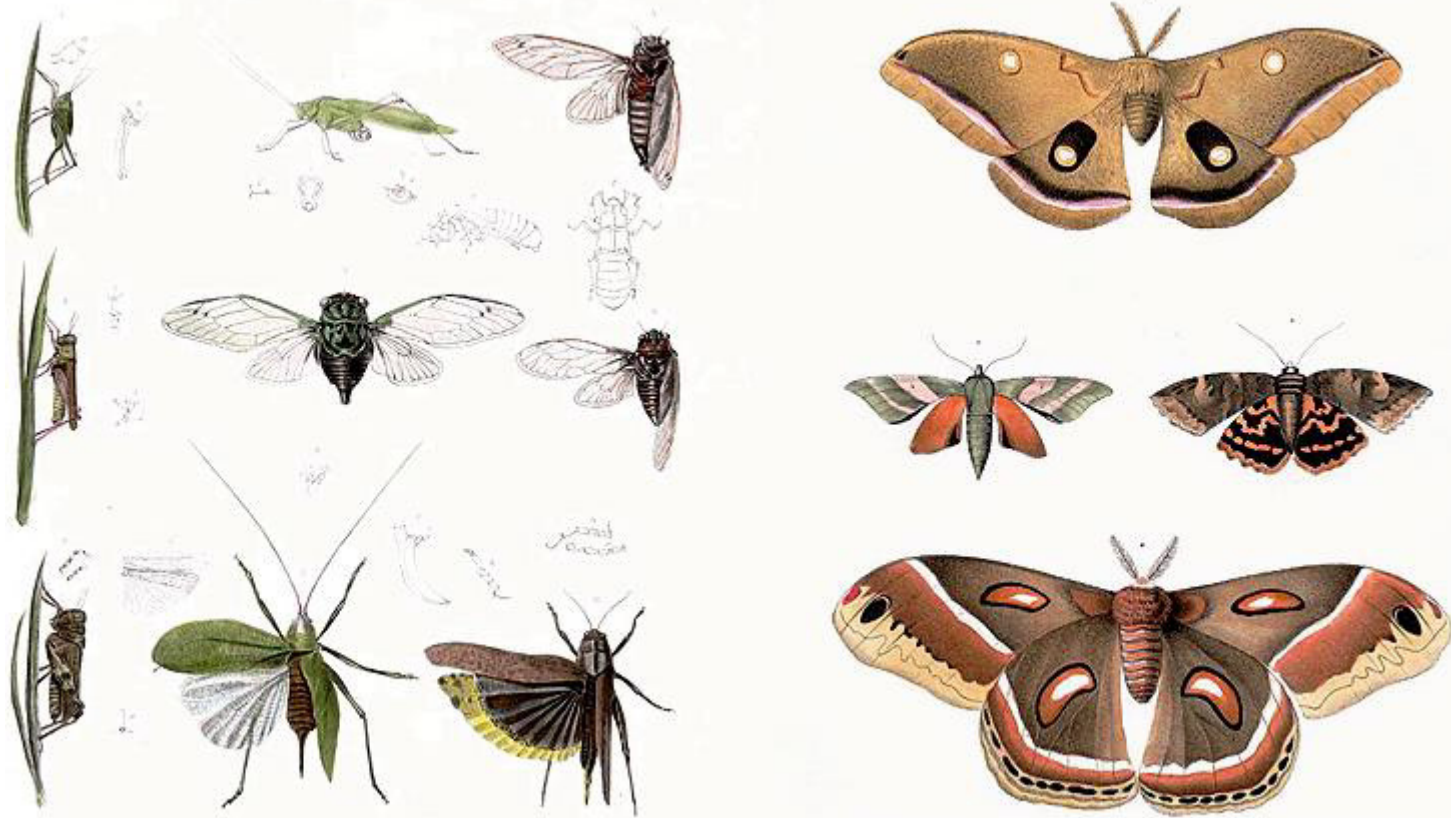
Now it is a fact that during my twenty-two years' residence in this country not a single summer has passed without my seeing some of these red-eyed Cicadas in one or other of the States,

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and hence I must maintain that the name "Seventeen-years Locust"
is neither correct nor proper.

At some point [Thoreau](#) would check out, from the [New Bedford, Massachusetts](#) library, a volume published in this year, [Ebenezer Emmons](#)'s INSECTS OF [NEW-YORK](#).

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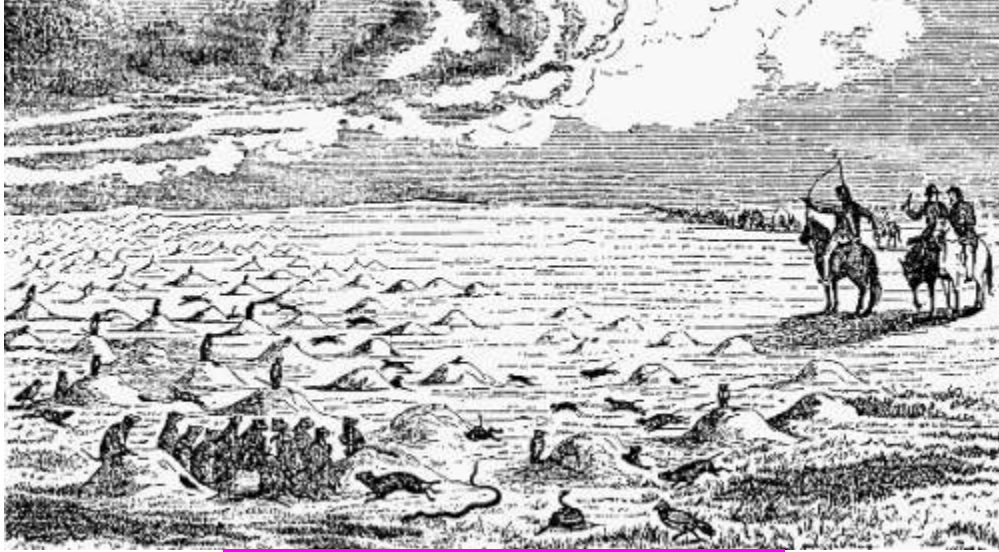
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In about this timeframe [Henry Thoreau](#) copied from the volumes of [Josiah Gregg](#)'s COMMERCE OF THE PRAIRIES: OR, THE JOURNAL OF A SANTA FE TRADER, DURING EIGHT EXPEDITIONS ACROSS THE GREAT WESTERN PRAIRIES, AND A RESIDENCE OF NEARLY NINE YEARS IN NORTHERN MEXICO (New York: Henry G. Langley) into his Indian Notebook #8.

MAP OF THE INDIAN TERRITORY



COMMERCE OF THE PRAIRIES

By “northern Mexico” this [tuberculosis](#) sufferer had intended what today we would consider as Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, and southern [California](#), although he did indeed during the [War upon Mexico](#) enter the Mexican state of Chihuahua (no, we’re not referring to that little doggie).

The sarape saltillero, or fancy blanket completes the picture. This peculiarly useful garment is commonly carried dangling carelessly across the pommel of the saddle except in bad weather when it is drawn over the shoulders, or the rider puts his head through a slit in the middle, while his whole person is thus effectually protected.

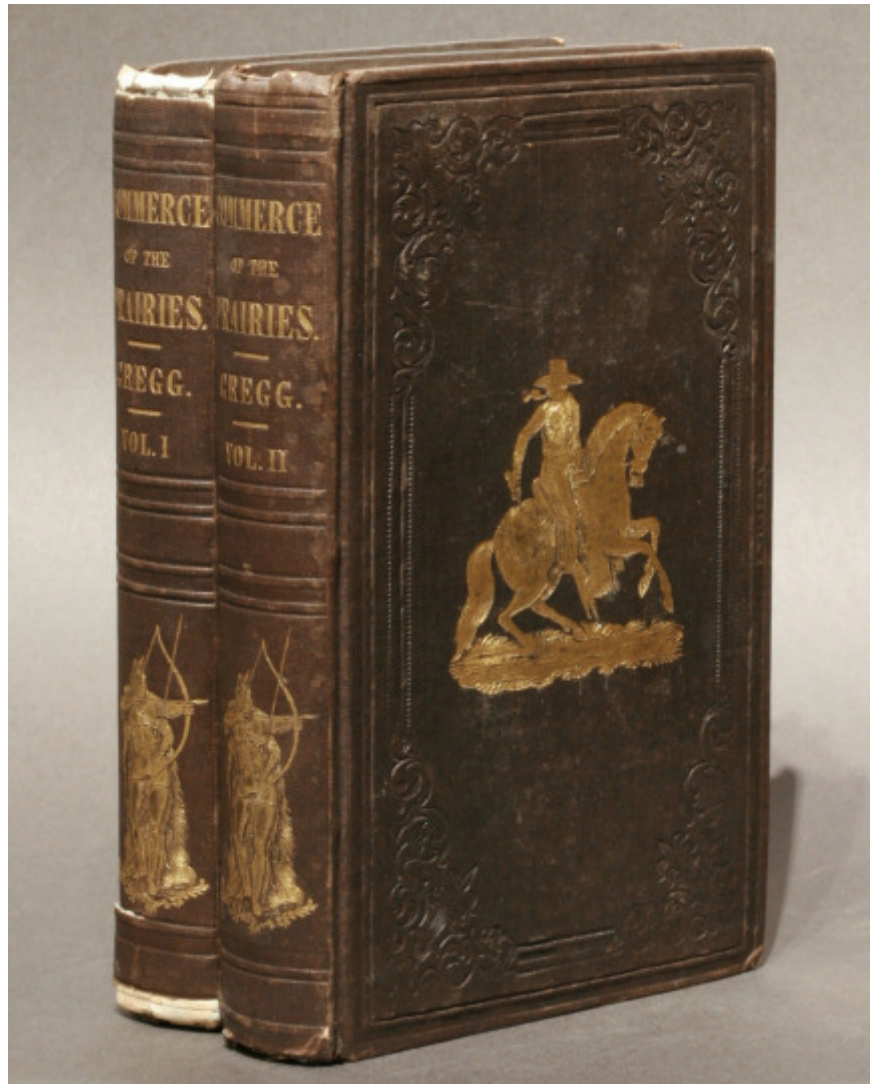
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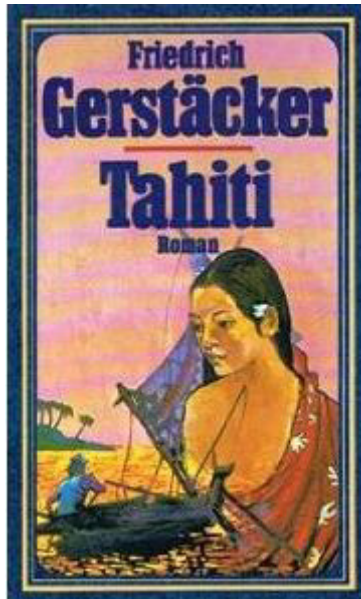
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 [Friedrich Gerstäcker](#)'s 2-volume *AUS ZWEI WELTTEILEN*, *FRITZ WILDAU'S ABENTEUER ZU WASSER UND ZU LANDE*, and *TAHITI*.



Publication in English translation of his 1844 *STREIF- UND JAGDZÜGE DURCH DIE VEREINIGTEN STAATEN NORDAMERICAS*, as *WILD SPORTS IN THE FAR WEST*. An 1859 revision would be read by [Henry Thoreau](#).⁸⁹

WILD WESTERN ARKANSAS

89. This original version of *WILD SPORTS IN THE FAR WEST* is available in a 1968 reprint from Duke UP, Durham, North Carolina.

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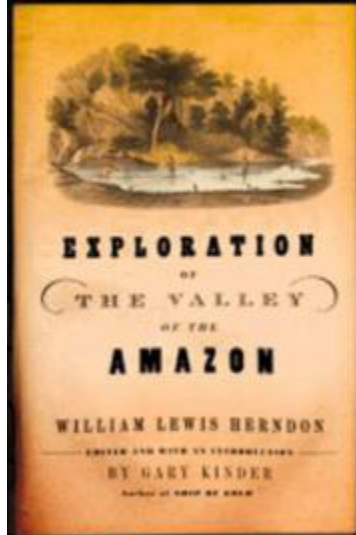
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His family moved into the Schloss Rosenau castle, as permanent guests of Duke Ernst II von Coburg.



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[Lardner Gibbon](#)'s portion, the 2d volume, of EXPLORATION OF THE VALLEY OF THE AMAZON, MADE UNDER DIRECTION OF THE NAVY DEPARTMENT was published in the District of Columbia. This also would be in the personal library of [Henry Thoreau](#), although I don't think Thoreau ever commented on Lieutenant Gibbon's part of the journey.



LT. GIBBON'S AMAZON

“LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE”: Lieutenant Herndon, whom our Government sent to explore the Amazon, and, it is said, to extend the area of Slavery, observed that there was wanting there “an industrious and active population, who know what the comforts of life are, and who have artificial wants to draw out the great resources of the country.” But what are the artificial wants to be encouraged? Not the love of luxuries, like the tobacco and slaves of, I believe, his native Virginia, nor the ice and granite and other material wealth of our native New England; nor are “the great resources of a country” that fertility or barrenness of soil which produces these. The chief want, in every State that I have been into, was a high and earnest purpose in its inhabitants. This alone draws out “the great resources” of Nature, and at last taxes her beyond her resources; for man naturally dies out of her. When we want culture more than potatoes, and illumination more than sugar-plums, then the great resources of a world are taxed and drawn out, and the result, or staple production, is, not slaves, nor operatives, but men, -those rare fruits called heroes, saints, poets, philosophers, and redeemers.



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THE GENESIS OF THE EARTH AND OF MAN appeared, anonymously edited by [Edward William Lane](#)'s nephew Reginald Stuart Poole.

A POPULAR ACCOUNT OF THE ANCIENT [EGYPTIANS](#). REVISED AND ABRIDGED FROM HIS LARGER WORK, BY [SIR J. GARDNER WILKINSON, D.C.L., F.R.S., &c.](#) IN TWO VOLUMES. *ILLUSTRATED WITH FIVE HUNDRED WOODCUTS* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 329 & 331 Pearl Street, Franklin Square; illustrated by Joseph Bonomi). These two volumes would be purchased for the personal library of Waldo Emerson and [Henry Thoreau](#) would immediately copy from them into his Fact Book, and into his Indian Notebook #8.

**ANCIENT EGYPT, VOL. I****ANCIENT EGYPT, VOL. II**

[Thoreau](#) copied from [George Douglas Brewerton](#)'s article in the previous August's [Harper's New Monthly Magazine](#) "A Ride with [Kit Carson](#) through the Great American Desert and the Rocky Mountains," into his Indian Notebook #8 (about something that had happened in 1848).

**A RIDE WITH KIT CARSON**



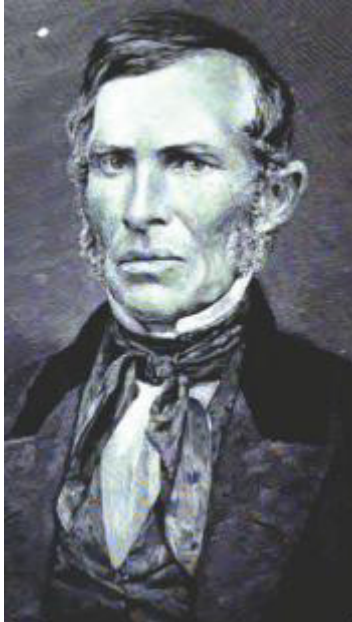
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**ONE COULD BE ELSEWHERE, AS ELSEWHERE DOES EXIST.
ONE CANNOT BE ELSEWHEN SINCE ELSEWHEN DOES NOT.
(TO THE WILLING MANY THINGS CAN BE EXPLAINED,
THAT FOR THE UNWILLING WILL REMAIN FOREVER MYSTERIOUS.)**

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[Ebenezer Emmons](#)'s AMERICAN GEOLOGY, CONTAINING A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES OF THE SCIENCE WITH FULL ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE CHARACTERISTIC AMERICAN FOSSILS (Albany: Gray, Sprague & Co.). Also, his A TREATISE UPON AMERICAN GEOLOGY.

**PIONEER OF SCIENCE**

Also, his INSECTS OF NEW-YORK (C. van Benthuyzen, publisher; this was the 5th volume of the author's AGRICULTURE OF [NEW-YORK](#)), which [Henry Thoreau](#) would check out of the [New Bedford](#) library while visiting [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) in 1857.

THE SCIENCE OF 1854

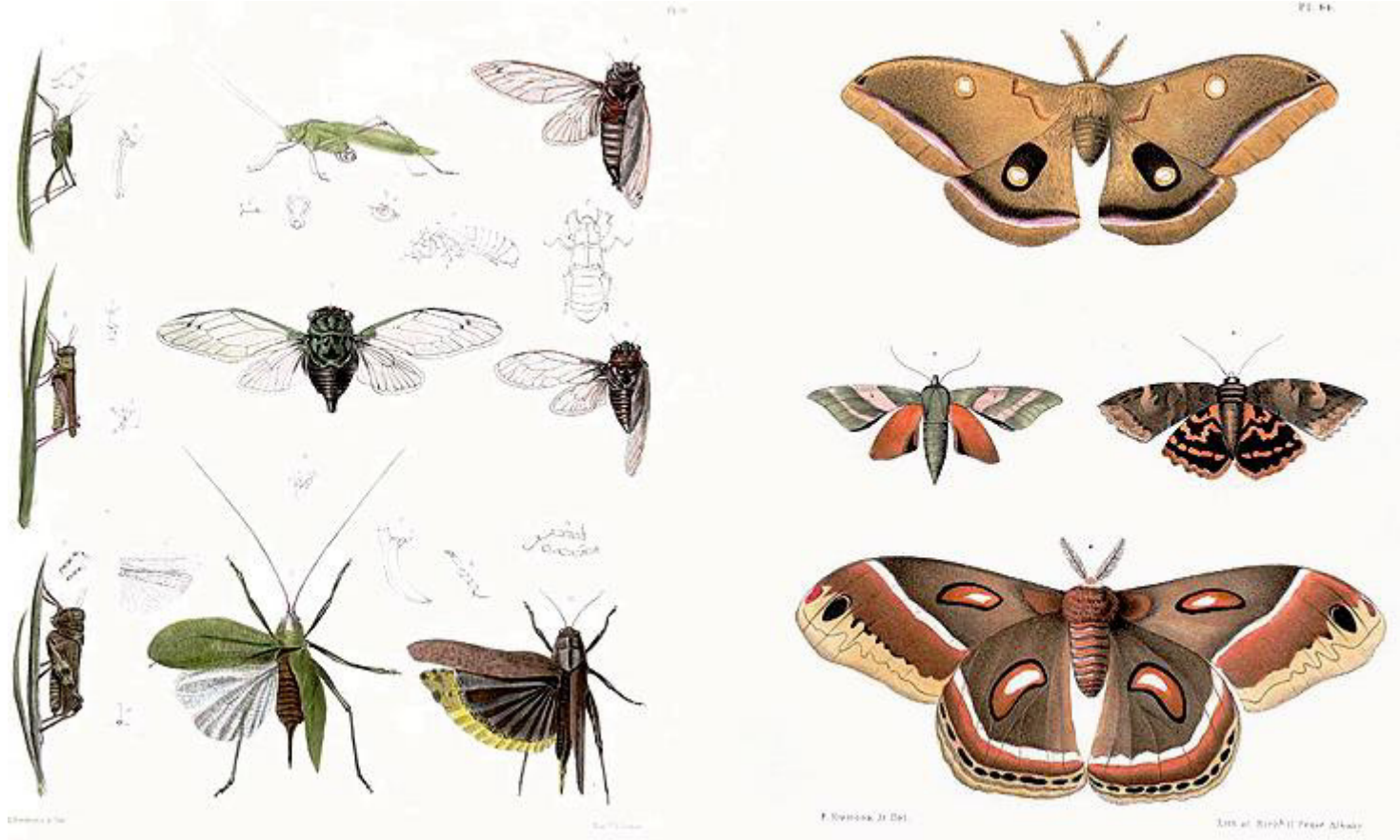
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 Everett and Laraine Fergenson's "A Personality Profile of [Henry David Thoreau](#): A New Method in Psycho-History" appeared in Raymond D. Gozzi's THOREAU'S PSYCHOLOGY (Lanham, Maryland: UP of America).

"A Review From Professor Ross's Seminar"

Everett Fergenson, Director of the Institute for Behaviorial Analysis at the Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken NJ, and his wife Laraine, sent some twenty Thoreau scholars a series of questions from the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) and asked them to answer the questions as they believed that [Henry David Thoreau](#) would have in 1854.  The Fergensons compiled the responses and determined how Thoreau's personality measured on the MMPI scales. Their outstanding finding is that Thoreau registered high on the "male sexual inversion scale," that he was [homoerotic](#) and was plagued by conflicts inhibiting his sexual expression.

As the Fergensons and some of the responding scholars point out, this type of psycho-historical research poses difficulties. 1stly, the test compared Thoreau to thirty-seven year old men living today and not his contemporaries. Thus, Thoreau's frank but platonic love for an [Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr.](#) has implications in this homophobic age of which Thoreau, Edmund, or Edmund's parents never would have dreamed. 2dly, the scholars note that Thoreau was an artist who played with words, and they wonder how literally he would have taken the test questions. 3dly, they recognize Thoreau as having several different personalities: the literary Thoreau, the biographical Thoreau, and the strident Thoreau would answer the questions on the test differently.

The Fergenson's results generally agree with the Thoreau we know from his work and biographies. While it is interesting to "give" a modern psychological test to a historical figure, I am not sure it reveals very much. The MMPI and other personality tests are designed chiefly to measure the personalities of people whose biographies are unknown. In Thoreau's case, we have both biography and a body of work to explore.

(Scott G. Kassner, January 29, 1986)



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At some point during this year [Emerson](#) noticed that [Thoreau](#) considered the gold rush immoral:

Thoreau thinks 'tis immoral to dig gold in California; immoral to leave creating value, & go to augmenting the representative of value, & so altering & diminishing real value, & that, of course, the fraud will appear. I conceive that work to be as innocent as any other speculating. Every man should do what he can; & he was created to augment some real value, & not for a speculator. When he leaves or postpones (as most men do) his proper work, & adopts some short or cunning method, as of watching markets, or farming in any manner the ignorance of people, as, in buying by the acre to sell by the foot, he is fraudulent, he is malefactor, so far; & is bringing society to bankruptcy. But nature watches over all this, too, & turns this malfeasance to some good. For, California gets peopled, subdued, civilised, in this fictitious way, & on this fiction a real prosperity is rooted & grown.

The recent [California](#) emigrant [John Rollin Ridge](#) (*Chee-squa-ta-law-ny*, “Yellow Bird”) produced a fiction entitled THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF [JOAQUIN MURIETA](#), THE CELEBRATED CALIFORNIA BANDIT. Of course there was no such person in California, actually, as this *bandito desesperado* Joaquin Murieta, but of course there were *banditos desesperados* aplenty in the territory to which Ridge had arrived in 1850, and this native author quite like his fictional character had been driven there by a white-man goldrush of sorts⁹⁰ — except that in Ridge’s real case as a native American, the “goldrush” in question had been the State-of-Georgia-sponsored rush of white citizens into the hilly [Cherokee](#) homelands. In the fiction in question, events have a catastrophic impact upon “Joaquin Murieta” and the author expresses this in a distinctively Emersonian spatial metaphor:

His soul swelled beyond its former boundaries, and the barriers of honor, rocked into atoms by the strong passion which shook his heart like an earthquake, crumbled around him. Then it was he declared ... [that] he would live henceforth for revenge and that his path should be marked with blood.

Because this book did not sell well, Ridge would need to write for the Sacramento [Bee](#) and the San Francisco [Herald](#). While editing the [Bee](#) he would advise his Indian relatives to trust in the federal government to protect their rights (he didn’t have any advice for the California natives, who in his view were an inferior people).

So, now, here below, I will supply you with the extrapolation which has been made upon this theme recently by a scholar named John Lowe in “‘I am Joaquin!’ Space and Freedom in Yellow Bird’s THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF JOAQUIN MURIETA, THE CELEBRATED CALIFORNIA BANDIT,” which is to be found as pages 104-21 in Helen Jaskoski’s EARLY NATIVE AMERICAN WRITING: NEW CRITICAL ESSAYS (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996):




Joaquin’s circle of self, thwarted in its effort to grow via the traditional American way (hard work, enterprise, and democratic leadership), has burst through into a new and larger circle through the passion of anger. His vow to cut a “bloody path”

90. A gold nugget weighing in at a full 162 pounds was discovered in the diggings in this year. This real event would have made a better story, of course, if for instance the guy who discovered it had weighed less than it did — but he didn’t.



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through the state as he avenges the wrongs done to him and his family presages ever-widening circles of spatial/criminal conquest. His path echoes several principles set down in the 1840s  by [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) in his seminal essay "CIRCLES". In one of literary [Transcendentalism](#)'s prime expressions, Emerson gives space and confinement elemental circular forms, first in the human eye and then, significantly, in nature, for the "horizon" formed by the eyes is the second circle man knows, a "primary figure" that is repeated "without end" in nature. Here and in his other essays, Emerson maps out an imperial self that properly seeks expansion and power, a process generated from and paralleled by nature itself. The concept of the self expressed by ever-expanding concentric circles has a demonic side as well; at one point in "Circles," Emerson relates his expanding circles of self to explosive anger, the kind Ridge's readers see expressed by Joaquin Murieta: "But the heart refuses to be imprisoned; in its first and narrowest pulses it already tends outward with a vast force and to immense and innumerable expansions." Theories of "self-reliance" and the "imperial self" fed into the ideology of manifest destiny. These ideas would find magnificent expression in other key works of the period, particularly in [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s exploration of the "magic circles" of the self in THE SCARLET LETTER (1850 ) and in [Herman Melville](#)'s critique of unleashed darker elements of Emersonian and capitalist ideology, MOBY-DICK (1851 ), books published only a few years before JOAQUIN. Although it is beyond the scope of this essay, THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF JOAQUIN MURIETA, THE CELEBRATED CALIFORNIA BANDIT surely demands to be studied alongside these books and other masterworks of what we have called the "American Renaissance," as well as with the works of newer members of the canon such as [Frederick Douglass](#), Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Harriet Jacobs.

GENERAL EVENTS OF 1854

JANUARY 1855

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for January 1855 \(æf. 37\) in the 1906 version](#)



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January: Review of [WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#) by [Edwin Morton](#) titled "Thoreau and His Books" in the [Harvard Magazine](#), 1:92, 98-99.

The sounds ... of Nature,—from the chirping sparrow to the screeching owl; from the lowing cow to the tr-r-o-o-nking frog,—who has ever heard them as [Thoreau] has? That chapter in *Walden on Sounds!* I have read and re-read it, always with delight. It deserves binding by itself, and gilt binding at that. * * * The critic will remember that Mr. Thoreau, where he speaks of "browsing Olive-Branches," has some excellent remarks upon newspapers; that reformers, alas! may sometimes begin with themselves; and that society, God knows, is bad enough. The question is, whether Mr. Thoreau takes the right way, or any way, to mend it. On the whole, we think he has no business with it. He has as distinct an office—mission, if you will—as any which Mr. Pierce can dispense, and many times more honorable. As the critic says, he is the "priest and poet of Nature," but, as the Night-song runs,—

"Zu was anderm taugt er nicht."

Further alluding to *Walden*, as a "book, though less artistic than its predecessor, yet in other respects superior, and in every way worthy the attention (he might have added, the admiration) of all honest readers," the critic disappears in the sunset cloud of this farewell apostrophe. Speaking of the discontent of some of his friends with society, and what prompted them to organize (?) the "Brook Farm Community," as "a true and noble aspiration for a better life," and of this joined with a certain "natural wildness" as shaping the destiny of Mr. Thoreau, he says: "This is the dæmon, seemingly satyrical, with a head for the stars, and hoofs to dig in the earth, which harries you now, as it ever will. This it is which causes you to shift from 'pencil-making,' 'huckleberrying,' or thy more praiseworthy and excellent surveying, 'from fear of doing a good business';—a Brahministic antipathy to what is, in a worldly sense, practical. This, which sent you dreaming down the Concord River, and up the Merrimack. Spiritually, poetically Quixotic pilgrimage! Rozinantean bark! Quaint navigators! Dreams infinitely beautiful, and sometimes, as the best dreams are, infinitely unintelligible!—Ah, Pliniogenes, if, in that divine pilgrimage, that Ulyssean wandering, (for the fates are not idle with thee,) thou hadst met with some Calypso's island, what dreams should we not have had!—And this, at last, which drove thee restless from a peaceful home, to live like a Gaboon savage, materially, at *Walden Pond*; spiritually, a true—the truest—prophet of Nature.

BROOK FARM

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



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George Eliot also reviewed [Henry Thoreau](#)'s literary production:

In other critical comments, Marian [Mary Anne Evans (Lewes) = "George Eliot"] criticized Kingsley's WESTWARD HO! for being too "parsonic," an amusing remark given her own penchant for sermonistic writing.... Marian was not duped by Tennyson's war cries [in MAUD], the male song of blood and sacrifice [in regard to the [Crimean War](#)]. Her taste is revealed in her approval of [Henry David Thoreau](#)'s [WALDEN](#), which she reviewed in the January 1855 issue of the [Westminster](#) [Review] and found quite sympathetic. How could she not have found a receptive voice in Thoreau's paean to solitude and to natural splendor! She found particularly gratifying his joining of a clear eye with a poetic strain which allowed him to turn realism into imaginative prose. But she also found [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#)'s "HIAWATHA" sympathetic, and recommended it; that she failed to object to its childish moralism cannot be explained.... In all, she covered over 150 books in her seven contributions to this segment of the [Westminster] Review, including favorable comments on [Harriet Beecher Stowe](#)'s DRED, in October 1856.



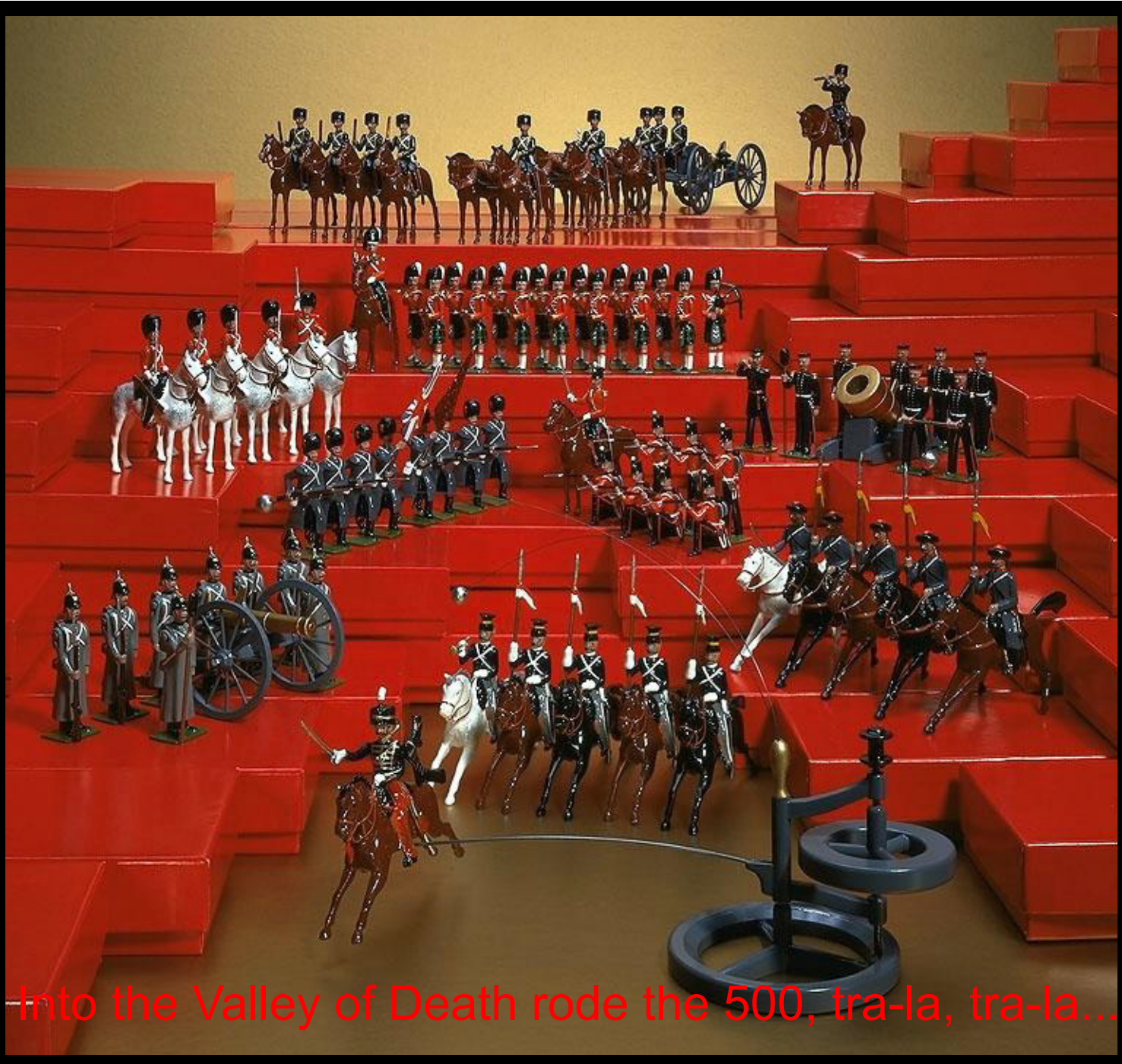
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Into the Valley of Death rode the 500, tra-la, tra-la...

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



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January 1, Monday: Two [New-York](#) lawyers, George Bissell and Jonathan Eveleth, formed Pennsylvania Rock Oil Company, the 1st oil company in the United States.

Ottawa, Ontario was incorporated as a city.

In Hamburg, Germany, an overflow of the Elbe River put the greater part of the city under water.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Ellery Channing](#) skated to Pantry Brook. The [Nantucket Island Inquirer](#) printed a long account of Thoreau's lecture, which began:

"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" By Henry D. Thoreau, Esq. Notwithstanding the damp, uncomfortable weather of Thursday evening, and the muddy streets, a large audience assembled to listen to the man who has rendered himself notorious by living, as his book asserts, in the woods, at an expense of about sixty dollars per year, in order that he might there hold free communion with Nature, and test for himself the happiness of a life without manual labor or conventional restraints. His lecture may have been desultory and marked by simplicity of manner; but not by paucity of ideas.¹

1. Nantucket [Inquirer](#), January 1, 1855, page 2, columns 2-3; Don Jordan, "Thoreau's Nantucket Lecture," [Thoreau Society Bulletin](#) 166 (Winter 1984): 1-3.

The reviewer went on for 128 sentences, the lengthiest contemporary newspaper summary of any of Thoreau's lectures. Clearly, "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" had been well received.

[Louisa May Alcott](#) began her diary for the new year:

Twenty-two Years Old

The principal event of the winter is the appearance of my book "Flower Fables." An edition of sixteen hundred. It has sold very well, and people seem to like it. I feel quite proud that the little tales that I wrote for Ellen E. when I was sixteen should now bring money and fame.

I will put in some of the notices as "varieties." Mothers are always foolish over their first-born.

Miss Wealthy Stevens paid for the book, and I received \$32.

ELLEN EMERSON

THE ALCOTT FAMILY



Jan. 1. P.M. — Skated to Pantry Brook with C.

All the tolerable skating was a narrow strip, often only 2 or 3 feet wide, between the frozen spew and the broken ice of the middle.

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

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January 2, Tuesday: Albany's new [New York State](#) Library building was opened to the public.



Daniel Head Taber (1824-1902) and his wife Matilda Haines Taber and two impressionable daughters had on January 1st, 1852 set forth from the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the Canadian Maritimes aboard the [Alice Mandell](#), Captain Fisher (built during 1851 at Rochester, New York), for a visit to the whaling grounds of the Pacific Ocean and the Arctic Ocean. The whaler had followed a southerly course to the Straits of Magellan, arriving at Tierra del Fuego on January 10th, arriving southwest of Valparaiso, Chile on January 31st, arriving at St. Carlos Harbor on February 4th, arriving at Valparaiso Harbor on February 11th, and 1st sighting the Hawaiian Islands on March 26th. On March 31st they had arrived at the harbor on Maui, on April 4th they had arrived in Pearl Harbor on Oahu, from whence they had gone a-whaling in the Bering Sea north of 50° latitude. On October 16th, 1853 they returned to Honolulu on Oahu after this northern expedition, on December 1, 1853 they left Honolulu to travel south by way of Hauhin in the Society Islands back around the horn and north to Ascension Island in the Atlantic Ocean, and then on this day, January 2d, 1855 –3 years and a day later– they were arriving in New Bedford harbor. We are allowed to hope that their hold was chock full of barrels of precious whale oil!



Jan. 2. I see, in the path near Goose Pond, where ~~locomotives [^whistle] & the life boats-bels,~~ the rabbits have eaten the bark of smooth sumachs & young locusts rising above the snow [^also barberry.] Yesterday we saw the pink light on the snow within a rod of us. The shadow of the bridges, etc., on the snow was a dark indigo blue.

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL
THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



January 3, Wednesday: The federal Congress confirmed the transference of the “Boston Corner” tract from Massachusetts to [New York State](#).

The [Minnesota](#) legislature voted to send an immigration commissioner to [New-York City](#). Beginning in the month of June, Eugene Burnand of St. Paul would propagandize on Manhattan Island, urging denizens of Gotham to emigrate west and create new, more expansive, homes in the Minnesota Territory.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JANUARY 3d]

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January 4, Thursday: During Alexander Ramsey's tenure as mayor the city council of St. Paul, [Minnesota](#) replaced a volunteer hook and ladder fire company with that municipality's 1st professional fire department, which inherited all the fire equipment of the volunteers, including an engine, ladders, ropes, hooks, and axes, and also a church bell that had been donated by the Reverend Edward D. Neill.

An American brigantine carrying rice, the *SV Tartar*, ran aground and was wrecked on East Key, a 4-acre island only 2 meters above sea level, in the Dry Tortugas group due west of Key West, Florida.

[Henry Thoreau](#) made the following entry in his INDIAN NOTEBOOK by mistake, rather than in his Journal: "Being in Worcester today Jan 4th '55 Mr Haven at the Antiquarian Library showed me a passage in Brereton? [illegible to Thoreau; the [Reverend John Brereton](#) was the author of THE DISCOVERY OF VIRGINIA] of [Gosnold](#)'s voyage in which the copper belt of tribes — the bracelets &c are described as in Lescarbot's — He spoke of an inscription found over 900 miles west of Montreal & mentioned by Kalm in some arctic language. Did I extract it? Of an English inscription on mica found in the breast of an Indian's remains (I think at grave yards) dated about the time of the early Virginia settlements. Also prob[ably] an Alabama hoax an individual Lat[in] inscription on stone dates 1200 something."

PETER KALM
HOAXES



[Thoreau](#) delivered "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" at the Worcester Lyceum. After the lecture Stephen C. Earle, sixteen years old, wrote in his journal

Went in the evening to a lyceum lecture by Thorough [sic] of Concord. It was a strange sort of a lecture. The subject was "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul." His lecture did not seem to have much to do with his subject. I slept part of the evening.¹

1. THE JOURNALS OF STEPHEN C. EARLE, 1853-1858, ed. Albert B. Southwick, Worcester MA: Worcester Bicentennial Commission, 1976, page 30. (Joel Myerson found this piece of information.)

No doubt at least one other member of the audience — Thoreau's friend [H.G.O. Blake](#) — was stimulated by what he heard. Blake, who had been corresponding with Thoreau for 7 years, could hardly have overlooked that many of the ideas and images in the letters he had received from Thoreau were in "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT".

THOREAU'S SERMON

[Various versions of "LIFE WITHOUT PRINCIPLE", variously titled, would be delivered:

- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on December 6, 1854 at Railroad Hall in [Providence](#)
- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on December 26, 1854 in the [New Bedford](#) Lyceum
- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on December 28, 1854 at the Athenaeum on [Nantucket Island](#)
- On January 4, 1855 in the [Worcester](#) Lyceum, as "The Connection between Man's Employment and His Higher Life"
- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on February 14, 1855 in the [Concord](#) Lyceum
- "WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT" on November 16, 1856 for the [Eagleswood](#) community
- "Getting a Living" on December 18, 1856 in the vestry of the Congregational Church of Amherst, [New Hampshire](#)
- "LIFE MISSPENT" on Sunday morning, October 9, 1859 to the Reverend [Theodore Parker](#)'s 28th Congregational Society in Boston Music Hall



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- “LIFE MISSPENT” on Sunday, September 9, 1860 at Welles Hall in Lowell.]

[Thoreau](#) was written to by [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) in [New Bedford](#).

*Shanty, Brooklawn
Thursday p. m
Jan 4, 1855.
Dear Walden,
We should be glad
to hear of your safe arrival
home from your ‘perils by land
and by flood’ and as we
are not likely to know of this
unless you receive a strong
hint I just drop a line for
that end. Your visit short*

Page 2
*as it was gave us all at Brooklawn
much satisfaction.
I should be glad when you
come again next summer and
cruise around with us.
I regret I was unusually unwell
when you were here, ~~which~~ as
you undoubtedly perceive
of my complaints.
I am just starting for a walk
& as I expect to pass our*

Page 3
*village post office thought it
a good time to write you.
I trust you & your comrade
Channing will have many
good times this winter.
I may possibly drop in on you for
a few hours at the end of this month
when I expect to be in Boston.
Excuse haste —
Yours very truly
Daniel Ricketson
P. S.
Mrs. R. & children send kind regards.*

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That evening [Abraham Lincoln](#) spoke at the statehouse in Springfield, Illinois before a group seeking to encourage black residents of Illinois to please go away, please go back to Africa, to [Liberia](#) (evidently an offshoot of the [American Colonization Society](#)). From where you do not belong to where you belong. Surely you want to make us white Americans so, so very happy! A newspaper would report:

Mr. Lincoln was emphatically non-committal, and no man could have handled the subject with more grace and ... tact. He stated that it was a subject entered into by men of all parties and shades of thought, and that if it could be accomplished without trouble ... he would be in favor of the project.... No one can object to this position.



Jan. 4th 55 To Worcester to lecture. —

[Transcript]

Visited the Antiquarian Library of 22 or 3 000 vols. It is richer in pamphlets & newspapers than Harvard. One alcove contains Cotton Mather's library, chiefly theological works, reading which exclusively you might live in his days and believe in witchcraft. Old leather-bound tomes, many of them as black externally as if they had been charred with fire. Time and fire have the same effect. Haven said that the Rev. Mr. Somebody had spent almost every day for [[^]the past] a year in that ~~year~~ alcove. Saw after my lecture a young negro [[^]who introduced himself as] a native of Africa, Leo L. Lloyd, who lectures on "Young Africa!" I never heard of anything but old Africa before.

Higginson told me of a simple, strong-minded man named Dexter Broad, who was at my lecture, whom I should see.

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January 5, Friday: [King Camp Gillette](#) was born.

Ramón Castilla began a 3d term as President of Peru.

[Waldo Emerson](#) told [Henry Thoreau](#) of a J.B. Hill of Bangor, Maine:



who was much interested in ... "Walden," but relished it merely as a capital satire and joke, and even thought that the survey and map of the pond were not real, but a caricature of the Coast Surveys.



Jan. 5th. A.M. — Walked to Quinsigamond Pond via Quinsigamond Village, to southerly end, & returned by Floating Bridge.

[Transcript]

Saw the straw-built wigwam of an Indian from St. Louis (Rapids?), Canada, — apparently a half-breed. Not being able to buy straw, he had made it chiefly of dry grass, which he had cut in a meadow with his knife. It was against a bank and partly of earth all round, the straw or grass laid on horizontal poles and kept down by similar ones outside, like our thatching. Makes them of straw often in Canada. Can make one, if he has the straw, in one day. The door, on hinges, was of straw also, put on perpendicularly, pointed at top to fit the roof. The roof steep, six or eight inches thick. He was making baskets wholly of sugar maple; could find no black ash. Sewed or bound the edge with maple also. Did not look up once while [we] were there. There was a fireplace of stone, oven-like, running out one side and covered with earth. It was the nest of a large meadow mouse. Had he ever hunted moose? When he was down at Green Island (~~Greenland?~~). Where was that? Oh, far down, very far! Caught seals there. No books down that way.

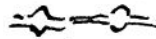
Saw men catching minnows for fishing through large holes in the ice of the Blackstone. At Quinsigamond Village, a Mr. Washburn showed me the wire rolling and drawing mill in which he is concerned. All sorts of scrap iron is first heated to a welding heat in masses of about two hundredweight, then rolled between vast iron rollers in successive grooves till it is reduced to long rods little more than [an] inch in diameter. These are cut



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up by powerful shears into lengths of about three feet, heated again, and rolled between other rollers in grooves successively of various forms, — square, oval, round, diamond, etc.,



which part of the work only one man in the concern fully understood and kept secret. It was here rolled and reduced to a large-sized wire maybe $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch in diameter, of which screws are made. At this stage, first, it begins to be *drawn*, though it must be heated again in the course of the drawing to restore its ductility. Make a great deal of telegraph-wire, and for pail-bails, etc. About twenty miles of telegraph-wire in a day, of the best Swedish iron for strength. Cannot make so good iron in this country, because we cannot afford to work it over so much, labor being higher. Said they had but few competitors now in making telegraph-wire, all the mills in England being just now engaged in making wire for telegraph between England and Sevastopol. These were the first wheels turned by the Blackstone. Sometimes their great wheel breaks, yielding to the centrifugal force, though it is one man's duty to watch it, and immense masses are thrown through the roof or sides of the building. They commonly hear premonitory symptoms, when all run. saw a part of the glowing mass which had been heated to a welding heat, ready to be rolled, but had dropped on its way. I could still trace the outlines of the various scraps which composed it, — screws, bolts, bar iron, an old axe curiously twisted, etc., etc., — all which by mere pressure would have been rolled into a homogeneous mass. It was now in the condition of many a piece of composition, which, however, mere compression would weld together into a homogeneous mass or a continuous rod. Washburn said the workmen were like sailors; their work was exciting and they drank more spirit than other laborers. In hot weather would sometimes drink 2 quarts of water an hour and sweat as much. If they could not sweat, left off work. Showed me a peculiar coarse yellow sand which they imported from the shore of Long Island, whose quartz, examined by a microscope, was seen to be perfect crystals. This they used on the floor of their furnace to repair and level it when their iron bars had furrowed it. In the cavernous furnace I saw the roof *dripping* with dark stalactites from the mortar and bricks. In one place they boiled the wire in water and vitriol, which cleaned it and ate out grease and other foreign particles. Wire is hard drawn when it is rapidly reduced, *i.e.* from one size to another — much smaller. Higginson showed me a new translation of the Vishnu Sarma. Spoke of the autobiography of a felon older than Stephen I3urroughs, one Fitch of Revolutionary days.

R. W. E. told [of] Mr. Hill, his classmate, of Bangor, who was much interested in my "Walden," but relished it merely as a capital satire and joke, and even thought that the survey and map of the pond were not real, but a caricature of the Coast Surveys. Also of Mr. Frost, the botanist, of Brattleboro, who has found five or six new species of lichens thereabouts. George Emerson is aware that he has confounded two black oaks. One is found on Nantucket. Is it not the *Quercus nigra*, and have we not got it in C.?

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January 6, Saturday: A combined force of French and Imperial Chinese troops attacked [Shanghai](#), held by the Small Sword Society. Though the struggle was furious, the attackers were driven back.

CHINESE CIVIL WAR

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) in [New Bedford](#). Friend Ricketson learned of Thoreau's experience, lecturing on [Nantucket Island](#):

*Concord Mass Jan 6th
1855*

*Mr Ricketson,
I am pleased to hear from the shanty whose inside and occupant
I have seen. I had a very pleasant time at Brooklawn, as you know,*



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— *and thereafter at Nantucket. I was obliged to pay the usual tribute to the sea, but it was more than made up to me by the hospitality of the Nantucketers. Tell Arthur that I can now compare notes with him, for though I went neither before nor behind the mast, since we had n't any — I went with my head hanging over the side all the way. In spite of all my experience I persisted in reading to the Nantucket people the lecture which I read at New Bedford, and I found them to be the very audience for me. I got home Friday night after being lost in the fog off Hyannis.*

I have not yet found a new jacknife but I had a glorious skating with channing the other day on the skates found long ago.

Mr Cholmondeley sailed for England direct in the America on the 3^d — after spending a night with me. He thinks even to go to the east & enlist!

Last night I returned from lecturing in Worcester—

I shall be glad to see you when you come to Boston, as will also my mother & sister who know something about you as an abolitionist.

Come directly to our house.

Please remember me to Mrs Ricketson, & also to the

{One-half page missing}

young folks

Yrs

Henry D Thoreau

Although the thoughts Thoreau offered in his lecture on Nantucket had definitely not been accepted, and there are newspaper reviews that reveal this non-acceptance (“We are inclined to the opinion that his views found few sympathizers among the audience”), generations of Thoreau scholars have inferred from the above remark “I found them to be the very audience for me,” that his own consideration had been inaccurate, supposing that his ideas had been embraced when they had not. I do not sympathize with such an assessment. In my own mind, Thoreau’s remark was decidedly ironic — in my own mind, what he was saying here was that this particular audience had definitely been the sort of audience that stood in dire need of such a corrective. He had been administering to them the moral corrective that they needed, and as we all know very well, the moral corrective that an audience needs is the very last thing it will ever be eager to embrace. By this ironic remark Thoreau was acknowledging that what he had had to offer had been anything but pleasing, anything but acceptable, anything but a “crowd-pleaser.” Thoreau did not, like Emerson, pander.

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"Nobody ever bought a product that made them feel worse."

— [George W. Bush](#)



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[Giacomo Costantino Beltrami](#) died at the age of 76, presumably in the small “Franciscan” cell he had constructed for himself in his large palazzo on his Azienda estate in Filottrano, Ancona, [Italy](#).

The knick-nacks he had brought back from his travels in [Minnesota](#) and [Mexico](#) are now on display in the glass cases of the Beltrami Museum in Filottrano, for what that is worth. A bronze bust has been sculpted by Vittorio Morelli:



Jan. 6th. P.M. — To Great Meadows.

Saw one of those silver-gray cocoons which are so securely attached by the silk being wound round the leaf-stalk and the twig. This was more than a year old and empty and, having been attached to a red maple shoot, a foot or more above the meadow, it had girdled it just as a wire might, it was so unyielding— [^& the wood had overgrown it on each side.]

What is that small insect with large, slender wings, which I see on the snow or fluttering in the air these days? Also some little black beetles on the ice of the meadow, ten rods from shore.

In many places near the shore the water has overflowed the ice to a great extent and frozen again with water between of a yellowish tinge, in which you see motes moving about as you walk. The skating is for the most part spoiled by a thin, crispy ice on top of the old ice, which is frozen in great crystals and crackles under your

[Transcript]



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feet. This is apparently the puddles produced by the late thaw and rain, which froze thinly while the rest of the water was soaked up. A fine snow is falling and drifting before the wind over the ice and lodging in shallow drifts at regular intervals.

I see where a woodpecker has drilled a hole about two inches over in a decayed white maple; quite recently, for the chippings are strewn over the ice beneath and were the first sign that betrayed it. The tree was hollow. Is it for a nest next season? [Probably for a winter lodging.] There was an old hole higher up.

I see that the locust pods are still closed, or but partially open, but they open wider after being lying in my chamber.

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January 7, Sunday: [Francis Cabot Lowell](#) was born in Boston.



Jan. 7. Sunday. P.M. — J.P. Brown road and Hubbard's Bridge.

Cloudy and misty. On opening the door I feel a very warm southwesterly wind, contrasting with the cooler air of the house, and find it unexpectedly wet in the street, and the manure is being washed off the ice into the gutter. It is, in fact, a January thaw. The channel of the river is quite open in many places, and in others I remark that the ice and water alternate like waves and the hollow between them. There are long reaches of open water where I look for muskrats and clucks, as I go along to Clamshell Hill. I hear the pleasant sound of running water. I see that black scum on the surface of water above the ice.

The delicious soft, spring-suggesting air, -how it tills my veins with life! Life becomes again credible to me.' A certain dormant life awakes in me, and I begin to love nature again. Here is my Italy, my heaven, my New England. I understand why the Indians hereabouts placed heaven in the southwest, - the soft south.' On the slopes the ground is laid bare and radical leaves revealed, - crowfoot, shepherd's-purse, clover, etc., -a fresh green, and, in the meadow, the skunk-cabbage buds, with a bluish bloom, and the red leaves of the meadow saxifrage; and these and the many withered plants laid bare remind me of spring and of botany.


On the same bare sand is revealed a new crop of arrowheads. I pick up two perfect ones of quartz, sharp as if just from the hands of the maker.

Still birds are very rare. Here comes a little flock of titmice, plainly to keep me company, with their black caps and throats making them look top-heavy, restlessly hopping along the alders, with a sharp, clear, lispng note. There begin to be greenish pools in the fields where there is A bottom of icy snow. I saw what looked like clay-colored snow-fleas on the under side of a stone.

The bank is tinged with a most delicate pink or bright flesh-color - where the *B[oe]omyces roseus* grows. It is a lichen day. The ground is covered with cetrari[ae], etc., under the pines. How full of life and of eyes is the damp bark! It would not be worth the while to die and leave all this life behind one.

The hillsides covered with the bear scrub oak, methinks, are of the deepest red at a distance. The pitch pine tops were much broken by the damp snow last month. I see where the birches which were weighed down and lay across the road have been cut off; and all their scales and seeds, shaken off by the sleighs, in one spot color the snow like thick sawdust. The sky, seen here and there through the wrack, bluish and greenish and, perchance, with a vein of red in the west, seems like the inside of a shell deserted of its tenant, into which I have crawled. The willow catkins *began* to peep from under their scales as early as the 26th of last month. Many buds have lost their scales.

There is nothing so sanative, so poetic, as a walk in the woods and fields even now, when I meet none abroad for pleasure. Nothing so inspires me and excites such serene and profitable thought. The objects are elevating. In the street and in society I am almost invariably cheap and dissipated, my life is unspeakably mean. No amount of gold or respectability would in the lest redeem it, — dining with the Governor or a member of Congress!! But alone in distant woods or fields, in unpretending sprout-lands or pastures tracked by rabbits, even in a bleak and, to most, cheerless day, like this, when a villager would be thinking of his inn, I come to myself, I once more feel myself grandly related, and that cold and solitude are friends of mine. I suppose that this value, in my case, is equivalent to what others get by churchgoing and prayer. I come to my solitary woodland walk as the homesick go home. I thus dispose of the superfluous and see things as they are, grand and beautiful.

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[Transcript]

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January 8, day: At several Kentucky estate sales in regard to white persons of property recently deceased, in the counties of Bourbon, Fayette, Clark, and Franklin, seven black slave men were sold to neighboring farmers who needed their labor. Their sale prices were \$1,015, \$1,070, \$1,175, \$1,260, \$1,295, \$1,378, and, for the most favored individual, \$1,505.



Jan. 8th. 55 7½ Am — To river.

[Transcript]

Still warm & cloudy — but with a great crescent of clear sky increasing in the north by west. The streets are washed bare down to the ice. It is pleasant to see the sky reflected in the open river-reach, now perfectly smooth.

10 Am. — To Easterbrooks place via old mill site.

It is now a clear warm and sunny day. [^The willow osiers by the Red Bridge decidedly are not bright now — were too old.] There is a healthy earthy sound of cock-crowing. I hear a few chickadees near at hand, & hear & see jays further off & as yesterday, a crow sitting sentinel on an apple tree. Soon he gives the alarm, and several more take their places near him. Then off they flap with their “caw” of various hoarseness. I see various caterpillars and grubs on the snow and in one place a reddish ant about a third of an inch long walking off. In the swamps you see the mouths of squirrels' holes in the snow, with dirt and leaves and perhaps pine scales

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about them. The fever-bush is betrayed by its little spherical buds.

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January 9, Tuesday: On the Atlantic Ocean, the sinking of the *Guiding Star*.

TIMELINE OF ACCIDENTS



January 9, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was musing in his journal on literary style: “What a strong and healthy, but reckless, hit-or-miss style had some of those early writers of New England, like [Josselyn](#) and [William Wood](#) and others elsewhere in those days; as if they spoke with a relish, smacking their lips like a coach-whip, caring more to speak heartily than scientifically true. they are not to be caught napping by the wonders of nature in a new country....” He was concluding that “certainly Josselyn’s generation stood nearer to Nature, nearer to the facts, than this, and hence their books have more life in them.” Writers like [John Josselyn](#) “use a strange, coarse, homely speech which cannot always be found in the dictionary, nor sometimes be heard in polite society, but which brings you very near to the thing itself described.”



Jan. 9th '55 Pm to Conantum.

[Transcript]

A cloudy day, threatening snow; wet under foot. How pretty the evergreen radical shoots of the St. John’s — wort now exposed, partly red or lake, various species of it. Have they not grown since fall? I put a stone [^at the end of] sone to try it. A little wreath of green and red lying along on the [^muddy] ground amid the melting snows.

I am attracted at this season by the fine bright-red buds of the privet andromeda, sleeping [^couchant] along the slender light-brown twigs. They look brightest against a dark ground. I notice the pink shoots of low blueberries where they are thick. How handsome now the fertile fronds of the sensitive fern standing up a foot or more on the sides of causeways, the neat pale-brown xxxx [^or stipe] clothed with rich dark-brown fruit at top. — The [^pinnate] divisions on the one side and slightly curved [^”a one-sided spike or raceme”] on one side & slightly curved — still full of seed! They look quite fresh though dry and rigid. Walked up on the river a piece above the Holden Swamp, though there were very few places where I could get on to it, it has so melted along the shore and on the meadows. The ice over the channel looks dangerously dark and rotten in spots. The oak leaves are of the various leather-colors. The white oak, which is least so and most curled and withered, has to my eye a tinge of salmon-color [^or pink] in it. The black shrub oak is particularly dark-reddish and firm. I think it is the ~~old buds or may be~~ the black whose leaves are such a pale brown verging on yellowish — sometimes reddish — but well preserved.

This winter I hear the axe in almost every wood of any consequence left standing in the township.

Made a splendid discovery this afternoon. As I was walking through Holden’s white spruce swamp, I saw peeping above the snow-crust some slender delicate evergreen shoots very much like the *Andromeda Polifolia*, amid sphagnum, lambkill, *Andromeda calyculata*, blueberry, bushes, etc., though there was very little to be seen above the snow. It is, I have little doubt, the *Kalmia Blanca* var. *Rosmarinifolia* (?), with very delicate evergreen opposite linear leaves, strongly revolute, somewhat reddish-green above, slightly weather-beaten — imbrowned or ripened by the winter, as it were, its cheeks made ruddy by the cold — white glaucous beneath, with a yellow midrib (not veined nor mucronated nor alternate like the *Andromeda Polifolia*), [^on the ends of the twigs which are] sharply 2-edged. The blossom-buds quite conspicuous. The whole aspect more tender and yellowish than the *Andromeda Polifolia*. [^And green while that is mulberry now. *Vide* Jan. 10.] The pretty little blossom-buds arranged crosswise in the axils of the leaves as you look down on them.

What a strong and healthy, but reckless, hit-or-miss style had some of those early writers of New England, like [Josselyn](#) and [William Wood](#) and others elsewhere in those days; as if they spoke with a relish, smacking their lips like a coach-whip, caring more to speak heartily than scientifically true. they are not to be caught napping by the wonders of nature in a new country, and perhaps are often more ready to appreciate them than she is to exhibit them. They give you one piece of nature, at any rate, and that is themselves. (Cotton Mather, too, has a rich phrase.) They use a strange, coarse, homely speech which cannot always be found in the dictionary, nor



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sometimes be heard in polite society, but which brings you very near to the thing itself described. The strong new soil speaks through them. I have just been reading some in Wood's "New England's Prospect." He speaks a good word for New England, indeed will come very near lying for her, and when he doubts the justness of his praise, he brings it out not the less roundly; as who cares if it is not so? we love her not the less for all that. Certainly that generation stood nearer to nature, nearer to the facts, than this, and hence their books have more life in them.

(Sometimes a lost man will be so beside himself that he will not have sense enough to trace back his own tracks in the snow.)

Expressions he uses which you now hear only in kitchens and barrooms, which therefore sound particularly fresh and telling, not book-worn. They speak like men who have backs and stomachs and bowels, with all the advantages and disadvantages that attach to them. Ready to find lions here, some having "heard such terrible roarings," which must be either Devils or Lions; there being no other creatures which use to roar." What a gormandizing faith (or belief) he has, ready to swallow all kinds of portents and prodigies! Says the wolves have no joints from bead to tail. Most admirable when they most outrage common taste and the rules of composition. Of mosquitoes he says those "that swell with their biting the first year, never swell the second." [*Vide* forward.]

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Thoreau was written to by Friend Daniel Ricketson in New Bedford.

*Shanty, Brooklawn
9 Jan '55—*

*Dear Walden,
I have just received
your very welcome reply. I am also
happy to learn of your safe arrival
home, and was much amused
by your account of your voyage
to Nantucket — also that you found
an appreciating audience there.
You address me as Mr Ricketson.
What did I do while you were here to
warrant so much deference —*

Page 2
*I pass for a rather aristocratic
man among big folk, but did 'nt
suppose you knew it. You should
have addressed "Dear Brooklawn"
Johnson in his Tour to the Hebrides
says they have a custom in those
isles of giving their names to their
chieftains or owners — As, Col*



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*Rasay, Much, etc of which
they are the Lairds. You are the
true & only Laird of Walden
& as such I address you. You
certainly can show a better title to
Walden Manor than any other. It
is just as we lawyers say, you
hold the fee.*

Page 3

*You did 'nt think of find such knowing
folks this way altho' you had travelled
a good deal in Concord.
By the way I have heard several
sensible people speak well of your lecture
before the N.B. Lyceum; but conclude
it was not generally understood.
Arthur My son & I have begun a series of
^ pilgrimages to old farm houses —
we dont notice any short of a hundred
years old.
I am much obliged to you and your
mother for your kind invitation. My
intention is to attend the Anti-Slavery
meetings in Boston Wednesday & Thursday
24 & 25 this month & and shall*

Page 4

*endeavor to get up to Concord
for part of a day.
I wish you would come to Boston at
that time. You will find me at
the Tremont House, where I shall
glad be to see you.
^ Mrs. Ricketson and the "young folks"
wish to be kindly remembered to you.
I have had a present of a jackknife
found upon a stick of timber in an
old house, built in — and supposed
to have been left there by the carpenters.
The house is over one hundred years
old & the knife is very curious.
So I conclude this rambling epistle
Yours exceedingly
"Mr Ricketson"
Present my compliments to Mr Channing*

 January 10, Wednesday: The National Aegis printed a 50-sentence “outline” of Henry Thoreau’s lecture of January 4 (page 2, column 7)⁹¹ but did not say how well the lecture was received.



Jan. 10th 55 Pm to Beck Stow’s.

[Transcript]

The swamp is suddenly frozen up again, and they are carting home the mud which was dug out last fall, in great frozen masses.

The twigs of the Andromeda Polifolia, with its rich leaves turned to a mulberry-color above by the winter, with a bluish bloom & [^a delicate] bluish white, as in summer, beneath, project above the ice, the tallest twigs recurved at top, with the leaves standing up on the upper side like teeth of a rake. The intermingling shades of mulberry brown (?) and bluish bloom and glaucous white make it peculiarly rich, as it lies along the ice frozen in. The leaves uninjured by insects.

Then there is the Andromeda calyculata, its leaves (now(?)) appressed to the twigs, pale-brown beneath, reddish above, with minute whitish clots. As I go toward the sun now at 4 Pm, the translucent leaves are lit up by it and appear of a soft red, more or less brown [^like cathedral windows] but when I look back from the sun, the whole bed appears merely gray and brown.

The leaves of the lambkill, now recurved, are more or less reddish. The great buds of the swamp-pink, on the central twig, clustered together, are more or less imbrowned and reddened.


At European Cranberry Swamp, I saw great quantities of the seeds of that low three-celled rush or sedge, about the edge of the pool on the ice, black and elliptical, looking like the droppings of mice, this size: ○ ○ , so thick in many places that by absorbing the sun’s heat they had melted an inch or more into the ice.



No doubt they are the food of some creatures. Saw a ~~whi~~ thorn with long thorns and its peculiarly shining varnished twigs.

Cold & blustering as it is, the crows are flapping & sailing about and buffeting one another as usual. It is hard to tell what they would be at.

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 January 11, Thursday: Warsaw’s Academic Department of Union School was incorporated.

Johannes Brahms made his 1st visit to the insane asylum near Bonn, where he found Robert Schumann in good spirits. Doctors still refused admittance to Clara Schumann.



Jan. 11th Am. Skated to Lee’s Bridge and Farrar’s Swamp — call it Otter Swamp.


[Transcript]

A fine snow had just begun to fall, so we made haste to improve the skating before it was too late. Our skates made tracks often nearly an inch broad in the slight snow which soon covered the ice. All along the shores and about the islets the water had broadly overflowed the ice of the meadows, and frequently we had to skate through it, making it fly. The snow soon showed where the water was. It was a pleasant time to skate, so still, and the air so thick with snowflakes that the outline of near hills was seen against it and not against the more distant and higher hills. Single pines stood out distinctly against it in the near horizon. The ground, which was 2/3 bare before, began to gray about Fair Haven Pond, as if it were all rocks. There were many of those grubs and caterpillars on the ice half a dozen rods from shore, some sunk deep into it. This air, thick with snowflakes, making a background, enabled me to detect a very picturesque clump of trees on an islet at Pole Brook, — a red (?) oak in midst, with birches on each side.

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91. Reported by Bradley P. Dean, “Another Review of ‘What Shall It Profit?’” Thoreau Society Bulletin 169 (Fall 1984): 7-8.

 January 12, Friday: [Abraham Lincoln](#) purchased a pair of gloves, and sewing materials, for Mrs. Lincoln.

Felipe Alvitre was [hanged](#) in Los Angeles, [California](#).

Calvin Carver Damon died of consumption in Concord, Massachusetts at the age of 50.

[Dorcas Honorable Esop](#), last of the Nantucket native Americans, died. She had been born in 1776.




FAMOUS LASTS		
July 28, 1854	William B. Sheppard	last public open-air hanging in San Francisco attended by a huge crowd, at the Presidio before a crowd of not less than 10,000
January 12, 1855	Dorcas Honorable Esop	last of the Nantucket native Americans
March 8, 1862	Captain Nathaniel Gordon	had been smuggling fresh slaves into the USA, hanged for this (classified as piracy)



Jan. 12th Pm To Flint's Pond via Minott's meadow.

[Transcript]

After a spitting of snow in the forenoon — [^I see the blue sky here and there &] the sun is coming out. It is still and warm. The earth is 2/3 bare. I walk along the Mill-Brook below Emerson's, looking into it for some life. Perhaps what moves us in winter is some reminiscence of far-off summer. How we leap by the side of the open brooks! What beauty in the running brooks! What life! What society! The cold is merely superficial; it is summer still at the core, far, far within. It is in the cawing of the crow [American Crow  *Corvus Brachyrhynchos*], the crowing of the cock, the warmth of the sun on our backs. I hear faintly the cawing of a crow far, far away, echoing from some unseen wood-side, as if deadened by the spring-like vapor which the sun is drawing from the ground. It mingles with the slight murmur of the village, the sound of children at play, as one stream empties gently into another, and the wild and tame are one. What a delicious sound! It is not merely [^the] crow calling to crow, for it speaks to me too. I am part of one great creature with him; if he has voice, I have ears. I can hear what he calls, and have engaged not to shoot nor stone him if he will caw to me each spring. On the [^one] hand, it may be, is the sound of children at school saying their a.b. abs — on the other, far in the wood-fringed horizon, the cawing of crows from their blessed eternal vacation [^out at their long recess]. Children who have got dismissed! While the vaporous incense goes up from all fields of the spring (if it were spring). Ah, bless the Lord, O my soul! bless him for wildness, for crows that will not alight within gunshot! and bless him for hens, too, that croak and cackle in the yard!

Where are the shiners now, and the trout? I see none in the brook. Have the former descended to the deep water of the river? [^Ah, may I be there to see when they go down! Why can they not tell me?] Or gone into the mud? There are few or no insects for them now.

The strong scent of this red oak, just split and corded, is a slight compensation for the loss of the tree. How cheering the sight of the evergreens now, on the forest floor, the various pyrolas, etc., fresh as in summer! What is that mint whose seed-vessels rubbed are so spicy to smell — minty — at the further end of the pond by the Gourgas wood-lot — ? horsemint? or calamint?

On Flint's-Pond I find Nat Rice fishing. He has not caught one. I asked him what he thought the best time to fish. He said, "When the wind first comes south after a cold spell, on a bright morning."

Well may the tender buds attract us at this season, no less than partridges, for they are the hope of the year, the spring rolled up. The summer is all packed in them.

Observed this afternoon the following oak leaves:—

- 1st, the white oak — the most withered and faded and curled; many [^spotted] with black dot-lichens.
- 2nd, the bear scrub, the most firm and fresh-colored and flat
- 3d, the black, moderately firm, the darkest above, much curled
- 4th, scarlet, Firmest after the [^Bear] Scrub, with much freshness and life; some conspicuously red still (unwithered); lobes remarkably distorted
- 5, Red [^considerably] ~~very much~~ withered and lifeless and worn, thin and faded; [^some reddish slightly] ~~not small~~ & not inclined to curl
- 6, Swamp white, pretty firm and bright, but considerably curled
- 7, I suspect that the small chinquapin is deciduous, for I could not find one [^leaf] in all my walk January 1st, though I looked along the Lupine Wall. Those on the ground are considerably withered, faded, & curled — yet pretty firm.

For color, perhaps all may be called brown, & vary into each other more or less
 The 1st, as both sides are seen, pale-brown with a salmon tinge beneath.
 2nd, clear reddish-brown, leather-like, above, often paler, whitish or very light beneath, silveryish
 3d, Dusky-brown above (not always), clear tawny (?) brown beneath.
 4th, clear pale-brown (except the unfaded red ones), leather-like, very generally reddish, nearly the same both sides.
 5th, Quite pale brown [^or slightly reddish] nearly the same both sides; some, prematurely dead, are yellowish—
 6th, Deep rusty-colored brown, often bright leather-red, silveryish-white beneath.
 7th, [^Leaves on ground] Pale brown, much like a withered red. but whitish beneath like bear shrub.
 {one-half blank page}
 The oak leaves now resemble the dif. kinds. of calf, sheep, & Russia [^leather] ~~to~~ [^Morocco — a few scarlet oaks] of different ages—



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GOD IN CONCORD by Jane Langton © 1992

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*Ah, bless the Lord, O my soul! bless him for
wildness, for crows that will not alight
within gunshot!*
Journal, January 12, 1855

**It was mid-autumn in Concord. Sugar maples flamed along
Walden Street. The swam maples had already lost their**

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 January 13, Saturday: The Weekly Intelligencer of Atlanta, Georgia reported on the sentencing of an Iowa Methodist seducer: “E.F. Freeman, a school teacher of Marion, Lynn county, Iowa, who seduced one of his lady scholars about a year ago, has been sentenced to three years in the penitentiary for the crime. He has a large and interesting family, and before the affair took place was a prominent member of Methodist Church.” (We know that this story also had appeared in the Daily Courier of Louisville, Kentucky on December 27th, and also would appear in the Journal of Poughkeepsie, New York on January 20th. One may wonder just how many such local newspapers picked up this item and retailed it to their readers, readers who had no acquaintance with this particular schoolteacher or this particular schoolchild or even, perhaps, with the state of Iowa –and one may well wonder in addition, why on earth they would retail such a story –a story which it would appear had attracted no particular notice in Lynn county, Iowa?)



Jan. 13. Warm & wet, with rain-threatening clouds drifting from SW. Muddy, wet, & slippery. Surprised to see oak balls on a red oak. Picked up a pitch pine cone which had evidently been cut off by a squirrel. ~~there were~~ The [^successive] grooves made by his teeth while probably he bent it down were quite distinct. The woody stem was 1/4 of an inch thick, & I counted 8 strokes of his chisel.

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January 14, Sunday: [Edward Foster](#) was born to [Dora Foster](#) and [Daniel Foster](#).

The Diet of the German Confederation voted down an Austrian request for mobilization against [Russia](#).

In Springfield, Illinois, [Abraham Lincoln](#) wrote about his chances of winning the upcoming election to the federal Senate, to Illinois Congressman Richard Yates. At this time federal Senators were being elected by the state legislatures, and Lincoln was the Whig candidate, with incumbent Senator James Shields as the Democratic candidate. Surveying the legislature and speculating on which legislators would or would not support him, Lincoln wrote: "At the meeting of the Legislature we had 57 to their 43, nominally. But [William C.] Kinny did not attend which left us only 56. Then [A.H.] Trapp of St. Clair went over, leaving us only 55, and raising them to 44. Next [Uri] Osgood of the Senate went over, reducing us to 54 and raising them to 45." He commented on the treacherous and messy business of politics: "What mines, and pitfalls they have under us we do not know; but we understand they claim to have 48 votes. If they have that number, it is only that they have already got some men whom we have all along suspected they would get; and we hope they have reached the bottom of the rotten material. In this too, we may be mistaken. This makes a squally case of it." Lincoln had no clue, how this contest was going to come out: "If the election should be protracted, a general scramble may ensue, and your chance will be as good as that of any other I suppose.... I suppose the election will commence on the 31st. and when it will end I am sure I have no idea."

In England, a very severe frost began that would persist through February 24th, and the weather would continue very cold all the way until June 26th. On February 22d fires would be lit on the Serpentine in Hyde Park. In Lincolnshire there would be traffic on the river ice for a length of 35 miles.



Jan 15 [14] Skated to Baker Farm with a rapidity which astonished myself—before the wind, feeling the rise and fall (the water having settled in the suddenly cold night) which I had not time to see. Saw the intestines of ap—a rabbit—(betrayed by a morcel of fur—) left on the ice—prob. the prey of a fox. A man feels like a new creature [^a deer perhaps] moving at this rate—he takes new possession of nature in the name of {the} his own majesty— There was I, & there & there, as mercury went down the Idaen mts. I judged that in a quarter of an hour I was 3 1/2 miles from home— without having made any particular exertion.—à la volaille.

[Transcript]

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January 15, Monday: A New Orleans gazette quoted approvingly from a recent address by the Reverend Ch. R. Marshall, chairman of the Committee of Education, to a Convention of Delegates from the Southern states:

The speaker reprobated the practice of educating Southern children in the North. "Our sons and daughters," he said, "return to us with their minds poisoned by fanatical teachings and influences against the institution of slavery."

"The reverend speaker," continues the reporter, "then considered slavery as an institution, and passed upon it a glowing eulogium, as contributing to the glory in arts and science, in religion, and national prosperity, in all countries wherein it has ever existed. He described it as forming a part of the patriarchal system of government established by God himself, as



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having been countenanced by Christ, and argumentatively sustained, and practically supported by the chief of Christ's Apostles, St. Paul. He (the speaker) had proclaimed these opinions in the streets of New York, and of Boston. He believed slavery to be right, and that within fifty years, instead of decreasing, it would be double in extent to what it is now. He believed that the colonies now gathering on the coast of Africa would all be slave States."

In the course of his speech," adds the reporter, "Mr. Marshall, commenting on the hostility of England towards our institutions, drew forth loud demonstrations of applause by expressing the hope, very earnestly, that the Czar would triumph in the pending war in the East."



Jan 15th Pm. Skated to Bedford It had just been sh^h[^n]owing—& this lay in shallow drifts, or waves [^{on the Grt meadows}] of alternate snow & ice— Skated into a crack & slid on my side 25 feet— The river channel [^{framen} dark] ice— —with fragments of old ice cemented togethe—not strong. polygons of various forms.

[Transcript]

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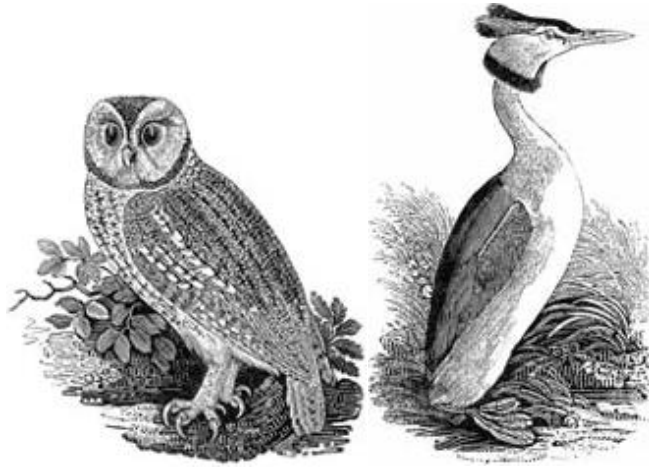
January 16, Tuesday: Off the coast of South America one of [Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#)'s [Japanese](#) cats, while playing on deck the USS *Mississippi*, jumped overboard. A boat was lowered "and picked poor puss up."

[Henry Thoreau](#) came in from Concord to Cambridge and Boston on various errands, and dropped off a bound copy of [A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS](#) in the Holworthy Hall room of [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#), who at that time was the editor of the [Harvard Magazine](#). This copy, inscribed "*To the 'Unknown' (but / guessed at) Critic of the / Harvard Magazine, / from / the Author. / Jan. 16 1855*", is now in the Rare Books Library of the University of Florida. [WHAT SPECIFIC JOTTING DID SANBORN ADD? "**Lent me by / Mr. Thoreau, in xxxxxxx / of a xxxxx in the Har. / Mag. for Dec. '54*"]

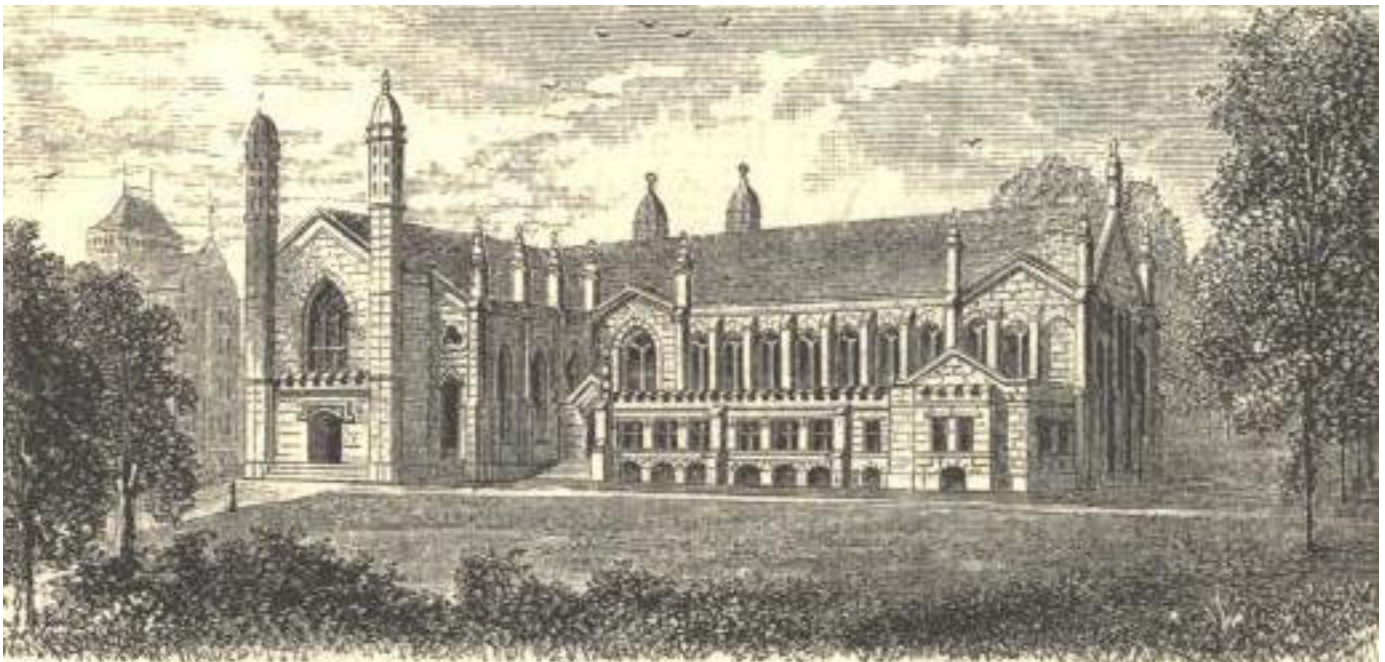


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He checked out, from the [Harvard Library](#) at [Gore Hall](#), [Thomas Bewick](#)'s A HISTORY OF BRITISH BIRDS (Volume I, Land Birds, 1797; Volume II, Water Birds, 1804).



He also checked out Father Gabriel Sagard-Théodat's *HISTOIRE DU CANADA ET VOYAGES QUE LES FRÈRES MINEURS RECOLLECTS Y ONT FAICTS POUR LA CONVERSION DES INFIDÈLES* (Paris: 1636).



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Jan 16—to Cambridge & Boston.

Carried to Harris the worms—brown light— striped—& fuzzy black cater-pillars— He calls the first also caterpillars. Also 2 black beetles, all which I have found within a week or two on [^ice &] snow; Thickest in a thaw.

Showed me in a German work plates of the larvae of dragon flies & ephemerae such as I see [^or their cases] on rushes &c over water. Says the Ant lion is found at Burlington Vt. and may be at Concord.

I can buy Ind. coats in Milk street from 3 1/2 to 6 dolls—depending on the length. also leggins from 1.50 to 3 or more dolls, also depending on the length—


Saw a Nantucket man—who said that their waters were not so good as the South side of Long Island to steer in by sounding. Off Long Island it deepened 1 mile every fathom for at least 40 miles—as he had proved. Perhaps 80. But at Barnegat it was not so.

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 January 17, Wednesday: When Mescalero Apaches attacked troops led by Captain Richard S. Ewell and Captain Henry W. Stanton during this day and the following one, Stanton and a dragoon were killed.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JANUARY 17th]

 January 18, Thursday: The Daily Alta California of San Francisco reported:


GUNPOWDER ACCIDENT.—A Spaniard, named Santa Aquiaso, who was employed to construct a well on Vallejo street, between Kearny and Dupont, was using powder, on Tuesday, for the purpose of blasting, when by some means a keg half full of powder, at the bottom of the well, became ignited, causing a terrific explosion, and horribly injuring the unfortunate man, who when taken out was found to be alive, although there is scarcely any probability that he can recover.

NARROW ESCAPE.—Mr. Spear, the well known comedian, came near acting a part in a tragedy on Tuesday night, in consequence of some persons in an adjoining room handling a colt's revolver. The weapon was discharged accidentally, the ball passing through the partition within a few inches of Mr. Spear's body.

IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.—It has been ascertained that the burglars in this city are supplied with the necessary implements to carry on their occupation by the proprietor of a cutlery store on Jackson street.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JANUARY 18th]

 January 19, Friday: The troopers of Lieutenant Samuel D. Sturgis managed to corner some Mescalero Apache raiders. When the natives offered to surrender Sturgis professed to be unable to understand them, and gave the order for his men to open fire.

The Sacramento Daily Union offered a piece of linguistic information, that there were no "Coolies" in California. The term, it explained, referred only to a degraded class of the Hindoos of India. The Chinese language, it alerted its white readers informedly, lacked any term equivalent to this:

There is not a solitary "coolie" in California. The laboring classes of China have been sometime styled "coolies." If justly, then an Englishman j at Hongkong, or any other whites in those countries, similarly employed is a "coolie" too for I there is no more essential degradation in the one case than the other. If it be said that the Englishman of a lower class often



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acquires wealth, and assumes a more elevated rank, so, we reply, does the Chinese camprodor, or servant, by his fortune purchase high honors of the state. But it, would be justly held degrading to style an English laborer, of whatever occupation, in China, a "coolie," and it is not right to attach to Chinese the odium of social debasement which is peculiar to another country, to other institutions, and to another and most dissimilar people. We repeat, that the word "coolie" represents a class, a caste, and a man, in its proper sense and origination, for which there is no equivalent in China or in California.

What are the Chinese we see swarming in our streets and crowding our mines? They are just what any other people are; laborers, cooks, boatmen, farmers, carpenters, stone-masons, brickmakers and brick-layers, shop-keepers, book-binders, weavers, tea-packers, gardeners, and just what an equal number from any other land might be expected to present in the variety of their occupations. Some, that speak English best, have been scholars in missionary schools, or employees about foreign honges. Here and there is a literary man, though rarely seen, and his accomplishments lost upon this air. Then, there is abundance of the vilest classes the gambler, the infamous female, and others, who prey upon the unfortunate, the unwary, or the wonton. How did they get here? Just as any others. Some had means of their own. Some borrowed. Some sold their small possessions to join the rush for "The Golden Hills." They were imported by no capitalists - English, or American. They are owned or held in slavery by no one, save in the bondage of obligation to pay one's honest debts. From an extensive acquaintance with them and their employments, and after inquiry into the points we have been considering, I am assured that the prejudices existing against the Chinese generally in this State, as a kind of slaves or bondsmen, is the result of want of information. Prejudice against them upon such grounds is unfounded. When this fully understood, their condition, as poor, friendless, inoffensive, foreigners many of them willing to do the best they can, and to learn to do better will ensure them sympathy instruction and protection from many by whom they are now avoided and contemned.



Jan 19th 7 Am Yesterday it rained hard all day washing off the little snow that was left—down to the ice—the gutters being good sized mill brooks— & the water of over shoes in the mid. of the road.

In the night it turned to snow—(which ~~now~~ still falls—) & now covers the [^wet] ground 3 or 4 inches deep. It is a very damp snow or sleet perhaps mixed with rain which the strong NW wind plasters to that side of the trees & houses. I never saw the blue in snow so bright as this damp dark stormy morning at 7 Am as I was coming down the RR. I did not have to make a hole in it—but I saw it some rods off in the deep narrow ravines of the drifts & under their edges or eaves—like the serenest blue of heaven—though the sky was of course wholly concealed by the driving snow storm²⁵—suggesting that in darkest storms we may still have the hue of heaven in us.

At noon it is still a driving snow storm—& a little flock of red-poles [**Common Redpoll**  *Carduelis flammaea*] is busily picking the seeds of the pigweed &c in the garden. Almost all have more or less crimson

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a [possibly altered from another word] few are very splendid with their particularly bright crimson breasts. The white on the edge of their wing coverts is very conspicuous—

Pm. The [^damp] snow still drives from the NW nearly horizontally over the fields—while I go with C— toward the Cliffs & Walden— There is not a single fresh track on the Back road & the aspect of the road & trees & houses is very wintry. Thuch [Much?] considerable snow has fallen it lies chiefly in drifts under the walls. We went through the Spring woods—over the Cliff—by the wood path at its base to Walden & thence by the path to Bristers Hill—& by {altered from “to”} road home— It was worth the while to see what a burden of [^damp] snow lay on the trees not withstanding the wind— Pitch pines were bowed to the ground with it—and birches also— and white oaks— I saw one of [possibly inserted] the last at least 25 feet high [^splintered] ~~broken~~ near the ground past recovery. All kinds of ever greens—and [^oaks] ~~trees~~ which retain their leaves—and birches which do not ~~were bent to~~ up to 25 feet or more in height were bent to the earth—and these novel but graceful curves were a new feature [^in] of the woodland scenery. Young white pines often stood [^veiled] draped in the robes of purest white—emblems of purity [^like a maiden that has taken the veil] —with their heads slightly bowed & their [^main] stems slanting to one side, like travellers bending to meet the storm with their heads muffled in their cloaks — The windard side of the wood & the very tops of the trees everywhere—for the most part—were comparatively bare—but within the woods the whole lower 2/3 of the trees were laden with the snowy burden which had sifted down onto them. The snow a little damp had lodged ~~on every~~ not only on the oak leaves & the evergreens—but on every twig & branch—~~but~~ & stood in upright walls or ruffs 5 or 6 inches high, [^like miniature chinese walls zig zag over hill & dale] making more conspicuous than ever the arrangement & the multitude of the twigs & branches, & the trunks also being plastered with snow—a peculiar soft ~~left~~ light was diffused around, [^very unlike the ordinary darkness of the forest] as if you were inside a drift or snow house— [^This was when you stood on the windward side] In most directions you could not see more than 4 or 5 rods into this labyrinth or maze of white arms— [^This is to be insisted on—on every side it was like a snow drift that lay loose to that height.] They were so thick that they left no crevice through which the eye could penetrate further The path was for the most part blockd up with the trees bent to the ground which we were obliged to go round by zig zag paths in the woods—or carefully creep under at the risk of getting our necks filled with an avalanch of snow— In many places the path was shut up by as dense a labyrinth high as the tree tops & impermeable to vision as if there had neve been a path there. Often we touched a tree with our foot— or shook it with our hand—& so relieved it of a part of its burden—& rising a little it made room for us to pass beneath— Often singular portals & winding passages were left between the pitch pines—through stooping—& grazing the touchy walls, we made our way—

When the path was open in the midst of the woods—the snow was about 7 or 8 inches deep. The trunks of the trees so uniformly covered on the northerly side— [^as happens frequently every winter & sometimes continuing so for weeks] suggested that this might be a principal reason why the lichens watered by the melting snow flourished there most. The snow lay in great continuous masses in the pitch pines & the white—not only like napkins but great white table-spreads and ~~carpets~~ counterpains—when you looked off at the wood from a little distance—Looking thus up at the Cliff. I could not tell where it lay an unbroken mass on the smooth rock—& where on the trees. [^It was so massed on the last also] White pines were changed into firs by it— & the limbs & twigs of some large ones were so matted together by the weight—that they looked [^like immense] solid fungi on the side of the trees—or those nests of the social grossbeak (?) of africa which I have seen represented. Some White pine bows hung down like fans or the webbed feet of birds— On som pitch pines it lay in ~~frigit~~ fruit-like balls as big as one’s head. [^like cocoanuts] Where the various oaks were bent down—the contrast of colors— of the snow & oak leaves—& the softened tints through the transparent snow—often a delicate fawn color—were very agreeable.

As we returned over the Walden road the damp driving snow flackes when we turned partly round & faced them hurt our eye balls as if they had been dry scales.

It may be that the linarias (~~seek~~) the come into the gardens now—not only because all nature is a wilderness today—but because the woods [^were the wind has not free play] are so snowed up—the twigs are so deeply covered that they cannot readily come at their food— In many places single trees or clumps of two or 3 [^drooping &] massed together by the superincumbent weight—made a sort of roof [^tent like] under which you might take shelter. We saw only one indistinct snow covered trail of an animal. Under one pitch pine which shut down to the ground on every side you could not see the sky at all—but sat in a gloomy light as in a tent. Where are the crows now? I never see them at such a time. The water of yesterday is very high now on the meadows over the ice—but the snow has mingled with it so densely that it is mere slosh now—

The channel ice is lifted up by the freshet & there is dry white snow—but on each side are broad dirty or yellowish green strips of ~~water~~ slosh. Where comes this green color?

One of the first snows of the winter was a similar damp one which lodged on the trees & broke them down. & the sides of woodland roads were strewn with birche ~~at~~ tops which had obstructed the way & [^which] travellers had been obliged to cut off.

There are plenty of these shell like drifts along the south sides of the walls now— There are countless perforations through which the fine snow drives & blinds you—

It was surprising to see what a burden of snow had lodged on the trees—especially the pitch pines in secluded



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dells in the woods out of the way of the wind— White oaks also 6 inches maybe the white oaks are more flexible than the others—or their leaves are higher up & they are more slender in diameter & 25 feet high were bent to the ground & sometimes broken or splintered by it. [^maybe the white oaks are more flexible than the others—or their leaves are higher up & they are more slender below] [^Some are split in the crotch] It lay on the smaller shrubs & bushes through which you walked damp as it was like lightest down—only the lightest part sifting down there

The houses have that peculiarly wintry aspect now on the W— side being all plastered over with snow— adhering to the clapboards—& half concealing the doors & windows—

The trees were everywhere bent into the path like bows tortly strung—& you had only to shake them with your hand or foot—when they rose up & made way for you—

You went winding between—³⁷stooping [^or creeping] under—them—fearing to touch them—lest you they should relieve themselves of their burden & let fall an avalanch or shower of snow on to you. [^Ever & anon the wind shook down a shower from high trees] You would not have believed there were so many twigs & branches in a wood as were revealed by the snow resting on them—perfect walls of snow—no place for a bird to perch. (V 20th—& 26th instant—)



 January 20, Saturday: Mary Anne Russell was born to [Mary Ellen “Nellie” Taylor Russell](#) and [Thomas Russell](#).

Ernest Amédée Chausson was born in Paris, the 4th of 6 children born to Prosper Chausson, a wealthy building contractor, and Stéphanie-Marcelline Levraux (or Levrault), daughter of a notary.

Harriet Beecher Stowe was reported in the Independent at Andover as offering an extended rational argument in favor of tolerating American females who attempted to speak before public assemblies. “Andover is wonderfully lively this winter for so steady a place.—Public amusements are in the sacrosanct. A Course of Lyceum lectures is drawing quite full betimes, and, besides that, the Mendelsson Quintette Club are giving a course of concerts, which are fully attended. Some sensation has been made by Miss Antoinette Brown's lecture in the Lyceum course, which, of course, has a result that the descent of the angel in the pool of Judea had—of troubling the waters, and giving rise to animated discussion. Wise people, however, do not disturb their own peace by a too vehement opinion, one way or the other, on the question of which Miss Brown is the embodiment. All seem to concede that the difficult function of a public speaker is performed by her so unexceptionably, and with as little loss of feminine grace, as such a step admits of. She has lectured also with acceptance in Dover, Beverly, Taunton, Providence, and many other places, and has, we are informed, altogether more applications than she can meet. In private society, Miss Brown is quiet, retiring and modest,

without the slightest shade of anything obtrusive or unwomanly. It would appear to be a safe course to allow the experiment which is now being made on the sphere of womanhood, to run itself out to its final results without opposition. The laws and sphere of the two sexes are so strongly and unalterably fixed by nature and constitution, that there is little danger I such patience. Women, as a general thing, will, by the force of constitutional instincts, tend to the sphere of domestic life. But there always have been, and always probably will be some who desire, and have the capacity for a wider sphere, and it will be difficult to show why they should not also follow their nature. Can one tell us why it should be right and proper for Jenny Lind to sing to two thousand people 'I know that my Redeemer liveth,' and improper for Antoinette Brown to say it? Why, it was proper for Madame Sontag to sing to the assembled clergy of Boston, and would have been highly improper for her to speak to them?—However, a little patience and quietness, and these vexed questions will determine themselves, by the most sensible of all tests—experience.”

TAPPAN FAMILY

In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) went with [Lewis William Tappan](#) to Conantum (Gleason J6) and C. Miles.

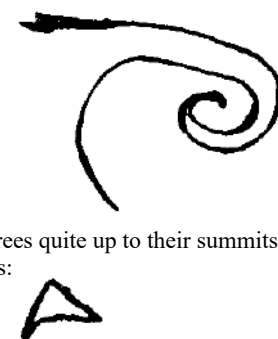


Jan. 20'55 Our lesser redpoll is said to be the same with the European, which is called [Le Sizerin](#) by Buffon. [^This in Bewick] I heard its mew about the house early this morning before sunrise. In many instances the snow had lodged on ~~the~~ trees yesterday in just such forms as a white napkin or counterpane dropped on them would take,— protuberant in the middle, with runny folds and dimples. An ordinary leafless bush supported so much snow on its twigs — a perfect maze [^like a whirligig] though not in one solid mass — that you could not see through it. We heard only a few *chic-a-does*. Sometimes the snow on the bent pitch pines made me think of rams' or elephants' heads, ready to butt you. In particular places, standing on their snowiest side, the woods were incredibly fair, white as alabaster. Indeed the young pines reminded you of the purest statuary, and the stately full-grown ones towering around affected you as if you stood in a titanic sculptor's studio, so purely and delicately white, transmitting the light, their dark trunks all concealed. And in many places, where the snow lay on withered oak leaves between you and the light, various delicate fawn-colored and cinnamon tints mingling & blending with the white, still enhanced the beauty. A fine, clear day, not very cold.—

[Transcript]

P.m. — To Conantum and C. Miles place with [Tappan](#). There was a high wind last night, which relieved the trees of their burden almost entirely, but I may still see the drifts. The surface of the snow everywhere in the fields, where it is hard blown, has a fine [^grain] with low shelves, like a slate stone that does not split well. We cross the fields behind Hubbard's and suddenly slump into dry ditches [^concealed by the snow] up to the middle, and flounder out again. How new all things seem! Here is a broad, shallow pool in the fields, which yesterday was slosh, now converted into a soft, white, fleecy snow ice, like bread that has spewed out and baked outside the pan. It is like the beginning of the world. There is nothing hackneyed where a new snow can come and cover all the landscape. The snow lies chiefly behind the walls. It is surprising how much a straggling rail fence detains it, and it forms a broad, low swell beyond it, two or three rods wide, also just beyond the brow of a hill where it begins to slope to the south. You can tell by the ridges of the drifts on the south side of the walls which way the wind was. They all run from north to south; *i.e.*, the common drift is divided into ridges [^or plaits] in this direction, frequently down to the ground between; which separate drifts are of graceful outlines somewhat like fishes, with a sharp ridge or fin gracefully curved, both as you look from one side and down on them. [^their sides curving like waves about to break] The thin edge of some of these drifts [^at the wall end] where the air has come through the wall and made an eddy, are remarkably curved, like some shells, even thus, more than once round:

I would not have believed it.
The world is not only new to the eye,
but is still as at creation; every blade
and leaf is hushed: not a bird or insect is heard;
only, perchance, a faint tinkling sleigh-bell in the distance.
As there was water on the ice of the river,
which the snow converted into slosh— now frozen
it looks like fleece.



The snow still adheres conspicuously to the northwest sides of the stems of the trees quite up to their summits, with a remarkably sharp edge in that direction, — in a horizontal section like this:

It would be about as good as a compass to steer by in a cloudy day or by night. You see where the trees have

deposited their load on the snow beneath, making it uneven. Saw suddenly, directly overhead, a remarkable mackerel sky, with ~~singul~~ peculiarly soft, large flakes, — polyhedrons, — showing the celestial blue between them, soft and duskyish, like new steam. This covered the greater part of the sky. In the zenith, a more leaden blue; in the crevices on the sides, a more celestial. This was just beyond the Holden Swamp. We admired the C. Miles elms, their strong branches now more conspicuous, zigzag or gracefully curved.

We came upon the tracks of a man and dog, which I guessed to be Channing's. Further [^still, a mile and a half from home] as I was showing to T. under a bank the single flesh-colored or pink ~~bee~~ apothecium of a bæomyces which was not covered by the snow—~~when~~ I saw the print of C.'s foot by its side and knew that his eyes had rested on it that afternoon. It was about the size of a pin's head. Saw also where he had examined the lichens on the rails. Now the mackerel sky was gone [^and all was clear again] & I could hardly realize that low, dark stratum far in the east was it, still delighting, perchance, some sailor on the Atlantic, in whose zenith it was, whose sky it occupied.

T. admired much the addition to the red house, with its steep bevelled roof. [^Thought he should send Mr. Upjohn to see it.] The whole house, methought, was well planted, rested solidly on the earth, with its great bank (green in summer) and few stately elms before, it [was] so much simpler and more attractive than a front yard with its knickknacks. To contrast with this pleasing structure, which is painted a whole some red, was a modern addition in the rear, perhaps no uglier than usual, only by contrast, — such an outline alone as our carpenters have learned to produce.



I see that I cannot draw anything so bad as the reality. [^So you will often see an ugly new barn beside a pleasing old house.]

Causeways are no sooner made than the swamp white oak springs up by their sides, its acorns probably washed there by the freshets.



In Sagard's Hist. I read, "The villager did not wish to hear the Huguenot minister, saving that there was not yet any ivy on the walls of his church, and that ours were all gray with age" (*chenues de vieillesse*). The walls of the Protestant church [^in their turn] have now got some ivy on them, and the villager does not wish to hear the preacher of any new church which has not.

In Bewick's Birds it is said of the night-jar (also called goat-sucker, dor-hawk, or fern owl) (*Caprimulgus Europens*), — L'Engoulevent (Buffon): "When perched the Night-Jar sits usually on a bare twig, its head lower than its tail, ant] in this attitude utters its jarring note ["by which," he says elsewhere, "it is peculiarly distinguished."] It is likewise distinguished by a sort of buzzing which it makes while on the wing, and which has been compared to the noise caused by the quick rotation of a spinning-wheel, from which, in some places, it is called the Wheel Bird." "It is seldom seen in the daytime." This last sound is apparently the same which I hear our whip-poor-will make, and which I do not remember to have heard described. [^?????]



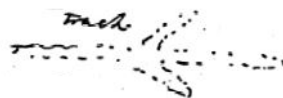
On the sides of dry lulls the dried heads of the hardback, rising above the snow, are very perfect and handsome now. I think it may be owing to the drought of the last summer, which caused them to dry up prematurely, but before they began to be brittle and to crumble. This on the first cladonia pasture of Conantum.

I sit there looking up at the mackerel sky and also at the neighboring wood so suddenly relieved of its snowy burden. The pines — mostly white — have ~~now~~ at this season a warm brown or yellowish tinge, and the oaks — chiefly ~~wh~~ young white ones — are comparatively red. The black oak I see is more yellowish. You have these colors of the ~~pin~~ evergreens and oaks in winter for warmth and contrast with the snow.

Seeds are still left on the birches, which, after each new snow, are sprinkled over its surface, apparently to keep the birds supplied with food.

You see where yesterday's snowy billows have broken at last in the sun or by their own weight, their curling edges fallen and crumbled on the snow beneath.

I see the tracks of countless little birds, probably redpolls, where these have run over broad pastures and visited every weed, — johnswort and coarse grasses, — whose oat-like seed-scales ~~they~~ or {culms} they have scattered about.



It is surprising they did not sink deeper in the light snow. Often the impression is so faint that they seem to have been supported by their wings.

The pines and oaks in the deepest hollows in the woods still support some snow, but especially the low swamps are half filled with snow to the height of ten feet, resting on the bent underwood, as if affording covert to wolves. Very musical and even sweet now, like a horn, is the hounding of a foxhound heard now in some distant wood, while I stand listening in some far solitary and silent field.

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I doubt if I can convey an idea of the appearance of the woods yesterday, as you stood in their midst and looked round on their boughs and twigs laden with snow. It seemed as if there could have been none left to reach the ground. These countless zigzag white arms crossing each other at every possible angle completely closed up the view, like a light drift within three or four rods on every side. The wintriest prospect imaginable. That snow which sifted down into the wood-path was much drier and lighter than elsewhere.

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January 21, Sunday: The Théâtre de la Monnaie that had opened in 1819 in Brussels burned down.



Jan 21st 2 1/2 Pm. The sky has gradually become overcast & now it is just beginning to snow—looking against a dark roof—I detect a ~~fla~~ single flake from time to time—but when I look at the [^dark side of the] woods 2 miles off in the horizon there already is seen a slight thickness or mistiness in the air— In this [^way] perhaps may it first be detected.

[Transcript]

Pm to Andromeda Ponds—via RR—return by base of Cliffs—

The snow is turning to rain through a fine hail.

Pines & oaks seen at a distance—say 2 miles off—are considerably blended & make one harmonious impression—the former the former if you attend are seen to be of a blue [^or misty] black—and the latter form commonly a reddish brown ground out of which the former rise— These colors are no longer in strong contrast with each other—

~~Isusp~~ Few twigs are conspicuous at a distance like those of the golden willow — The tree is easily distinguished at a distance by its color. Saw in old White pine stump about 15 inches from the ground a hole [^pecked] about 1 1/2 inches in diameter— It was about 6 inches deep ~~in the~~ downward in the rotten stump & was bottomed with hypnum—rabbits fur & hair—& a little dry grass— was it a mouse-nest?—or a nuthatch—creeper's (Prob. last) or chic-a-dee's nest—?)[^xxxxxxx] It has a slight musky smell.

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January 22, Monday: In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Stone Bridge (Gleason F6) over the Sudbury River on Union Turnpike, Loring's Pond (Gleason F3), Derby's Bridge (Gleason F4) over the Assabet River, and Nut Meadow (Gleason H4). The water level was quite high.



Jan 22nd Heavy rain in the night & half of today with very high wind from the Southward —Washing off the snow—& filling the road with water— The roads are well nigh impassable to foot travellers.

Pm To Stone bridge—Lorings pond Derby's & Nut meadow—

It is a good lichen day—for the high wind has strewn the bark over the fields & the rain has made them very bright. In some places for 15 rods the [^whole] road is like a lake from 3 to 15 inches deep. It is very exciting to see where was so lately only ice & snow—dark wavy lakes—dashing in furious torrents through the commonly dry channels [^under] ~~of~~ the causeways—to hear only the rush & roar of waters & look down on mad billows where in summer is commonly only dry pebbles—great cakes of ice ~~litter~~ lodged & sometimes tilted up against the causeway bridges over which the water pours as over a dam. After their passage under these commonly dry bridges the crowding waters are at least 6 or 8 inches higher than those of the surrounding meadow— What a tumult at the Stone Bridge—where cakes of ice a rod in diameter & ~~10~~ [^a foot] inches thick are carried rounded & round by the eddy ~~only by~~ in circles 6 or 8 [^or 10] rods in ~~er~~ diameter, & rarely get a chance to go down stream—while others are seen coming up edgewise from below in the midst of ~~the~~ torrent. The musk of rats driven out ~~by~~ [^of] their holes by the water are exceedingly numerous— [^yet many of their

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cabins are above water on the S branch here there are none] We saw 15 or 20 at least bet Derby's bridge & the Tarbel spring—either swimming with surprising swiftness up or down or across the stream—to avoid us—or sitting at the waters edge—or [^resting] on the edge of the ice [^One refreshed himself there after his cold swim regardless of us—probed its fur with its nose & scratched its ear like a dog—] —or on som alder bough just on the surface— They frequently swam toward an apple tree in the midst of the water—in the vain hope of finding a resting place & refuge there. I saw one—looking quite a reddish brown busily feeding on some plant just at the waters edge—thrusting his head under for it— But I hear the sound of Goodwin's gun up stream—& see his bag stuffed out with their dead bodies. The radical leaves of the yellow thistle are now very fresh & conspicuous in Tarbel's meadow—the rain having suddenly carried off the snow.

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January 23, Tuesday: Near the Cook Strait area of New Zealand, an 8.2-8.3 Mw Wairarapa earthquake took between 5 and 9 victims.

The winter in Illinois was continuing miserable. [Abraham Lincoln](#) purchased overshoes, a small shawl, and for his wife 2 combs and cotton flannel.

A 2d version of [The Overture to Faust](#) by [Richard Wagner](#) was performed for the initial time, in the Casino Zürich, and was conducted by the composer.

LISTEN TO IT NOW

Panacea-Klänge op.161, a waltz by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#), was performed for the initial time, in the Sophiensaal, Vienna (also premiered was the *Souvenir-Polka op.162*).

[Thomas Cholmondeley](#) had, by this date, been appointed a captain of the militia of Hodnet Salop, England. In the afternoon, the water was still higher than yesterday, and [Henry Thoreau](#) noticed that near Hunt's or Red Bridge (Gleason E6) over the Concord River, the river was just over Lowell Road. In the [Minnesota Territory](#), amidst general celebration, sleighs passed over the first bridge to span the Mississippi River at any point along its length. This suspension bridge had been thrown over the river, by a local "fixer" named Franklin Steele,

HDT

WHAT?

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just above St. Anthony “Place where the Water Falls,” the point at which the river became unnavigable by steamboat, to join the booming city of St. Anthony to an illegal community named Minnehapolis made up of white squatters on the territory of Fort Snelling Military Reservation. Basically, Steele was out to “Steele” anything that wasn’t nailed down. These squatters were all competing with one another to be in on the take, when and if the US government could be lobbied or bribed into releasing control over this unneeded military claim and its riparian water rights to the enormous falls at St. Anthony, which could potentially generate more power than was being used by all the mills of Lowell MA. (Other sources say “the first bridge across the [navigable] Mississippi River” was between Rock Island IL and Davenport IA, a railroad bridge, but this claim is disingenuous because it involves suppressing the modifier “navigable” and thus presupposes an implicit definition of “Mississippi River” as starting one mile south of the Minnesota bridge.)



Jan 23d Pm— The water is still higher than yesterday—I found [it] just over the red-bridge road—near the bridge. The willow row near there is not now bright—but a dull greenish below—with a yard at the ends of the twigs red. The water in many hollows in the fields has suddenly fallen away run off or soaked up—leaving last night’s ice to mark its high around the edges & the bushes— It has fallen 2 feet in many cases—leaving some times a mere feathery crystallization to supply its place—I was pleased to see the vapor of Sam. Barrett’s fall—and after— the icy caves of the alder & willow stems below—
 But the river is higher than ever— especially the N. river.
 I was obliged to after crossing Hunt’s Bridge to keep on round to the RR bridge at Loring’s before I could recross—it being over the road with a roar like a mill dam this side the further stone-bridge—and I could not get over dry for the feebleness of the and incontinuity of the fence— In front of G.M. Barretts was a great curving bay—which crossed the road bet him & Heywoods—and by Fort Pond bridge at Loring’s it had been over for

[Transcript]

92. Eventually, a federal officeholder who sympathized with the institution of slavery did open the lands of Fort Snelling to their exploitation a few days before he fled from his Washington office to Richmond, Virginia to join the insurrection.

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MAKERS OF MINNESOTA

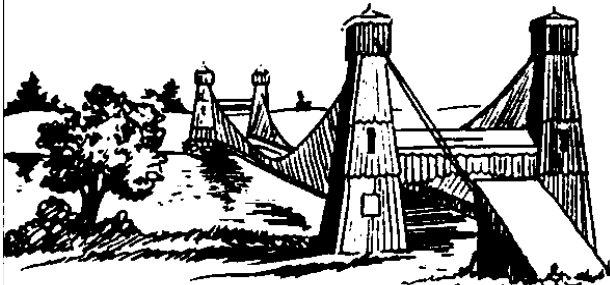
Sponsored by the Minnesota Historical Society

Franklin Steele

FRONTIER BUSINESS MAN; HELPED TO OPEN THE NORTHWEST TO SETTLEMENT.



STEELE CAME TO MINNESOTA IN 1837. HE TOOK A PROMINENT PART IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WATER POWER AT THE FALLS OF ST. ANTHONY, AND MAY BE CALLED THE FOUNDER OF MINNEAPOLIS.



IN 1854 STEELE BUILT A SUSPENSION BRIDGE CONNECTING ST. ANTHONY AND MINNEAPOLIS, WHICH WAS THE FIRST BRIDGE TO SPAN THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.



IN THE WINTER OF 1838 STEELE LEARNED THAT THE LANDS EAST OF THE MISSISSIPPI HAD BEEN OPENED FOR SALE. HE HOMESTEADED THE LAND ADJOINING THE FALLS ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE RIVER AND ESTABLISHED HIS CLAIM BY CONSTRUCTING A SHACK OF BOARDS AND STARTING A FARM, PLANTING POTATOES IN HOLES IN THE SNOW.



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10 rods in the night. A great cake a foot thick stands on end against the RR bridge—
 I do not quite like to see so much bare ground in mid winter— The rad. leaves of the shepherd's purse seen in green circles on the water-washed plowed grounds—remind me of the internal heat & life of the globe—anon to burst forth anew—
 Yesterday I met Godwin shooting muskrats—& saw the form & bloody stains of two through his game bag— He shot such as were close to the shore where he could get them—for he had no dog—the water being too cold he said. I saw one poor rat lying on the edge of the ice [^reddened with its blood] 4 or half a dozen rods from the shore—which he had shot but was unwilling to wade for.
 It is surprising how much work will be accomplished in such a night as the last— so many a brook will have run itself out & now be found reduced within reasonable bounds. This settling away of the water leaves much crackling white ice in the roads.

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January 24, Wednesday: The Sacramento, [California Daily Union](#) provided an interesting report of the sort of thing that passed for sidewalk entertainment in these days of yore:

DISTINGUISHED ARRIVAL.— The proprietor of the moving cosmorama that in times gone by was located just off the sidewalk in Third street, near J street, has returned and resumed the exhibition of his famed establishment for a brief season. To render the entertainment still more acceptable, he explains orally the character of each view as it passes before the eye of the audience. We jotted down last evening some of the more eloquent passages in his lecture, as follows: "Arts St. Mary's Church Rome—Arts Amsterdam—Arts e Chrystal Palace, New York e World's fair—Arts e City Chapultepec Mexican city—Arts e battle of Vera Cruz, fought by Giner-ral Scott behind him mounted on white horse passing and repassing—Arts e going round Cape Horn." As the views are multitudinous and selected, a person may, at this establishment inspect personally, for a dime, all the more notable structures of the earth done up in magnificent style and highly colored.



Jan 24th '55 I am [reading] [Wm Wood's N.E.'s Prospect](#)—
 He left NE. Aug 15th 1633—and the last Eng. Edition referred to in this Am. one of 1764 is that of Lond. 1639. The wild meadow grasses appear to have grown more rankly in those days. He describes them as "thick & long, as high as a man's ~~shoulder~~ middle; some as high as the shoulder,"—v. Ind. book. [there is a vertical pencil line from here through the bottom of this manuscript page, "far more abundant"] Strawberries too were more abundant and large before they were so cornered up by cultivation "some being 2 inches about; one may gather half a bushel in a forenoon;" and no doubt many other berries were far more abundant— as gooseberries— raspberries [vertical pencil line from here through line beginning "speak of..."]—& also especially currants— which last so many old writers speak of but so few moderns find wild. We can perhaps imagine how the primitive wood looked from the samples still left in Maine— He says "The timber of the country grows straight, & tall, some trees being 20, some 30 foot high before they spread forth their branches; generally the trees be not very thick, tho' there be many that will serve for mill-posts, some being 3 foot & a half over." One would judge from accounts that the woods were clearer than the primitive wood that is left [^on ac. of Ind. fires] —for he

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says you might ride a hunting in most places—"There is no underwood saving in swamps" which the Ind. fires did not burn. v. Ind. book. "Here no doubt might be good done with saw mills; for I have seen of these stately high grown trees, [^he is speaking of pines, particularly] ten miles together close by the river[^prob. Charles R.]side,"— He says at first "fir & pine" as if the fir once grew in this part of the state abundantly as now in Maine & farther west. Of the oaks he says "These trees afford much mast [vertical pencil line through this and the following lines] for 19 hogs, especially every third year,"— Does not this imply many more of them than now—

"The hornbound tree is a tough kind of wood, that requires so much pains in riving as 20 is almost incredible, being the best to make bowls & dishes, not being subject to crack or leak." & speaks, both in prose & verse, of the vines being particularly inclined to run over this tree. If this is the true hornbeam it was probably larger then—but I am inclined to think it the tupelo—& that it was both larger & more abundant than commonly now. [^for he says it was good for bowls & it has been so used since] Of the plums of the country he says "they be black & yellow, about the bigness of damsons, of a reasonable good taste." Yet Emerson has not found the Yellow plum *i.e.* Canada—growing wild in Mass.

Of quadrupeds no longer found in Concord he— names—the Lion—that Cape Ann Lion [^"which some affirm that they have seen"]—which may have been a cougar for he adds— "Plimouth men have traded for lions skins in former times".— Bear, Moose—Deer—Porcupines—"The grim fac'd Ounce," —& ravenous howling wolf, [^a verse]" & Beaver. Martins. "For bears they be common, being a black kind of bear, which be most fierce in strawberry time, at which time they have young ones; at which time likewise they will go upright like a man, & climb trees, & swim to the islands;" &c v. Ind. book. In the winter they lie in "the cliffs of rocks & thick swamps"— [^The wolves hunt these in packs & "tear ~~one~~ as him as a dog will tear a kid."

— "they never prey upon the English cattle, or offer to assault the person of any man," unless shot. Their meat "esteemed— — —above venison."

For moose & deer see Ind. book.

Complains of the wolf as the great devourer of Bear—Moose—& deer—which kept them from multiplying⁶² more. "Of these deer; [*i.e.* the small) there be a great many, & more in the Massachusetts-Bay, than in any other place,"— "Some have killed 16 deer in a day upon this island," so called because the deer swam thither to avoid the wolves.

For Porcupine & Raccoon v. Ind Book— Grey squirrels were evidently more numerous than now— I do not know whether his Ounce [^or wild cat] is the Canada lynx (or wolverene??)— [^He calls it wild cat—& does not describe the little wild cat.] v. Ind Book. [^(prob. this.)] Says they are accounted "very good meat. Their skins be a very deep kind of fur, spotted white & black on the belly." [^Aud. & Bach. make the Lynx rufus black & white beneath.] For wolf v. Ind. Books

He says "These be killed daily in some places or other, — — — —Yet is there little hope of their utter destruction,— "travelling in the swamps by kennels".

Says the beaver are so cunning "the English "seldom or never kill any of them, being not patient to lay a long siege—" & not having experience.

Eagles are probably less common—Pigeons of course— [^v. Ind. B.] heath cocks all gone— [^price "4 pence"] & Turkeys [^good cock "4 shillings"] — Prob more owls then—& cormorants &c &c sea-fowl generally [^of humilities he "killed 12 score at 2 shots.""] —& Swans.

Of pigeons "Many of them build among the pine trees 30 miles to the north-east of our plantations; joining nest to nest, & tree to tree by their nests, so that the sun never sees the ground in that place, from whence the Indians fetch whole loads of them."

& then for turkeys tracking them in winter—or shooting them on their roosts at night.

Of the Crane "almost as tall as a man" prob blue heron [^possibly the Whooping? C. or else the Sand-hill?] — he says "I have seen many of these fowls, yet did I never see one that was fat, though very sleeky;" neither did I. "There be likewise many swans, which frequent the fresh ponds & rivers, seldom consorting themselves with ducks & geese; these be very good meat, the price of one is 6 shillings." Think of that. They had not only brant & common grey wild geese—but "a white goose"—prob the Snow-Goose "sometimes there will be 2 or 3000 in a flock"— continue 6 weeks after Michaelmas & return again N in March. Peabody says of the Snow Goose "They are occasionally seen in Mass. Bay."

Sturgeon were taken at Cape Cod & in the Merrimack especially "pickled & brought to England" —⁶⁴ some of these be 12, 14 & 18 feet long:"

An abundance of Salmon shad & bass

"The stately bass, old Neptune's fleeting post,
That tides it out & in from sea to coast;"

"One of the best fish in the country," taken "sometimes 2 or 3000 at a set" [^"Some 4 foot long"—left on the sand behind] the seine. Sometimes used for manure. "Alewives— — — —in the latter end of April come up to the fresh rivers to spawn, in such multitudes as is almost incredible, pressing up in such shallow waters as will scarce permit them to swim, having likewise such longing desire after the fresh water ponds, that no beatings with poles, or forcive agitations by other devices, will cause them to return to the sea, till they have

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cast their spawn.”

“The oysters be great ones in form of a shoe-horn, some be a foot long; these breed on certain banks that are bare every spring tide. This fish without the shell is so big, that it must admit of a division before you can well get it into your mouth.”

For lobsters “their plenty makes them little esteemed & seldom eaten.”

Speaks of “a great oyster bank” in the middle of back bay just off the true mouth of the Charles— & of another—in the ~~mystic~~ Mistick. [^These obstructed the] the navigation of both rivers. v. Book of facts.

Pm. to Walden & Andromeda Ponds.

The river is remarkably high for this season. Meeks the carpenter said that he could not get home to night if he could not find Rhodes with whom he road into town—for the water was more than a foot deep over half the causeway—this was at 8 Pm—

But the ice is not thick enough on the meadows so I go to Walden—a skating. Yet to my surprise it is thinly frozen over those parts of the river which are commonly open even in the coldest weather—(as at Cheney’s) prob. because it being spread over the meadows there is not so much current there now.

On the 19th Walden was covered with slesh 4 or 5 inches deep—but the rain of the 22d turned it all to water—or chiefly—leaving it pretty smooth in the main—but at dif. levels— Under the higher levels are many handsome white figures one to 2 feet long where water has flowed—now empty & white in form of trees or cladonia lichens {drawing} very handsome. I saw a meadow full of lambkill turned reddish—the other day which looked quite handsome with the sun on it. Those Andromeda ponds are very attractive spots to me They are filled with a dense bed of the small andromeda—a dull red mass as commonly seen [^brighter—or translucent red looking toward the sun, greyish looking from it] ~~about~~ 2 feet or more high—as thick as a moss bed—springing out of a still denser bed of sphagnum beneath— Above the general level rise in clumps here & there the panicked andromeda [^with its ~~fruit~~ brown clustered fruit] & the high blueberry— But I observe that the Andromeda does not quite fill the pond—but there is an open wet place with coarse grass,—swamp loosestrife & some button bush— about a rod wide surrounding the whole. Those little hummocks or paps of sphagnum—out of which the andromeda springs—as bouquets are tied up in the same to keep them fresh— {drawing} are very beautiful— Now where the frost has touched them they are hoary protuberances [^perhaps inclining to ridges—now frozen firmly] —green beneath & within—general aspect [^now] perhaps pale withered brownish [^the green only driven in a little deeper spotted] —with more or less bright reddish stars— where drier frequently beautiful crimson stars amid the hoary portions—a beautiful soft bed—of a myriad swelling bosoms out of which the andromeda springs. I got a load once to shift into [^the chinks in] —a well I was ~~building~~ — [^to keep the sand out] but [^it being covered it died &] I believe I only filled the water with moats & worms ever after— A beautiful—pale brown & hoary—red & crimson—ground of swelling bossoms— Dr Harris spoke of this andromeda as a rare plant in Cambridge— There was one pond hole when [possibly “when”] he had found it but he believed they had destroyed it now getting out the mud. What can be expected of a town where this is a rare plant? Here is nature’s parlor—here you can talk with her in the lingua vernacula— — [^if you can speak it—if you have anything to say] her ^ little back sitting room—her with-drawing— her keeping room.

I was surprised to find the ice in the middle of the last pond a beautiful delicate rose color—for 2 or 3 rods—deeper in spots— It reminded me of red snow & may be the same— I tried to think it the blood of wounded muskrats—but it could not be— It extended several inches into the ice at least & had been spread by the flowing water—recently—as for vegetable pingnents. there were button bushes in & about it. It was this delicate rose tint with internal bluish tinges like mother o’pearl—or the inside of a conch— It was quite conspicuous 15 rods off—& the color—of spring cranberry juice. This beautiful blushing ice! what are we coming to?

Was surprised to see oak balls on a bear scrub oak— Have them then on black—scarlet—red & bear-scrub.

Saw a young ap. red oak [^another in same state has an oak ball on it!] [it did not taste bitter.] 10 feet high the ends of whose twigs looked at first sight as if they had been twisted off, by some hungry browsing bird, leaving the fibres streaming— These I found were the strong woody fibres of last years leaf stalk—standing out [^white] in some cases 2 inches in all directions—from the ends of the twigs—in others rolled together like strong twine—& commonly this twine of dif. leaf stalks with the flapping of the leaves twisted together— Sometimes 4 or 5 leaf stalk fibers ~~as~~—with wonderful regularity as if braided—like braided horsetails. On other oaks the leaves still remained with their leaf-stalks thus reduced to fibers & twisted together. It was wonderful how they could have become so wonderfully knotted or braided together— but Nature had made up in assiduity for want of skill. In one instance 4 leaf stalks reduced to fine white fibres & rolled & twisted into strong twine, had afterwards been closely braided together for 1/2 an inch in length—& in the course of it tied twice round the twig. I think it must be that these leaves—died [perhaps in the [^great] drought of last year] while ~~still~~ their fibres were still strongly united with their twigs—& so preserving their flexibility without losing their connexion & so the wind flapping the leaves ~~has twisted~~ which hang short down {drawing} has twisted them together—and commonly worn out the leaves entirely—without loosening or breaking the tough leaf stalk. [^Here is self registered the flutterings of a leaf in this twisted, knotted, & braided twine.] So fickle & unpredictable, not to say insignificant a motion does yet get permanently recorded in some sort. Not a leaf

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flutters—summer or winter,



Old Wood in his NE's Prospect—says but its variation & dip & intensity are registered in The Book. [Here the word "Book" has a double underlining.] Englishmanlike— "It is thought there can be no better water in the world, yet dare I not prefer it before good beer, as some have done, but any man will chose it before bad beer, whey, or buttermilk. Those that drink it be as healthful, fresh, & lusty, as they that drink beer."

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➡ January 25, Thursday: [Dorothy Mae Ann Wordsworth](#) had been seriously ill since 1829, and in “a deepening haze of senility” for two decades. On this day, at the age of 84, she died at Rydal Mount. Throughout her life she had shared in the poetic vision of her famous brother and eventually her journals would see publication.

On this day and the following one, Anton Bruckner took the Hauptlehrer-Prüfung in Linz.

[Henry Thoreau](#) was written to by Ann E. Brown in Brattleboro.

*Brattleboro
Vt } Jan. 25. 1855
Mr Thoreau,
Having heard that
you purpose visiting Brattleboro
next summer, I take the liberty
of inviting you to make our
house your stopping place, while
you stay. Mr Brown and*

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*I shall be happy to see you
and make you welcome to such
accommodations as we have.
Our friend, Mr C. Frost is
anticipating the delight of making
excursions in your company,
and introducing you to our
hills and woods. Myself,
a votary of Nature, though an
untaught one, I have a reverence*

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*for her priesthood, and if
you accept our invitation,
it will give me real pleasure.
I promise not to lay any
visiting trammels upon you,
to interfere with your chosen
pursuits.
In proof that we are
real personages, I refer you
to Mr Emerson, whom we had
the pleasure of seeing at our
house, for a few minutes, when
[he] was in Brattleboro.
Yours with kind regards
Ann E. Brown
Address
Mrs Ann E. Brown
Brattleboro
Vt*



Jan 25th 55

Pm. To Andromeda Ponds

[Transcript]

This morning was a perfect Hunters morn—for it snowed about 3/4 of an inch last even—covering land and ice [^Is not good skating a sign of snow?] — In the swamps however where there was water ~~one~~ oozed out over the ~~old~~ ice, there is no snow but frozen slosh today—i.e a rotten roughish dull white ice. It is a rare day for winter—clear & bright yet warm—

The warmth & stillness in the hollows about the Andromeda ponds are charming. You dispense with gloves.

I see mice tracks in the fields & meadows like this {drawing} 4 together rabbit like 4 or 5 inches apart & 1 1/4 broad—are they the same with the {drawing} I think so. I see rabbit tracks pretty large maybe white ones {drawing} 2 feet apart— I suspect that in each case they are coming down the page. [^Yes]

In The partridge tracks the side [^toes]talons are more spread than in crows & I think believe the hind one is not so long —both trail the middle toe— The partridge track looks like this {drawing}

I see the tracks ap. of many hunters that hastened out this morning.

I have come with basket & hatchet to get a specimen of the rose-colored ice. It is covered with snow—I push it away with my hands & feet—At first I detet no rose tint & suspect it may have disappeared faded or bleached out—or it was a dream— But the surrounding snow & the little body of the ice I had laid bare—was what hindered— At length I detect a faint tinge—I cut down a [^young] white oak & sweep bare a larger space— I then cut out a cake. The redness is all about an inch below the surface— —the little bubbles in the ice there [^for

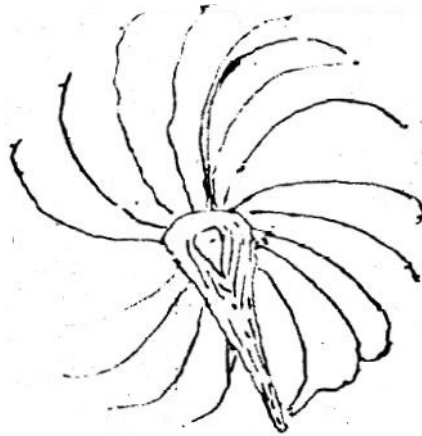
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1/2 an inch vertically] being coated [interruptedly] within or without with what looks like a minute red dust when seen through a microscope—as if it had dried on— Little balloons with some old red paint almost scaled off their spheres. It has no beauty nor brightness thus seen more than brick dust. And this it is which gave the ice so delicate a tinge—seen through that inch of clear white ice. What is it? Can it be blood?

I find an abundance of the seeds of sweet gale frozen in in windrows on the ice of the R. meadows as I return—which were washed out by the freshet— I color my fingers with them. & thus they are planted [vertical pencil line through this and the following lines] there—Somewhat perhaps in waving lines—as they wash up. Returning over the fields—the shallow pools made by the rain & thaw—whose water has almost entirely settled away—and the ice rests on the ground—where they are bare of snow—now that the sun is about 1/4 of an hour high—looking East are quite green. For a week or two the days have been sensibly longer—and it is quite light now when the 5 O'clock train comes in— Sagard says of the hares [lievres) of the Huron Country— “les sapinieres & little woods are the places of their retreat.” Such is their taste now. Says the muskrats paissent “feed on l’herbe on land & the white of the junces at the bottom of the lakes & rivers.”

A pine cone blossoms out [vertical pencil line from here through “regular figure” at the bottom of the manuscript page] now fully in about 3 days, in the house— They begin to open about half way up. They are exceedingly regular & handsome—the scales with shallow triangular or crescent shaped extremities—the prickles pointing downward are most open above—and are so much recurved at the base of the cone that they lie close together & almost flat there—or at right angles with the stem—like a shield of iron scales —making a perfectly regular figure of 13 [in one inst.) curved rays—thus only far more regular



There are just 13 rays in each — of the 3 I have!!! — end of scale on side of cone.



These vary in their roundness the flatness of the cone— So the Wht. P. cones in their length a Larch cone has five rows I find just 5 such rays—(the no' of the needles in a fascicle) in each Wht. — pine cone I have, & each goes round once. 4 hemlock cones have 5 each like wht pine—but little twisted

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January 26, Friday: Ellen Devereux Osgood was born to [Mrs. Ellen Devereux Sewall Osgood](#) and the [Reverend Joseph Osgood](#) in [Cohasset, Massachusetts](#) (Ellen would get married with John Gannett Littlefield on April 20th, 1893).

The Point No Point Treaty was signed in the Washington Territory.

Sardinia declared war on [Russia](#).

[Henry Thoreau](#) was written to by [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#) in [New Bedford, Massachusetts](#).

BROOKLAWN, N. BEDFORD,
26 Jan., 1855.

DEAR SIR,— I fully intended to have gone to Boston yesterday; but not being very well, deferred it until to-day, and now we are visited by a severe snowstorm, so that I fear the railway track may be obstructed. I shall not, therefore, be able to reach Concord this time. My only fear is that you may have gone to Boston in expectation of meeting me there; but as I have not heard from you to this effect I have no very strong reason to think so, and hope that you have not.

I should like very much to see Concord and its environs with the Laird of Walden, and hope at no very distant time to do so, should it meet his pleasure. I hope also to see your lordship again here, and to visit with you some of our rural retreats.

Yours,

D. RICKETSON.

H.D. Thoreau, Esq.,
Concord, Mass.



Jan 26—55 This morning it snows again—A fine dry snow with no wind to speak of giving a wintry aspect to the landscape—

[Transcript]

What a Proteus is our weather— Let me try to remember its freaks— We had remarkably steady sleighing ~~for~~ on a little snow some 6 inches deep from the 5th of December all through the month—& some way into Jan. It came damp & froze up solid— Yet there was none in Boston the while. There was however a little rain near the end of December—& occasional slight flurries of snow.

Jan 6th After some comparatively pleasant days—there was a raw northerly wind & fine drifting or driving snow in the P.m. as I walked over the Great Meadows—forming shallow drifts on the ice—but it soon stopped.⁷⁶

Jan 7th I was surprised when I opened the door in the P.m. by the warm south wind—& sudden softening & melting of the snow— It was a Jan. thaw without rain—the manure beginning to wash off the ice in the streets. The winters back was broken & I dreamed of spring &c &c

Jan 8th the same— The ice in roads washed bare—the brooks full of melted snow— But it is still clear weather & warm.

Jan 9 A cloudy day—wet underfoot—threatening snow—dif. to get on to the river [[^]yet] —water many rods wide each side over the ice

Jan 10 Suddenly cold again. [[^]& blustering] All waters frozen up— go onto the swamps—keeping ears covered.

Jan 11th Make haste to improve the skating in the Pm—though it is beginning to snow— —& the is soon covered 1/2 inch. Then it stops at night.

Jan 12 After a nother slight spitting of snow in the fore noon, it clears up very pleasant & warm in the Pm & I



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walk by the brooks—looking for fish—hearing the crows caw in the horizon & thinking of spring.

Jan 13 Still warm— In roads both muddy—wet—& slippery where ice—thick & misty air threatening rain.

Jan 14 Clear & cold— All things frozen again. excellent skating on Meadows. Skated to Baker Farm.

Jan 15 In the fore noon spit a little snow making shallow drifts on the ice—through which I skated in the Pm to Bedford. stopped snowing.

Jan 16 snowed a little again. spoiling the skating.

Jan 17 forget


Jan 18 Rained hard all day—washed off the little snow left down to the ice— Staid in all day— Water over shoes in the mid. of the road— The gutters turned to mill brooks. Few go out.

Jan 19 In the night rain turned to damp snow—which at first made slosh—then for most part prevailed over the water which ran off underneath—Stuck to the houses & trees & made a remarkable winter scene. A driving damp snow with a strong NW wind all day—lodging on the trees within the woods beyond all—account— Walked in woods in midst of it to see the pines bent down & the white oaks &c & broken— Snow birds *i.e.* linarias in yard. Making drifts by walls

Jan 20 Still higher wind in night (snow over) shaking the snow from trees—Now almost bare—snow 7 or 8 inches on level in woods—but almost all in drifts under the vales in fields. The sudden-frozen slosh ponds—partly run off—like spewed bread. Hardly bear yet. Not very cold. Go studying drifts. Fine clear weather.

Jan 21st Becomes over cast at noon— A fine snow spits then turns to fine—hail then rain glazing a little.

Jan 22d Rained all night. Walking now worse than ever this year—mid-leg deep in gutters. Lakes in the street— River risen—a freshet—breaking up ice a foot thick—flows under dry causeway bridges a torrent—muskrats driven out by hundreds & shot—dark angry waves where was lately ice and snow—Earth washed bare—radical leaves appear & russet hills—still rains a little.

Jan 23 [[^]Fair weather] Water still rising ove the Redbridge road—though suddenly fallen in many hollows in fields leaving [[^]thin] ice 2 feet above it around—& by clumps—

Great work done by brooks last night by brooks— Have to go round 2 or 3 miles to find a dry causeway. not strong enough for skating.

Jan 24 Not strong enough to skate on meadows went to Walden. At dark—snowed 3/4 inch & spoiled prospect of skating.

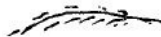
Jan 25 Clear bright & mild—Water still higher than before—over the causeways

Jan 26 —A fine snow falling—spoiling all prospect of skating on this broad ice— Is not good skating the surest sign of snow or foul weather?

To Continue the 26th

Pm to Walden—

A thick driving snow—([[^]Something like—but less than that of the 19th]) There is a strong easterly wind— & the snow is very damp— In the deepest hollows on the Brister-Hill path it has already lodged handsomely— Suppose you descend into the deepest circular one—far beneath the sweep of the blustering wind—where the flakes at last drop gently to their resting places— There is a level white circular floor—indicating ice beneath— & all around the white-pines under an accumulating snowy burthen are hung with drooping white wreathes or fans of snow The snow on Pitch pines takes the forms of large balls, on White pines often of [[^]great] rolling-pins— Already the trees are bending in all directions into the paths & hollows as here— The birches here are bowed inward to the open circle of the pond hole—their tops ap. buried in the old snow



Nothing can be prettier than the snow on the leafless shrub oaks—the twigs are so small & numerous—little snowy arms crossing each other at every imaginable angle—like a whirligig. It is surprising what a burden of snow already rests on little bare twigs hardly bigger than a knitting needle—both as they stand perpendicularly

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& horizontally.

The great damp flakes come & soon bridge across the interval even 2 inches over between the forks of such twigs where they are horizontal—one sticking to Another— It rests on such horizontal twigs commonly in the form of a prism resting on one corner [^vertical section where no wind].



And in many places where the wind is felt—these little walls of snow are built out at an angle with the perpendicular, in the direction whence the snow comes (a vertical section—or end)



Damp as it is—it like swans down—as if it lay as light as well as thick. As it is with these Shrub-oaks —so with the largest trees in the stiller parts of the woods—& even the lowest dead limbs of the white pines are not prevented by the upper from bearing their part of the burden.

I am afraid I have not described vividly enough the aspect of that Lodging Snow of the 19th & today partly I am Imagine the innumerable twigs & boughs of the forest (as you stand in its still midst) crossing each other at every conceivable angle on every side from the ground to 30 feet in height —with each its zigzag wall of snow 4 or 5 inches high—so innumerable at different distances one behind another that they completely close up the view like a loose woven downy screen—into which however stooping & winding you ceaselessly advance— The wintriest scene. Which perhaps can only be seen in perfection while the snow is yet falling before wind & thaw begin. Else you miss, you lose, the delicate touch of the Master. A coarse woof & warp of snowy batting—leaving no space for a bird to perch.

I see where a partridge [**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] has waddled through the snow still falling—making a continuous track— I look in the direction to which it points—& see the bird just skimming over the bushes 15 rods off. The plumes of pitch pines are first filled up solid—then they begin to make great snowy casse-têtes—or pestles. In the fields the air is thick with driving snow—you can only see a dozen rods into its woof & warp It fills either this ear or that & your eyes with hard cutting blinding scales if you face it. It is forming shelly drifts behind the walls—& stretches in folds across the roads— But in deep withdrawn hollows in the woods—the flakes at last come gently & deviously down—lodging on every twig & leaf—& forming deep & downy—~~but~~ & level beds between & on the ice of the pools. The lowermost twigs support not less snow but more.



In many places where you knew there was a thrifty young wood—there appears to be none—for all is bent down & almost completely buried in the snow. [^& you are stepping over them.] The P—pines are most round headed— —& the [^young] White oaks are most leaved at top—& hence suffer most—

What changes in the aspect of the earth—one day russet hills—& muddy ice—& yellow & greenish pools in the fields— the next all painted white—the fie[l]ds & woods & roofs laid on thick— The great sloshy pools in the fields freezing as they dried away—look like bread that has spewed in the baking the fungi of a night—an acre in extent—but trust not your feet on it—for the underside is not done.—there the principle of water still prevails.

Methinks that after any great storm in winter whether of snow or rain—the equilibrium of the air is again disturbed & there comes a high wind shaking down the snow & drying up the water.

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January 27, Saturday: [Richard Henry Dana, Jr.](#) dined again with the Saturday Club at the Albion Hotel in downtown [Boston](#), with [James Russell Lowell](#), [Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe](#), [Edwin Percy Whipple](#), and [Waldo Emerson](#). Either before or after this meal Emerson was lecturing in Worcester.

The winter in Illinois was continuing miserable. [Abraham Lincoln](#) purchased another “Small Shawl” at John Williams’ store.

The Panama Railway became the 1st railroad to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.



Jan 27 '55 Yesterdays dr[[^]i]ving Easterly snow storm turned to sleet in the evening & then to rain— & this morning it is clear & pretty cold [[^]the wind Westerly] —the snow settled to 3 or 4 inches on a level with a frozen crust & some water beneath in many places. It seems as if the sky could not bear to look down on smooth ice—& so made haste to cover it up.

[Transcript]

One is educated to believe—& would rejoice if the rising generation should find no occasion to doubt that the state & the Church are on the side of morality—that the voice of the people is the voice of God. Harvard College was partly built by a lottery—my father tells me he bought a ticket in it—perhaps she thus laid the foundation of her Divinity school— Thus she teaches by example. New England is flooded with the “Official schemes of the Maryland State Lotteries” and in this that state is no less unprincipled than in her slave-holding Maryland and every fool who buys a ticket of her is bound straight to the bottomless pit. The state of Maryland is a moral fungus. her offence is rank—it smells to heaven. Knowing that she is doing the devils work— & that her customers are ashamed to be known as such—she advertises— as in the case of private diseases—that “the strictest confidence will be observed.” “Consolidated” Devilry[[^]!]

P. m. up meadow to Cliffs
& Walden Road.

A cold cutting S.’Westerly wind. The crust bears where the snow is very shally—but lets you through to water in many places on the meadow. The river has not yet fallen much— The muskrats have added to their houses in some places. So they still use them. Started a hare among shrub oaks—it had been squatting in a slight hollow— rather concealed than sheltered. They always look poverty stricken.

Some ice organ-pipes at the Cliffs. They appear to be formed of successive rings about 1/2 inch thick & diameters lessening [[^]with more or less regularity] to the point— [[^]sometimes the point split in two.]



Then the rocks are incased with ice under which water flows—thin sheets of rippling water frozen as it flowed—& with the sun again ap. thawing beneath & giving room to a new sheet of water—for under the south side of the rocks it melts almost every day.

I came upon a fox’s track under the N end of the Cliffs—& followed it. It was made last night—after the sleet & prob. the rain was over [[^]before it froze. It must have been at midnight or after.] — The tracks were commonly 10 or 12 inches apart—& each 1 3/4⁸⁹ or 2 inches wide—Sometimes there was a longer interval & 2 feet fell nearer together, as if in a canter. It had doubled directly on its track in one place for a rod or 2—then went up the N end of the Cliff where it is low—& went along Southward just on its edge—ascending gradually. In one place it had made water like a dog—& I perceived the peculiar rank fox odor without stooping. It did not wind round the prominent rocks but leaped upon them as if to reconnoitre— Its rout was for the most part a little below the edge of the Cliff—occasionally surmounting it. At length after going perhaps 1/2 a mile—it turned as if to descend a dozen rods beyond the Juniper & suddenly came to end. Looking closely I found the entrance ap. to its hole under a prominent rock which seemed to lie loose on the top of the ledge— & about 2 feet from the nearest track— by stooping it had probably squeezed under this & passed into its den beneath. I could find no track leading from it.

Their tracks are larger than you would expect—as large as those of a much heavier dog, I should think. What a life is theirs—venturing forth only at night—for their prey—ranging a great distance—trusting to pick up a sleeping partridge or a hare— & at home again before morning. With what relish they must relate their midnight adventures to one another there in their dens by day—if they have society— [[^]I had never associated that rock with a fox’s den though perhaps I had sat on it many a time] They are the only outlaws—the only Robinhoods here now-a days. [[^]There are more things in heaven & earth Horatio &c &c] Do they not stand for Gipseys & all outlaws? Wild dogs, as Indians are wild men.

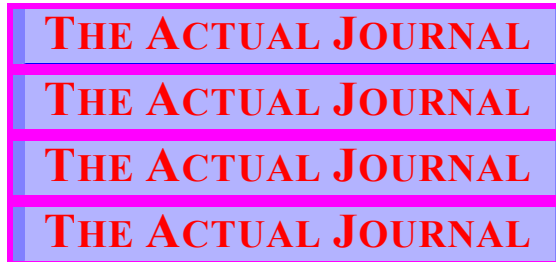
People will tell you of the Cold winter ~~when~~ clear bright days—when for 6 weeks the eves did not run once.




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As I went through the woods toward the RR—the sun setting—there were many [^{small}] violet colored [^{i.e.} lilac tinted] clouds scattered along the otherwise clear Western horizon. I often see the mincing tracks of a skunk. I came upon the track of a woodchopper who had gone to his work early this morning across Fair Haven Pond. It suggested his hard work—& little pecuniary gain—but simple life & health & contentment— As I took the back track on his trail—comparing his foot [^{& stride}] with mine— I was startled to detect a slight aberration, as it were sliding in his tread [^{or}] as if he had occasionally stopped & ~~taken a fresh~~ & made a fresh impress not exactly coincident with the first. In short I discovered ere long that he had had a companion [^{perchance they were 2 thieves trying to pass for one, thought I, but the truth was the 2nd}] —~~who~~ to save his strength in this long walk to his work through the crusty snow had stepped with more or less precision in the tracks of his predecessor— The snow was 3 or 4 inches deep— I afterwards used the track of a horse in like manner to my advantage—So that my successor might have thought that a sleigh had gone along drawn by a ~~horse~~ [^{man}]



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

 January 28, Sunday: William Seward Burroughs, who would invent a recording adding machine and found the Burroughs Computer Corporation, was born.

The Panama Railroad Company of New York began operating a railroad across the Isthmus of Panama. No longer would the thousands of [California](#) gold seekers need to journey up the San Juan River by light boat and then pass across Lake Nicaragua by large steamer and then venture down a road in carriages through the dense jungles of Central America, encountering clouds of swirling malaria mosquitos.

[AMANAPLANACANALPANAMA](#)

The 1st performance of [Hector Berlioz](#)'s cantata in honor of [Napoléon III](#), Le Dix Décembre, scheduled for the Théâtre-Italien, was canceled owing to concerns about the war in the [Crimea](#).

Anton Bruckner was deemed to have passed the Hauptlehrer-Prüfung, which qualified him to be a high school teacher.



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Jan 28th 55 Sunday Grew warmer toward night & snowed But this soon turned to heavy rain in the night—which washed all the snow off the ice—leaving only bare ground & ice the country over—by next morn.

[Transcript]

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January 29, Monday: Lord Aberdeen resigned as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, over his perceived mismanagement of the Crimean War.

Leopolderstädter Polka op.168 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in the Sperl Ballroom, Vienna.

In 1837 the New York politician Philip Hone had described the glorious geist of his countrymen as “*Go ahead* is our maxim and our password. We go ahead with a vengeance, regardless of the consequences and indifferent about the value of human life.” On this day the New-York Times proclaimed that such American “go-aheadativeness” amounted to “the spirit of progress.”

The abolitionist newspaper editor Sherman M. Booth appealed his conviction to the Wisconsin Supreme court. Booth’s attorney argued before Wisconsin Supreme Court Judge A.D. Smith that his client should not have been found guilty of having violated the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 because 1) the federal Congress couldn’t legislate on fugitive slaves; 2) even if it could, a person claimed to be a slave had in Wisconsin to have the benefit of a jury trial; 3) since the law put the power of interpreting itself into the hands of court commissioners rather than of judges, it was unconstitutional. The court declared the federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 to be contrary to Wisconsin’s constitution and gave as its opinion that the state did have the power to free persons who had been illegally imprisoned. “I am frank to say,” Booth declared in court, “—and the prosecution may make the most of it— that I sympathize with the rescuers of Glover and rejoice at his escape. I rejoice that, in the first attempt of the slave-hunters to convert our jail into a slave-pen and our citizens into slave-catchers, they have signally failed, and that it has been decided by the spontaneous uprising and sovereign voice of the people, that no human being can be dragged into bondage from Milwaukee. And I am bold to say that, rather than have the great constitutional rights and safeguards of the people —the writ of habeas corpus and the right of trial by jury— stricken down by this fugitive law, I would prefer to see every federal officer in Wisconsin hanged on a gallows fifty cubits higher than Haman’s.” “They will never consent,” United States court commissioner Winfield Smith mused, in referring to the rights of the states in the enforcement of the law, “that a slave-owner, his agent, or an officer of the United States, armed with process to arrest a fugitive from service, is clothed with entire immunity from state authority; to commit whatever crime or outrage against the laws of the state; that their own high prerogative writ of habeas corpus shall be annulled, their authority defied, their officers resisted, the process of their own courts contemned, their territory invaded by federal force, the houses of their citizens searched, the sanctuary or their homes invaded, their streets and public places made the scenes of tumultuous and armed violence, and state sovereignty succumb —paralyzed and aghast— before the process of an officer unknown to the constitution and irresponsible to its sanctions. At least, such shall not become the degradation of Wisconsin, without meeting as stern remonstrance and resistance as I may be able to interpose, so long as her people impose upon me the duty of guarding their rights and liberties, and maintaining the dignity and sovereignty of their state.”

Booth was discharged from imprisonment by the state supreme court, but only on the ground of irregularities in the warrant — and this did not end the case. Booth was re-arrested by federal officers and bound over for a federal trial. Although he applied to the Wisconsin Supreme Court for a writ, this was denied since responsibility for the case had been claimed by the federal government. Booth and John Rycraft would be tried for violation of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and would be found guilty. The sentences imposed were:



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Sherman M. Booth — Imprisonment in the county jail one month, a fine of \$1,000 and the costs of prosecution.

John Rycraft — Imprisonment for ten days; fine of \$200 without costs.

The owner of the rescued slave also brought suit against Booth for the value of a negro slave as fixed by the act of congress and obtained judgment in the United States District court for \$1,000. It is said that the litigation ruined Booth financially.



Jan 29th Not cold—Sun comes out at noon.

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



January 30, Tuesday: Glossen op.163, a waltz by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#), was performed for the initial time, in the Sophiensaal, Vienna.

On approximately this date [Henry Thoreau](#) was being written to by [Thomas Cholmondeley](#) in England. The letter included some news from the [Crimea](#).

Hodnet

Salop

[January 30] Tuesday

1855.

Dear Thoreau

*You will be glad to hear
that I am safe at my Brothers
house in Salop after a most disagreeable
passage to England in the steamer
America.*

*I have accepted the offer of
a Captaincy in the Salop Militia, &
it is probable that we shall be sent
before very long to relieve other troops
who are proceeding to the seat of the
war: but if the strife continues to
consume men at its present rate
of 1000 a week we shall be involved*

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*in it I hope before the year is out
by volunteering into the Line.
Meanwhile I shall use my best
diligence to learn all I can of my
men &c & prepare myself for the*

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active service to which I impatiently look forward. Nothing can be more awful than the position of our poor army. At the present rate of mortality they will be finished up by the time they are most wanted; & it will be reserved for the French to take Sabastopel.

We are learning a tremendous lesson: I hope we shall profit by [it] & so far from receding I trust we

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shall continue hostilities with greater energy & greater wisdom than before.

I would rather see the country decimated than an [in]glorious or even an accommodating peace.

My passion is to see the fellows crushed or to die in the attempt.

Lord John has resigned & the ministry is, we all think, breaking up.

It was high time considering the mismanagement of New Castle.

We are in the midst of a great snow (great at least for us). Colds are rife in the Parish so that "coughing drowns the Parsons saw".

I find the red brick houses are the most striking feature on revisiting

Page 4

this country. Though a great deal smaller than your elegant villas our cottages on the whole please my eyes & look more homey, & very suggestive of good cheer.

There is such a quietness & excessive sleepiness about Shropshire — the only excitement being an occasional alehouse brawl — that it is hardly possible to imagine we are at war!

The fact is the common people never see a newspaper — & such [is] their confidence in "the Queen's army[?]" that they believe prolonged resistance



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on the part of any power would be impossible & absurd. My cousin in

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the Crimea still survives contrary to my expectations — we have heard a good anecdote from him. Early on Christmas morning the remains of the regiment to wh. he belongs gathered painfully together, & as day dawned they all sung the fine English Carol “Christmas Awake.” It is rather touching. I find all here quite well & hearty & hope your people will be the same when this arrives at Concord — a place I shall often revisit in spirit— Pray remember me to your father mother & sister — to Mr Emerson & [C]hanning & do not forget your promise to come over some time

Page 6

to England, which you will find a very snug & hospitable country — though perhaps decaying, & not on such a huge scale as America. My romance — the Dream of my life — without which it is not worth living for me — is — a glorious commonwealth— I am persuaded that things must in their way to [] be greatly worse before they can become better. Turn it how you will our English nation no longer stands upon the Living Laws of the Eternal God — we have turned ourselves to an empire & cotton bags & the luxury [?] of prodigious manufacture. Let [] all go & let us grow great men again

Page 7

instead of dressing up dolls for the market. I feel we are strong enough to live a better life than this one which now festers in all our joints. So much for the confession of a thorough English conservative as you



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*know me to be!
You have my direction so
pray write — your letter will be
forwarded to wherever I may be.
Dear Thoreau
Ever affectionately your[s]
Thos Cholmondeley.*

*Henry Thoreau Esq^{re}
Concord
Massachusetts U.S.
North America.*

[Thoreau](#) was written to by [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) in Hampton Falls, [New Hampshire](#).

{No MS — printed copy Sanborn, 1882}
“HAMPTON FALLS, N. H., Jan’y 30th, ’55.
“MY DEAR SIR,— I have had it in mind to write you a letter ever since the day when you visited me, without my knowing it, at Cambridge. I saw you afterward at the Library, but refrained from introducing myself to you, in the hope that I should see you later in the day. But as I did not, will you allow me to seek you out, when next I come to Concord?
“The author of the criticism in the ‘Harvard Magazine’ is Mr. Morton of Plymouth, a friend and pupil of your friend, Marston Watson, of that old town. Accordingly I gave him the book which you left with me, judging that it belonged to him. He received it with delight, as a gift of value in itself, and the more valuable for the sake of the giver.
“We who at Cambridge look toward Concord as a sort of mecca for our pilgrimages, are glad to see that your last book finds such favor with the public. It has made its way where your name has rarely been heard before, and the inquiry, ‘Who is Mr. Thoreau?’ proves that the book has in part done its work. For my own part, I thank you for the new light it shows me the aspects of Nature in, and for the marvelous beauty of your descriptions. At the same time, if any one should ask me what I think of your philosophy, I should be apt to answer that it is not worth a straw. Whenever again you visit Cambridge,



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be assured, sir, that it would give me much pleasure to see you at my room. There, or in Concord, I hope soon to see you; if I may intrude so much on your time.

“Believe me always, yours very truly,
“F.B. SANBORN.”



Jan 30 Clear & not cold & now fine skating—the river rising again to the height it had attained the 24th ult which (with this) I think remarkable for this season. It is now about 1 foot ~~in~~ lower than on the 24th [^(it had fall only 18 inches since then)] but is rising. [^Both these—or this whole rise—is owing to heavy rains on the frozen ground carrying off what snow there was—& now soaking up— The hills shed it all like a roof into the valleys. It is up to the hubs on the causeways & foot travellers have to cross on the river & meadows.] It is unusual for the river to be so much swollen in mid winter because it is unusual to have so much rain at this season— Melvin & others are out after muskrats again & see them with their pouches stuffed out with their round bodies.

[Transcript]

Minott to day enumerates—the red—gray—black—& what he calls the Sampson fox— He says “its a sort of yaller fox—but their pelts aint good for much.” He never saw one but the hunters have told him of them. He never saw a grey nor a black one. Told how Jake Lakin lost a dog—a very valuable one—by a fox leading him onto the ice on the Great Meadows & drowning him.⁹³ Said the Raccoon made a track just very much like a young child’s foot. He had often seen it in the mud of a ditch.

DOG

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

GEORGE MINOTT



January 31, Wednesday: Handels-Elite-Quadrille op.166 by Johann Baptist Strauss II was performed for the initial time, in the Sperl Ballroom, Vienna.

On a clear, cold, beautiful day, Henry Thoreau took a day-long skating trip:



Jan 31st 55 Wednesday—
A clear cool beautiful day—Fine skating— an unprecedented expanse of ice.
At 10 Am Skated up the river to explore further than I had been— The water within 10 inches of the height at which it stood Ap. 23d '52, as I noticed at the Stone Bridge—v Feb. 1st
At 8. A.m. the river rising—the thin yellowish ice of last night—next the shore—is as usual much heaved up in ridges—as if beginning to double on itself—and here & there at 9 o'clock—being cracked thus⁹⁸ in the lowest parts the water begins to spurt up in some places in a stream {drawing} as from an ordinary pump & flow along these valleys & thus we have soon reestablished an [^edging of] shallow yellowish or oil-colored [^water] ~~edging~~ all along the river & meadows—covered with floating snow fleas
By ~~night~~[^noon] though it was a pretty cool day—the water had generally burst through & overflowed the ice along⁹⁹ the shore & once more stood at a level there. [^i.e. Water & ice made a level where the ice was uneven before] {drawing} Before skating upstream I tried my [^boat] sail on the meadow in front of the house & found that I could go well enough before the wind—but ~~but~~ ~~can~~ resting the mast on my hip & holding by the middle with one hand—but I could not easily tack.
The country thus almost completely bare of snow—only some ice in the roads & fields—and the frozen freshet at this remarkable height— I skated up as far as the boundary between Wayland & Sudbury—just above Pelhams’ Pond [^to a point which a woman called about 1 1/2 miles from Saxonville] about 12 miles—bet 10

[Transcript]

93. Compare this entry with the entry for January 2, 1859: “Minott says that a fox will lead a dog on to the ice in order that he may get in. Tells of Jake Lakin losing a hound so, which went under the ice and was drowned below the Holt; was found afterward by Sted. Buttrick, his collar taken off and given to Lakin. They used to cross the river there on the ice, going to market, formerly.”

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Am & 1 —quite leisurely—. There I found the river open unexpectedly—is if there were a rapid there—& as I walked up it some 3/4 of a mile it was still open before me—a [^1/2] mile further [^at least] or probably to the falls.??? Somewhat like this {drawing}

All the open part

1 1/2 miles at last—was pretty closely hemmed in by highlands. I skated about 12 mile & walked 3/4 of a mile further. I skated past 3 bridges above Sherman’s [^or 9 in all] —& walked to the 4th. The next or 5th would prob be that in mid of Saxonville viz Causeway bridges—Mill village Bridge at Larned Brook—Pelham P. bridge—& that on It was all the way that I skated a chain road from Dudley P. to Southboro & Marlboro of meadows—with the muskrat houses still rising above the ice—~~over~~[^commonly on] the bank of the river [^& marking it like smaller hay cocks amid the large ones still left.] As I skated near the shore under Lee’s Cliff I saw what I took to be some scraggs or knotty stubbs of a dead limb lying on the bank beneath a white oak—close by me—Yet while I looked directly at them I could not but admire their close resemblance to partridges [Ruffed Grouse ■ *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)]. I had come along with a rapid whirr & suddenly halted right against them —only 2 rods distant—and as my eyes watered a little from skating against the wind—I was not convinced that they were birds till I had pulled out my glass & deliberately examined them. They sat & stood 3 of them perfectly still with their heads erect—some darker feathers like ears methinks—increasing their resemblance to scraggs—as where a small limb is broken off {drawing}. I was much surprised at the remarkable stillness they preserved instinctively relying on the resemblance to the ground for their protection—ie—withered grass—dry oak leaves—dead scraggs & broken twigs. I thought at first that it was a dead oak limb with a few stub ends or scraggs sticking up—and for some time after I had noted the resemblance to birds standing only 2 rods off I could not be sure of their character on account of their perfect motionlessness [^their necks & every muscle tense with anxiety] & it was not till I brought my glass to bear on them & saw their eyes [^] distinctly [^steadily glaring on me] that I was convinced. At length—on some signal which I did not perceive—they went ~~off~~ with a whirr [^as if shot off] over the bushes.



It was quite an adventure getting over the bridgeways or causeways—for on every shore there was either water or thin ice which would not bear— Sometimes I managed to get on to the timbers of a bridge—the end of a projecting “tie” (?) and off the same way—straddling [^Thus over the bridges & the gulf of] ~~over the~~ open water [^about them onto] ~~from~~ the edge of the [^thick] ice— or else I swung myself onto the cause ways by the willows—or crawled along a pole or rail— [^catching at a tree which stood in the water] or got in.

At the bend above The Pantry there was sort of canal or crack quite across the river & meadow—~~which~~ excepting a slight bridge of ice— [^As I passed the mouth of Larned Brook—off Wayland ~~to~~ {M.} H. I pulled out my glass & saw that it was 12 1/2 o’clock] In each town I found one or 2 trappers come forth to shoot muskrats. [^As a regular thing they turned out after dinner—buttoning up their great coats] — All along the river their cabins had been torn to pieces by them—& in one place I saw 2 [^men] sitting over the hole where they had just demolished one—one with a pistol ready pointed to the water where he expected the rat to come up—the other with a gun. In this 12 miles of the river there would be 2 or 3 at least pretty sure to turn out such a day—& take to the ice for muskrats. I saw again an abundance of sweet gale seed on the ice—frozen in—near Pelham’s Pond. This seed is thus dispersed regularly on a large scale. It lies as it was washed along the edge of an overflow {drawing} Beside a dilapidated muskrat’s house lay the wretched carcass of its former occupant— [^on the ice] stripped of its hide [^black, even without its skin, with veins of red.] Returning I saw a large hawk flapping & sailing low over the meadow. There was some dark color to its wings.

You were often liable to be thrown when skating fast by the shallow puddles on the ice formed in the mid of the day—& not easy to be distinguished. These detained you feet while your unimpeded body fell forward

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Waldo Emerson had scheduled Charles H. Goddard of Cincinnati to lecture before the Concord Lyceum on this evening, and Goddard at some point had apparently needed to reschedule so Emerson had scheduled Thoreau to lecture in his place. Later, however, things had changed again and Goddard showed up to lecture on this evening — so after all Thoreau didn’t need to.



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FEBRUARY 1855

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for February 1855 \(ÆT. 37\) in the 1906 version](#)



February 1, Thursday: The USS *Mississippi* reached Valparaiso, Chile. They discovered the sloop USS *John Adams* at anchor, as well as a large number of merchant vessels. The American Consul, Mr. Merwin, visited on board. Crew and officers were surprised to receive letters from home, posted the previous August.

[Henry Thoreau](#) took another day-long [skating](#) trip.

He wrote to [Friend Daniel Ricketson](#).

Concord Feb 1ST '55

Dear Sir,

*I supposed, as I
did not see you on the
24TH or 25TH, that some track
or other was obstructed; but
the solid earth still holds
together between New Bedford
and Concord, and I trust
that as [t]his time you staid
away, you may live to come
another day. I did not go
to Boston, for with regard
to that place, I sympathize with
one of my neighbors, an old man,
who has not been there since
the last war, when he
was compelled to go— No, I
have a real genius for staying
at home.*

*I have been looking
of late at Bewick's tail-pieces in the "Birds" — all they
have of him at Harvard. Why*

BEWICK

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*will he be a little vulgar at
times? Yesterday I made an ex-
cursion up our river — skated
some thirty miles in a few
hours, if you will believe
it— So with reading &
writing & skating, the night*



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*comes round again.
Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau.*

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Postage: pD

{upside down: PAID 3}

Postmark: CONCORD

FEB

I

MASS.

Address: Daniel Ricketson Esq

New Bedford

Mass

[Thoreau](#) wrote to Ann E. Brown in Brattleboro.

Concord Feb 1ST'55

Dear Madam,

I have not

contemplated visiting Brattle-

boro next summer, as you

have heard; but it is pleasant

to entertain, if only for a mo-

ment the idea of such an

excursion. I should like very

much to walk in your woods,

which are more primitive than

ours, and especially in com-

pany with Mr[]Frost, of

whom I have heard through

Mr[]Russell & Miss Ann Whiting.

Be assured that whenever

I may come to Brattleboro, and

I feel many attractions drawing

me that way, I shall remem-

ber the spirit of your very kind

and hospitable invitation.

Yrs respectfully

Henry D. Thoreau[.]



Feb 1st 55

As usual these broad fields of ice could not be left uncovered over the 3d day— It began to spit a little snow at noon—just enough to show on the ice—the thickness of a blanket— though not on the ground—dissipated there both by the warmth & irregularity—

A 4 Pm—I find that the river rose last evening to within 8 1/2 inches of the rise of Ap 23d [[^]“23d” written over

[Transcript]



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“24th”] ’52—& then began to fall. It has now fallen about 4 inches—Accordingly, the river falling all day,—No water has burst out through the ice next the shore—& it is now one uninterrupted level white blanket of snow quite to the shore on every side— This then is established—that the river falling 4 inches during the day—though it has been as warm as yesterday, there has been no overflow along the shore. Ap the thin recent ice of the night which connects the main body with the shore bends & breaks with the rising of the mass [^especially in the morning] under the influence of the sun & wind—And the water establishes itself at a new level. As I skated up the river so swiftly yesterday—I now here now there—past the old kingdoms of my fancy—I was reminded of [Landor](#)’s Richard the First—“I sailed 56 along the realms of my family—[^dashes canceled];

LANDOR’S “RICHARD THE FIRST”

on the right was England, on the left was France; [^Nine Acre Corner—Lincoln—] [^on the right was Sudbury, on the left was Wayland;]

[The brackets above are Thoreau’s.]

little else could I discover than sterile eminences & extensive shoals. They fled behind me; so pass away generations; so shift, and sink, and die away affections.” — — — — “I debark in Sicily”


That [^altered from “that”] was Tall’s Island. “I sail again, an hour or 2? & within a day or two I behold, as the sun is setting, the solitary majesty of Crete,” mother of a religion, it is said, that lived 2000 years.² [^That was Nobscot surely] [^Pencil line connects this to caret following “years.”] Onward &c “Onward, and many specks bubble up along the blue AEgean;” These must have been the muskrat houses in the ~~Great~~ Meadows. “Every one” — — — — I have no doubt “the monument of a greater man [^being?] than I am” —

The swelling river was belching on a high key from ten to eleven— Quite a musical cracking—running like a chain lightning of sound athwart my course—as if the river squeezed thus gave its morning’s milk with music— A certain congealed milkiness in the sound, like the soft action of piano keys—A little like the cry of a pigeon wood pecker—~~a-week a-week~~ &c. A congealed gurgling—froglike. As I passed the ice forced up by the water on one side—suddenly settled on another with a crash—& quite a lake was formed above the ice [^behind me]—& my ~~successive~~ [^cancelled “successive” altered to “successor” and then cancelled; may need TN; in AL now] successor 2 hours after—to his wonder & alarm saw my tracks disappear in one side of it & come out on the other— ~~Ø~~ my seat [^from time to time] is the springy horizontal bough of some fallen tree which is frozen in to the ice—some Old maple that has blowed over—[^& retained some life for a year after in the water]covered with the great shaggy perforate parmelia. [^lying flat I quench] my thirst where it is melted about it—blowing aside the snow fleas

The great arundo in the sudbury meadows was all level with the ice— There was a great bay of ice stretching up the Pantry & up Larned Brook[^I looked up a broad glaring bay of ice at the last place—which seemed to reach]. Some dead maple to the base of Nobscot & almost to the horizon— or oak saplings laid side by side made my bridges—by which I got on to the ice along the watery shore— [^It was a problem to get off—& another to get on, dry shod.] You are commonly repaid for a longer excursion than usual & being out doors all day—by seeing some rarer bird for the season, as [^yesterday as] ~~to-day~~ a great hawk.

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THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 February 2, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) skated. He wrote to [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) saying he would like to meet him if he comes to Concord.

*Concord Feb 2nd ’55
Mr F. B. Sanborn,
Dear Sir,
I fear
that you did not get
the note which I left
with the Librarian for you,*

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*and so will thank you
again for [your] politeness.
I was sorry that I was
obliged to go into Boston
almost immediately. How-
ever, I shall be glad to
see you whenever you come
to Concord, and I will
suggest nothing to discour-
age your coming, so
far as I am concerned,
trusting that you know
what it is to take a
partridge on the*

Page 2

*wing.
You tell me that the
author of the criticism is
Mr. Morton. I had heard
as much, & indeed guessed
more. I have latterly
found Concord nearer
to Cambridge than I
believed I should, when
I was leaving my Alma
Mater, and hence you
will not be surprised if
even I feel some interest
in the success of the
Harvard magazine.
Believe me
[Yrs] truly
Henry D. Thoreau*



Feb [^crossed out false start] 2nd

Quite Clear—& Colder— Yet it could not refrain from snowing 1/2 inch more in the night—whitening the ground now as well as the ice.

Brown is again filling his ice house— which he commenced to do some weeks ago.

I got another skate this P. m. in spite of the thin coating of snow— This then is the 4th day of this rare skating— though since yesterday noon the slight whitening of snow has hurt it somewhat—

The river at 4 Pm has fallen some 8 or 10 inches— In some places there are thin flakes of ice standing on their edges within an inch or two of each other—Over more than 1/4 of an acre—eithe ice blown into that position (—which in this case is not likely—since there is a great deal too much for that surface) or crystalized so while the water suddenly ran off below. There are large tracts of thin white ice, where the water ran off before it had time to freeze hard enough to bare.

This last 1/2 inch of snow which fell in the night is just enough to track animals on the ice by. All about the Hill & Rock I see the tracks of rabbits which have run back & forth close to the shore repeatedly since the night. In the case of the rabbit the fore-feet are further apart than the hind ones.—[^dash above period] the first say 4 or

[Transcript]

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5 inches to the outside—the last 2 or 3. They are generally not quite regular but one of the fore feet a little in advance of the other and so with one of the hind feet. There is an interval of about 16 inches bet each 4 tracks— [^Some times they are in a curve or crescent—all touching] [^Horizontal line separates this paragraph from



next; “I saw” written on same line as “tracks” and “Some ... touching” interlined above] I saw what must have been either a muskrats or minks track I think, since it came out of the water– the tracks roundish—& toes much rayed ~~about~~ 4 or 5 inches apart in the trail– with only a trifle more bet the fore & hind legs—and the mark of the tail in successive curves as it struck the ice—thus [^Horizontal line separates this



paragraph from next; “Another” written on same line as drawing] Anothe track puzzled me as if a hare had been running like a dog and touched its tail—if it had any—This in



several places. Snowed again 1/2 inch more in the evening—after which at 10 o'clock [^the moon still obscured] I skated on the river & meadows– The water falling, the ice on the meadow occasionally settles with a crack under our weight— It is pleasant to feel these swells & valleys occasioned by the subsidence of the water—in some cases pretty abrupt—also to hear the hollow rumbling sound in such rolling places on the meadow where there is an empty chamber beneath– the water being entirely run out. Our skates make but little sound in this coating of snow about an inch thick—as if we had on woolen skates—and we can easily see our tracks in the night— We seem thus to go faster [^than by day before by day] not only because we do not see (but feel & imagine) our rapidity—but because of the impression which the mysterious muffled sound of our feet makes. In the mean while we hear the distant note of a hooting owl– & the distant [^Possibly altered from “owl”] rumbling of ~~appra~~ approaching or retreating cars sounds like a constant waterfall— Now & then we skated into some chippy crackling white ice where a superficial puddle had run dry before freezing hard—and got {^possibly altered from another word] a tumble

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February 3, Saturday: Eugène Rouher replaced Léon Faucher as chief minister of France.

In Lowell, Massachusetts, 2 1/2 months after the death of his wife from puerperal fever, Alonzo Calvin Chadwick, father of George Whitefield Chadwick, got married with a 29-year-old neighbor, Susan Collins.

The Squatter Sovereign was published at Atchison in the Kansas Territory (this was initially pro-slavery).



Feb 3d

This morning it is snowing again—as if a squall. The snow has thus spit on the ice 4 times since this last skating began on Tuesday the 30th—viz—Thursday noon —Thursday eve—Friday eve—& now Sat. morn— This will deserve to be called the winter of Skating— The heavens thus spit on the ice as if they had a spite

[Transcript]

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against it— I even suspect that the account of the matter may be— that when an atmosphere containing more moisture than usual is wafted over this ~~brea~~ chain of broad ice-lakes [^{especially}] the rest of the country being bare of snow) its moisture is suddenly condensed & frozen—and there is a spitting of snow. This last flurry lasted an hour or more—& then it grew colder & windy.

P. m.

Skating thro Snow—

Skated up the river with T— n— in spite of the snow—& wind. It had cleared up but the snow was ~~only~~ a level strong 3/4 of an inch deep— (seemingly an inch) but for the most part blown into drifts 3 to 10 feet wide & much deeper (with bare intervals) under a strong N westerly wind. It was a novel experience this skating through snow—sometimes a mile without a bare spot—this blustering day. In many places a crack ran across our course [^{possibly altered from “coarse”}] where the water had oozed out & the driving snow catching in it had formed a ~~stiff~~ thick batter with a stiffish crust in which we were tripped up—& measured our lengths on the ice. The few thin places were concealed & we avoided them by our knowledge of the localities. [^{Though we some times saw the air bubbles of the mid channel through the thin ice—for the water going down the current is increasing & eating its way through the ice.}] Sometimes a thicker drift too threw us—or a sudden unevenness in the concealed ice—but on the whole the snow was but a slight obstruction.

We skated with much more facility than I had anticipated, & I would not have missed the experience for a good deal— The water falling rapidly—has left a part of the ice in shelves attached to the shore & to the alders & other trees & bushes 15 or 18 inches above the general level.

[^{Sometimes we had to face a head wind & driving—or blowing snow which concealed the water had sunk away faster than it could freeze solidly— I think that in my ice-flakes of the 2nd ult the thin crust of the horizontal ice was blown off & had left these exposed.}] (with a spongy or brittle mass of crystals suspended from its undersides 5 or 6 inches deep—or double that of the ice—looking like lace work on the side—& showing all kinds of angular geom. figures when you look down on it turned bottom up—~~(drawing)~~ as if the prospect a few—rods a head—& we made a tedious progress— We [^{altered from “we”}] went up the Pantry Meadow above the old Wm Wheeler House—& came down this meadow again with the wind & snow dust—spreading our coat tails—like birds—though somewhat at the risk of our necks if we had struck a foul place. I found that I could sail on a tack pretty well [^{trimming with my skirts}]. Sometimes we had to jump suddenly over some obstacle [^{which the snow had concealed before}] to save our necks— It was worth the while for one to look back against the sun and wind & see the other 60 rods off coming—floating down like a graceful demon in the midst of the broad meadow all covered & lit with the curling snow-steam [^{between which you saw the ice in dark waving streaks}] like a ~~brea~~ mighty [^{river Orellana}] braided of a myriad steaming currents—Like the demon of the storm driving his flocks & herds [^{before him}]—In the midst of this tide of curling snow steam— he sweeps & surges this way & that & comes on like the spirit of the whirlwind.

At Lees' Cliff we made a fire— kindling with white pine [^{written over “pines”}] cones, after oak leaves— [^{& twigs,}] else we had lost it. & there [^{Possibly altered from another word}] [^{These saved us, for there is a resinous drop at the point of each scale.}] we forgot that we were out doors in a blustering winter day.

—The drifts will probably harden by to-morrow & make such skating impossible. I was curious to see how my tracks looked—what figure I cast— & skated back a little to look at it— that little way—it was like this somewhat



[^{Caption for above drawing: “some what like the shallow snow drifts.”}]

Looking toward the sun & wind you saw a broad river half a mile or more in width its whole surface lit & alive with flowing streams of snow [^{in form}] like the stream which curls ~~up from~~ [^{along}] a river's surface ~~in the~~ ~~sno~~ at sunrise—& in midst of this moving world sailed down the skater majestically—as if on the surface of water while the stream curled as high as his knees—

~~Many~~ [^{Several}] broad bays open on to this some of them like the Pantry & Larned Brook 2 or 3-^[more] miles deep.

You scarcely see a bird such a day as this

Flash go your dry leaves like powder— & leave a few bare & smoking twigs—Then you sedulously feed a little flame—until the fire [^{takes hold of the solid wood &}] establishes itself— [^{What an uncertain & negative}] ~~How uncertain~~ [^{thing}] when it finds ~~its~~ nothing to suit its appetite after the first flash—^[what a positive &] ~~how~~ ~~inexpugnable~~ [^{thing}] when it begins to devour the solid wood with a relish ~~eating~~ burning with its own wind. You must study as long at last how to put it out, as you did how to kindle it.—Close up under some upright rock—when [^{possibly “where”}] you scorch the yellow sulphur lichens. Then cast on some creeping juniper wreathes [^{or hemlock boughs}] to hear them crackle—realizing scripture.

Some little boys 10 years old are as handsome skaters as I know— They sweep along with a graceful floating motion leaning now to this side then to that—(like a marsh-hawk beating the bush.)

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I get my impulse in skating not by striking out much & shoving—and a certain forward impulse or snapping of the body like a whip-lash.

I still recur in my mind to that skate of the 31st—I was thus enabled to get a bird's eye view of the river to survey its length & breadth within a few hours—connect one part on the shore with another in my mind & realize what was going on upon it— [^from end to end] to know the whole as I ordinarily knew a few miles of it only— I connected the Chestnut tree house—near the shore in Wayland

There is good skating from the mouth to Saxonville—measuring in a straight line [^with the Chimney House in Billerica—] [^Atkinsons?] some 22 miles—by the river say 30 now Concord midway.


Pelham's Pond—with [^Nutting's] ~~the~~ Pond in Billerica.

It is all the way of one character—a meadow river—or dead ~~water~~ stream— Musket-icook—the abode of muskrats—pickerel &c—Crossed within these dozen miles each way—or 25[^30] in all—by some 20 ~~bridges~~ low wooden bridges—sublicij pontes connected with the main land by willowy causeways. Thus the long shallow lakes divided into reaches. These long causeways all under water & ice now only the bridges peeping out [^from time to time] like a dry eyelid— You must look close to find them in many case —mere islands are they to the traveller in the waste of water & ice. Only 2 villages lying near the river—Concord & Wayland & one at each end of this 30 miles.

Haycocks commonly stand only in the Sudbury meadow— You must beware when you cross the deep dark channel— ~~distinguish~~ between the sunken willow rows distinguishing it from the meadowy sea [^where the current is seen eating its way thro']— else you may be in over head before you know it. I ~~made~~ [^used] some bits of wood with a groove in them for crossing the causeways & gravelly places—that I need not scratch my skate-irons.

Minott says that the White rabbit does not make a hole—(sits under a bunch of dry ferns & the like—[^v n p b 1])but that the grey one does— They and the fox love to come out & lie in the sun.



 February 4, Sunday: Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston replaced George Hamilton-Gordon, Earl of Aberdeen as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Symphony no.1 by Charles Gounod was performed for the initial time, in Paris.

The weather turned quite cold. [Henry Thoreau](#)'s journal suggests that since January 30th he had skated every day.



February 4. Clear and cold and windy; much colder than for some time
Saw this afternoon a very distinct otter-track by the Rock, at the junction of the two rivers. The separate foot-tracks were quite round, more than two inches in diameter, showing the five toes distinctly in the snow, which was about half an inch deep. In one place, where it had crossed last night to Merrick's pasture, its trail, about

six inches wide and of furrows in the snow, was on one side of its foot-tracks, thus



and there was about nine inches between the fore and hind feet [*sic*]. Close by the Great Aspen I saw where it had entered or come out of the water under a shelf of ice left adhering to a maple. There it apparently played and slid on the level ice, making a broad trail as if a shovel had been shoved along, just eight inches wide, without a foot-track in it for four feet or more. And again the trail was only two inches wide and between the foot-tracks, which were



side by side and twenty-two inches apart. It had left much dung on the ice, soft, yellow, bowel-like, like a gum that has been chewed in consistency. About the edge of the hole, where the snow was all rubbed off, was something white which looked and smelt exactly like bits of the skin of pouts or eels. Minott tells of one shot once while eating an eel. Vance saw one this winter in this town by a brook eating a fish

The water has now fallen nearly two feet, and those ice shelves I noticed yesterday, when you go into a swamp and all along the shore amid the alders, birches, and maples, look just like ample picnic tables ready set, two feet high, with often a leaf down or else a table-cloth hanging, — just like camp tables around the tent-poles, now covered with snowy napkins

I notice my old skate-tracks like this:



It is better skating to-day than yesterday. This is the sixth day of some kind of skating.

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February 5, Monday: The [Anti-Slavery](#) Society of New York opened its [New-York](#) convention.

Lord Palmerston became Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

The American barque *What Cheer*, Captain Baker, arrived in the Sandwich Islands from Swaton and Hongkong with 183 Coolies, procured by Mr. Graves, in fulfilment of his contract made nearly a year since. The Coolies brought by this vessel were considered to be an unusually fine and healthy class, and the expectation of the Hawaiian authorities (reported in the Honolulu [Polynesian](#)) was that they would prove superior to any previous importation, and would no doubt give satisfaction to the parties who ordered them.



Feb 5th 55

[Transcript]

[^Cold weather—no sleighing—mere whitening.]

It was quite cold last evening—& I saw the scuttle window reflecting the lamp from a myriad brilliant points—[^when I went up to bed—[^it sparkled (Line connects this to caret following “bed.”)] as if [^“if” inserted] we lived inside of a cave—] but this morning it has moderated considerably & is snowing. Already 1 inch of snow has fallen.

NB According to [Webster](#) in Welsh A hare is “furze or gorse-cat.” v. skate. That is the meaning of the W. name. Also “Chuk, A word used in calling swine. It is the original name of that animal, which our ancestors brought with them from Persia, where it is still in use. Pers. [chuk](#)” &c — “Sans. [sugara](#). Our ancestors while in England adopted the Welsh [hwc](#), hog; [but chuck](#) [^underlining possibly intended for only one word, either “but” or “chuck”] is retained in our popular name of wood chuck, that is, wood hog.”

In a journal it is important in a few words to describe the weather or character of the day as it affects our feelings. That which was so important at the time—cannot be unimportant to remember.



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Day before yesterday the fine snow blowing over the meadow in parrallel streams between which the darker ice was seen looked just like the steam curling along the surface of a ~~mea~~ river. [^In the midst of this mid leg deep at least you surged along] It was surprising how in the midst of all this stationary & drifting snow the skate found a smooth & [^possibly inserted] level surface ~~of~~ over which it glided so securely—with a muffled rumble— The ice for the last week has reached quite up into the village— so that you could get onto it just in the rear of the Bank & set sail on skates for any part of the Concord River valley.

Found [Therien](#) cutting down the 2 largest chestnuts in the woodlot behind where my house was. On the but of one about 2 feet in diameter I counted 75 rings. T— soon after broke his axe in cutting through a knot in this tree which he was cutting up for posts. He broke out a piece 1/2 an inch deep. This he says often happens— Perhaps there is some frost in his axe. Several choppers have broken their axes—today.

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February 6, Tuesday: Extreme cold strikes western New York. Temperatures in Rochester drop to 26° below zero, the coldest to date.

[Waldo Emerson](#) addressed the Anti-Slavery Society, proposing the purchase of all slaves from their owners. According to Morison and Commager’s THE GROWTH OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC, it was he who made “the only constructive proposal” of the day, at the meeting of the New York Anti-slavery Society. The Sage of Concord’s proposal was to do as the British Empire had done, and recompense slavemasters for their loss of their human livestock through the sale of Federal and state lands, and through private donations. He made the assertion that the total cost of freedom and equality would be only on the order of \$200,000,000.⁰⁰, though this amounted to less than \$100.⁰⁰ per enslaved American and would surely not have been considered a legitimate free-market offer by any slave trader of the day.



Feb 6th

[Transcript]

The coldest morning this winter—our thermometer stands at 14°- [^It is not clear whether all of the marks following temperatures are dashes, or minus signs] at 9 Am.[^Others we hear at 6 Am stood at 18° at Gorham N.H. 30°-] There are no~~t~~ loiterers in the street. & the wheels of wood wagons squeak as they have not for a long time[^actually shriek]. Frost work—keeps its place on the window within 3 feet [[^stove all day in my chamber—] of the ~~snow~~. [^“snow” canceled in pencil] A 4 Pm the thermometer is at 10°- at 6 it is at 14° [^vertical pencil line from here through line beginning “It looks...”]


I was walking at 5 & found it stinging cold—It stung the face— When [^altered from “I”] I look out at the chimneys I see that the cold & hungry air snaps up the smoke at once— The smoke is [^written over “&”] clear & light colored & does not get far into as {at whole} condensed the air before it is dissipated [^as {at whole} condensed] (?) [^possibly altered from period] The setting sun no sooner leaves our west windows than a solid but beautiful crystallization coats them. [^except perhaps a triangularish bare spot at one corner] which perhaps the sun has warmed & dried.

(I believe the saying is that by the 1st of February the wood & meal [^& grain for a horse] are half out.) A solid sparkling field in the midst of each pane—with broad flowing sheaves surrounding it. It has been as well as a very mild & [^verify that this is canceled] open winter up to this. At 9 o'clock P. m. thermometer at 16°- They say it did not rise above 6°- today—

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 February 7, Wednesday (2 mo. 7th, 4th day): Red Cedar Monthly Meeting in Iowa received a letter signed by 47 [Quakers](#) requesting the establishment of two Preparative Meetings named “Winneshiek” and “Springwater,” with these two to compose a new “Winneshiek Monthly Meeting.” “After a time of deliberation” a committee of 8 Red Cedar Friends (Enoch Peasley, Jeremiah A. Grinnell, Asa Staples, Amos Hampton, Brinton Darlington, David Tatum, Elisha Stratton, and James Schooley) was appointed to “consider the subject” and “visit them if way should open.” After preparations had been made 6 members of this committee would set off in a couple of carriages to traverse 150 miles of snowy wind-swept prairie: “A part of their number [the committee] had visited them & were united with them in their request.” Winneshiek would be added to the roll of Quaker centers of settlement and influence in the West.

A treaty was concluded between [Russia](#) and [Japan](#) setting out friendly relations, trade concerns and the territorial status of the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin.

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [Thomas Cholmondeley](#) in England a month after the Worcester lecture on “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT”:

I am from time to time congratulating myself on my general want of success as a lecturer—apparent want of success, but is it not a real triumph? I do my work clean as I go along, and they will not be likely to want me anywhere again. So there is no danger of my repeating myself and getting to a barrel of sermons which you must upset & begin again with.

*Concord Mass.
Feb 7th 1855
Dear Cholmondeley,
I am glad
to hear that you have
arrived safely at Hodnet,
and that there is a
solid piece of ground of
that name which can sup-
port a man better than a
floating plank in that
to me as yet purely his-
torical England.
But have I not seen you
with my own eyes, a piece of
England herself? and has not
your letter come out to me
thence? I have now reason
to believe that Salop is as
real a place as Concord,
with, at least, as good
an underpinning of granite*

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floating in liquid fire. I congratulate ^ on having arrived safely at that floating isle, after your disagreeable passage in the steamer America. So are we not all making a passage, agreeable or disagreeable, in the steamer Earth, trusting to arrive at last at some less undulating Salop and Brother's house?

I cannot say that I am surprised to hear that you have joined the militia, after what I have heard from your lips, but I am glad to doubt if there will be occasion for your volunteering into the line. Perhaps I am thinking of the saying that it is always darkest just before day. I believe that

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it is only necessary that England be fully awakened to a sense of her position, in order that she may right herself--especially as the weather will soon cease to be her foe.

I wish I could believe that the cause in which you are embarked is the cause of the people of England. However, I have no sympathy with the idleness that would contrast this fighting with the teachings of the pulpit, for perchance more true virtue is being practised at Sebastopol than in many years of peace. It is a pity that we seem to require a war from time



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to time

*^ to assure us that there is any man-
hood still left in man.*

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*I was much pleased by
Wilkinson's vigorous
& telling assault on Al-
lopathy, though he sub-
stitutes another and perhaps
no stronger thi[g]h for that.
Something as good on
the whole conduct of the
war would be of service.
Can not Carlyle supply it?
We will not require him
to provide the remedy. Every
man to his trade.
As you know, I am
not in any sense a politician.
You who live in that snug
and compact isle may
dream of a glorious Com-
monwealth, but I have
some doubts whether I and
the new [k]ing of the Sandwich
Islands shall pull together.
When I think of the gold-dig-
gers and the Mormons, the
slaves and slave-holders, and*

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*the flibustiers, I naturally
dream of a glorious
private life. No—I am
not patriotic; I shall
not meddle with the
gem of the Antilles;
Gen. Quitman cannot
count on my aid, [alas]
[for] him.! nor can Gen.
Pierce.
I still take my daily walk
or skate over Concord fields
or meadows, and [on] the whole
have more to do with nature
than with man. We have not*



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*had much snow this winter, but
have had some remarkably
cold weather, the mercury
Feb 6th not rising above 6° below
zero during the day, and the next
morning falling to 25°. Some
ice is still 20 inches thick about us.
A rise in the river has made*

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*uncommonly good skating
which I have improved to the
extent of some 30 miles at
a time, 15 out & 15 in.
Emerson is off westward,
enlightening the Hamiltonians
& others, mingling his thunder
with that of Niagara. Since his
themes are England & [S]lavery some
begin to claim him as a practical
man.*

*Channing still sits warming
his 5 wits—his sixth you
know is always limber—over
that stove, with the dog
down cellar.*

*Lowell has just been appointed
Professor of Belles Lettres in
Harvard University, in place of
Longfellow, resigned, and
will go very soon to spend
another year in Europe before
taking his seat.*

Page 7

*I am from time to time
congratulating myself
on my general want of
success as a lecturer—ap-
parent want of success, but
is it not a real triumph?
I do my work clean as I
go along, and they will not
be li[k]ely to want me any-
where again. So there is no
danger of my repeating myself
and getting to a barrel of*



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*sermons which you must
upset & begin again with.
My father & mother
& sister all desire to be
remembered to you, &
trust that you will never
come within range of
Russian bullets.
Of course I would rather
think of you as settled
down there in Shropshire,*

Page 8
*in the camp of the English
people, making acquaintance
with your men—striking at
the root of the evil—perhaps
assaulting that rampart
of cotton bags that you
tell of. But it makes
no odds where a man goes
or stays if he is only about
his business.
Let me hear from you,
wherever you are, and
believe me yours ever
in the good fight,—
whether before Sebastopol
or under the Wreken—
Henry D. Thoreau.*

*Thomas Cholmondeley Esq
Hodnet
Market Drayton
Shropshire
England*

[Abbé Adrien-Emmanuel Rouquette](#) wrote a letter of support from Mandeville, St. Tammany, Louisiana to Mr. [A.O. Brownson](#) because [Brownson's Review](#) was currently being attacked by the Catholic authorities at New Orleans:

MON CHER MONSIEUR: — Je ne puis pas résister plus longtemps au désir de vous écrire, pour vous témoigner ma haute estime, ma vive sympathie et mon entière adhésion aux doctrines que vous avez émises dans votre Revue. Depuis quelques mois, j'ai été, si non *étonné*, du moins indigné du ton de la presse catholique et des attaques dirigées contre vous. C'est le sort inévitable et glorieux de tout écrivain qui ose dire la vérité abstraction faite des susceptibilités individuelles ou nationales. Votre

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article sur le "Nativisme Américain" était nécessaire; je n'y trouve pas une syllabe à blâmer; la publication de cet article a été un acte de grand courage. Je sais, Monsieur, que mon opinion est peu de chose; mais vous me pardonnerez de vous l'exprimer au milieu des circonstances douloureuses où votre âme se trouve, quelque fortement trempée qu'elle soit. Je crois accomplir un devoir; je n'ai pu résister à l'impulsion de mon cœur. Je tiens aussi à vous dire, dans la crainte que vous puissiez penser le contraire, que je n'ai jamais eu aucune part à la rédaction du "propagateur Catholique," j'en désapprouve l'esprit et la forme, en beaucoup de choses. Ainsi, donc, sache bien que je suis entièrement étranger à ce journal. Croyez, mon cher Monsieur, que je ne vous oublie pas dans mes prières, et veuillez recevoir de nouveau l'expression de ma haute considération et de ma profonde sympathie.

Votre très-humble serviteur.

A. ROUQUETTE.

P.S. Je vous ai envoyé par la poste les "Saintes Voies de la Croix," par Marie Bourdon. Ce volume contient, selon moi, *toute la science des saints*.



Feb 7th

[Transcript]

The Coldest night for a long long time was last— Sheets froze stiff about the faces.

[^Cat mewed to have the door opened—but was at first disinclined to go out.]

When she [written over "the"] ~~eat~~ came in at 9—she smelt of meadow hay [^We all took her up & smelled of her it was so fragrant]—had cuddled in some barn [^People dreaded to go to bed.]. The ground cracked in the night as if a powder mill had blown up & the timbers of the house also— My pail of water was frozen in the morning so

Must leave many buttons unbuttoned—owing to numb fingers that I could not break it— [^iron was like fire in the hands] Thermometer at about 7 1/2 Am gone into the bulb—19°- at least—[^The cold has stopped the clock] Every bearded man [^in the street] is a gray-beard Bread—meat—milk—cheese &c &c all frozen—[^See the inside of your cellar door all covered & sparkling with frost like Golconda] Pity the poor who have not a large woodpile. The latches are white with frost. [^& every nail-head in entries &c has a white cap] The chopper hesitates to go to the woods. Yet I see S. Wetherbee stumping past 3/4 of a mile for his morning's dram— Neighbor Smiths thermometer stood at 26°- early this morning—

But this day is at length more moderate than yesterday.

R Rice says that alewives used to go into Pelham Pond—[^that you may go up Larned Brk & so into the Pond by a ditch] His Brother James skated from Sudbury to Billerica & by canal to Charleston & back. He used to see where the Otter had slid at Ware (Weir?) Hill, a rod down the steep bank—as if many hundred times— [^a thousand it was so smooth] After a thick snow had been falling in the river & formed a slosh on the surface he could tell whether otter had been at work —by the holes in this slosh or snowy water where they had put up their heads while fishing —The surface would be all dotted with them. He had known musquash to make a canal & keep the water from freezing a ~~rod~~ [^foot] wide. Thinks otter make their track by drawing themselves along by the fore feet obliterating the track of their feet—[^But may not the tail suffice to do this in light snow?] Had seen a fox catching mice in a meadow. He would jump up & come down on a tussuck & then look round over the edge to see if he had scared any mice out of it.

2 frog hawks (white rump—& slaty wings—rather small hawk) have their nest regularly at his place in Sudbury— He once saw one the male he thinks—come along from the meadow with a frog in his claws. As he flew up toward [^& over] the wood where the other was setting—he uttered a peculiar cry & the other darting out he let the frog drop 2 or 3 rods through the air which the other caught—.

He spoke of the Dunge Hole meaning that deep hollow & swamp by the road from the Wheeler's to White Pond. This prob. the same that is referred to in the Town Records.

Showed me a bunching up of the twigs of a ~~large~~ larch from his swamp—perfectly thick 2 feet in diameter— 40 feet up a tree. This principle extends ap. to all the evergreens. You could not begin to see through this though all the leaves of course are off. Though [^"t" and "h" constructed with single stroke] the cold has been moderate today compared with yesterday—it has got more into the houses & barns & the farmers [^connected to caret following "This"] complain more of it while attending to their cattle. This [^ie yesterday the 6th] will be remembered as the cold Tuesday. The old folks still refer to the cold Friday—when they sat before great fires of wood 4 ft long with a fence of blankets behind them & water froze on the mantel piece. But they say this is

CAT

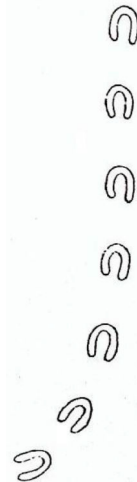
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[^written over "was"] as cold as that was.

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February 8, Thursday: On this night and a few later nights there would be heavy snowfall in East and South Devon, England, and afterward a series of hoof-like marks would be noted in the snow. These footprints, most of which measured about 4 inches long, 3 inches across, between 8 and 16 inches apart and mostly in a single file, would be reported from more than 30 locations across Devon, from Exmouth up to Topsham, and across the Exe Estuary to Dawlish and Teignmouth. It would be estimated on the basis of viewings in various locations by various individuals that the total distance of the tracks might have amounted to some 40 to 100 miles. When the tracks came to a house, or a river, or a haystack or other obstacle, this would be traveled straight over with these marks appearing atop snow-covered roofs and high walls along their path as well as leading up to, and exiting from, various drainpipes as small as 4 inches in diameter. The following sketch would appear in the Illustrated London News:



Evidence and testimony would be collected by the Reverend H.T. Ellacombe, vicar at Clyst St George.



Feb 8th [^center the date]

[Transcript]

Commenced snowing last eve. about 7 o'clock—a fine dry snow—and this morning it is about 6 inches deep— & still snows a little. Continues to snow finely all day—

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February 9, Friday: Tewodros II replaced Webe Haile Mariam as Emperor of Ethiopia.

The Hastings & St Leonards News reported on an inquest that had been held at the Lion Inn, Hastings after the death of an illegitimate infant. Mary Akehurst, the mother, had testified that “I put the child out to nurse with my brother’s wife, residing at Wellington mews. Either on Wednesday or Thursday last (I forget which) I saw the child and nursed it. It appeared quite well. Yesterday I saw it again and it was then dead. I did not see any marks of violence about it.” Sarah Akehurst had testified that “Deceased was put under my care to nurse for my sister in law. It is nine weeks old and I have had it eight weeks. On Saturday the child was undressed and dressed for bed. Some food and the breast were given to it, and it was then put in its basket by the fire, with a shawl partly over it. As my own child was ill, I had a fire in the bed room. Before I went to bed I looked at deceased and thought it was asleep. In the morning I found the child dead.” A surgeon, David Gabb, had testified “I believe the child died from convulsions.” The verdict of the jury had been “Death from convulsions.”



Feb 9th

[Transcript]

Snowed harder in the night & blowed considerably. It is somewhat drifted this morning. A very fine & dry snow about a foot deep on a level. It stands on the top of our pump about 10 inches deep almost a perfect hemisphere or half of an ellipse {drawing}

It snows finely all day—making about 2ce as much as we have had on the ground before this winter. Tree sparrows 2 or 3 only at once come into the yard—the first I have distinguished this winter. I notice that the snow drifts on the windows—as you see the light through then are stratified—showing undulating equidistant strata—apparently as more or less dense—(may be more or less coarse & damp.) Alternately darker & lighter strata. I was sure this storm would bring snow birds into the yard that I went to the window [^{early} at 10] to look for them & there they were. Also a downy woodpecker—(perhaps a hairy) flitted high across the street to an elm in front of the house & commenced cur assiduously tapping. [^{his head going like a hammer}] The snow is so light & dry that it rises like spray or foam before the legs of the horses. They dash it before them upward like water. It is a ~~ple~~ handsome sight—a span of horses at a little distance dashing thro’ it— [^{especially coming toward you}] it falls like ~~sud~~ suds around their legs. {drawing} Who do birds come in to the yards in storms almost alone? Are they driven out of the fields & woods for their subsistence—or is it that all places are wild to them in the storm? [^{It is very dark in cellars the windows being covered with snow—}]

Pm Up river to Hub’s swamp & wood.

The river & meadow are concealed under a foot of snow—I cannot tell when I am on it. [^{It would be dangerous for a stranger to travel across the country now}] The snow is so dry that though I go through drifts up to my middle—it falls off at once & does not adhere to & damp my clothes at all. All over this swamp I find that the ice upheld by the trees & shrubs—stands some 2 feet above the ground—the water having entirely run out beneath, & as I go along the path not seeing any ice in snow a foot deep, it suddenly sinks with a crash for a rod around me—snow and all—and stooping I look ~~under this level~~ through a dry cellar from 1 to 2 feet deep—in some places pretty dark—extending ove the greater part of the swamp—with a perfectly level ceiling composed of ice 1 to 2 inches thick surmounted by a foot of snow—& from the under side of the ice there depends from 4 to 6 inches a dense mass of crystals—So that it is a most sparkling grotto.

You could have crawled round under the ice & snow all over the swamp—quite dry—& I saw where the rabbits & c had entered there. In another swamp where the trees were larger & further apart—only about 1 half the ice was held up in this manner—in tables from a few feet to a rod in diameter— so that it was very difficult walking—I should think this ice by its strain & fall would injure the young trees & bushes. In the first place—as I was walking

many are barked by it.—And so it melts & wastes away tumbling down from time to time along the path—the first I knew with a crash—

down went the whole body of the snow for a rod ~~about me~~, & I saw into a dark cavern yawing about me.

Those crystals were very handsome—and tinkled when touched, like bits of tin.

The snow is so dry that but little lodges on the trees.

I saw a similar phenomenon Feb 4th on a smaller scale— I saw very few tracks [^{altered from “trails”?}] today— It must be very hard for our small wild animals to get along while the snow is so light— Not only the legs but the whole body [^{of some—a ~~sunk~~ skunk E.g. I think,}] sinks in it & leaves its trail— They must drag themselves bodily through it.

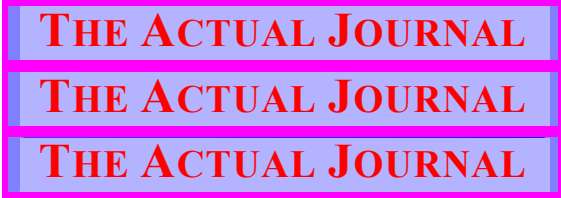
Saw F. linarias.



1854-1855

1854-1855

Elsewhere we hear the snow has been much deeper than here



February 10, Saturday: [Giacomo Meyerbeer](#) was awarded the Commander's Cross of the Albrecht's Order of Saxony, in Dresden.

The USS *Mississippi* was back at sea, out of the harbor at Valparaiso.

The federal Congress amended US citizenship to include automatic citizenship for any children of fathers who were citizens of the United States of America and had resided there, even were those children born abroad:

All children heretofore born or hereafter born out of the limits and jurisdiction of the United States, whose fathers were or may be at the time of their birth citizens thereof, are declared to be citizens of the United States; but the rights of citizenship shall not descend to children whose fathers never resided in the United States.

(We understand, of course, that this was implicitly whites only, due to the citizenship stipulation.)



Feb 10th Pm to Walden—

[Transcript]

A fine clear day— There is a glare of light from the fresh unstained surface of the snow so that it pains the eyes to travel toward the sun.


I go across Walden. My shadow is very blue—It is especially blue when there is a bright sun light on pure white snow— It suggests that there may be something divine—something celestial in me.

Silas Hosmer tells me that a [^wild] deer was killed in Northboro this winter.

In many places the edges of ~~et~~ drifts are sharp & carving almost a complete circle—



reflecting a blue color [^from within]—like blue-tinted shells


I hear the faint metallic chirp of a tree sparrow [**American Tree Sparrow**  *Spizella arborea*] in the yard from time to time—or perchance the mew of a linaria. It is worth the while to let some pig weed grow in your garden if only to attract these winter visitors [^It would be a pity to have these weeds burned in the fall]. Of the ~~larger~~ former I see in the winter but 3 or 4 [^commonly] at a time—of the latter large flocks— This in & after considerable snow storms.

Since this deepe snow the landscape is in some respects more wintry than before—the rivers & roads are more concealed than they have been—and billows of snow succeed each other across the fields & roads like an ocean-waste.



1854-1855

1854-1855

 February 11, Sunday: Kassa Hailu was crowned Tewodros II, Emperor of Ethiopia.


Ella-Polka op.160 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in the Sophiensaal, Vienna.

A sentence for Court Martial of 3 men for mutinous conduct committed on board the *Independence* while in New-York was read.



Feb 11th




Pm to I. Dugan's via Tommy Wheeler's—
The atmosphere is very blue tinging the distant pine-woods. The dog scared up some partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  ***Bonasa umbellus*** (Partridge)] out of the soft snow under the apple-trees in the [altered from "The"] Tommy Wheeler orchard.
Smith's thermometer early this morn—at 22°- ours at 8 Am 10°-

[Transcript]



THE ACTUAL JOURNAL
THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 February 12, Monday: Michigan State University was established as the "pioneer" land-grant college.

Sirenen op.164, a waltz by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#), was performed for the initial time, in the Sophiensaal, Vienna.

The cold spell that had set in on February 4th finally ended in a thaw. In the afternoon, [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Walden Pond.




Feb 12th

All trees covered this morning with a hoar frost very handsome looking toward the sun—the ghosts of trees. Is not this what was so blue in the atmosphere yesterday p.m?

[Transcript]

Pm to Walden

A very pleasant & warm afternoon— There is a softening of the air & snow— The eaves run fast on the S side of houses— and as usual in this state of the air— the cawing of crows at a distance & the crowing of cocks falls on the ear with a peculiar softness & sweetness;—they come distinct & echoing musically through the pure air. What are those crows about which I see from the RR— causeway in the middle of a field where no grass appears to rise above the snow— ap. feeding? I observe no mouse tracks in the fields & meadows—the snow is so light & deep that they have run wholly underneath—& I see in the fields here & there a little hole in the crust where they have come to the surface. In trillium woods I see, as usual, where a squirrel has scratched along from tree to tree. His tracks cease at the foot of a pine up which he has ascended within these few hours—He may be concealed now amid the thickest foliage. It is very pleasant to stand now in a high pine wood—where the sun shines in amid the pines & hemlocks & maples—as in a warm apartment. I see at Warren's Crossing where ~~within~~ las night perhaps some partridges [**Ruffed Grouse**  ***Bonasa umbellus*** (Partridge)] rested in this light dry deep ~~sow~~ snow. They must have been almost completely buried—They have left their traces at the bottom. They are such holes as would be made by crowding their bodies in backwards slantingwise—while perhaps their heads were left out. The dog scared them out of similar holes yesterday in the open orchard. I watched for a long time 2 chickadee-like birds—only 1 thought a good deal larger—which kept ascending the pitch-pines spirally from the bottom like the nuthatch. They had the markings & the common faint note of the chickadee yet they looked so large & confined themselves so to the trunk that I cannot but feel still some doubt about them. They had black chins—as well as top of head—tail black above—back slate —sides dirty white or creamy—breast &c white.



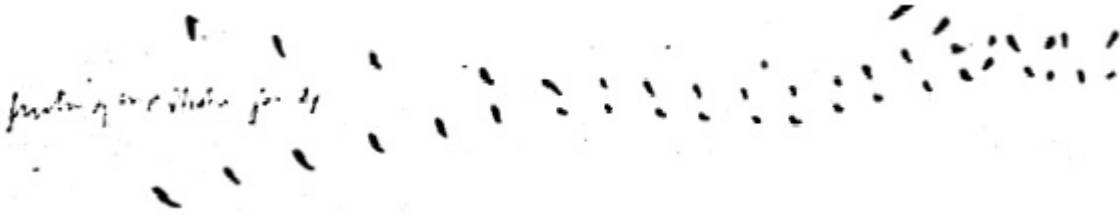
1854-1855

1854-1855


Set a trap in the woods for wild mice I saw where they had run over the snow making a slight impression thus.



The tracks some 5 inches apart frequently with a very distinct mark of the tail— These tracks commonly came together soon & made one beaten trail—where 2 or 3 had passed—or one several times— The whole trail would be 5 or 6 inches wide. [^As if they had hopped along 2 3 or 4 in company]




[^drawing captioned in pencil as above: putting one stroke for 4]

Under the birches, where the snow is covered with birch seeds & scales, I see the fine tracks undoubtedly of linarias [Common Redpoll  *Carduelis flammea*]. The track of one of these birds on the light surface looks like a chain or the ova of toads —



Where a large flock has been feeding the whole surface is scored over by them.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL
THE ACTUAL JOURNAL


 February 13, Tuesday: At 10 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) walked to Walden Woods. It was not cold but the sky was somewhat overcast.

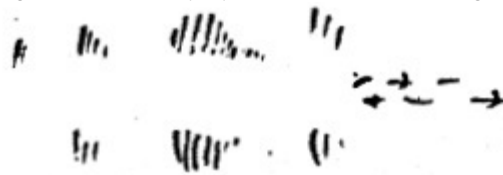


Feb 13th
10 Am to Walden woods

[Transcript]

Not cold—sky somewhat overcast.

The tracks of partridges [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] are more remarkable in this snow than usual—it is so light— being at the same time a foot deep. I see where one has waddled along several rods making a chain-like track about 3 inches wide or (2 1/2) at and at the end has squatted in the snow making a perfectly smooth & regular oval impression like the bowl of a spoon 5 inches wide—then 6 inches beyond this are the marks of its wings where it struck the snow on each side when it took flight. It must have risen at once without running. In one place I see where one after running a little way—has left 4 impressions of its wings on the snow on each side extending 18 or 20 inches {ten}& 12 or [^foot tracks not good] 15 in width— In one case



almost the entire wing was distinctly impressed—8 primaries & 5 or 6 secondaries— In one place wher

alighting the primary quills 5 of them have marked the snow for a foot.

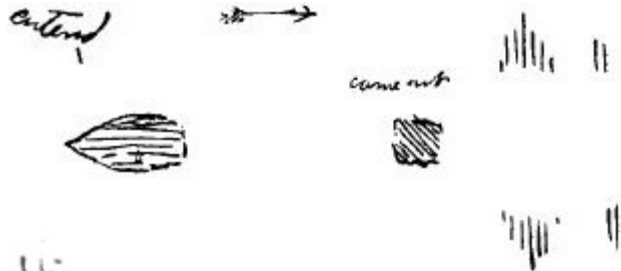


I see where 149 many have dived into the snow ap last night on the side of a shrub oak hollow. In 4 places they have passed quite underneath it for more than a foot—in one place 18 inches They appear to have dived or burrowed into it then passed along a foot or more underneath—& squatted there perhaps with their heads out—& have invariably left much dung at the end of this hole. I scared one from its hole only half a rod in front of me now at 12 11 Am. These holes seen side wise look thus {drawing} It is evidently a hardy bird—and in the above respects too is like the rabbit which squats under a brake or bush in the snow— I see the traces of the latter in hollows in the snow in such places— —their forms. In the Journal of the [Rev. Wm Adams](#) (afterward settled in Dedham) written ap in and about Cambridge mass—[^He graduated in 1671 at Cambridge] he says under “Dece 1” [^1670] — — — — “This day was the first flight of snow this winter it being hardly over shoes.” & 1671 Nov “24. The first great snow this winter being almost knee deep.” Hist. Coll. 4th Series vol. 1st An English Antiquarian says “May-Flower was a very favorite name with English seamen, and given by them to vessels from almost every port in England,”— Ibid p. 85 Hurts is an old English word used in heraldry—where according to [Bailey](#) it is “certain balls resembling hurtleberries.”

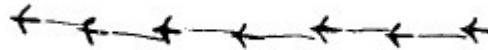
BAILEY'S DICTIONARY

One of these pig weeds in the yard last the snow birds all winter—& after every new storm they revisit it. How inexhaustible their granary!

To resume the subject of partridges—looking further in an open place or glade amid the shrub oaks & low pitch pines, I found as many as ~~40 or 50~~ [^20 or 30] places where partridges had lodged in the snow ap. the last night or the night before. You could see commonly where their bodies had first struck the snow & furrowed it for a foot or 2 [^& 6 inches wide] then entered & gone underneath 2 feet & rested at the further end, where the manure is left. Is it not likely that they remain quite under— the snow there & do not put their heads out till ready to start? In many places they walked along before they went under the snow— They do not go under deep—and the gallery they make is mostly filled up behind them—leaving only a thin crust above. Then invariably just beyond this resting place you could see the marks made by their wings when they took their departure— These distinct



impressions made by their wings, on the pure snow, so common on All hands— though the bird that made it is gone & there is no trace beyond—affect me like some mystic oriental symbol—the winged globe or what not— As if made by a spirit. In some places you would see a furrow & hollow in the snow where there was no track for rods around, as if a large snow ball or a cannon ball had struck it—where apparently the birds had not paused in their flight. It is evidently a regular thing with them thus to lodge in the snow— Their tracks when perfectly distinct are seen to be almost in one straight line thus—trailing the middle toe— About 5 inches apart—



In one place I saw where one had evidently trailed the tips of the wings making 2 distinct lines 5 or 6 inches apart, one on each side the foot tracks. Probably made by a male.

In the same place were many great tracks of the white rabbit— The earliest made while the snow was very soft wer very large & shapeless somewhat like the marks made by snow falling from the trees— More recent ones



1854-1855

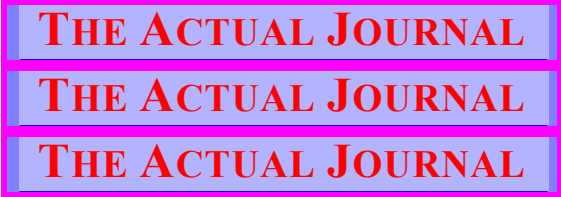
1854-1855

had settled & broke the slight crust around them—leaving a large indentation. The distinct tract was like this



the front tracks which are the largest being about 2 1/2 inches in diameter & the whole track of the 4 feet often 1 foot long.

These impressions so slight (though distinct) it is hard to realize that so heavy an animal made them. I see where the squirrels have been eating the P. pine cones since the last snow.



February 14, Wednesday: Aurora-Polka op.165 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in the Sperl Ballroom, Vienna.

[Henry Thoreau](#) recorded in his journal an interesting conversational exchange that he had had with [Alek Therien](#), ““You didn’t live at Smith’s last summer. Where did you live? At Baker’s?” ‘Yes,’ said he. ‘Well, is that a good place?’ ‘Oh, yes.’ ‘Is that a better place than Smith’s?’ ‘Oh, a change of pasture makes a fatter calf.”



Feb 14

[Transcript]

Another rather warm morning—still more overcast than yesterday’s— There is also another leaf or feather frost on the trees weeds & rails—slight leaves or feathers 1/4 to 1/2 inch long x 1/8 wide standing out around the slightest core— I think it [^written over “is”] is owing to the warmer nights. A 9 last evening & at 9 this morning the thermometer stood at 20°+ These ghosts of trees are very handsome & fairy-like—but would be handsomer still with the sun on them— The thickened clubbed tansy & the golden rods &c—& the [^golden] willows of the RR causeway with spiring tops shaped like one of the frost leaves—& the white telegraph wire— & the hoary sides of pine woods.

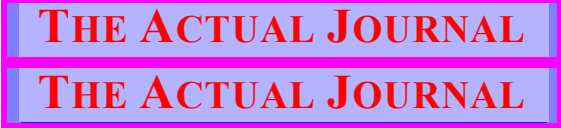
That cold weather of the 6th & 7th was preceded by [^2 days (the 4 & 5th)] much colder weather than we had been having— It moderated sufficiently to snow again on the eve of the ~~11th~~ 7th—& the 8th & 9th—on the morn of the 11th was down to 22°-

Aunt Louisa says that her cousin Nahum Jones, son to that Nathan Jones whom her Mother & sisters visited with her down east,—carried a cat to the West Indies, sold his vessel there, & though the same vessel did not return, & he came back in another vessel without the cat— the cat got home [^to Gouldsboro] some how unaccountably about the same time that he did.

Capt. Woodard told her that he carried the same cat 3 times round the world.

I said to Therien—You did ’nt live at Smiths last summer—Where did you live?—at Bakers? Yes, said he— Well is that a good place— O. Yes. Is that a better place than Smiths? O—a change of pasture makes a fatter calf.

CAT



1854-1855

1854-1855



February 14, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was written to by Elizabeth Oakes Smith in Brooklyn.



*Brooklawn 13 Oct. '55
Dear Thoreau,
Your long lost letter came
to hand last Monday and I concluded
that you had safely arrived in Concord
and had forwarded it yourself.
One week ago this morn. we parted
in Plymouth. I looked out my
window and got the last glimpse
of you going off with your umbrella &
carpet bag or valise.
Your visit here was very agreeable
to us all, and particularly to me.*

*Page 2
In fact your visit was highly successful
except in duration — being much too short.
But the principal object in my now
writing is, to inform you that I expect
to spend a few days in Concord
next week. I shall leave here
by the middle or towards the end
of the week. I shall bring my
hair pillow & some old clothes.
not I shall consider it obligating on
^ you to devote much time to me
particularly as you are an invalid
but much time as you can spare
I will be glad to avail myself
of, but I hope that Channing*

*Page 3
you and I will be able to feelosophize
a little occasionally.
I shall go directly to the Tavern*



1854-1855

1854-1855

*& shall insist upon putting you to no
trouble or attention ~~to me~~.
I conclude in haste, breakfast
waiting.
Yours truly
Danl. Ricketson
Tell Channing I hope to smoke
my pipe with him soon.—*



As he did with most of his new lectures, [Thoreau](#) agreed to read “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” to his hometown lyceum. Bradley P. Dean has noticed that, using a pencil so he could later erase the marks, Thoreau tactfully drew lines through at least two passages in the sermon he delivered to the Concord Lyceum that Wednesday night in the High School room of the Brick or Centre schoolhouse, beginning at 7:30PM, because they referred more or less explicitly to certain of his fellow townsmen. The two passages we know Thoreau omitted were “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” 12 (“including two ... done in his house”) and all of “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” 13-14.⁹⁴

THOREAU'S SERMON

94. “Concord Lyceum 1828-1859,” manuscript notebook, MCo.



1854-1855

1854-1855

FRAGMENTS OF BRAD DEAN'S NOTES ON LECTURE 50:

The manuscript notebook "Concord Lyceum, 1828-1859," says of this lecture, "D. H. Thoreau Esq, of Concord gave a lecture from the text, 'What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world & lose his own soul?['']" Emerson, who was one of the lyceum's two curators that season, had initially scheduled Professor Cornelius C. Felton of Harvard College to deliver the lecture that evening, but for some reason Felton's engagement was moved back one week.

Thoreau's was the tenth in a course of sixteen lectures before the Concord Lyceum that season. In his journal five days after delivering the lecture he wrote:

Many will complain of my lectures that they are transcendental. "Can't understand them." "Would you have us return to the savage state?" etc., etc. A criticism true enough, it may be, from their point of view. But the fact is, the earnest lecturer can speak only to his like, and the adapting of himself to his audience is a mere compliment which he pays them. If you wish to know how I think, you must endeavor to put yourself in my place. If you wish me to speak as if I were you, that is another affair."

It would appear from this that "What Shall It Profit" was not entirely successful in Concord.

Thoreau did not give another public lecture in 1855. Nonetheless, the New-York Daily Tribune, in a 19 October 1855 article on the coming lecture season, included him in a list of forty-three "Lecturers who have hitherto been most widely invited."

[Similar to] lecture 46. Using a pencil so he could later erase the marks, Thoreau tactfully drew lines through at least two passages in the lecture that referred more or less explicitly to some of his fellow townsmen. One of the two passages discusses a Concord milk-farmer who kept in his house ten hired men, six children, a deaf wife, and his mother and father; the other passage mentions another Concord farmer "who keeps twenty-eight cows — whose hired man and boy rise daily at half past four in mid-winter, and milk the cows before breakfast, which is at six o'clock by candlelight...."



February 15, Thursday: The North Carolina General Assembly incorporated the Western North Carolina Railroad, to build a rail line from Salisbury to the western part of the state.



Feb 15

Commenced a fine half snow half rain yesterday


[Transcript]

P. m. All rain & harder in the night & now quite a thaw—still raining finely— with great dark puddles amid the snow— & the cars detained by wet rails. Does not a thaw succeed that blue atmosphere observed on the 11th? A thaw, as well as warmer nights & hoar frosts?

All day a steady warm imprisoning rain carrying off the snow—not unmusical on my roof— It is a rare time for the student & reader who cannot go abroad in the P. m. provided he can keep awake—for we are wont to be drowsy as cats—in such weather— Without it is not walking but wading. It is so long since I have heard it that the [^steady-soaking-rushing] sound of the rain on the shingles is musical. The fire needs no replenishing, & we save our fuel. It seems like a distant fore-runner of spring— It is because I am allied to the elements that the sound of the rain is thus soothing to me. The sound soaks into my spirit as the water into the earth— reminding me of the season when snow & ice will be no more—when the earth will be thawed and drink up the rain as fast as it falls.

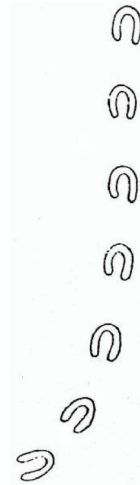
CAT

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 February 16, Friday: William Speiden made the final entry in the 2d volume of his *Mississippi* journal, a confession that he had omitted to note that before that ship had reached Valparaiso, one of [Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#)'s prized pet [Japanese](#) dogs, Master Sam Spooner, had died suddenly (during January 1855). He reported that the morning of February 16th, a 2d of the pet dogs, Madame Simoda, was also discovered dead, and her body buried at sea. "Monsieur Yedo or Jeddo, the only one of the family left, has been running about all day with his rocky heart almost broken" noted Speiden, who then closed his journal with this verse:

Happy dogs to die,
 Upon the broad blue sea,
 For there your bones will lie,
 Buried, and forever, be.

According to a report appearing in the London Times, the track of the devilishly mysterious [series of hoof-like marks](#) had been found to extend from Exmouth, up to Topsham, and across the Exe Estuary to Dawlish and Teignmouth!



In unrelated pieces of news, the Daily Alta California advised its readership that:

THE CHINESE are celebrating their New Year with a terrible racket—burning crackers and other fireworks, enough to drive a quiet man crazy. We believe they keep up their jubilee three or four days.

OVERBOARD.—A boy fell off from Davis street wharf yesterday afternoon, and come near being drowned. A Mr. Rockwell and Mr. Cox both jumped in, and by their exertions rescued him from his perilous situation.

THE HANGING AT RED BLUFFS.—A correspondent at Red Bluffs writes us that the recent hanging of a man at Red Bluffs, was justified by the facts. The man who was hung is represented to have been a rogue of the first water, and the accused was caught in the act of stealing a mule.



Feb 16th Still rains a little this morning. Water at the mill dam higher than ever since the new block was built [^or longer]. Ground half bare—but frozen & icy yet.

[Transcript]

1854-1855

1854-1855

Pm to Cliff via Spanish Brook—

A thick fog—without rain— Sounds sweet & musical through this air— as crows cocks—& striking on the rails at a distance. In the woods by the cut—in this soft air under the pines draped with mist—my voice & whistling are peculiarly distinct & echoed back to me as if the fog were a ceiling—which made this hollow an apartment. Sounds are not dissipated & lost in the immensity of the heavens above you—but your voice being confined by the fog ~~y~~ is distinct & you hear yourself speak. It is a good lichen day— Every crust is colored & swollen with fruit—& C— is constantly using his knife—& filling his pockets with specimens. I have caught a mouse at last— [^where were tracks like those of Feb. 12]but it is eaten half up— ap. by its fellow?— [^All [the underlining here is double] the flesh is eaten out & part of the skin—one fore foot eaten off—but the entrails left] No wonder we do not find their dead bodies in the woods. [^The rest of the trap is not moved or sprung & there is no track of a large animal or bird in the snow— It may have been a weasel]

The sand is flowing fast—in forms of vegetation in the deep cut. The fog is so thick we cannot see the engine till it is almost upon us—& then its own steam hugging the earth—greatly increases the mist. As usual it is still more dense over the ice at the pond.

goes on melting {~~den~~} till there is only a little ice snow left on N. of hills in woods on the 10—of Mar & then is whitened again.

The ground is more than half bare—especially in open fields and level evergreen woods— It is pleasant to see there the bright evergreens of the forest floor—undimmed by the snow— The winter green—the great leaved pyrola—the shin leaf—the rattlesnake plantain & the Lycopodiums—I see where probably rabbits have nibbled off the leaves of the winter green—[^It is pleasant to see elsewhere in fields & on banks so many green radical leaves only half killed by the winter] Are those little scratches across pallescent lichens which C. notices made by squirrels. I find in the leavings of the partridges [Ruffed Grouse ■ *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] numer ends of twigs—they are white with them—some 1/2 inch long & stout in proportion—perhaps they are apple? twigs— The bark (& bud if there was any) have been entirely digested leaving the bare white hard wood of the twig— Some of the ends of apple twigs looked as if they had been bitten off. It is surprising what a quantity of this wood they swallow with their [^these? the?] buds— What a hardy bird—born amid the dry leaves— of the same color with them—that grown up lodges in the snow—& lives on buds & twigs! Where apple buds are just freshly bitten off they do not seem to have taken so much twig with them—



The drooping oak leaves show more ~~read~~ red amid the pines this wet day—agreeably so—& I feel as if I stood a little nearer to the heart of nature.

The mouse is so much torn that I cannot get the length of the body & its markings exactly.

Entire Length of? =	8 inches	[^Prob an] inch too much
" of head to <u>base</u> of ears	1 inch	
body	3 ?	
tail	3 1/2	

Brown or reddish brown above—White beneath—fur slate.[^ above & beneath] tail also darker above light beneath—feet white—hind legs longest say 1 1/4 inches [^long]—fore 3/4.

hind foot more than 5/8 [^3/4] inch long—5 toes on hind feet 4 on front— [^with rudiment of thumb—without claw] with little white protuberances on the soles of all—ears large [^almost bare] thin slaty colored— 5/8 inch long on outside. Upper jaw 1/4+ inch longer than lower—tail round round, hairy, gradually tapering— dimly ringed. Longest moustachios 1 3/8 inches—incisors varnish or [^dry] maple-wood color V Feb 20

From Emmons account—I should think it the Arvicola Emmonsii of De Kay—or Deer Mouse— which is thought a connecting link bet the Arvicola & Gerbillus. —The Gerbillus is the only other described much like it—& that is a “yellowish cream color” beneath.

Where snow is left on banks I see the galleries of mice? or moles? unroofed— The mouse I caught had come up through the snow by the side of a shrub oak run along wood & entered again—i.e. before I set the trap.

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February 17, Saturday: French and Imperial Chinese forces took [Shanghai](#). The city would be held for 17 months by rebels of the Small Sword Society with the active participation of the local populace.

CHINESE CIVIL WAR

Piano Concerto no.1 by Franz Liszt was performed for the first time, in the Ducal Palace, Weimar with the composer at the keyboard and the orchestra directed by [Hector Berlioz](#). It was the initial of two joint concerts in Weimar. Both concerts would be sellouts.

At Loudon Centre, [New Hampshire](#), while making a political stump speech in favor of [Know-Nothingism](#), 59-year-old Cyrus Barton fell into the arms of his political opponent Walter Harriman and departed this mortal coil.



Feb 17

[Transcript]

It is still cloudy & a very fine rain. The river very high 1 inch higher than the eve of Jan 31st
The bridge of Sam. Barrett's caved in—also the Swamp Bridge on Back road. Muskrats driven out— Heard this morn at the new Stone bridge from the hill that singular spring-like note of a bird which I heard once before [^one year] about this time (under F.H. Hill—) The jays were uttering their unusual notes—& this made me think of a wood-pecker— It reminds me of the pine warbler—vetter vetter vetter vetter vet—except that it is much louder—& I should say had the sound of l rather than t veller &c perhaps— Can it be a jay?—or a pig. woodpecker?— Is it not the earliest spring ~~sp~~ ward note of a bird? In the damp misty air.
~~Wask~~ Was waked up last night by the tolling of a bell about 11 o'clock— [^as if a child had hold of the rope] dressed & went abroad in the wet to see if it was a fire— It seems the town clock was out of order & the striking part ran down & struck steadily for 15 minutes. If it had not been so near the end of the neck [^week?] it might have struck a good part of the night.

Pm

A riparial excursion—over further RR bridge return by Flints bridge— At 2 Pm the water at the Sam Wheeler Bridge is 3 inches above stright truss or 2 inches higher than at 9 Am. The ice is not generally broken over the channel of this stream—but is lifted up & also for a good distance over the meadows—but for a broad space ~~of~~ over the meadows on each side the freshet stands over the ice which is flat on the bottom. It rains but a trifle this afternoon but the snow which is left is still melting—

The water is just beginning to be over the road beyond this stone bridge— The road beyond the opposite or Wood's Bridge is already impassable to foot travellers—

I see no muskrats in the Assabet from the Tommy Wheeler bank—perhaps they provided themselves holes at the last freshet— It is running over both side of Derby's bridge for a dozen rods (each side) as over a dam— The ice in the middle of this stream is for the most part broken up— Great cakes of ice are wedged against the RR bridge there & still threaten its existence. They are about 20 feet in diameter & some 20 inches thick of greenish ice—more or less tilted up & commonly another [^if not 2 more] of equal size forced directly underneath the first by the current— They stretch quite across the river—& being partly tilted up against the spiles of the bridge exert a tremendous power upon it— They form a dam between & over which the water falls— so that it is fully ten inches higher on the upper side of the bridge than on the lower—2 maples a little above the bridge—one a large one—have been leveled & carried off by the ice. The track repairers have been at work here all day ~~sup~~ protecting the bridge— They have a man on the ice with a rope round his body—the other end in their hands—who is cracking off the corners of the cakes with a crow bar— One great cake as much as a dozen rods long is slowly whirling round just above the bridge & from time to time one end is born against the ice which lies against the bridge. The workmen say that they had cleared the stream here before dinner—& all this has collected since.

(Now 3 Pm). If Derbys bridge should yield to the ice which lies against it this—would surely be swept off—

They say that 3 (?) years ago the whole of the E end of the bridge was moved some 6 inches, rails & all.

Waded through water in the road for 8 or 10 rods, beyond Loring's little bridge— It was a foot deep this morning on the short road that leads to Heywood's house—I had to go 1/4 of a mile up the meadow there & down the college road— Sam Barrett's Bridge is entirely covered & has slumped— They cross [^a broad bay] in a boat there— I went over on the string piece of the dam above. It is within 8 or 9 inches of the top of the little bridge this side of Flint's Bridge at 5 1/2 Pm. So though it is within 5 1/2 inches of where it was 3 years ago in the spring at the New Stone bridge—it is not so high comparatively here. The fact is the water is in each case dammed not only by the bridges & causeways—but by the ice which lodges there—so that it stands at as many levels as there are causeways. It is perhaps about a foot lower at Flint's Bridge now, than ~~it was 3 years ago at the same moments that it was~~— when it stood where it does now at the new stone Bridge 3 years ago. So that

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a meter at one point above will not enable you to compare the absolute height or quantity of water at dif. seasons & under dif, circumstances. Such a meter is the more to be relied on, in proportion as a river is free from obstructions—such as ice—causeways—bridges &c— Everywhere now in the fields you see [^a green] water standing over ice in the hollows. Sometimes it is a very delicate tint of green. [^would this water look green on any white ground? ~~No I think not for~~ it is corn-yellow on meadows in spring] The highway surveyor is on the alert to see what damage the freshet has done— As they could not dig in the frozen ground, they have upset a cartload of p. pine boughs into the hole at the swamp bridge.

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February 18, Sunday (March 2, New Style): Tsar Nicholas I (Nikolai Pavlovich, His Imperial Majesty The Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias) died so suddenly and unexpectedly at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg that there would arise rumors of suicide. The cause of death was evidently the development of pneumonia, after catching a chill and refusing medical attention.



Feb 18th

[Transcript]

8 Am Water 4 3/4 inches above truss—nearly 2 inches higher than yesterday at 2 Pm [^It may have risen 1 inch higher during the day—then went down]— Surface of ground & snow slightly frozen—no flowing now— At 9 Am sun comes out. rather warm— sunlight peculiarly yellow & spring-suggesting. Mts in horizon dark blue. the wooded parts—with snow below & between—

Pm to Grt Mead's & around Beck stow's.

A clear bright day, though with passing clouds—(the clouds darker by contrast with the bright sky—) the first since the evening of the 14th ult—

Now for the first time decidedly there is something spring-suggesting in the air & light—Though not particularly warm the light of the sun (now travelling so much higher)—on the russet fields—the ground being nearly all bare—& on the sand—& the pines, is suddenly yellower. It is the earliest day-breaking of the year— We now begin to look decidedly forward & put the winter behind us. We begin to form definite plans for the approaching ~~season~~ [^spring & summer] year. I look over a particolored landscape of russet fields & white snow patches—as in former spring days— Some of the frost has come out & it is very wet & muddy crossing plowed fields. [^As filthy waking as any in the year— You have the experience of wading birds that get their living on the flats when the tide has gone down & leave their tracks there—but you are cheered by the sight of some radical greenness.] The legions of light have poured into the plain in overwhelming numbers, & the winter darkness will not recover the ground it has lost.

I listen ever for something spring-like in the notes of birds—some peculiar tinkling notes.

Now and through the winter I am attracted by the reddish patches on the landscape where there is a dense growth of young white birches—the bark of the young shoots. Neither the main stream nor meadows are decidedly broken up by the thaw & rise—only there are great open places in the meadows—where you observe the ripple of water still in the mornings—the cold is so much relaxed—& the ice that belonged is superimposed in great cakes upon the still firmly frozen parts. On the Great Fields I see an acre of a straw-colored feathery grass in tufts 2 feet high. These too reflect the yellower light.

I see pitch pine cones 2 years old still closed on felled trees—2 to 6 together [^recurved] ~~elo~~ in the last case closely crowded & surrounding the twig in a ring—forming very rich looking clusters—8 to 10 inches from the extremity—& within two or 3 inches of the extremity—may be on or 2 small ones of the last year— Low down on twigs around the trunks of old trees—& sometimes on the trunk itself you see old grey cones which have only opened or blossomed at the apex—covered with lichens. Which have lost their spines.

A man came to our house at noon and got something to eat—who set out this morning to go from Waltham to [^Noah Wheeler's in] Nine Acre Corner— He got as far as Lees bridge on the edge of Lincoln— or within 3/4 of a mile of Wheelers—& could not get over the river on account of the freshet So he ~~was obliged to~~ [^came] round through Concord village—he might have come by the RR a little nearer—& I directed him over the RR

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bridge—the first by which he could cross dry-shod down the stream. & up stream he would have been obliged to go to Saxonville— Thus he ~~would have~~ [^had] to go 8 miles round—instead of 3/4 of a mile direct [^& in the whole about double the usual distance from Waltham.]—It was probably over the road also at Nut Meadow Brook.

The river thus opposes a serious obstacle to travellers—from ~~Nw~~ to S. E. to N. W. for some 20 miles of its course at least—above & below Concord. [^No doubt hundreds have been put to great inconvenience by it within a day or 2.] Even travellers in wagons are stopped at many of these causeways. If they were raised 2 feet the trouble would be in great part the danger wholly obviated. There should at least be provided a ferry for foot passengers at each such causeway—at the expense¹⁶ of the town—& the traveller could blow a horn to call the ferry-man ~~of~~ over— Youill see a man carrying a child over a causeway on his back—

After a thaw old {~~ha~~} tracks in the snow—from basso—become alto relievō—the snow which was originally compressed [^solidified] & hardened beneath the feet— ~~now becoming~~ [^also perhaps by the influence of the sun & maybe rain] being the last to melt become protuberant. the highest part & most lasting— That part of the snow compressed & solidified under the feet remains nearly at the same level—

The track becomes a raised almost icy type. How enduring these trails! How nature clings to these types. The track even of small animals like a skunk will outlast a considerable thaw.

Why do laborers so commonly turn out their feet more than ~~other~~ the class still called gentlemen—ap. pushing themselves along by the sides of their feet? I think you can tell the track of a clown from that of a gentleman though he should wear ~~the~~ [^a] gentleman's boots.

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February 19, Monday: Man lebt nur einmal! op.167, a waltz in the style of a ländler by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in the Sperl Ballroom, Vienna.

[Henry Thoreau](#) replied to Elizabeth Oakes Smith.



In this letter [Thoreau](#) commented on his regard for the relation between time and eternity:

As for the good time that is coming, let us not forget that there is a good time **going** too, and see that we dwell on that eternal ridge between the two that neither comes nor goes.



The sermon of February 14th had not been well received, and would not again be attempted until [Thoreau](#) obtained a more receptive and capable audience at the Eagleswood community on Raritan Bay in New Jersey in November 1856. Thoreau noted in his journal:



[^Feb 19]

[Transcript]

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Rufus [Hosmer](#) says that in the year 1820 (?) there was so smooth & strong an icy crust on a very deep snow—that you could skate everywhere over the fields & for the most part over the fences. Sam Potter's father moving into town—turned off into the fields ~~as to~~ with a 4 (?) horse team as soon as he had crossed Woods bridge & went directly across to Dea Hubbard's. When ~~the~~ Wood's Bridge was carried off upstream it was landed against Hubbard's land.

Showed me where his grandfather Nathan Hosmer who lived in the old house still standing on Conantum was drowned when crossing the river on the ice from town just below the bridge since built.

Many will complain of my lectures—that they are transcendental—cant understand them—would you have us return to the savage state? &c &c A criticism true enough, it may be, from their point of view. But the fact is, the earnest lecturer can speak only to his like—and the adapting of himself to his audience is a mere compliment which he pays them. If you wish to know how I think you must endeavor to put yourself in my place— If you wish me to speak as if I were ~~in~~ your ~~place~~ that is another affair.

I think it was about a week ago that I saw some dead honeybees on the snow.

The water is about a foot deep on the Jimmy Miles road. E. Conant thinks that the Joe Miles Causeway is rather worse than Hubbard's in respect to water— Rice & some others always say Cassey for Causeway— Conant was cutting up an old Pear tree [^which had blown down] by his old house on Conantum— This, & others still standing—& a mulberry tree whose stump remains—were set anciently with reference to a house which stood in the little peach orchard near by— The only way for Conant to come to town when the water is highest is by Tarbells—& Woods or the Stone Bridge. about 1 1/2 miles round.

It is true, when there is no snow we cannot so easily see the birds, nor they the weeds—

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February 20, Tuesday: At the Casino in Zurich, a revised version of Richard Wagner's [Eine Faust-Ouverture](#) was performed, and also [Elsa's Bridal Procession](#) from Lohengrin.



Feb 20

[Transcript]

I have caught another of those mice of Feb 16th & secured it entire—a male

- Whole length,.....6 1/2 inches
- Head, from the nose to the ears....1 inch
- Tail.....3 1/8 inches
- Longest of the whiskers.....1 5/8 "

Hind legs the longest—though only the feet, about 3/4 of an inch in length, one exposed—without the fur— Of the fore legs little more is exposed than the hands—or perhaps 4 to 5/8 of an inch—[^claws concealed in tufts of white hair] The upper jaw projects about 1/2 inch beyond the lower. ~~Whisk~~

The whole upper parts are brown, except the ears,²¹ from the snout to the tip of the tail— dark brown on the top of the head & back & upper side of the tail—reddish brown [^or fawn or fox? colored] on the sides. [^Tail hairy & obscurely ringed] The whole lower parts white, including the [^neat white] feet. [^& under side of tail] The irregular [^waving] line ~~fo~~ along the sides forming the boundary between the brown & the white very sharply defined[^from side of the mout to the tip of the tail—above brown beneath white very decidedly]— The brown of the sides extends down by a triangular point to the last joint ~~of~~ or foot of the forelegs— same or & to the [^same or] heels of the hind ones. [^or you may say the white of the belly extends upward on the sides bet. the legs in a broad bay.] The ears are large— [^broad & roundish] 5/8 inch long—ash or slate colored— thin & bare except at ~~the~~ base— The reddish brown & the white are the striking colors. It is in the attitude of hopping— Its thighs ~~of its concea~~ drawn up & concealed in the fur & its long hind feet in the same plane with its buttocks—while the short fore feet appear like hands. Fur dark slate, under both brown & white hair The droppings black say 1/6 inch long. cylindrical. Some of the whiskers are dark, some whitish. It has a rather large head, ap. curving forward. [^or downward.] A very slight & delicate tinge of yellowish beneath bet. the fore legs. v. Mar 12th

It is undoubtedly the [Amicola Emmonsii](#) de Kay. It is a very pretty & neat little animal for a mouse—with its wholesome reddish brown sides— [^distinctly bounding in] its pure white belly—neat white feet— large slate colored ears [^which suggest circumspection & timidity—ready to earth itself on the least sound of danger]—long tail & numerous whiskers— This was caught in a dry & elevated situation, amid shrub oaks.



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It ap. like the other, came up through a hole in the snow at the foot of a shrub oak—Q. ilicifolia.
 This tawny or reddish brown color [^which belongs to the king of beasts & to the deer]—singular that it should extend to this minute beast also. vn. p. but 2 V. Mar. 10th
 A strong wind drying the earth which has been so very wet— The sand begins to be dry in spots on the R. R. causeway—
 The northerly wind blows me along—& when I get to the cut I hear it roaring in the woods all reminding me of March—March.
 It is decided March weather & I see from my window the bright blue water here & there between the ice on the meadow.
 The sides of the cut are all bare of snow—& the sand foliage is dried up.
 The quadrupeds which I know that we have in Concord are V. Emmonds p 5

Of Order Carnivora— Fam. Vespertilionidae / have we more of the 3 in the State?
 " Soricidae Have we any?
 Talpidae Condylura longicaudata
 star-nosed Mole
 Have we not another of the 3 moles?
 Ursidae— Procyon lotor, The Raccoon
 Canidae Vulpes fulvus
 Mus-telidae [^Mustela martes Pine Marten] Putorius Vison. The Mink
 " Vulgaris reddish weasel
 " Noveboracensis Ermine "
 Lutra Canadensis Otter
 Mephitis Americana
 Rodentia ~~Rodentia~~ [^Castoridae] Fiber Zibethicus
 Leporidae Lepus Americanus
 " Virginianus
 Muscidae Mead. Mouse
 altered to Muridae [^in Arvicola hirsutus] 59 probably—his Albo-rufescens only a var. ac
 to Aud. & Bach.
 " Emmonsii—[^mus leucopus]
 Mus Musculus Com. Mouse
 Mus rattus? black rat
 " Decumanus Wharf rat [^Brown]
~~Arctomys monax~~

Order—	Family	Genus
		Arctomys Monax Woodchuck
		Sciurus leucotis little Gray squirrel
		" Hudsonius
		" Striatus
		Pteromys Volucella
		Have we the Gerbillus Canadensis?- Jumping mouse?

Ac. to this we have at least 21 & perhaps 26 quadrupeds—5 & possibly 6 families of the [^order] Carnivora & 3 families of the order Rodentia
 None of the order Ruminantia
 Nearly half of our quadrupeds belong to the Muridae or Rat family—& [^about] 1/4 of them to the Mustelidae or Weasel Family.
 Some, though numerous, are rarely seen— as the wild mice & moles— Others are very rare like the otter & raccoon
 The striped squirrel is the smallest quadruped that we commonly notice in our walks in the woods & we do not ~~even~~ realize—especially in summer—when their tracks are not visibles—that the aisles of the wood are threaded by countless wild mice—and no more that the meadows are swarming in many places with meadow mice & moles.
 The cat brings in a mole from time to time & we see where they have heaved up the soil in the meadow— We see the tracks of mice on the snow in the woods—or once in a year one glances by like a flash through the grass or ice at our feet—& that is for the most part all that we see of them.
 Though [^all] the muskrat cabins will be covered by an early rise of the river in the fall—you will yet see the greater part of them above the ice in midwinter however high the water may be.
 I frequently detect the track of a foreigner by the print of the nails in his shoes—both in snow & earth—of an india rubber—by its being less sharply edged & most surely often by the fine diamond roughening of the sole.

CAT

How much we infer from the dandy's narrow heel tap—while we pity his unsteady tread— & from the lady's narrow slipper—suggesting corns not to say consumption— The track of the farmers cowhides—whose carpet tearing tacks in the heel—frequently rake the ground several inches before his foot finds a resting place— suggests weight & impetus.

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February 21, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) made a comment in his journal about “invalids who have weak lungs, who think they may weather it till summer now,” suggesting that for some time he had been struggling with a bad cold.



Feb 21st

[Transcript]

Another [arvicola Emmonsii](#) [^a male]—whole length 6 inches—tail 3 inches— This is very little reddish the sides—but general aspect above dark brown—though not iron-grey yet reminding me of that—[^Yet not the less like the hue of beasts in a menagerie] This may be a last years Mouse—

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

[Aud.](#) & Bach. say that when “it sheds its hair late in spring”—“it assumes a bluish gray tint, a little lighter than that of the common mouse.”

P.m. To F— H. Hill via Cliff Cut—

A clear air, with a Northwesterly March-like wind—as yesterday— What is the peculiarity in the air—that both the invalide in the chamber & the traveller on the highway—say ~~it is~~ these are perfect March days [^The wind is rapidly drying up earth & elevated sands already beg. to look whitish]. How much light there is in the sky & on the surface of the russet earth—! It is reflected in a flood from all cleansed surfaces—which rain & snow have washed—from the rail-road rails & the mica in the rocks— [^& The silvery latebrae of insects there] & I never saw the white houses of the village more brightly white. [^Now look for an early crop of arrowheads—for they will shine] When I have entered the wooded hollow on the East of the Deep Cut it is novel & pleasant to hear the sound of the dry leaves & twigs [^which have so long been damp & silent] crackling again under my feet.— more warm & lighter than ever though there is still considerable snow about [^along wall sides &c]— & to see the holes & galleries recently made by the mice (?) in the now fine withered grass of such places— [^the upper aralia hollow there] I see the peculiar softened blue sky of spring over the tops of the pines—& when I am sheltered from the wind I feel the warmer sun of the season reflected from the withered grass & twigs on the side of ~~an~~ [^this] elevated hollow— A warmth begins³⁵ to be reflected from the partially dried ground here & there in the sun [^in sheltered places] very cheering to invalides who have weak lungs— [^who think they may weather it till summer now] Nature is more genial to them When the leaves on the forest floor are dried & begin to rustle under such a wind sun & wind as these—the news is told to how many myriads of grubs that under-lie them! When I perceive this dryness under my feet I feel as if I had got a new sense, or rather I realize what was incredible to me before—that there is a new life in Nature beginning to awake—that her halls are being swept & prepared for a new occupant— [^It is whispered through all the aisles of the forest that another Spring is approaching—the wood mouse listens at the mouth of his burrow—and the chickadee passes the news along] We now ~~notice~~ ~~th~~ notice the snow on the mts because on the remote rim of the horizon its whiteness contrasts with [^the russet & darker hues of] our bare fields. I looked at the Peterboro mts with my glass from F. H. Hill. I think that there can be no more arctic scene than these mts [^in the edge of the horizon] completely crusted over with snow [^with the sun shining on them] seen through a telescope over bare russet fields & dark forests— with perhaps a house on some remote bere [^bare] ridge, seen against them.

A silver edging or ear like handle to this bassin of the world—

They look like great loaves incrustured with pure white sugar—and I think that this must have been the origin of the name sugar loaf sometimes given to mts—& not on account of their form. We look thus from russet fields into a landscape still sleeping under the mantle of winter. [^We have already forgotten snow & think only of frosted cake] The snow on the mts has, in this case, a singular smooth & crusty appearance— & by contrast you

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see even single evergreens rising here & there above it—and where a promontory casts a shadow along the mts' side. I saw what looked like a large bluish lake [[^]of misty bluish water] on the side of the further Peterboro mt—its edges or shore very distinctly defined— This I concluded was the shadow of another part of the mt. & it suggested that in like manner what on the surface of the moon is taken for water—may be shadows. [[^]Could not distinguish Monadnock till the sun shone on it.]

I saw a train go by which had hitched on [[^]in front,] a dozen [[^]dirt] cars somewhere up country—laden ap. with some kind of earth [[^]or clay?] —& these with their loads were thickly & evenly crusted with unspotted snow— [[^]a part of that sugary crust I had viewed with my glass] which contrasted singularly with the bare tops of the other cars [[^]which it had hitched on their side]—& the 20 miles [[^]at least] of bare ground over which they had rolled. It affected me as when a traveller comes into the house with snow on his coat—when I did not know it was snowing.

How plain wholesome & earthy are the colors of quadrupeds generally—! The commonest I should say is the tawny or various shades of brown—answering to the russet which is the prevailing color of the earth's surface—perhaps—& to the yellow of the sands beneath. The darker brown mingled with this answers to the darker colored soil of the surface. The white of the Polar bear—ermine weasel &c answer to the snow— — The spots of the pards perchance to the earth spotted with flowers or tinted leaves of autumn. The black perhaps to night— & muddy bottoms & dark waters— There are few or no bluish animals.

Can it be true, as is said, that geese have gone over [[^]prob. yesterday] Massachusetts [[^]Boston]? It is in the newspapers

Henry Hosmer tells me (Mar. 17th) that he saw several flocks about this time!

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 February 22, Thursday: Pennsylvania State University was founded as the Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania.

It would not be until the availability of stop-motion photography in 1931 that it would be possible to ascertain that the male ruffed grouse makes its drumming noise not by striking its wings against its drumming stand or its body or behind its back, but by the rapidity of the motion of its feathers through the air (This would be photographically documented by Dr. Arthur A. Allen).

CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO



Feb 22

Pm to J. Farmer's

[Transcript]

Remarkably warm & pleasant weather— perfect spring. I even listen for the 1st blue bird— I see a seething ~~of~~ in the air [[^]also the 24th which is very cold]] over clean russet fields. The westerly wind is rather raw—but in sheltered places it is deliciously warm— The water has so far gone down that I get over the Hunt Bridge causeway—by going half a dozen rods on the wall in one place. This water must have moved 2 or 300 cartloads of sand to the side of the road— This damage would be avoided by raising the road.

J. Farmer showed me an ermine weasel he caught in a trap 3 or 4 weeks ago. They are [[^]not very] uncommon about his barns. All white but the tip of the tail—2 conspicuous canine teeth in each jaw— In summer they are distinguished from the red weasel, which is a little smaller, by the length of their tails particularly — 6 or more inches, while the red one's is not 2 inches long. He says their track is like that of the mink— {drawing}

as if they had only 2 legs—they go on the jump—sometimes make a 3d mark — He saw one in the summer (which he called the red weasel—but as he thought the red 2ce as big as the white, it may have been a white one) catch a striped squirrel thus. He was at work near the wall near his house when he saw a striped squirrel come out of the wall & jump along by the side of a large stone— When he had got 2 or 3 feet along it as it were in the air, the weasel appeared ~~in pursuit~~ behind him — & before he had got 4 feet had him by the throat. Said

a man told him that he saw a weasel come running suddenly to an [^apple] tree near which he was working run r[^o]und & round & up it—when a squirrel sitting on the end of a branch ~~dropt~~ [^jumped] off & the weasel jumping had him before he touched the ground. He had no doubt that when the weasel ran round the tree he was on the track of the squirel—

F. said he had many of the black rat but none or very few of the wharf rats on his premises. He had seen mice nests 20 feet up trees.

3 or 4 weeks ago he traced a mink by his tracks on the snow to where he had got a frog from the bottom of a ditch—dug him out.

Says that where many minnows are kept in a spring—they will kill 4 or 500 at once & pile them up on the bank. Showed me his spring—head of one of the sources of Dodge’s Brook—which by his mark is not 1/4 of an inch higher now when there is so much water on the surface—than it was in the midst of the [^great] drought last summer—

This does not freeze-over for 20 rods—a pool in it some dozen or more rods from source—where his cattle drink he never saw frozen—

But the important peculiarity of it is that when in a dry spell this stream is dry 15 or 20 rods from this source—it may suddenly fill again before any rain comes.

He had seen a partri[^d]ge **[Ruffed Grouse** **[Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] drum standing on a wall— Said it stood very upright and produced the sound by striking its wings together behind its back—as a cock often does—but did not strike the wall nor its body— This he is sure of—& declares that he is mistaken who affirms the contrary, though it were Audubon himself. Wilson says he “begins to strike with his stiffened wings” while standing on a log—but does not say what he strikes—though one would infer it was either the log or his body. Peabody says he beats his body with his wings.

The sun goes down tonight under clouds— a round red orb—& I am surprised to see that its light falling on my book & the wall—is a beautiful purple—like the poke-stem—[^or perhaps some kinds of wine.]

You see fresh upright green radical leaves of some plants—the dock—prob water d. for one in and about water—now the snow is gone there—as if they had grown all winter.

P. pine cones must be taken from the tree at the right season else they will not open or blossom in a chamber—I have one which was gnawed off by squirrels ap. of full size—but which does not open. Why should they thus open in the chamber or elsewhere. I suppose that under the influence of heat or dryness the upper side of each scale expands while the lower contracts—or perhaps only the one expands or the other contracts. I notice that the upper side is a lighter almost cinnamon color—the lower a dark (pitchy (?) red.



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February 23, Friday: After a year of concertizing in [Cuba](#), Louis Moreau Gottschalk boarded a British steamer in [Havana](#) bound for Mobile and New Orleans.



Feb 23d

Clear—but a very cold north wind.

I see great cakes of ice a rod or more in length [^2 1 foot thick] lying high & dry on the bare ground in the low fields some 10 feet or more beyond the edge of the thinner ice, which were washed up by the last rise (the 18th) which was some 4 inches higher than the former one [^V the 26th]

Some of these great cakes when the water going down has left them on a small mound— have bent as they settled & conformed to the surface.

Saw at Walden this P— m. that that grayish ice which had formed over the large square where ice had been taken out for Brown’s ice-house—had a decided pink or rosaceous tinge. I see no cracks in the ground this year yet.

Mr Loring says that he & his son Geo. fired at [^white] swans in Texas on the water—& though G. shot 2 [^with

[Transcript]




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ball] the & killed them—the others in each case gathered about them & crowded them off out of their reach.

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 February 24, Saturday: [Johannes Brahms](#) visited [Robert Schumann](#) in the insane asylum near Bonn. They talked and Schumann told Brahms that he was writing music.

In Manhattan's Stanwix Hall, [Know-Nothing](#) Party leader Bill "The Butcher" Poole picked an argument with a political opponent, John Morrissey, and was gunned down by Lewis Baker. There would be a series of 3 hung juries and the killing would never be punished.

NEW-YORK




February 24. Clear, but very cold and windy for the season. Northerly wind; smokes blown southerly. Ground frozen harder still; but probably now and hereafter what ground freezes at night will in great part melt by middle of day. However, it is so cold this afternoon that there is no melting of the ground throughout the day. The names of localities on the Sudbury River, the south or main branch of Concord or Musketaquid River, beginning at the mouth of the Assabet, are the Rock (at mouth), Merrick's Pasture, Lee's Hill, Bridge, Hubbard Shore, Clamshell Hill and fishing-place, Nut Meadow Brook, Hollowell Place and Bridge, Fair Haven Hill and Cliffs, Conantum opposite, Fair Haven Pond and Cliff-and Baker Farm, Pole Brook, Lee's and Bridge, Farrar's or Otter Swamp, Bound Rock, Rice's Hill and [Blank Space]'s [sic] Isle, the Pantry, Ware Hill, Sherman's Bridge and Round Hill, Great Sudbury Meadow and Tall's Isle, Causeway Bridges, Larned Brook, the Chestnut House, Pelham Pond, the Rapids. I saw yesterday in Hubbard's sumach meadow a bunch of dried grass with a few small leaves inmixed, which had lain next the ground under the snow, probably the nest of a mouse or mole P. M.—To young willow-row near Hunt's Pond road
Here is skating again, and there was some yesterday, the meadows being frozen where they had opened, though the water is fast going down. It is a thin ice of one to two inches, one to three feet above the old, with yellowish water between. However, it is narrow dodging between the great cakes of the ice which has been broken up. The whole of the broad meadows is a rough, irregular checker-board of great cakes a rod square or more, — arctic enough to look at. The willow-row does not begin to look bright yet. The top two or three feet are red as usual at a distance, the lower parts a rather dull green. Inspecting a branch, I find that the bark is shrunk and wrinkled, and of course it will not peel. Probably when it shines it will be tense and smooth, all its pores filled. Staples said the other day that he heard Phillips speak at the State-House. By thunder! he never heard a man that could speak like him. His words come so easy. It was just like picking up chips
Minott says that Messer tells him he saw a striped squirrel (!) yesterday [*Vide* Mar. 4th and 7th.]. His cat caught a mole lately, not a star-nosed one, but one of those that heave up the meadow. She sometimes catches a little dark-colored mouse with a sharp nose. Tells of a Fisk of Waltham who, some thirty years ago, could go out with a club only and kill as many partridges as he could conveniently bring home. I suppose he knew where to find them buried in the snow. Both Minott and Farmer think they sometimes remain several days in the snow, if the weather is bad for them. Minott has seen twigs, he says, of apple, in their crops, three quarters of an inch long. Says he has seen them drum many times, standing on a log or a wall; that they strike the log or stone with their wings. He has frequently caught them in a steel trap without bait, covered with leaves and set in such places. Says that quails also eat apple buds.
I notice that, in the tracks, hens' toes are longer and more slender than partridges and more or less turned and curved one side
The brightening of the willows or of osiers, — that is a season in the spring, showing that the dormant sap is awakened. I now remember a few osiers which I have seen early in past springs, thus brilliantly green and red (or yellow), and it is as if all the landscape and all nature shone. Though the twigs were few which I saw, I remember it as a prominent phenomenon affecting the face of Nature, a gladdening of her face. You will often fancy that they look brighter before the spring has come, and when there has been no change in them

[Transcript]

CAT

Thermometer at 10° at 10 P.M.

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 February 25, Sunday: [Jefferson Davis](#) and [Varina Davis](#)'s daughter Margaret Howell Davis was born.



February 25. Clear, cold, and windy. Thermometer at 7° at 7.30 A.M. Air filled with dust blowing over the fields. Feel the cold about as much as when it was below zero a month ago. Pretty good skating.

[Transcript]

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 February 26, Monday: Lew Baker and Jim Turner, seeking vengeance, shot Bowery Boys gang leader [William Poole AKA "Bill the Butcher,"](#) a leader in the "Know Nothing" American political movement, in the leg at Stanwix Hall, a bar on Broadway near Prince, at that time a center of the city's nightlife (this wasn't even remotely similar to what is depicted in Martin Scorsese's film "[Gangs of New York](#)").

Bedrich Smetana conducted his Triumphal Symphony in its premiere at Konvikt Hall. This was Smetana's 1st appearance in Prague as conductor and pianist.




February 26. Still clear and cold and windy. No thawing of the ground during the day. This and the last two or three days have been very blustering and unpleasant, though clear

[Transcript]

P.M. — To Clamshell Hill, across river

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10



I see some cracks in a plowed field, — Depot Field corn-field, — maybe recent ones. I think since this last cold snap, else I had noticed them before. Those great cakes of ice which the last freshet floated up on to uplands now lie still further from the edge of the recent ice. You are surprised to see them lying with perpendicular edges a foot thick on bare, grassy upland where there is no other sign of water, sometimes wholly isolated by bare grass there. In the last freshet the South Branch was only broken up on the meadows for a few rods in width next the shores. Where the ice did not rise with the water, but, apparently being frozen to the dry bottom, was covered by the water, — there and apparently in shallow places here, then far from the shore, the ground ice was at length broken and rose up in cakes, larger or smaller, the smaller of which were often floated up higher on to the shore by a rod or so than the ice had originally reached. Then, the water going down, when the weather



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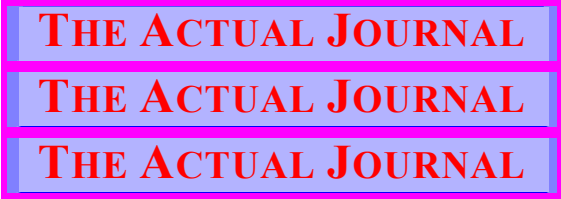
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became colder and froze, the new ice only reached part way up these cakes, which lay high and dry. It is therefore pretty good skating on the river itself and on a greater part of the meadows next the river, but it is interrupted by great cakes of ice rising above the general level near the shore

Saw several of those rather small reddish-brown dor-bugs on the ice of the meadow, some frozen in. Were they washed out of their winter quarters by the freshet? Or can it be that they came forth of their own accord on the 22d? I cannot revive them by a fire

C. says he saw a lark to-day close to him, and some other dark-colored spring bird

Directly off Clamshell Hill, within four rods of it, where the water is three or four feet deep, I see where the musquash dived and brought up clams before the last freezing. Their open shells are strewn along close to the edge of the ice, and close together, for about three rods in one place, and the bottom under this edge of older ice, as seen through the new black ice, is perfectly white with those which sank. They may have been blown in, or the ice melted. The nacre of these freshly opened shells is very fair, — azure, or else a delicate salmon pink (?), or rosaceous, or violet. I find one not opened, but frozen, and several have one valve quite broken in two in the rat's effort to wrench them open, leaving the frozen fish half exposed. All the rest show the marks of their teeth at one end or the other, i. e., sometimes at one end, sometimes at another. You can see distinctly, also, the marks of their teeth where they have scraped off, with a scraping cut, the tough muscles which fasten the fish to its shell, also sometimes all along the nacre next the edge. One shell has apparently a little caddis-case of ironcolored sand on it. These shells look uncommonly large thus exposed; at a distance like leaves. They lie thickly around the edge of each small circle of thinner black ice in the midst of the white, showing where was open water a day or two ago. At the beginning and end of winter, when the river is partly open, the ice serves them instead of other stool. Some are reddish-brown in thick and hard layers like iron ore outside; some have roundish copper-colored spots on the nacre within. This shows that this is still a good place for clams, as it was in Indian days. Examined with glass some fox-dung (?) from a tussock of grass amid the ice on the meadow. It appeared to be composed two thirds of clay, and the rest a slate-colored fur and coarser white hairs, black-tipped, — too coarse for the deer mouse. Was it that of the rabbit? This mingled with small bones. A mass as long as one's finger.



February 27, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [Thaddeus William Harris](#).

Concord Mass Feb 27th

1855

Dear Sir,

I return to the Library, by Mr Frost, the following books, viz

Wood's N. E. Prospect,

Sagard's "Histoire du Canada,"

& Bewick's "British Birds."

Yrs respectfully

Henry D. Thoreau


BEWICK



February 27. Another cold, clear day, but the weather gradually moderating.

[Transcript]



 February 28, Wednesday: A census of the [Kansas Territory](#) counted 8,501 whites, 151 free blacks, and 192 black slaves. The majority of these intrusives were Missourians and other Westerners.



Feb 28th

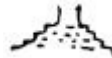
[Transcript]

Still cold & clear— Ever since the 23d inclusive a succession of clear but very cold days—in which for the most part it has not melted perceptibly during the day— My ink has frozen & plants &c have frozen in the house— though the thermometer has not indicated nearly so great a cold as before— Since the 25th it has been very slowly moderating—

The skating began again the 24th after the great freshet had gone down some 2 feet or more—but that part of the old ice which was broken up by the freshet—& floated from its place, either on to the upland or meadow or onto the old firm ice—made it remarkably broken & devious—not to be used by night — The deep bays & sides of the meadows have presented a very remarkable appearance—a stretching pack of great cakes of ice ~~sometimes~~ [^often] 2 or more upon each other & partly tilted up—a foot thick & 1 to 2 or more rods broad— The westerling sun reflected from their edges makes them shine finely—

In short our meadows have presented & still present—a very wild and arctic scene—far on every side over what is usually dry land are scattered these great cakes of ice—The water having now gone down about 5 feet on the S branch.

Pm to further RR Bridge & Ministerial swamp—
I see that same kind of icicle terracing



about the piers of Wood's Bridge & others that I saw I think last spring—but not now quite so perfect—as if where the water had stood at successive levels. [^The lower edge now a foot or 2 above water—]

Examined where the White maple & the apple tree were tipped over by the ice the other day at the RR Bridge It struck them 7 or 8 feet from the ground—that being the height of the water—rubbed off the bark & then bent flat & broke them— They were nearly about 10 inches in diameter—the maple partly dead before⁴⁹ I see where many trees have been wounded by the ice in former years. They have a hard time of it—When a cake half a dozen rods in diameter & nearly 2 feet thick is floated & blown against them.

Just S of Darbys Bridge lie many great cakes some one upon another [^which were stopped by the bridge & causeway] & a great many have a crust of the meadow of equal thickness— —6 inch to 1 foot—frozen to their under surfaces— Some of these are a rod in diameter—& when the ice melts the meadow where they are landed will present a singular appearance— I see many also freshly deposited on the Elfin burial ground—showing how that was formed. The greater part of those hummocks there are probably if not certainly carried by the ice— though I now see a few small but thick pieces of meadow 4 or 5 feet broad without any ice—or appearance of its having been attached to them— This is a powerful agent at work. Many great cakes have lodged on a ridge of the meadow west of the river here—& suggest how such a ridge may be growing from year to year—

This North river is only partially open. I see where a bright gleam from a cake of ice on the shore is reflected in the stream with remarkable brightness—in a pointed flamelike manner



Look either side — you see it. Standing here—still above the elfin burial ground—the outlines of Haywards the millers houses in the distance against the pine & oak woods come dimly out—& by their color are in very pleasing harmony with this ~~low~~ wood— I think it is a dull red house against the usual mixture of red oak leaves & dark pines— There is such a harmony as between the gray limbs of an over shadowing elm & the lichen clad roof—

We crossed the river at Nut meadow Brook— The ice was nearly worn through all along there with wave-like regularity [notice that above this sketch of regular waves, Thoreau has placed a penciled arrow]

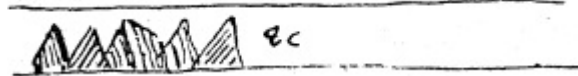


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in oblong (round end) or thick crescent or kidney-shaped holes—as if worn by the summits of waves— like a riddle to sift a man through— These holes are hard to detect in some lights except by shaking the water— I saw some gre cakes of ice 10 feet across & 1 foot thick — lodged with one end on the top of a fence post & some 7 or 8 feet in the air—the other on the bottom.

There is a fine pack of large cakes away in the bay behind Hubbards Grove. I notice looking at their edges that the white or rotted part extends downward in points or triangles alternating with the round greenish parts thus



Most however are a thin white or maybe snow ice with all beneath solid & green still. Found a hang birds nest fallen from the ivy maple—composed wholly of ~~raveling~~ or ~~probably~~ that thread they wipe the locomotive with [^“cotton waste”]—& one real thread all as it were woven into a perfect bag. I have a piece of a limb alder or maple? say 5/8 inch in diameter which has been cut off by a worm boring spirally—but in one horizontal plane—3 times round



I observed how a new ravine ? is formed in a sand hill— A new one was formed in the last thaw at [Clam Shell Hill](#) thus.— Much melted snow & rain being collected on the top of the hill—some [^ap.] found its way through the ground frozen a foot thick a few feet from the edge of the bank—& began with a small rill washing down the slope the unfrozen sand beneath—as the water continued to flow the sand on each side continued to slide into it & be carried off leaving the frozen crust above quite firm making a bridge 5 or 6 feet wide over this ~~gulf~~ [^cavern] — Now since the thaw this bridge, I see, has melted & fallen in leaving a ravine some 10 feet wide & much longer—which now may go on increasing from year to year without limit. [^& thus the sand is] ravished away.

I was there just after it began

Aud. & Bach. think a ravine may sometimes have been produced by the gallery of a shrew-mole.

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MARCH 1855

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for March 1855 \(æt. 37\) in the 1906 version](#)

 March 1, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to Ann E. Brown.

Concord Feb. 29th '55
Mrs. Brown,
Dear Madam,
Though I failed to recognise you last evening in the dusky entry, I assure you that I have not forgotten a pleasant call which I made at your house some years ago.

*Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau*

Thoreau for the 8th time (Dr. Bradley P. Dean has noticed) deployed in his journal a weather term that had been originated by [Luke Howard](#): "I did well to walk in the forenoon, the fresh and inspiring half of this bright day, for now, at midafternoon, its brightness is dulled, and a fine **stratus** is spread over the sky."



March 1st 1855

[Transcript]

10 A. m. to Derby's Bridge & ret by Sam Barretts—to see ice cakes & meadow crust.

The last day for skating

It is a very pleasant & warm day the finest yet—with considerable coolness in the air however [^winter still]—The air is beautifully clear—& though I love to trace at a distance the roofs & outlines of sober colored farmhouses amid the woods We go listening for blue birds but only hear crows—& chicadees. A fine seething air over the fair russet fields. The dusty banks of snow by the RR—reflect a wonderfully dazzling white from their pure crannies—being melted into an uneven sharp—wavy surface. This more dazzling white must be due to the higher sun. I see some thick cakes of ice where an ice-car has broken up—

In one I detect a large—bubble [^4 inch in diam.]—about a foot beneath the upper surface & 6 inches from the lower—



In confirmation



of my theory the grain of the ice—as indicated by the linear bubbles within it, was converging beneath this bubble as the rays of light under a burning glass and what was the under-surface at that time was melted in a concave manner to within 1 1/2 inches of the bubble—as appeared by the curvature in the horizontal grain of the more recently formed ice beneath. I omit to draw the other horizontal grain. The situation of this bubble also suggests that ice perhaps increases more above than below the plane of its first freezing in the course of a winter—by the addition of surface water & snow ice—

Examined again the ice & meadow crust deposited just S of Derby's Bridge— The river is almost down to summer level there now being only 3 to 4 feet deep at that bridge— It has fallen about 8 feet since Feb. 17. The ice is piled up there 3 or 4 cakes deep & no water beneath—and most of the cakes which are about, 1 foot thick, have a crust of meadow of equal thickness (ie from 6 inches to 1 foot) attached beneath. I saw in one place 3 cakes of ice each with a crust of meadow frozen to it beneath—lying one directly upon another—and all upon the original ice there—and the alternately ice & meadow—and the middle crust of meadow—measured 28 x 22 feet

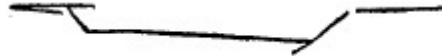


In this case the earth was about 6 inches thick only for the most part [^3 to 4 feet high in all above original ice]—

This lay on a gentle ridge or swell




between the main Derby Bridge & the little one beyond— & it suggested that that swell might have been thus formed or increased. As we went down the bank through [^A] Hosmer's land we saw great cakes & even fields of ice lying up high & dry where you would not suspect otherwise that water had been. Some have much of the withered pickerel weed, stem & leaves, in it— causing it to melt & break up soon in the sun. I saw one cake of ice 6 inches thick & more than 6 feet in diameter—with a cake of meadow of exactly equal dimensions attached to its underside—exactly & evenly ballanced on the top of a water⁹⁵ wall in a pasture 40 rods from the river, & where you would not have thought the water ever came. We saw 3 white maples about 9 inches in diameter which had been torn up roots & sod together & in some cases carried a long distance. One quite round, of equal size, had been bent flat & broken by the ice striking them some 6 or 7 feet from the ground. Saw some very large pieces of meadow lifted up or carried off at mout of G. M. Barretts Bay— One measured 74 x 27 feet— topped with ice almost always—& the old ice still beneath. In some cases the black-peaty soil thus floated was more than 1 1/2 feet thick—& some of this last was carried 1/4 of a mile without trace of ice to buoy it— [^but prob. it was first lifted by ice.] The edge of these meadow crusts is singularly abrupt, as if cut with Saw one piece, more than a rod long & 2 feet thick of black peaty soil brought from I know not where a turf cutter knife— Of course a great surface is now covered with ice on each side of the river under which there is no water—& we go constantly getting in with impunity. The spring sun shining on the sloping icy shores makes numerous dazzling ice-blinks—still brighter & prolonged with rectilinear sides in the reflection.



I am surprised to find the N. river more frozen than the S, and we can cross it in many places. I think the meadow is lifted in this wise. 1st you have a considerable freshet in midwinter succeeded by severe cold before the water has run off much—(Then as the water goes down or rather all the water freezes where it is shallow the ice for a certain width on each side & the grass is frozen into it. V Mar. 11th⁹⁶ the mead river meadows rests on the ground which freezes to it.) Then comes another freshet which rises a little higher than the former This [^gently] lifts up the river ice, & that meadow ice on each side of it which still has water under it, without breaking them, but over flows the ice which is frozen to the bottom. Then after some days of thaw & wind the latter ice is broken up & rises in cakes larger or smaller—with or without the meadow crust beneath it and is floated off before the wind & current till it grounds somewhere— frequently on a or melts & so sinks— frequently 3 cakes one upon another— on some swell in the meadow—or the edge of the upland. The ice is thus with us a wonderful agent in changing the aspect of the surface—of the river valley— I think that there has been more meadow than usual moved this year—because we had so great a freshet in mid winter succeeded by severe cold—& that by another still greater freshet before the cold weather was past. Saw a butcher bird—as usual on top of a tree—& distinguished from a jay by black wings & tail & streak side of head. I did well to walk in the forenoon —the fresh & inspiring half of this bright day —for now [^at mid-afternoon] its brightness is dulled & a fine white stratus is spread over the sky. Is not “the “starry puff (lycoperdon stellatum)” of the Journal of a Naturalist, which “remains driving about the pastures, little altered until spring”—my 5-fingered fungus? **KNAPP** The same tells of goldfinches—fringilla carduelis [Bewick calls it the “thistle-finch”] “scattering all over the turf the down of the thistle, as they pick out the seed for their food.” It is singular that in this particular it should resemble our goldfinch, a dif bird.

BEWICK'S LAND BIRDS
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95. Did Thoreau intend to cancel “a”?
 96. “or rather ... Mar. 11th” poss LR in ink

 March 2, Friday: A report appeared in the New-York Times of the contents of a magazine, Knickerbocker. A section of that magazine, "Town and Rural Humbugs," had commented that Henry Thoreau lived on thirteen dollars a year and had lately written a curious book, WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS, "which we waded more than half through":

its troubles, and is comforted *viá* Bore-dom. *Town and Rural Humbugs* is a very just estimate of the value and services of BARNUM—whom some of us have heard of—and THOREAU, who lived on thirteen dollars a year, and wrote a curious book lately—to wit, *Walden*—which we waded more than half through. The other contents of this March number are pleasant reading, especially "F. W. S.'s Un

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

Nikolai I, Tsar of all the Russias, Grand Duke of Finland, King of Poland died in St. Petersburg and was succeeded by his son, Alyeksandr II (the family name of this family was Romanov).

Thoreau went to Great Meadows (Gleason D8) to see the ice.



March 2nd

[Transcript]

Another still warm beautiful day like yesterday.

9 Am to Great Meadows to see the ice—

Saw yesterday one of those small slender winged insects on the ice. A. Wright says that about 40 years ago an acre of meadow was carried off at one time by the ice D. Clarke. tells me he saw a piece of meadow, on his part of the Grt Meadows, on the Colburn place. I observe that 5 or 6 rods square which had been taken up in one piece & set down where there is ploughed ground much of again a little distance off. it has been washed over the neighboring grass ground to a great distance—discoloring it.

The Great meadows, as all the rest, are one great field of ice a foot thick to their utmost verge—far up the hill sides & into the swamps [[^]sloping upward there]—~~resting~~—without water under it resting almost every where on the ground—a great undulating field of ice—rolling prairie-like —the earth wearing this dry icy shield or armor—which shines in the sun.

Over brooks & ditches [[^]perhaps & in] &⁹⁷ in many other places the ice a foot thick [[^]in some places] is shoved (?) [[^]or puffed] up in the form of a pent roof in some places 3 feet high & stretching 20 or 30 rods. There is certainly more ice than can lie flat there as if the adjacent ices had been moved toward each other— Yet this general motion is not likely— & it is more probably the result of the expansion⁹⁸ of the ice under the sun—& of the warmth of the water [[^]?] there. In many places the ice is dark & transparent & you see plainly the bottom on which it lies— The various figures in the partially rotted ice are very interesting— [[^]white] bubbles which look like coins of varies sizes over lapping each other—{drawing} Parrallel waving lines, with sometimes very slight intervals, on the underide of sloping white ice— marking the successive levels at which the water has stood {drawing} Also countless white cleavages perpendicular or inclined—straight & zigzag meeting and crossing each other at all possible angles & making all kinds of geometrical figures —checkering the whole surface— like white frills or ruffles in the ice.

(At length the ice melts on the edge of these cleavages into little gutters which catch the snow—) There is the greatest noise from the ice cracking about

10 Am—yesterday & to-day.

Where the last years shoots or tops of the young white maples, at the S. Purshiana shore, are brought together as I walk into a mass 1/4 of a mile off—with the sun on them—they {possibly altered from "the"} present a fine dull scarlet streak— Young twigs are thus more fluid than the old wood as if from their nearness to the flower—

97. smudged; possibly canceled

98. underlining possibly pencil

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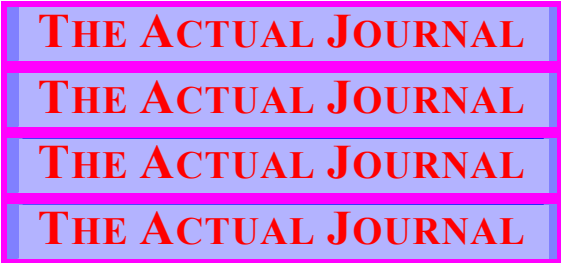
—or like the complexion of children. You see thus a fine dash of red or scarlet against the distant hills—which near at hand or in their midst is wholly unobservable. I go listening but in vain— for the warble of a blue-bird from the old orchard across the river—I love to look now at the fine grained russet hill sides in the sun—ready to relieve & contrast with the azure of the blue-birds.

I made a burning glass of ice—which produced a slight sensation of warmth on the back of my hand—but was63 so untrue that it did not concentrate the rays to a sufficiently small focus.

Returning over Great Fields—found half a dozen arrowheads—one with 3 scallops in the base {drawing}64

If we have a consider able freshet before the ice melts much— ap. much meadow crust will be moved on the S branch. There is about 665 inches of frost in the swamps [^There was something truly March-like in it—] like a prolonged blast or whistling of the wind through a crevice in the sky—which like a cracked blue saucer overlaps the woods. Such are the first rude notes which prelude the Summer’s quire — learned of the whistling March-wind.

Heard 2 large hawks scream—



March 3, Saturday: [Ice hockey](#) was played by Paine’s Bridge (predating the arrival of the Royal Canadian Rifles in Kingston, Ontario later in that year).

The Foreign Affairs Committee of the US House of Representatives published the documents of the Ostend Manifesto regarding US attempts to gain control of [Cuba](#).

The federal Congress approved \$30,000 to test camels for military use. It also authorized registered mail.



March 3. *Saturday*. P.M. — To Conantum. This afternoon it is somewhat overcast for the first time since February 18th inclusive. I see a dirty-white miller fluttering about over the winter-rye patch next to Hubbard’s Grove.

A few rods from the broad pitch pine beyond, I find a cone which was probably dropped by a squirrel in the fall, for I see the marks of its teeth where it was cut off; and it has probably been buried by the snow till now, for it has apparently just opened, and I shake its seeds out. Not only is this cone, resting upright on the ground, fully blossomed, a very beautiful object, but the winged seeds which half fill my hand, small triangular black seeds with thin and delicate fleshcolored wings, remind me of fishes, — alewives, perchance, — their tails more or less curved.

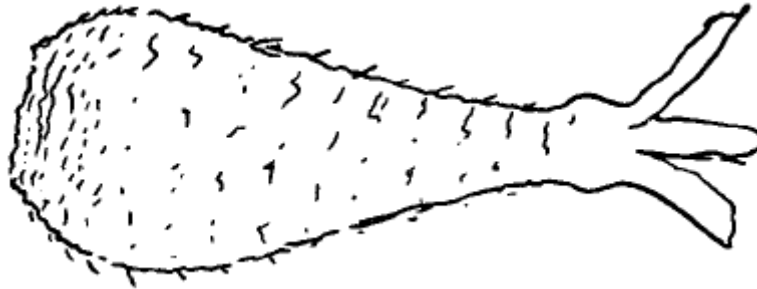


I do not show the curve of the tail. I see, in another place under a pitch pine, many cores of cones which the squirrels have completely stripped of their scales, excepting the (about) three at extremity which cover no seeds,

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cutting them off regularly at the seeds or close to the core, leaving it in this form, or more regular: —



From some partially stripped I see that they begin at the base. These you find left on and about stumps where they have sat, and under the pines. Most fallen pitch pine cones show the marks of squirrels' teeth, showing they were cut off.

Day before yesterday there was good skating, and it was a beautiful warm day for it. Yesterday the ice began to be perceptibly softened. To-day it is too soft for [skating](#).

I might have said on the 2d that though it is warm there is no trouble about getting on to the river, for, the water having fallen about six feet on the South Branch, the ice, about a foot thick, slopes upward in many places half a dozen rods or more on to the upland, like the side of an earthen milk-pan, and you do not know when you have passed the water-line.

Also I noticed yesterday that the ice, along the river-edge at the Great Meadows, still clinging to the alders and maples three or four feet from the ground, was remarkably transparent and solid, or without bubbles, like purest crystal, not rotted; probably because the rays of the sun passed through it, and there was no surface beneath to reflect them back again and so rot the ice. Of this I made my burning-glass.

I think it was yesterday morning that I first noticed a frost on the bare russet grass. This, too, is an early spring phenomenon. I am surprised to see that the radical johnswort leaves, which have been green all winter, are now wilted and blackened by it, and where a wood was cut off this winter on a hillside, all the rattlesnake-plantain has suffered in like manner.

Again I observe the river breaking up (from the bank). The thin and rotted ice, saturated with water, is riddled with oblong open places, whose prevailing form is curving *commonly* up-stream, though not always, — i.e.



southerly *here*. Has this anything to do with the direction of the prevailing winds of winter, which make the waves bend southerly? Since the cold of a week ago — they may be of older date — I see many tracks in the earth, especially in plowed fields, which are cracked up into vast cakes in some places, apparently on the same principle that ice is.

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March 4, Sunday: In San Francisco, California, at about 5PM, the Police arrested a Frenchman named Childs for reckless shooting with a pistol on Clay Street opposite Pike Street. Childs claimed that he had been shooting at a dog that had attacked a Chinaman but, in the consideration of Captain Durkee, the reckless endangerment of innumerable passers-by more than counterbalancing any such laudable motive.



March 4. River channel fairly open.

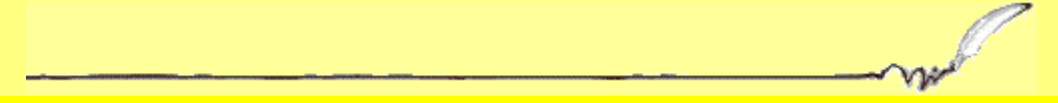
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P.M. — To Bee Tree Hill over Fair Haven Pond.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10



For some time, or since the ground has been bare, I have noticed the spider-holes in the plowed land. We go over the Cliffs. Though a cold and strong wind, it is very warm in the sun, and we can sit in the sun where sheltered on these rocks with impunity. It is a genial warmth. The rustle of the dry leaves on the earth and in the crannies of the rocks, and gathered in deep windrows just under their edge, midleg deep, reminds me of fires in the woods. They are almost ready to burn. I see a fly on the rock. The ice is so much rotted and softened by the sun that it looks white like snow now as I look down on the meadows. There is considerable snow on the north side of hills in the woods. At the Bee Hill-side, a striped squirrel, which quickly dives into his hole at our approach [*Vide* Mar. 7th.]. May not this season of spring-like weather between the first decidedly spring-like day and the first bluebird, already fourteen days long, be called the striped squirrel spring? In which we go listening for the bluebird, but hear him not. Returning by the Andromeda Ponds, I am surprised to see the red ice visible still, half a dozen rods off. It is melted down to the red bubbles, and I can tinge my finger with it there by rubbing it in the rotted ice.

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March 5, Monday: In San Francisco, California, an 18-year-old named William Walterson had been found dead in his bead [*sic*, in the local newspaper] on board the hulk *Fame*, a storeship moored along with other old remnants of a departed race of ships, off Rincon Point. The young man had been an employee taking care of this storage hulk. Coroner Whaling held an inquest on the body and rendered a verdict that habitual intemperance had brought about a fatal apopleptic [*sic*, in the local newspaper] attack.

By means of a new technological development, on this morning a number of handbills were being carried around San Francisco, providing local citizens with "a very excellent lithographic likeness" of Lewis Freidel, a defaulting bookkeeper whose arrest was being solicited by one Wheeler Hotchkiss of Buffalo, New York, and also by the chief of police in New-York City. A \$200 reward was being offered. This "very excellent lithographic likeness" had been transmitted across the continent by magnetic telegraph! The local newspaper Daily Alta California commented "The device that is employed for his arrest is a skilful one and shows an improvement even on the telegraph."

Ingenious.— We have seen a number of handbills scattered round town headed with a very excellent lithographic likeness of some young deceiver, for whom one Wheeler Hotchkiss, of Buffalo, N.Y., or the chief of police in New York City offer \$200 reward. The name of the individual is stated to be Lewis Freidel, a defaulting bookkeeper. The device that is employed for his arrest is a skilful one and shows an improvement even on the telegraph, which at first starting was supposed to have sounded the death knell of the hopes of all moneyed refugees.

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[This is an utterly fascinating data factoid from the San Francisco newspaper of 1855! If accurate, it would indicate the effective deployment of an early [FAX](#) capability! What we know is that from 1843 to 1846 the Scottish inventor [Alexander Bain](#) had worked on chemical mechanical fax type devices and had come to be able to reproduce graphic signs in laboratory experiments. Bain had received British patent 9745 on May 27, 1843 for an “Electric Printing Telegraph” creating “improvements in producing and regulating electric currents and improvements in timepieces, and in electric printing, and signal telegraphs.” What we know is that [Frederick Collier Bakewell](#) had in 1848 made several improvements on Bain’s design and demonstrated an “image telegraph” telefax machine. What we do not know about is, the effective deployment of such a device in trans-American [telegraphy](#) as of 1855, as described above! We have always been told that Bakewell’s device was so difficult to use that it “never became commercial.” We have always been told that mechanical effectiveness of such devices would not begin until the 1860s or 1870s.]

FAX



March 5. P.M. — To Beck Stow’s. A strong but warm southwesterly (?) wind, which has produced a remarkable haze. As I go along by Sleepy Hollow, this strong, warm wind, rustling the leaves on the hillsides, this blue haze, and the russet earth seen through it, remind me that a new season has come. There was the less thick, more remotely blue, haze of the 11th February, succeeded by a thaw, beginning on the 14th. Will not rain follow this much thicker haze?

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March 6, Tuesday: Gustave Flaubert posted a goodbye letter to Louise Colet.



March 6. To Second Division Brook. Still stronger wind, shaking the house, and rather cool. This the third day of wind. Our woods are now so reduced that the chopping of this winter has been a cutting to the quick. At least we walkers feel it as such. There is hardly a woodlot of any consequence left but the chopper's axe has been heard in it this season. They have even infringed fatally on White Pond, on the south of Fair Haven Pond, shaved off the topknot of the Cliffs, the Colburn farm, Beck Stow's, etc., etc. Observed a mouse or mole's nest in the Second Division Meadow, where it had been made under the snow, — a nice warm globular nest some five inches in diameter, amid the sphagnum and cranberry vines, etc., — made of dried grass and lined with a still finer grass. The hole was on one side, and the bottom was near two inches thick. There were many small paths or galleries in the meadow leading to this from the brook some rod or more distant. The small gyrenis is circling in the brook. I see where much fur of a rabbit, which probably a fox was carrying, has caught on a moss rose twig as he leaped a ditch. It is much worse walking than it has been for ten days, the continual warmth of the sun melting the ice and snow by walls, etc., and reaching the deeper frost, unexpectedly after the surface had been dry. Pastures which look dry prove soft and full of water. There is a peculiar redness in the western sky just after sunset. There are many great dark, slate-colored clouds floating there, seen against more distant and thin, wispy, bright-vermilion (?), almost blood-red ones. This in many places appears as the lining of the former. It rained last evening, but not much. This the first rain or storm since February 18th inclusive, i.e. fifteen days. The weather began to be decidedly springlike, — air full of light, etc., — the 18th. The 20th was perfect March. The 21st and 22d were remarkably fair and warm; 23d to 28th inclusive remarkably clear and cold; March 1st and 2d remarkably clear and serene and pleasant. Since then colder, with increasing wind and some clouds, with last night some rain. The sands are too dry and light-colored to show arrowheads so well now. I see many places where after the late freshet the musquash made their paths under the ice, leading from the water, a rod or two, to a bed of grass above the water-level.

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➡ March 7, Wednesday: [Anthony Burns](#), back from his 2d enslavement at a ransom price of \$1,325.⁰⁰, was feted at the Tremont Temple and handed [manumission](#) papers. The former slave, free at last, would attend the School of Divinity at [Oberlin College](#) and become a minister of the gospel, pastor at the Zion [Baptist](#) Church of St. Catherine's, [Canada](#) West.



During that spring, however, in Boston, due to the parental boycott of racially segregated school facilities, enrollment at Boston's all-black [Smith School](#) was standing at but 28. In the petition drive to desegregate Boston's system, [William C. Nell](#) would obtain 311 signatures and [Lewis Hayden](#) would obtain 87. A bill prohibiting all distinction of color and religion would be passed by the Massachusetts House of Representatives, at that time under the control of [Know-Nothings](#). Then that bill would be passed by the Massachusetts Senate, also at that time under the control of these people.⁹⁹



The 17th Grand National horse race was won by Wanderer IRE, ridden by John Hanlon.



March 7. P.M. — To Red-Ice Pond. A raw east wind and rather cloudy. Methinks the buds of the early

99. In Massachusetts at least, this party was not only [nativist](#) and anti-immigrant but also anti-aristocratic and anti-slavery. Nothing in this blazing amazing world is so strange and strained as politics! An explanation for this phenomenon might be that the Catholic Irish, who had to compete with free blacks for the roughest and dirtiest of laboring jobs, were violently pro-slavery and, since the [Know-Nothings](#) were violently anti-Catholic and anti-Irish and the Catholic Irish were reaching what were seen as dangerous proportions, actually in Boston by that point the majority of the citizenry, then, on the principle "an enemy of my enemy is my friend," the Know-Nothings were making common cause with the free black minority. One Know-Nothing representative is recorded as having stated that he resented the idea that some black children had to travel a long way to Black Smith, passing other schools on the way, when the "dirtiest Irish" could step directly from their teeming tenements into the nearest and most convenient public school. The Boston [Pilot](#), a Catholic paper, suggested that this integration of the public schools was intended "as an insult" to Boston's Catholics, who were of course all white. Boston Catholics were at this time so anti-black that they didn't even bother to establish a segregated section in their cathedral for blacks. When a temperance speaker who had spoken against slavery in Ireland, where it was unpopular, came to speak of temperance in the Catholic churches of America, for the most pragmatic of reasons he needed to cease saying anything at all about this topic of slavery.

ANTI-CATHOLICISM

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willows, the willows of the railroad bank, show more of the silvery down than ten days ago. Did I not see crows flying northeasterly yesterday toward night? The redness in the ice appears mostly to have evaporated, so that, melted, it does not color the water in a bottle. Saw, about a hemlock stump on the hillside north of the largest Andromeda Pond, very abundant droppings of some kind of mice, on that common green moss (forming a firm bed about an inch high, like little pines, surmounted by a fine red stem with a green point, in all three quarters of an inch high), which they had fed on to a great extent, evidently when it was covered with snow, shearing it off level. Their droppings could be collected by the hand probably, [550307a.jpg (2597 bytes)] a light brown above, green next the earth. There were apparently many of their holes in the earth about the stump. They must have fed very extensively on this moss the past winter [Vide Mar. 14th.]. It is now difficult getting on and off Walden. At Brister's Spring there are beautiful dense green beds of moss, which apparently has just risen above the surface of the water, tender and compact. I see many tadpoles of medium or full size in deep warm ditches in Hubbard's meadow. They may probably be seen as soon as the ditches are open, thus earlier than frogs. At his bridge over the brook it must have been a trout I saw glance, — rather dark, as big as my finger. To-day, as also three or four days ago, I saw a clear drop of maple sap on a broken red maple twig, which tasted very sweet. The *Pyrola secunda* is a perfect evergreen. It has lost none of its color or freshness, with its thin ovate finely serrate leaves, revealed now the snow is gone. It is more or less branched. Picked up a very handsome white pine cone some six and a half inches long by two and three eighths near base and two near apex, perfectly blossomed. It is a very rich and wholesome brown color, of various shades as you turn it in your hand, — a light ashy or gray brown, somewhat like unpainted wood. as you look down on it, or as if the lighter brown were covered with a gray lichen, seeing only those parts of the scales always exposed, — with a few darker streaks or marks ([DRAWING]) and a drop of pitch at the point of each scale. Within, the scales are a dark brown above (i. e. as it hangs) and a light brown beneath, very distinctly being marked beneath by the same darker [550307b.jpg (3940 bytes)] brown, down the centre and near the apex somewhat anchorwise. We were walking along the sunny hillside on the south of Fair Haven Pond (on the 4th), which the choppers had just laid bare, when, in a sheltered and warmer place, we heard a rustling amid the dry leaves on the hillside and saw a striped squirrel eying us from its resting-place on the bare ground. It sat still till we were within a rod, then suddenly dived into its hole, which was at its feet, and disappeared. The first pleasant days of spring come out like a squirrel and go in again

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March 8, Thursday: [Major George Alexander Hamilton Blake](#), an officer with a reputation as a harsh disciplinarian, was assaulted by a number of his men (a court martial would sentence the unit's bugler, [Aaron Dwight Stevens](#), and 3 others to death).

Bowery Boys gang leader [William Poole AKA "Bill the Butcher,"](#) a leader in the "Know Nothing" American political movement, died in his home on Christopher Street in Manhattan, of the gunshot wound to his leg. He left a wife and son.

The 1st train of the Rochester, Lockport & Suspension Bridge line crossed John Augustus Roebling's newly-constructed suspension bridge over the [Niagara River](#).



March 8. P.M. — To old Carlisle road. Another fair day with easterly wind. This morning I got my boat out of the cellar and turned it up in the yard to let the seams open before I calk it. The blue river, now almost completely open (*i.e.* excepting a little ice in the recesses of the shore and a good deal over the meadows), admonishes me to be swift. I see where many young trees and bushes have been broken down by the ice after the last freshet, many of Loring's young maples, for example. The cornel and other bushes along the walls are broken like young trees by snowdrifts, the ice, sinking with them in its embrace, weighing or dragging them down. In many places, where the water rose so high as to reach the ends of the lower branches of white maples and these were afterward frozen in, the ice, sinking with the ebb, breaks off or strips down the branch [*Vide* Mar. 14th.]. There appears to be a motion to the ice (even on meadows away from the current and at Walden shore) somewhat like that of a glacier, by which it tips over the trees, etc., standing in it without breaking up, — the result, one would say, of its swelling under the influence of the sun.¹⁰⁰ Was surprised to see a cluster of those large leek buds on a rock in Clark's (?) meadow between the oak and my house that was. Daniel Clark tells me that on his part of the Great Meadows there is a hole just about the breadth and depth of a man, commonly full of water. He does not know what made it. I crossed through the swamp south of Boulder Field toward the old dam. Stopping in a sunny and sheltered place on a hillock in the woods, — for it was raw in the wind, — I heard the hasty, shuffling, as if frightened, note of a robin in a dense birch wood, — a sort of tche tche tche tche, — and then probably it dashed through the birches; and so they fetch the year about Just from the South Shore, perchance, it alighted not in the village street, but in this remote birch wood. This sound reminds me of rainy, misty April days in past years. Once or twice before, this afternoon, I thought I heard one and listened, but in vain. I still see the bluish bloom on thimble-berry vines quite fresh. I walk these days along the brooks, looking for tortoises and trout, etc. They are full of a rust-colored water, as if they flowed out of an iron mine. As the ice melts in the swamps I see the horn-shaped buds of the skunk-cabbage, green with a bluish bloom, standing uninjured, ready to feel the influence of the sun, — the most prepared for spring — to look at — of any plant. I see of late more than before of the fuzzy caterpillars, both black and reddish-brown.

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March 9, Friday: Convict Mary Ann Wilson, charged at the [Geelong Gaol](#) (a maximum security Australian prison located on the corner of Myers Street and Swanston Street in Geelong, Victoria) with improper language, was sentenced to 48 hours solitary on bread and water by The Gaoler. Convicts Jane Purdon, Jane Joyce, and Mary Carmody, charged with disobedience of orders, were sentenced to 7 days in solitary on bread and water. Convicts Elizabeth Wilson and Mary Bennett, charged with insubordination and assaulting a turnkey, were sentenced to 1 month cumulation with meat and vegetables to be reduced every other day. Convict Sarah Cane, charged with insubordination only, received a similar sentence.

100. This was the year in which the bookstore shelves of Boston would have been featuring [James David Forbes](#)'s new THE TOUR OF MONT BLANC AND OF MONTE ROSA, BEING A PERSONAL NARRATIVE, ABRIDGED FROM THE AUTHOR'S "TRAVELS IN THE ALPS OF SAVOY," &C. Edinburgh, (R. and R. Clark for) Adam and Charles Black. Abridged edition of TRAVELS THROUGH THE ALPS OF SAVOYE (1843) and NORWAY AND ITS GLACIERS VISITED IN 1851 (1853) illustrated with 24 woodcuts. Forbes's major contribution to the Mont Blanc range were his extensive surveyings of the "Mer de Glace" and other glaciers, resulting in his map of the Mer de Glace of Chamouni and the adjoining district from an actual survey in 1842, 1844, 1846, and 1850. Drawn by August Petermann, Lith. by C. Helfarth, Gotha. Glaciers colored in blue. Another map shows "The Penine chain of Alps."

1854-18



March 9. A cloudy, rain-threatening day, not windy and rather warmer than yesterday. Painted the bottom of my boat.

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P.M. — To Andromeda Ponds. Scare up a rabbit on the hillside by these ponds, which was gnawing a smooth sumach. See also where they have gnawed the red maple, sweet-fern, *Populus grandidentata*, white and other oaks (taking off considerable twigs at four or five cuts), amelanchier, and willow; but they seem to prefer the smooth sumach to any of these. With this variety of cheap diet they are not likely to starve. I get a few drops of the sweet red maple juice which has run down the main stem where a rabbit had nibbled off close a twig. The rabbit, indeed, lives, but the sumach may be killed. The heart-wood of the poison-dogwood, when I break it down with my hand, has a singular rotten, yellow look and a spirituous or apothecary odor. As, on the 4th, I clambered over those great white pine masts which lay in all directions one upon another on the hillside south of Fair Haven, where the woods have been laid waste, I was struck, in favorable lights, with the jewel-like brilliancy of the sawed ends thickly bedewed with crystal drops of turpentine, thickly as a shield, as if the dryads (?), or eads (?), pine-wood nymphs had seasonably wept there the fall of the tree. The perfect sincerity of these terebinthine drops, each one reflecting the world, colorless as light, or like drops of dew heaven-distilled and trembling to their fall, is incredible when you remember how firm their consistency. And is this that pitch which you cannot touch without being defiled? Looking from the Cliffs, the sun being as before invisible, I saw far more light in the reflected sky in the neighborhood of the sun than I could see in the heavens from my position, and it occurred to me that the reason was that there was reflected to me from the river the view I should have got if I had stood there on [550309.jpg (5222 bytes)] the water in a more favorable position. I see that the mud in the road has crystallized as it dried (for it is not nearly cold enough to freeze), like the first crystals that shoot and set on water when freezing. I see the minute seeds of the *Andromeda calyculata* scattered over the melting ice of the Andromeda Ponds. C. says he saw yesterday the slate-colored hawk with a white bar across tail, — meadow hawk, i. e. frog hawk. Probably finds moles and mice. An overcast and dark night.

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March 10, Saturday: Some of the specimens accumulated by [Benedict Jaeger](#) may have been consumed in a fire which destroyed the entire interior of Nassau Hall at [Princeton University](#) (it is possible that some turtles and some stuffed anteaters survived the conflagration by having been on display at the time in Philosophy Hall).

Jacob B. Farmer gave [Henry Thoreau](#) a part of an animal foot (probably of a pine marten).



March 10. Snowed in the night, a mere whitening. In the morning somewhat overcast still, cold and quite windy. The first clear snow to whiten the ground since February 9th. I am not aware of growth in any plant yet, unless it be the further peeping out of willow catkins. They have crept out further from under their scales, and, looking closely into them, I detect a little redness along the twigs even now. You are always surprised by the sight of the first spring bird or insect; they seem premature, and there is no such evidence of spring as themselves, so that they literally fetch the year about. It is thus when I hear the first robin or bluebird or, looking along the brooks, see the first water-bugs out circling. But you think, They have come, and Nature cannot recede. Thus, when on the 6th I saw the gyrenid at Second Division Brook, I saw no peculiarity in the water or the air to remind me of them, but to-day they are here and yesterday they were not. I go looking deeper for tortoises, when suddenly my eye rests on these black circling appleseeds in some smoother bay. The red squirrel should be drawn with a pine cone. Those reddening leaves, as the checkerberry, lambkill, etc., etc., which at the beginning of winter were greenish, are now a deeper red, when the snow goes off. No more snow since last night, but a strong, cold northerly wind all day, with occasional gleams of sunshine. The whitening of snow consequently has not disappeared. Miss Minott says that Dr. Spring told her that when the sap began to come up into the trees, i. e. about the middle of February (she says), then the diseases of the human body come out. The idea is that man's body sympathizes with the rest of nature, and his pent-up humors burst forth like the sap from wounded trees. This with the mass may be that languor or other weakness commonly called spring feelings. Minott tells me that Henry [Hosmer](#) says he saw geese two or three days ago! Jacob Farmer gave me to-day a part of the foot probably of a pine marten, which he found two or three days ago in a trap he had set in his brook for a mink, — under water, baited with a pickerel. It is clothed above with a glossy dark-brown hair, and contains but two toes (perhaps a third without the talon), armed with fine and very sharp talons, much

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AUDUBON

curved. It had left thus much in the trap and departed. [Audubon](#) and Bachman call my deer mouse “Mus Leucopus, Rafinesque,” American White-Footed Mouse; call it “yellowish brown above” and give these synonyms: “Mus Sylvaticus, Forster, Phil. Trans., vol. Ixii., p. 380. Field-Rat, Penn., Hist. Quad., vol. ii., p. 185. Field-Rat, Arctic Zool., vol. i., p. 131. Musculus Leucopus, Rafinesque, Amer. Month. Review, Oct. 1818, p. 444. Mus Leucopus, Desmar. Mamm., esp. 493. Mus Sylvaticus, Harlan, Fauna, p. 151. Mus Agrarius, Godm., Nat. Hist., vol. ii., p. 88. Mus Leucopus, Richardson, F. B. A., p. 142. Arvicola Nuttallii, Harlan, variety. Arvzcola Emmonsii, Emm., Mass. Report, p. 61. Mus Leucopus, Dekay, Nat. Hist. N. Y., pl. 1, p. 82.”

By fur he does not mean the short inner hair only. Says they are larger in Carolina than in the Eastern States, but he does not describe any larger than mine. “Next to the common mouse, this is the most abundant and widely diffused species of mouse in North America. We have received it ... from every State in the Union, and from Labrador, Hudson's Bay, and the Columbia River.” Has found it “taking up its abode in a deserted squirrel's nest, thirty feet from the earth.” “They have been known to take possession of deserted birds' nests — such as those of the cat-bird, red-winged starling, song thrush, or red-eyed flycatcher.” “We have also occasionally found their nests on bushes, from five to fifteen feet from the ground. They are in these cases constructed with nearly as much art and ingenuity as the nests of the Baltimore Oriole.” Of some he has, says, “They are seven inches in length and four in breadth, the circumference measuring thirteen inches; they are of an oval shape and are outwardly composed of dried moss and a few slips of the inner bark of some wild grape-vine; other nests are more rounded, and are composed of dried leaves and moss.” Thinks two pairs live in some very large ones. “The entrance in all the nests is from below, and about the size of the animal.” Female sometimes escapes with her young adhering to her teats. “Nocturnal in its habits.” Only sound he has heard from them “a low squeak.” Not so carnivorous as “most of its kindred species.” Troubles trappers by getting their bait. Lays up “stores of grain and grass seeds,” acorns, etc. In the North, wheat; in the South, rice. Eats out the heart of Indian corn kernels. Thinks it produces two litters in a season in the North and three in the South. Foxes, owls, etc., destroy it. Thinks the ermine weasel its most formidable foe. Thinks it sometimes occupies a chipping squirrel's hole. Thinks that neither this nor the mole does much injury to garden or farm, but rather “the little pinemouse (Arvicola pinetorum, Le Conte), or perhaps Wilson's meadow-mouse (Arvicola Pennsylvanica, Ord, A. hirsutus, Emmons, and Dekay).” Yet Northern farmers complain that the deer mouse gnaws young fruit trees, etc.; maybe so. Avoids houses, at least those where there are wharf rats and cats. Observed this afternoon some celandine by Deacon Brown's fence, apparently grown about an inch. Vide if it is really springing.

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March 11, Sunday: When Bowery Boys gang leader [William Poole AKA “Bill the Butcher,”](#) a leader in the “Know Nothing” American political movement, was buried in Brooklyn, the ceremony attracted 155 carriages and approximately 6,000 mourners.

The body of Tsar Nikolai I was taken from the Winter Palace to the Cathedral of the Fortress of SS. Peter and Paul. Accompanying it were members of the Cadet School, including Modest Musorgsky.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Annursnack Hill (Gleason D3).



March 11. P.M. — To Annursnack.

Clear and rather pleasant; the ground again bare; wind northerly. I am surprised to see how rapidly that ice that covered the meadows on the 1st of March has disappeared under the influence of the sun alone. The greater part of what then lay on the meadows a foot thick has melted, — two thirds at least.

On Abel [Hosmer's](#) pasture, just southeast of the stone bridge, I see where the sod was lifted up over a great space in the flood of the 17th of February. There is one bare place there, showing only the fine and now white roots of grass, seven rods long by two or three. There are other smaller ones about it. The sod carried off is from four to six inches thick commonly. Pieces of this crust, from a quarter to a third the size mentioned, are resting within ten or twenty rods. One has sunk against the causeway bridge, being too wide to go through. I see one piece of crust, twelve feet by six, turned completely topsyturvy with its ice beneath it. This has prevented the ice from melting, and on examining it I find that the ice did not settle down on to the grass after the water went down and then freeze to it, for the blades of grass penetrate one inch into the ice, showing that, the water being shallow, the whole froze, and the grass was frozen in, and thus, when the water rose again, was lifted up. The bared places I have noticed as yet were not in the low ground, but where the water was comparatively shallow,



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commonly at a distance from the river [*Vide* (p. 245)].

A bluebird day before yesterday in Stow [Next page.].

Saw a cake of recent ice very handsomely marked as it decayed, with darker marks for the original crystals centred with the original white. It would be a rare pattern for a carpet, because it contains a variety of figures agreeable to the eye without regularity.

Many of those dirty-white millers or ephemerae in the air.

As I sit at the base of Annurnack the earth appears almost completely bare, but from the top I see considerable white ice here and there. This shows that what is left is only the whitened and rotting ice, which, being confined to the lowest hollows and meadows, is only observed from a height.

At this season, — before grass springs to conceal them, — I notice those pretty little roundish shells on the tops of hills; one to-day on Annurnack.

I see pitch pine needles looking as if whitewashed, thickly covered on each of the two slopes of the needle with narrow, white, oyster-shell-like latebrae or chrysalids of an insect.

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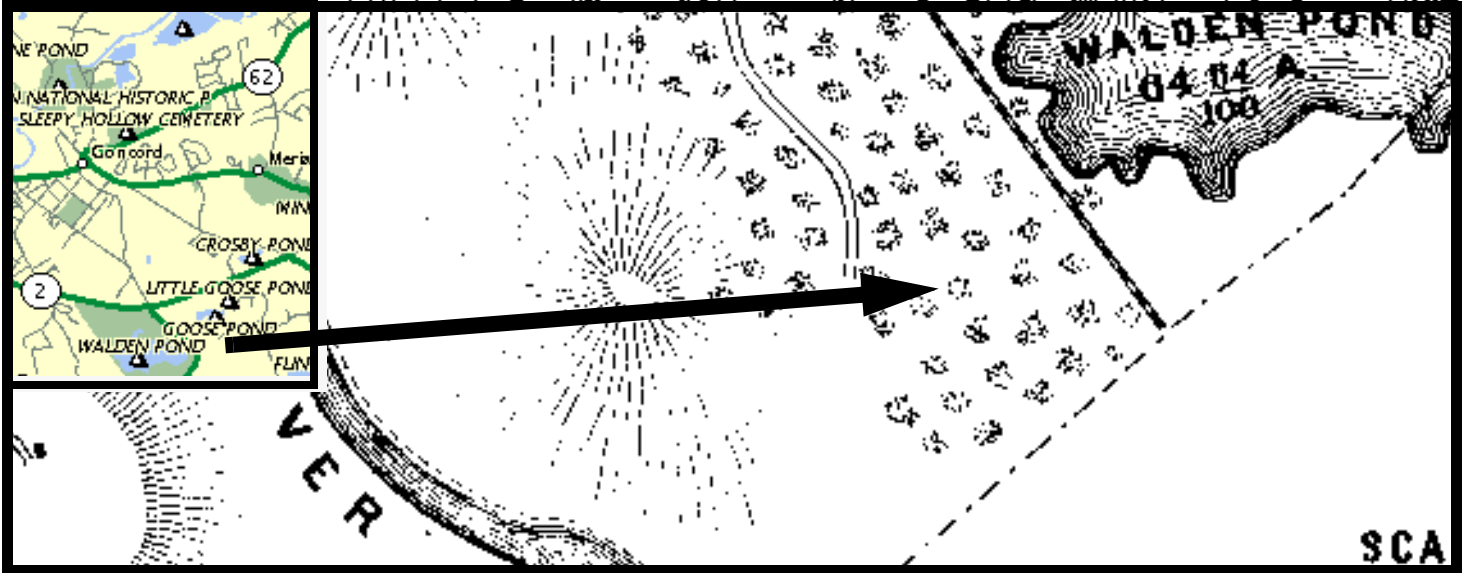
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March 12, Monday: Father [Isaac Hecker](#), CSSR, wrote to [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#).

In the morning [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Andromeda or Cassandra Ponds,



and in the afternoon to Great Meadows (Gleason D8).

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11

[Thoreau](#) wrote to Charles Sumner [CHARLES SUMNER](#).

Concord Mar. 12

1855

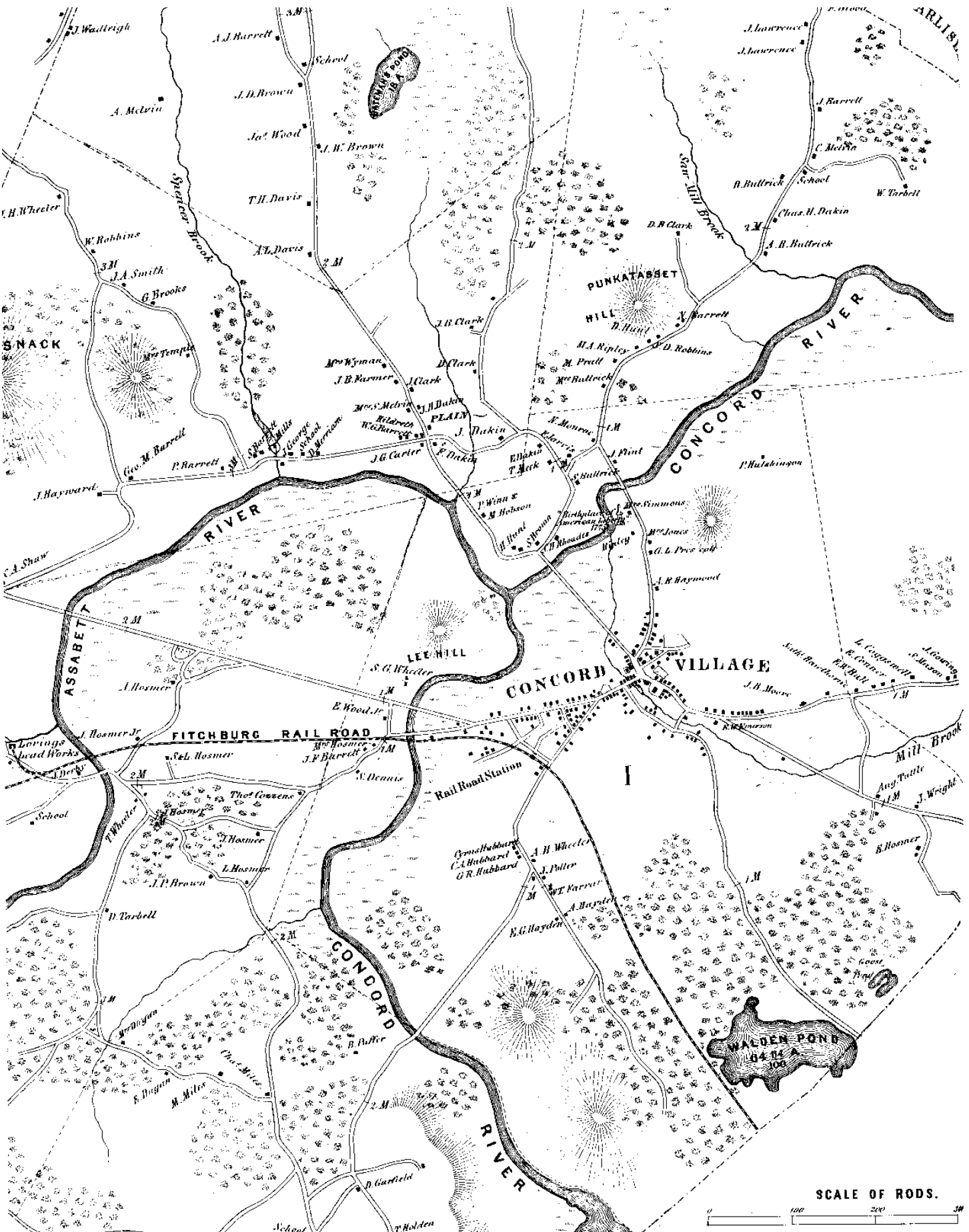
Dear Sir

Allow me to thank you for the Comp'd'm of the U.S. census, which has come safely to hand. It looks as full of facts as a chestnut of meat. I expect to nibble at it for many years.

I read with pleasure your pertinent Address before the Merc. Lib.

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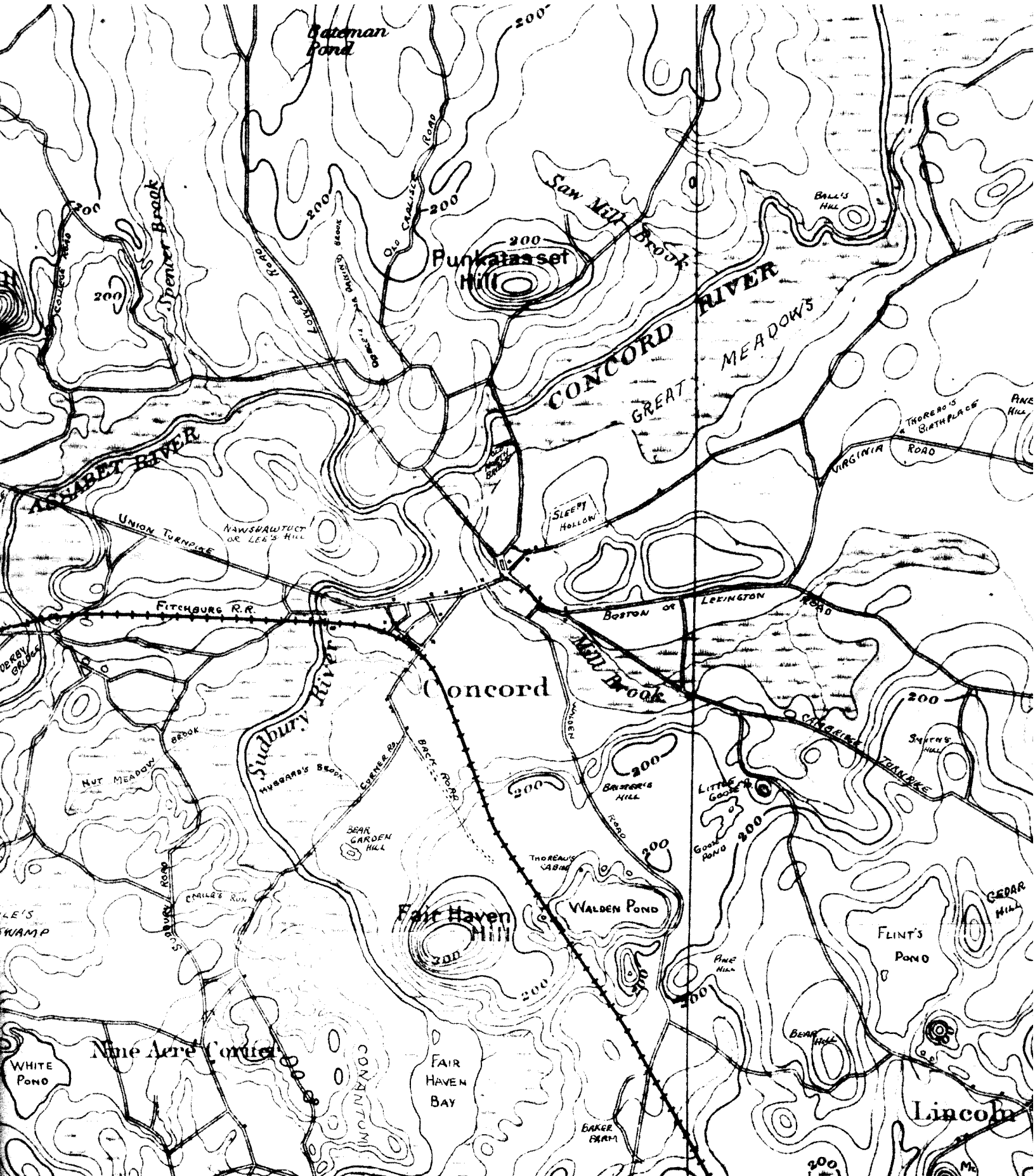
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*Association, sent me long ago.
Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau
Charles Sumner.*



March 12. 6.30 A.M. — To Andromeda Ponds. Lesser redpolls still [*Vide* forward.]. Elbridge Hayden and Poland affirm that they saw a brown thrasher sitting on the top of an apple tree by the road near Hubbard's and singing after his fashion on the 5th. I suggested the shrike, which they do not know, but they say it was a brown bird. Hayden saw a bluebird yesterday.

P.M. — To Great Meadows. Comes out pleasant after a raw forenoon with a flurry of snow, already gone. Two ducks in river, good size, white beneath with black heads, as they go over [Sheldrakes?]. They first rise some distance down-stream, and fly by on high, reconnoitring me, and I first see them on wing; then settle a quarter of a mile above by a long slanting flight, at last opposite the swimming-elm below Flint's. I come on up the bank with the sun in my face; start them again. Again they fly down-stream by me on high, turn and come round back by me again with outstretched heads, and go up to the Battle-Ground before they alight. Thus the river is no sooner fairly open than they are back again, — before I have got my boat launched, and long before the river has worn through Fair Haven Pond. I think I heard a quack or two. Audubon and Bachman say that Forster and Harlan refer the *Mus leucopus* “to *Mus sylvaticus* of Europe,” — wrongly, for they differ in many respects. “They may always be distinguished from each other at a glance by the following mark: in more than twenty specimens we examined of *Mus sylvaticus* [in Europe] [The brackets are Thoreau's.] we have always found a yellowish line edged with dark-brown, on the breast. In many hundred specimens of *Mus leucopus* we have without a single exception found this yellow line entirely wanting, all of them being pure white on the breast, as well as on the whole under surface. We have no hesitation in pronouncing the species distinct.” Now I find that I had described my specimen of February 20th, before I had read Audubon and Bachman or heard of the *Mus sylvaticus*, as having “a very slight and delicate tinge of yellowish beneath, between the fore legs,” though Emmons does not mention this color. The other differences they mention certainly are not of much importance, and probably equally great ones are to be found between different specimens of *Mus leucopus*.

AUDUBON

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March 13, Tuesday: Francis Jackson wrote from Boston to James Winchell Stone, in regard to an article for the Telegraph about a pro-slavery meeting there, and about the inclusion of Judge Edward Greeley Loring at this meeting — and his pro-slavery sentiments. There is mention of the use of Faneuil Hall by the Reverend D. Channing to notice the death of Elijah Parish Lovejoy.¹⁰¹



A public auction of “178 Sugar and Cotton Plantation Slaves” began at Banks Arcade, New Orleans.



March 13. Northern lights last night. Rainbow in east this morning. Almost all the meadow-crust now (and for a week past) lies on a cake of ice where it lodged and which, being prevented from melting any further than its edge, is of the same size with it. The crust is frozen on to this, and, the ice which first froze to it and raised it having melted some time ago, most would not know how to account for its position. 6.30 A. M. — To Hill. Still, but with some wrack here and there. The river is low, very low for the season. It has been falling ever since the freshet of February 18th. Now, about sunrise, it is nearly filled with the thin, half-cemented ice-crystals of the night, which the warmer temperature of day apparently has loosened. They grate against the bushes and wheel round in great fields with a slight crash and piling up. I hear the rapid tapping of the woodpecker from over the water. P. M. — To Hubbard's Close. For a week the more stagnant brooks and ditches have been green with conferva, a kind of green veil that conceals their bottom and invests the bubbles on the surface. I am surprised to see, not only many pollywogs through the thin ice of the warm ditches, but, in still warmer, stagnant, unfrozen holes in this meadow, half a dozen small frogs, probably *Rana palubstri* [Is it not the croaker?]. Green spires of grass stand perfectly upright in these pools, rising above water. Coming through the stubble of Stow's rye-field in front of the Breed house, I meet with four mice-nests in going half a dozen rods. They lie flat on the ground amid the stubble; are flattened spheres, the horizontal diameter about five inches, the perpendicular considerably less, composed of grass or finer stubble, and on taking them up you do not at once detect the entrance with your eye, but rather feel it with your finger on the side; lined with the finest of the grass. These were undoubtedly — probably — made when the snow was on the ground, for their winter residence, while they gleaned the rye-field, and when the snow went off they scampered to the woods. I think they were made by the *Mus leucopus*, i.e. *Arvicola Emmonsii*. Similar to that of March 6th in meadow, except that was thicker against wet. I look into many woodchucks' holes, but as yet they are choked with leaves and there is no sign of their having come abroad. At evening the raw, overcast day concludes with snow and hail.

101. Stimpert, James. A GUIDE TO THE CORRESPONDENCE IN THE CHARLES WESLEY SLACK MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION: 1848-1885. Kent State University, Library, Special Collections

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**SUGAR AND COTTON PLANTATION
SLAVES!**

IN THE SUCCESSION OF WM. M. LAMBETH, AND FOR A PARTITION.

By J. A. Beard & May---J. A. Beard, Auct.

TUESDAY AND WEDNESDAY,
13th and 14th MARCH, 1855,

AT TWELVE O'CLOCK, ON EACH DAY.

WILL BE SOLD AT AUCTION, AT BANKS' ARCADE, MAGAZINE STREET, in the city of New Orleans,
by and in pursuance of an order of the Hon. J. N. Lee, Judge of the Second District Court of New Orleans, the
Slaves comprising the gangs of the WAVERLY and MERRIDITH PLANTATIONS, belonging to the succession
of William M. Lambeth, deceased.

TERMS.

One-third cash, and the remainder at 12 months' credit, for approved city paper, bearing vendor's lien and mortgage on the Slaves, and eventual interest of 8 per cent. in case of non-payment at maturity. All sales to be completed within ten days from adjudication, or the Slaves will be re-sold for account and risk of the former purchaser after ten days' advertisement in one city paper, and without further notice or other putting in default.

No slave delivered until the terms of sale are complied with, but will be at the risk of the purchaser from adjudication. The slaves will be sold singly, and when in families, together. They can be seen three days previous to sale, on application at the office of the Auctioneers, No. 8 Banks' Arcade.

Acts of sale before T. O. Stark, Notary Public, at the expense of the purchasers.

Printed at the BULLETIN JOB OFFICE, 87 Genieve street.

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Two pickerel caught in Flint's Pond to-day weighed on the Mill-Dam to-night 7 3/4+ or nearly 8 pounds.

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March 14, Wednesday: The public auction of "178 Sugar and Cotton Plantation Slaves" continued at Banks Arcade, New Orleans.



March 14. Three inches of snow in the morning, and it snows a little more during the day, with occasional gleams of sunshine. Winter back again in prospect, and I see a few sparrows, probably tree sparrows, in the yard.

P.M. — To Andromeda Ponds. At one of the holes under the stump of March 7th, caught a *Mus leucopus* (deer mouse). So this was the kind, undoubtedly, that fed on the moss, and that colored their droppings. It is in very good condition; extreme length six and a half, tail three inches. It is a less reddish brown on the sides and cheeks than my whole skin, and a darker brown above, mixed with a little reddish; no yellow tinge on breast. Some whiskers, as usual, are white, others black, and I count the "six tubercles on each palm." There are no tracks about the stump, for they are not abroad by day, i. e. since the last of this snow, but probably there will be tracks to-morrow morning. Thus it is generally. If it ceases snowing in the morning, you see few, if any, tracks in your walk, but the next morning many. It is the first and last snows — especially the last — which blind us most, when the sun is most powerful and our eyes are unused to them. I observe the tracks of sparrows leading to every little sprig of blue-curls amid the other weeds which (its seemingly empty pitchers) rises above the snow. There seems, however, to be a little seed left in them. This, then, is reason enough why these withered stems still stand, — that they may raise these granaries above the snow for the use of the snowbirds. That ice of February has destroyed almost all of Charles Hubbard's young red maple swamp in front of the Hollowell place. Full an acre of thrifty young maples, as well as alders and birches four to seven feet high, is completely destroyed, being pulled and broken down (broken near the ground) as the ice sank after the water went down. It is all flat, and looks at a little distance as if one had gone through with a bush-whack and done his work faithfully. They [are] from half an inch to one inch thick, broken this wise: [550314.jpg (4628 bytes)] He has apparently concluded to clear-it. Only the taller birches, etc., are left. I thought, as I approached, seeing some clumps still standing, all the rest flat on the ground, that without a doubt some one had been clearing the swamp, though I; stood within a rod of it. Just as a snow-drift breaks down young fruit-trees. R. Rice tells me that a great many young white pines in a swamp of his in Sudbury have been barked, the bark rubbed down several inches completely bare by the ice. Thus the river from time to time asserts its authority over its swamps to a great distance [The willows, alders, etc., all along the river where the water was deeper are commonly broken higher up, three or four feet from the ground. This Mar. 19th. *Vide* Mar. 20th.].

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March 15, Thursday: Francis Jackson wrote again from Boston to James Winchell Stone. The letter, edited for publication in the Telegraph, is in regard to public meetings on the subject of slavery that had been held in 1835 and 1837. Some of the people attending these meetings are listed.

Jackson also provided to Stone a list of those who opposed the antislavery movement.

Wendell Phillips and William Cooper Nell appeared at the State House to speak in favor of a monument to Crispus Attucks.

Louisiana established its 1st health board to regulate quarantine.

The Crimean Peace Conference opened in Vienna.



March 15. Jacob Farmer gave me to day the foot of an otter, also of a fisher, — to put with. my pine marten's foot. He cut them off of recent furs in Boston. He sells about a hundred mink skins in a year. Thinks not more than thirty or forty are caught in Concord in a year. He says (I think) a mink's skin is worth two dollars! They are sent to Europe to be worn there, not for hats. Foul weather all day, — at first a fine snow, and finally rain. Now, at 9 P. M., a clear sky. And so the storm which began evening of 13th ends. As for the first half of this month, it began very pleasant and warm (the latter third of February had been very clear and pleasant but colder), the river opening and ice beginning to soften; then on the 4th it became windy (northerly, east, or southwest), sometimes very cold and raw, occasionally rocking the house; the 9th a little warmer, storm threatening; the 10th, ground whitened with snow; and so it goes on, more or less raw till the snow of the 14th. Mr. Rice tells me that when he was getting mud out of the little swamp at the foot of Brister's Hill last [a blank space left for the day], he heard a squeaking and found that he was digging near the nest of what he called a "field mouse," — by his description probably the meadow mouse. It was made of grass, etc., and, while he stood over it, the mother, not regarding him, came and carried off the young, one by one, in her mouth, being gone some time in each case before she returned, and finally she took the nest itself. He saw a bluebird about a week ago in Sudbury, and [was] surprised to observe that it had a worm in its mouth, but I am not, for the ice and snow have been sprinkled with caterpillars of several kinds all the past winter.

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March 16, Friday: In the House of Lords, on the Motion of Earl Granville, it was ordered "That The Lord Bishop of Salisbury be and he is hereby desired to preach before this House on Wednesday, the 21st of this instant March, in the Abbey Church, Westminster, being the Day appointed by Her Majesty's Royal Proclamation as a public Day of Solemn Fast, Humiliation, and Prayer." The House then adjourned to Monday next.

In Maine, Bates College was founded by abolitionists at Lewiston.



March 16. Cloudy in the forenoon. Sun comes out and it is rather pleasant in the afternoon.

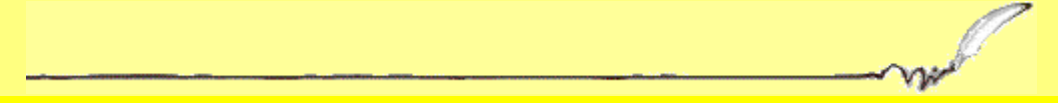
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P.M. — To Conantum End.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10



At the woodchuck's hole just beyond the cockspur thorn, I see several diverging and converging trails of undoubtedly a woodchuck, or several, which must have come out at least as early as the 13th. The track is about one and three quarters inches wide by two long, the five toes very distinct and much spread, and, including the scrape of the snow before the foot came to its bearing, is somewhat hand-like. It is [550316a.jpg (2895 bytes)] simple and alternate, thus commonly, but sometimes much like a rabbit's, and again like a mink's, somewhat thus: [550316b.jpg (2324 bytes)] They had come out and run about directly from hole to hole, six in all, within a dozen rods or more. This appeared to have been all their travelling, as if they had run round a-visiting and waked each other up the first thing. At first they soiled the snow with their sandy feet. At one place they had been clearing out to-day the throats of two holes within a rod of each other, scattering the mud-like sand, made wet by the melting snow, over the pure snow around; and I saw where, between these holes, they had sat on a horizontal limb of a shrub oak (which it had tried its teeth on), about a foot from the ground, also on a rock, plainly to warm and dry themselves in the sun, having muddied it all over. I also saw where another had sunned itself on a stone at the foot of a small pitch pine and tried its teeth on a dead limb of the pine. They could not go in or out of these burrows without being completely covered with sandy mud. The path over the snow between these holes was quite covered with it. The impression of the foot a little like this, but not so much spread: [550316c.jpg (13563 bytes)] They have but four toes on the fore feet, with rudiment of a thumb. His first journey, then, appears to be to some neighboring hole which he remembers, a dozen or fifteen rods off, and, perchance, he goes as straight or unerringly to it as if he had not been asleep all winter. Apparently after a little gossiping there his first work is to clear out the entrance to his burrow, ejecting the leaves and sand which have there collected. None have travelled beyond these holes, except that one track leads into the swamp. But here are the tracks of foxes bound on longer journeys. They are generally ten or twelve inches apart by three to five, but are irregular, now two [550316d.jpg (3889 bytes)] at the usual distance, then two close together, three or



four inches apart only. The foot is very shapely [DRAWING] and much like a dog's. The dirty-colored aspen down there projects an eighth of an inch, or nearly as much as the early willows. As I stand here, some sixty rods from the river, at about 3.30 P.M., looking at the open river, toward which my shadow points at right angles with its current, that part which my shadow extended would strike is a pale dull slate-color, but that part a dozen rods southerly from this is a distinct blue, which goes on increasing in depth southerly, till, looking at an angle of forty-five degrees from the first line, it is of a glorious, deep indigo blue. For some reason I must look much further north to see it blue. River not yet worn through Fair Haven Pond. You are pretty sure to see the tracks of squirrels, red ones, about the base of walnuts which they have ascended, and where they have probed the snow for a nut. I think that a great many birds' nests are broken up in summer by weasels, minks, and skunks. Returning, scared up two large ducks just above the bridge. One very large; white beneath, breast and neck; black head and wings and aft. The other much smaller and dark. Apparently male and female. They lit more than a hundred rods south of the bridge, and I viewed them with glass. The larger sailed about on the watch, while the smaller, dark one dived repeatedly [*Vide* Apr. 1st.]. I think there are but three ducks ever seen here anything like these, — the golden-eye or whistler, the goosander or sheldrake, and the red-breasted merganser [“Red-breasted merganser” is crossed out with pencil, and “Is it not female goosander?” written over it.]. This male I suspect was too large for the first, and, from its size and its great superiority in size to its companion, I think it the goosander or sheldrake. It did not scoot over the water as I think the red-breasted merganser [Two interrogation-points in pencil here.] does.

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March 17, Saturday: In [China](#), a Taiping army of 350,000 invaded Anhui.

[Hector Berlioz](#) offered the 1st of 3 concerts at the Théâtre du Cirque, Brussels.

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The New-York Times carried a most intriguing advertisement:

A VALUABLE BOOK FOR THE TIMES.
HOW TO LIVE ECONOMICALLY.
LIFE IN THE WOODS.
 Just Published in 1 vol., 16mo. Price, \$1.
 MR. HENRY D. THOREAU'S NEW BOOK.
WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS.

The Author says: "When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Mass., and earned my living by the labor of my hands only."

CONTENTS.

ECONOMY.	THE PONDS.
WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR.	BAKER FARM.
READING.	HIGHER LAWS.
SOUNDS.	BRUTE NEIGHBORS.
SOLITUDE.	HOUSE WARMING.
VISITORS.	FORMER INHABITANTS.
THE BEAN-FIELD.	WINTER VISITORS.
THE VILLAGE.	THE POND IN WINTER.
	SPRING.

CONCLUSION.

This strikingly original and interesting book has been widely commended by the Press. A few extracts from notices are given below.

From the Philadelphia Register

This book was written because the author had something to say. "Walden" may be pronounced a live book—a sincere, hearty production.

From the New-York Tribune.

Full of eloquent thought and interest from beginning to end

From the Salem Register.

A remarkable book. There is nothing like it in literature. Strikingly original, singular and most interesting.

From the Worcester Palladium.

"Walden" is a prose poem. It is a book to be read, and re-read, and read again.

From the Newark Advertiser.

THOREAU writes almost as many *thoughts as words*. Indeed his pages are more full of ideas than commas.

From the New-Bedford Mercury.

This is a remarkable history of remarkable experiences.

From the Lowell Courier.

This is one of the most singular, as well as one of the best of works.

For sale by **EDWARD P. RUDD,**
 No. 18 Ann-st., up-stairs, near Barnum's Museum, N. Y.
TICKNOR & FIELDS, Publishers, Boston.
 For sale by Booksellers and News Agents everywhere.
 Single copies sent by mail, post-paid, on receipt of price.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN

Review of [Henry Thoreau's WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS](#)): "Walden—Life in the Woods," Portsmouth Journal of Literature and Politics.



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March 17. Saturday. H. [Hosmer](#) says he has seen black ducks. Edmund Hosmer's meadow, *i.e.* the Hunt house meadow, is covered with great pieces of meadow, the largest thick and dense cranberry meadow. It is piled three or four feet high for several rods. Higher up on the North Branch I see where the trees, especially the swamp white oaks, have been chafed smooth and white by the ice (at that time), from the ground to three or four feet (six in some cases), as if scraped with a hoe, and the bushes all along the shore — willows, alders, etc., etc. (blueberry swamps in some places) — have been more or less broken down. I hear the lesser redpolls yet [The last.]. See now along the edge of the river, the ice being gone, many fresh heaps of clamshells, which were opened by the musquash when the water was higher, about some tree where the ground rises. And very many places you see where they formed new burrows into the bank, the sand being pushed out into the stream about the entrance, which is still below water, and you feel the ground undermined as you walk. White maple blossom-buds look as if bursting; show a rusty, fusty space, perhaps a sixteenth of an inch in width, over and above the regular six scales [There is an interrogation-point in the margin against this paragraph.]. I see scraps of the evergreen ranunculus along the riverside.

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March 18, Sunday: A suspension bridge spanning Niagara Gorge, designed by Augustus Roebling, was opened to railway traffic.

[Emily Dickinson](#) wrote from Philadelphia to Mrs. J.G. Holland:

Dear Mrs. Holland and Minnie, and Dr. Holland too — I have stolen away from company to write a note to you; and to say that I love you still.

I am not at home — I have been away just five weeks today, and shall not go quite yet back to Massachusetts. Vinnie is with me here, and we have wandered together into many new ways.

We were three weeks in Washington, while father was there, and have been two in Philadelphia. We have had many pleasant times, and seen much that is fair, and heard much that is wonderful — many sweet ladies and noble gentlemen have taken us by the hand and smiled upon us pleasantly — an the sun shines brighter for our way thus far.

I will not tell you what I saw — the elegance, the grandeur; you will not care to know the value of the diamonds my Lord and Lady wore, but if you haven't been to the sweet Mount Vernon, then I will tell you how on one soft spring day we glided down the Potomac in a painted boat, and jumped upon the shore — how hand in hand we stole along up a tangled pathway till we reached the tomb of General George Washington, how we paused beside it, and no one spoke a word, then hand in hand, walked on again, not less wise or sad for that marble story; how we went within the door — raised the latch he lifted when he last went home — thank the Ones in Light that he's since passed in through a brighter wicket! Oh, I could spend a long day, if it did not weary you, telling of Mount Vernon — and I will sometime if we live and meet again, and God grant we shall!

I wonder if you have all forgotten us, we have stayed away so long. I hope you haven't — I tried to write so hard before I went from home, but the moments were so busy, and then they flew so. I was sure when days *did* come in which I was less busy, I should seek your forgiveness, and it did not occur to me that you might not forgive me. Am I too late today? Even if you are angry, I shall keep praying you, till from very weariness, you

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will take me in. It seems to me many a day since we were in Springfield, and Minnie and the *dumb-bells* seem as vague — as vague; and sometimes I wonder if I ever dreamed — then if I'm dreaming now, then if I always dreamed, and there is not a world, and not these darling friends, for whom I would not count my life too great a sacrifice. Thank God there is a world, and that the friends we loved well forever and ever in a house above. I fear I grow incongruous, but to meet my friends does delight me so that I quite forget time and sense and so forth.

Now, my precious friends, if you won't forget me until I get home, and become more sensible, I will write again, and more properly. Why didn't I ask before, if you were well and happy?

Forgetful

Emilie.



March 18. Fair in the forenoon, but more or less cloudy and windy in the afternoon.

P. M. — Round by Hollowell place via Clamshell.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10

I see with my glass as I go over the railroad bridge, sweeping the river, a great gull standing far away on the top of a muskrat-cabin which rises just above the water opposite the Hubbard Bath. When I get round within sixty rods of him, ten minutes later, he still stands on the same spot, constantly turning his head to every side, looking out for foes. Like a wooden image of a bird he stands there, heavy to look at; head, breast, beneath, and rump pure white; slate-colored wings tipped with black and extending beyond the tail, — the herring gull. I can see clear down to its webbed feet. But now I advance, and he rises easily, goes off northeastward over the river with a leisurely flight. At Clamshell Hill I sweep the river again, and see, standing midleg deep on the meadow where the water is very shallow with deeper around, another of these wooden images, which is harder to scare. I do not fairly distinguish black tips to its wings. It is ten or fifteen minutes before I get him to rise, and then he goes off in the same leisurely manner, stroking the air with his wings, and now making a great circle back on its course, so you cannot tell which way it is bound. By standing so long motionless in these places they may perchance accomplish two objects, i. e., catch passing fish (suckers?) like a heron and escape the attention of man. Its utmost motion was to plume itself once and turn its head about. If it did not move its head, it would look like a decoy. Our river is quite low for the season, and yet it is here without freshet or easterly storm. It seems to take this course on its migrations without regard to the state of the waters. Meanwhile a small dark-colored duck, all neck and wings, a winged rolling-pin, went over, — perhaps a teal. For the last two or three days very wet and muddy walking, owing to the melting of the snow; which also has slightly swollen the small streams. Some vigorous osiers about the trunk of some golden willows on the Hubbard Bridge causeway have all winter been a much brighter yellow than the rest of the trees. They cannot well be more brilliant any time. Notwithstanding the water on the surface, it is easier crossing meadows and swamps than it will be a month hence, on account of the frost in the ground.

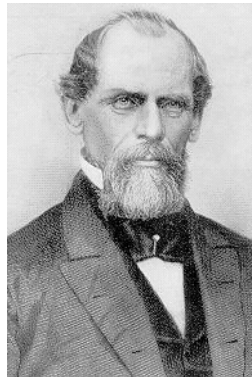
THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

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March 19, Monday: [David Peck Todd](#) was born in Lake Ridge, New York.

The temporary vehicular suspension bridge which had been thrown across the chasm of the [Niagara River](#) in 1848, which had had to be removed, was replaced in a form strengthened by wooden trusses for the passage of railway trains. (These wooden trusses would be replaced with steel trusses in 1880.)

A little more detail on this: The chasm of the Niagara River had for many years prevented connection of New York Central tracks with the Great Western Railway of Canada. The solution had to be a railway suspension structure, but of a magnitude never previously attempted. A company had formed for that purpose with Ellet as their engineer. When the main effort began, there were disagreements and Ellet left the project. In 1851 John Augustus Roebling had been invited to submit plans and estimates.



(While all this was going on, another railway suspension bridge had been being constructed by the Roebling firm, across the Kentucky River on the line of the Southern Railroad leading from Cincinnati to Chattanooga. The gorge of that river in that region is deeper and wider than the gorge of the Niagara, necessitating a clear span of no less than 1,224 feet. The anchorage and stone towers had rapidly been completed, the necessary plates and saddles hoisted up the towers; most of the cable wire delivered, as also the material for the superstructure, the girder principle adopted there being essentially different from that carried out in the Niagara Bridge since no floor for vehicles was required in that case; suddenly, however, the finances of the railway company had collapsed and the building of that stupendous bridge, already well advanced, had immediately stopped, as well as work on the railroad — and has never since been renewed.)

Construction of the Niagara span, however, had been uninterrupted even during the coldest Canada winters and in this month the 1st locomotive and train crossed the new 825-foot span. A railroad train hanging from wires! This clear span was not merely longer than the Britannia rail bridge over the Menai Strait in North Wales, it was twice as long, and it was very light, using only $\frac{1}{6}$ th the weight of materials in proportion to its length. Its 4 wire cables were each 10 inches in diameter and hung from the cliffs in such a manner as to resist deck uplift from the winds. The bridge had two decks, a lower one devoted to vehicles and an upper one for

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trains. The decks were connected by struts and diagonal tension rods so as to create a continuous, hollow suspended¹⁰² girder stiff enough to support rolling load. Inclined cable stays above its top deck further stiffened the bridge. John Augustus Roebling had positioned the bridge over the rapids of the river rather than above the falls themselves, slightly downstream, which were then being touted to America by [George William Curtis](#)—he claimed to be able to hear Niagara roar “FORWARD!”—as a natural USer symbol of our “irresistible progress.”¹⁰³

“No one is afraid to cross.”



We may speculate that John Augustus Roebling’s claim “No one is afraid to cross” needed to be issued simply because hundreds of people had fallen to their deaths five years earlier when a suspension bridge had collapsed in France. Of all the people who would pass over this bridge, it would be Mark Twain (of course) who would have the most apposite remark:

You drive over the Suspension Bridge, and divide your misery between the chances of smashing down two hundred feet into the river below, and the chances of having a railway train overhead smashing down onto you. Either possibility is discomfiting taken by itself, but, mixed together, they amount in the aggregate to positive unhappiness.

102. The structure would be referred to as a suspension structure, although it was not like the Golden Gate bridge and really classifies instead as a cable-stayed span, similar to the one over a ship canal east of Houston TX.

103. For some reason this is reminiscent of the concluding scene in the movie “Doctor Zhivago.”

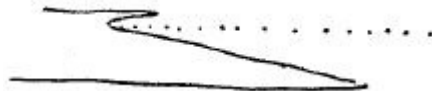


March 19. A fine clear and warm day for the season. Launched my boat.

P.M. — Paddled to Fair Haven Pond.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
 — [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10

Very pleasant and warm, when the wind lulls and the water is perfectly smooth. I make the voyage without gloves. The snow of March 14th is about gone, and the landscape is once more russet. The thick ice of the meadows lies rotting on each side of the stream, white and almost soft as snow. In many places it extends still over the shallower parts of the river. As I paddle or pole up the side of the stream, the muddy bottom looks dark and dead, and no greenness is observed but on a close scrutiny. The unsightly dead leaf-stalks of the pontederia cover it in irregular whorls covered with filth. The black stems of the polygonums here and there still rise above the surface. But on a closer scrutiny you detect here and there bits of the evergreen ranunculus (commonly floating), the cress, some reddish pads of nuphar expanded close to the bottom, and a few points of its closely rolled, unexpanded leaves, also some radical greenness in the pontederia. And what is that fresh green oblong, perhaps spatulate, leaf one and a half inches long, making little rosettes on a running root, in one place just this side the ash above the railroad [It is forget-me-not.]? There is this radical greenness to correspond with that on the land. The muskrat-houses are for the most part flatted down, even below the present level of the water (at least five feet and more below the truss), probably by the water and ice a month ago. I see but three or four well repaired. One new one at least, however, on a piece of meadow lately lodged. It is to be inferred that they have not the same need of them as in the fall. Already Farrar is out with his boat looking for spring cranberries, and here comes, slowly paddling, the dark-faced trapper Melvin with his dog and gun. [See him out here the first boating day next year also.]. I see a poor drowned gray rabbit floating, back up as in life, but three quarters submerged. I see a hawk circling over a small maple grove through this calm air, ready to pounce on the first migrating sparrow that may have arrived. As I paddle or push along by the edge of the thick ice which lines the shore, sometimes pushing against it, I observe that it is curiously worn by the water into this form: the dotted



line being the water's edge. The water has eaten into the edge of the ice just where its surface meets it (which may be one and a half inches beneath the top), four or five inches or more, leaving a sharp projecting eave above, while the lower part, five or six inches thick, being preserved hard by the water, slopes off to a very sharp edge from one to even four feet from the upper. The undulations made by my boat and paddle, striking under this eave, make a constant sound as I pass. I am surprised to find that the river has not yet worn through Fair Haven Pond. Getting up a weed with the paddle close to the shore under water, where five or six inches deep, I found a fishworm in the mud. Here and there, floating or on the edge of the ice, I see small pieces of nuphar root, with a few rolled, pointed leaf-buds, probably gnawed off by the muskrats. The greater part of the Wood meadow this side Clamshell has been lifted up and settled again, and it now sounds hollow and sinks under my steps. The wind has got round more to the east now, at 5 P. M., and is raw and disagreeable, and produces a bluish haze or mist at once in the air. It is early for such a phenomenon. Smelled muskrats in two places, and saw two. Saw, by their white droppings on the bottom, where ducks had fed. I hear at last the tchuck tchuck of a blackbird and, looking up, see him flying high over the river southwesterly, — the wrong way, — in great haste to reach somewhere; and when I reach my landing I hear my first bluebird, somewhere about Cheney's trees by the river. I hear him out of the blue deeps, but do not yet see his blue body. He comes with a warble. Now first generally heard in the village. Not a duck do I see. It is perhaps too bright and serene a day for them.

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March 20, Tuesday: In Charlestown, Virginia the gazette Spirit of Jefferson reported a couple of frantic incidents that had recently occurred in churches. In one incident, which had happened Sunday evening last at the St. Mary's (Catholic) Church in Oswego, New York, an audience of 2,500 persons had grown alarmed that the church was on fire, and had stampeded for all exits. Men were seen to run full-tilt across the backs of the pews in the direction of the rear of the church. Most of the congregation had succeeded in getting out before, 15 minutes later, it became evident that the alarm had been false. In the other incident, in Kosciusko, Mississippi a Dr. Woodward who had formerly preached in the Methodist Church of Charlestown, Virginia had been stabbed in the heart in front of the pulpit by an excommunicated member of the congregation (the expelled member was highly indignant because he had made application to be reinstated into the church and the members had consented with the sole exception of their pastor).



March 20. A flurry of snow at 7 A.M. I go to turn my boat up. Four or five song sparrows are flitting along amid the willows by the waterside. Probably they came yesterday with the bluebirds. From distant trees and bushes I hear a faint tinkling te te te and at last a full strain whose rhythm is whit whit whit, ter tche, tchear tche, deliberately sung, or measuredly, while the falling snow is beginning to whiten the ground, — not discouraged by such a reception. The bluebird, too, is in the air, and I detect its blue back for a moment upon a picket. It is remarkable by what a gradation of days which we call pleasant and warm, beginning in the last of February, we come at last to real summer warmth. At first a sunny, calm, serene winter day is pronounced spring, or reminds us of it; and even the first pleasant spring day perhaps we walk with our greatcoat buttoned up and gloves on. Trying the other day to imitate the honking of geese, I found myself flapping my sides with my elbows, as with wings, and uttering something like the syllables mow-ack with a nasal twang and twist in my head; and I produced their note so perfectly in the opinion of the hearers that I thought I might possibly draw a flock down.

P.M. — Up Assabet.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10



It soon cleared off in the morning, and proved a fair but windy day. I see a willow six inches in diameter which was broken down by the ice, and some birches up the Assabet, which had previously been bent over the stream, were broken off ten feet from the ground. I notice this havoc along the stream on making my first voyages on it. The ice either freezes to the alders, etc., one half to two thirds up them, and settling, breaks them lower down, settling upon them, or else freezes to drooping limbs and so pulls them down. As I look into the low woods or swamp on each side, I see the trees, especially rough-barked ones like the black willow, swamp white oak, and elm, chafed white to the height of three or four feet, sometimes the bark worn off, and, the maples, birches, etc., being also divested of their lichens, you see exactly the height at which the water stood when it froze. The lower twigs of swamp white oaks over the water are, as it were, nibbled off by the ice. Were those rocks by the shore this side the Leaning Hemlocks placed there by the ice? Some willow catkins, whose limb was bent down and held in the ice, are three eighths of an inch long, i. e. the down beyond the scale. I see maple sap flowing and taste it sweet in many places where the branches have been stripped down. In the meadow near the stone-heaps I pace a space laid bare by the ice, — fourteen rods by one to four, nearly a quarter of an acre. The crust raised is commonly only four or five inches thick, or down to where the grass roots break; and it is taken principally from the higher parts of a meadow, covered at the time of the freezing frequently from a longitudinal swell. We notice the color of the water especially at this season when it is recently revealed (vide 16th), and in the fall, because there is little color elsewhere, — when it is seen in contrast with the ice or snow or russet landscape. It shows best in a clear air contrasting with the russet shores. At my landing I hear the peculiar tche tche, tche tche — or somewhat like that — of the *F. hyemalis*, in company with a few tree sparrows. They take refuge from the



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cold wind, half a dozen in all, behind an arbor-vitæ hedge, and there plume themselves with puffed-up feathers.

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March 21, Wednesday: In the New-York Times:

A VALUABLE BOOK FOR THE TIMES.
HOW TO LIVE ECONOMICALLY.
LIFE IN THE WOODS.
 Just Published in 1 vol., 16mo. Price, \$1.
 MR. HENRY D. THOREAU'S NEW BOOK.

WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS.

The Author says: "When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Mass., and earned my living by the labor of my hands only."

CONTENTS.

ECONOMY.	THE PONDS.
WHERE I LIVED, AND WHAT I LIVED FOR.	BAKER FARM.
READING.	HIGHER LAWS.
SOUNDS.	BRUTE NEIGHBORS.
SOLITUDE.	HOUSE WARMING.
VISITORS.	FORMER INHABITANTS.
THE BEAN-FIELD.	WINTER VISITORS.
THE VILLAGE.	THE POND IN WINTER.
	SPRING.

CONCLUSION.

This strikingly original and interesting book has been widely commended by the Press. A few extracts from notices are given below.

From the Philadelphia Register
 This book was written because the author had something to say. "Walden" may be pronounced a live book—a sincere, hearty production.

From the New-York Tribune.
 Full of eloquent thought and interest from beginning to end

From the Salem Register.
 A remarkable book. There is nothing like it in literature. Strikingly original, singular and most interesting.

From the Worcester Palladium.
 "Walden" is a prose poem. It is a book to be read, and re-read, and read again.

From the Newark Advertiser.
 THOREAU writes almost as many thoughts as words. Indeed his pages are more full of ideas than commas.

From the New-Bedford Mercury.
 This is a remarkable history of remarkable experiences.

From the Lowell Courier.
 This is one of the most singular, as well as one of the best of works.

For sale by **EDWARD P. RUDD,**
 No. 18 Ann-st., up-stairs, near Barnum's Museum, N. Y.
TICKNOR & FIELDS, Publishers, Boston.
 For sale by Booksellers and News Agents everywhere.
 Single copies sent by mail, post-paid, on receipt of price.

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



March 21. 6.30 A.M. — To Swamp Bridge Brook. Clear, but a very cold westerly wind this morning. Ground frozen very hard. Yet the song sparrows are heard from the willow and alder rows. Hear a lark far off



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in the meadow. P. M. — To Bare Hill by railroad. Early willow and aspen catkins are very conspicuous now. The silvery down of the former has in some places crept forth from beneath its scales a third of an inch at least. This increased silveriness was obvious, I think, about the first of March, perhaps earlier. It appears to be a very gradual expansion, which begins in the warm days of winter. It would be well to observe them once a fortnight through the winter. It is the first decided growth I have noticed, and is probably a month old. The song sparrow is now seen dodging behind the wall, with a quirk of its tail, or flitting along the alders or other bushes by the side of the road, especially in low ground, and its pleasant strain is heard at intervals in spite of the cold and blustering wind. It is the most steady and resolute singer as yet, its strain being heard at intervals throughout the day, more than any as yet peopling the hedgerows. There is no opening in Flint's Pond except a very little around the boat-house. The tree sparrow, flitting song-sparrow-like through the alders, utters a sharp metallic tcheep. In the hollow behind Britton's Camp, I see seven mouse-holes — probably *Mus leucopus* — around an old oak stump, all within a foot of it, and many of their droppings at each hole and where they have gnawed off the grass, and indistinct galleries in the grass, extending three or four feet on every side. I see red maple sap oozing out and wetting the young trees where there is no obvious wound. Crossed Goose Pond on ice.

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 March 22, Thursday: Prejudice toward [Irish Catholic](#) immigrants, fanned by the [Providence Journal](#) (nowadays this paper is referred to locally as the “ProJo”), was using as its vehicle the American, or “[Know-Nothing](#)” party, a secret organization that was sweeping town, city, and state elections in the mid-fifties. In this year its candidate, William W. Hoppin, had captured the [Rhode Island](#) governorship. Some of the party’s more zealous adherents even planned a raid on St. Xavier’s Convent, home of the “female Jesuits,” supported by a fake rumor they were circulating to the effect that a Protestant girl, named Rebecca Newell, was being held against her will by the nuns of Sisters of Mercy.



The password of these [Know-Nothing](#) Protestant rioters was “show yourself.” (Is the password of the Ku Klux Klan “expose yourself”?)

[ANTI-CATHOLICISM](#)

In [Providence, Rhode Island](#) on this day, an angry mob instigated by the ProJo and the [Know-Nothings](#) dispersed when confronted with Bishop Bernard O’Reilly and an equally militant crowd of [Irishmen](#). On this day, God’s providence was definitely on the side of the big shillelaghs!

HDT

WHAT?

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Irish Gangs and Stick-Fighting

In the Works of William Carleton



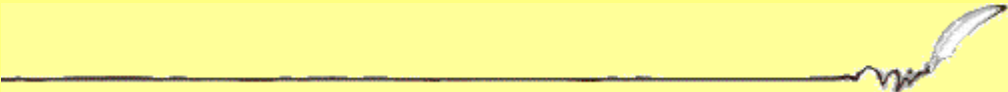
John W. Hurley



March 22. 6.30 A.M. — To Hill.

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11




Overcast and cold. Yet there is quite a concert of birds along the river; the song sparrows are very lively and musical, and the blackbirds already sing o-gurgleee-e-e from time to time on the top of a willow or elm or maple, but oftener a sharp, shrill whistle or a tchuck. I also hear a short, regular robin song, though many are flitting about with hurried note. The bluebird faintly warbles, with such ventriloquism that I thought him further off. He requires a warmer air. The jays scream. I hear the downy woodpecker's rapid tapping and my first distinct spring note (pille-be) of the chickadee. The river has skimmed over a rod in breadth along the sides. Saw a heavy-flapping, bittern-like bird flying northeast. It was small for a fish hawk. Can it be the stake-driver?? or a gull? A (probably meadow) mouse nest in the low meadow by stone bridge, where it must have been covered with water a month ago; probably made in fall. Low in the grass, a little dome four inches in diameter, with no sign of entrance, it being very low on one side. Made of fine meadow-grass. Though there was a clear strip in the west only about three times the height of the mountains, and much less in the east, I saw the sun shining on the Peterboro mountains while we had not had a ray from him. Did the rays at this hour (seven) pass over the clouds which shaded us? They may have passed further north than the clouds reached, for there seemed a lifting in the horizon there.

P.M. — Fair Haven Pond via Conantum.

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
— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10



Caught a salamander in the spring-hole in the brook behind Hubbard's. It was lying on the mud in water as if basking. I have not yet identified it. It has no bright spots, being uniformly dark above, except to a microscope, beneath bluish-slate, beneath and sides of tail dull-golden. Three and a quarter inches long; tail alone one and a half plus; a dozen or more marks as of ribs on each side. Under microscope all above very finely sprinkled black and light brown, — hard to tell which the ground. Somewhat like Salamandra dorsalis, but not granulated nor ocellated with vermilion spots. Irides dull-golden. Last five-eighths inch of tail lighter-colored. I have noticed crows in the meadows ever since they were first partially bare, three weeks ago. I hear a song sparrow on an alder-top sing ozit ozit oze-e-e j (quick) tchip tchip tchip tchip tchay I te tchip ter che ter tchay; also the same shortened and very much varied. Heard one sing uninterruptedly, i. e. without a pause, almost a minute. I crossed Fair Haven Pond, including the river, on the ice, and probably can for three or four days yet. C. says he has already seen a little dipper. How long? Going [along] the steep side-hill on the south of the pond about 4 P.M., on the edge of the little patch of wood which the choppers have not yet levelled, — though they have felled

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many an acre around it this winter, — I observed a rotten and hollow hemlock stump about two feet high and six inches in diameter, and instinctively approached with my right hand ready to cover it. I found a flying squirrel [**Flying Squirrel**  *Glaucomys sabrinus*] in it, which, as my left hand had covered a small hole at the bottom, ran directly into my right hand. It struggled and bit not a little, but my cotton glove protected me, and I felt its teeth only once or twice. It also uttered three or four dry shrieks at first, something like cr-r-rack cr-r-r-ack cr-r-r-ack. I rolled it up in my handkerchief and, holding the ends tight, carried it home in my hand, some three miles. It struggled more or less all the way, especially when my feet made any unusual or louder noise going through leaves or bushes. I could count its claws as they appeared through the handkerchief, and once it got its head out a hole. It even bit through the handkerchief. Color, as I remember, above a chestnut ash, inclining to fawn or cream color (?), slightly browned; beneath white, the under edge of its wings (?) tinged yellow, the upper dark, perhaps black, making a dark stripe. Audubon and Bachman do not speak of any such stripe! It was a very cunning little animal, reminding me of a mouse in the room. Its very large and prominent black eyes gave it an interesting innocent look. Its very neat flat, fawn-colored, distichous tail was a great ornament. Its “sails” were not very obvious when it was at rest, merely giving it a flat appearance beneath. It would leap off and upward into the air two or three feet from a table, spreading its “sails,” and fall to the floor in vain; perhaps strike the side of the room in its upward spring and endeavor to cling to it. It would run up the window by the sash, but evidently found the furniture and walls and floor too hard and smooth for it and after some falls became quiet. In a few moments it allowed me to stroke it, though far from confident.

I put it in a barrel and covered it for the night. It was quite busy all the evening gnawing out, clinging for this purpose and gnawing at the upper edge of a sound oak barrel, and then dropping to rest from time to time. It had defaced the barrel considerably by morning, and would probably have escaped if I had not placed a piece of iron against the gnawed part. I had left in the barrel some bread, apple, shagbarks, and cheese. It ate some of the apple and one shagbark, cutting it quite in two transversely. In the morning it was quiet, and squatted somewhat curled up amid the straw, with its tail passing under it and the end curled over its head very prettily, as if to shield it from the light and keep it warm. I always found it in this position by day when I raised the lid.



THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



March 23, Friday: The Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward obtained an opportunity to stand and witness a sitting of the Houses of Parliament:

Wishing to see all that I could while in England, and having a strong desire to go to the Houses of Parliament, I communicated my desire to the Honourable Arthur Kinnaird, M.P., and to the Earl of Shaftesbury. Mr. Kinnaird kindly gave me an order for the House of Commons, and Lord Shaftesbury procured for me admission to the House of Lords. In the former there were no questions of interest under discussion, and but few members were in attendance. It was a morning session. Subsequently, Edward Ball, Esq., member for Cambridgeshire, kindly showed me to the visitors' gallery, where I had the pleasure of hearing Lord Palmerston and Mr. Frederick Peel. The veneration I had from my

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childhood felt for Viscount Palmerston, as his name and that of Lord John Russell had always been associated in my mind with the greatest of past or present British statesmen, gave me a peculiar pleasure in hearing him. It was a peculiar time. The good ship of the State had been but recently committed to his care. There had just been a sort of mutiny, at least a desertion, of some of the officers. There had been great dissatisfaction; alas, there had been great cause for it! The public mind had been brought, by the suffering of the army, the seeming want of vigour in the former Cabinet, the apparent need of greater energy in the [Crimea](#), and the exceedingly severe comments of the press, to a state of great excitement. Questions were poured in upon the Ministry, like a torrent. The Premier was holden responsible not only for what he said, but how he said it, and for honourable members laughing or crying at what he said. It was indeed a most difficult time. A firm, strong, steady hand at helm was needed. Reform must be brought about, the war must be carried on, negotiations must be conducted, despondency must be driven from some minds, the doubtful must be assured – in short, all classes made all manner of demands, and the Opposition took all manner of advantage of the crisis. It was most interesting, on the 23rd of March, 1855, to see Lord Palmerston, a man of seventy, with the appearance of a man of fifty, at midnight as if it were but noon, keep his place, meet the Opposition, endure the public grumbling, maintain a cheerful face, and, by his indefatigable industry and unwearied attention to public business, conduct the nation through storms and perils in the midst of which, while many found fault and loudly complained, few dared, none could, take his place and do his work. I know not of a more interesting occasion to see Lord Palmerston and hear him speak, than that. One seldom has an opportunity of seeing such a Prime Minister in such circumstances. I shall always remember that night. And, now that Sebastopol is captured, the English press lauds Lord Palmerston. St. Clare said, he judged of Aunt Dinah's cooking "as men judge of generals – by their successes." So is Lord Palmerston now judged by those who, at the time I saw him, could condemn and distrust the Premier, but could neither govern the country nor remedy defects.

...It was during "the season," and before the war – so that many Lords were in attendance, and local matters of legislation occupied their attention. Lord Shaftesbury, with his natural kindness, met me at the door of one of the passages, and conducted me to the standing place (none but Peers, not even Ambassadors, sit in the House of Lords), and pointed out to me the several Peers and Bishops. The Earl Waldegrave left his seat, to come and shake my hand. The Duke of Argyll gave me his recognition. I was so fortunate as to hear the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice, the Duke of Argyll, the Earl of Harrowby, the Earl of Aberdeen, Lord Grey, Lord Kinnaird, Lord Henry Peter Brougham, Lord Lyndhurst, the Earl of Clarendon, and the Earl of Shaftesbury. Such a display of senatorial talent one seldom has the good fortune to witness. But illustrious as were the names of those I heard, eloquent as were their speeches – and mortal men never spoke more eloquently than Lord Grey and Lord Brougham – the subject of these speeches, and the conclusion to

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which their Lordships came, interested me far more. After the disposal of some petitions, and other matters of routine, Lord Lyndhurst asked a question of Lord Clarendon concerning the position and intentions of [Russia](#), in the Danubian Principalities. The noble Secretary answered the question to the satisfaction of the great Ex-Lord Chancellor, and then came on the business of the day. Lord Redesdale took the chair, as the House went into Committee, and his Lordship is Chairman of Committee. The order of the day was Lord Shaftesbury's Juvenile Mendicant Bill. The Lord Chancellor made a speech against it; the Lord Chief Justice did the same. Lord Shaftesbury calmly sat in his place while these attacks were made. Soon after, the Bill was defended by the noble Premier (Lord Aberdeen) and the Duke of Argyll. Lord Grey made a most eloquent speech in its favour. Lord Harrowby brought to its defence the weight of his great name. Then uprose the Earl of Shaftesbury in defence of his Bill, meeting the objections of the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice, utterly refusing to withdraw the Bill, from a sense of duty to his God and to his fellow men, and declaring that, "from the opposition it had received from the two legal Lords, he had made up his mind that its fate was sealed; but the responsibility of its being lost must rest upon their Lordships, and not upon him."

The earnestness, the eloquence, with which this speech was delivered, commanded universal attention. It showed that the great prince of British beneficence was a statesman as well as a philanthropist: it showed that a honest manly sense of Christian responsibility controlled him in the senate as well as in the Ragged School: it was quite consistent with the reputation he had earned when a member of the House of Commons, devoting himself like a Howard to the welfare of the neglected, and to the removal of the abuses which crushed them: and it gave me, who had learned to venerate him, the unspeakable satisfaction of seeing the most decided abolitionist in the House of Lords one of its most influential members; for, after he sat down, in less than twenty minutes the Lord Chief Justice and the Lord Chancellor gave in their adhesion to the Bill, Lord Brougham spoke in its favour, and it passed unanimously. I could not help congratulating Lord Shaftesbury upon his success, and he accepted the compliment kindly.

Now, what was that Bill? for that it was which impressed me with inexpressible admiration of the British peerage. The title of the Bill indicates the class to whom it relates. Its objects, briefly, were, to arrest the mendicant children of London, whose parents compel them to beg for a living. These parents neither support, nor educate, nor in any other way care for their children, but compel them to obtain money by begging or stealing. The consequence is, that these children are what Lord Shaftesbury called "a seedplot of crime"; for, in the great majority of cases, they become the worst description of criminals. The Bill provided for the arrest of these children, and placing them under the care of proper persons, to educate and teach them some honest way of earning a livelihood. I think it also provided some punishment or fine upon the parents. The debate, therefore, which engaged the most learned and the most eloquent, as well as those highest in rank, in the House of

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Peers, both in the Ministry and out of it, was upon the question, What shall be done with the mendicant children of the British Metropolis? On both sides, the most tender pity and the most anxious solicitude for these poor children was constantly expressed. The greatest point of difficulty was, to settle how far the legislature could interfere, consistently with the rights of the parties concerned. In the course of the debate a noble Marquis asked – "My Lords, who is to be the judge as to whether these parents perform their duty, or not? and if not, who is to assume their place, and act in their stead?" In his peculiarly graceful and easy manner, the Lord Chief Justice arose and replied, "I beg to answer the noble Lord by reminding him that the constitution puts the Lord Chancellor in loco parentis to the neglected and deserted children of England."

The subject of the discussion, and the result of it – the personages engaged in it, and the spirit in which they addressed themselves to it – filled me with such a sense of admiration for that senate, as I cannot express. The House of Lords, discussing their duties towards the lowest classes of Her Majesty's subjects! The rights of those classes, though criminals, as adults, and though mendicants, as children, seemed, to me, most delicately handled! The Lord Chief Justice, speaking both as a peer and a judge, saying that his fellow peer, the Lord Chancellor, is the guardian, the constitutional guardian, of these children of poverty and crime! The yielding of that noble House to the eloquent suasion of one of humanity's great British ornaments, the poor man's great model friend, the Earl of Shaftesbury! All these ideas crowded so upon my bewildered brain, that I was excited almost beyond endurance. It gave me such ideas of the British legislature and the British constitution, that I felt more than ever grateful to God that it is my lot, and the lot of my children, to be and remain subjects of the British Crown.

How different was all this from what was true of my unhappy native country! There, the poorest of the poor are sold in the shambles. There, honourable senators are but too anxious to avoid legislating in their behalf: there, alas! legislation is chiefly devoted to rivetting the chains that bind them. More of American legislation is devoted to the promotion of slavery, directly and indirectly, than to any other interest whatever! Rights of the poorest, in America! why, one half of the time of American senators is spent in declaring what are the rights of all men, and the other half in depriving the poorest, the most outraged, those needing the most protection from the legislature, of all rights!

Besides, I should not dare visit the capital of my native country. It is in slaveholding territory; and there I could be legally arrested either as a runaway slave, or, if it were after ten at night, as a Negro at large without permission. In the latter case, I must pay £2 fine, or be severely flogged the next morning; in the former, I should be advertised. If no one came forward to prove me a freeman, or claim me as a slave, I should be sold to pay jail fees. But I had been in the British senate at the invitation of one of its most influential members; I had received from him marked attention; and I had seen him triumphantly carry what was to him a favourite measure, a

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measure having for its object the suppression and prevention of crime, and benefiting and blessing the poor. Who can blame a Negro for loving Great Britain? Who wonders that we are among the most loyal of Her Majesty's subjects?



March 23. P.M. — To Fair Haven Pond.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10

Carried my flying squirrel [[Flying Squirrel](#)  *Glaucomys sabrinus*] back to the woods in my handkerchief. I placed it, about 3.30 P.M., on the very stump I had taken it from. It immediately ran about a rod over the leaves and up a slender maple sapling about ten feet, then after a moment's pause sprang off and skimmed downward toward a large maple nine feet distant, whose trunk it struck three or four feet from the ground. This it rapidly ascended, on the opposite side from me, nearly thirty feet, and there clung to the main stem with its head downward, eyeing me. After two or three minutes' pause I saw that it was preparing for another spring by raising its head and looking off, and away it went in admirable style, more like a bird than any quadruped I had dreamed of and far surpassing the impression I had received from naturalists' accounts [Vide next page.]. I marked the spot it started from and the place where it struck, and measured the height and distance carefully. It sprang off from the maple at the height of twenty-eight and a half feet, and struck the ground at the foot of a tree fifty and a half feet distant, measured horizontally. Its flight was not a regular descent; it varied from a direct line both horizontally and vertically. Indeed it skimmed much like a hawk and part of its flight was nearly horizontal, and it diverged from a right line eight or ten feet to the right, making a curve in that direction. There were six trees from six inches to a foot in diameter, one a hemlock, in a direct line between the two termini, and these it skimmed partly round, and passed through their thinner limbs; did not as I could perceive touch a twig. It skimmed its way like a hawk between and around the trees. Though it was a windy day, this was on a steep hillside away from the wind and covered with wood, so it was not aided by that. As the ground rose about two feet, the distance was to the absolute height as fifty and a half to twenty-six and a half, or it advanced about two feet for every one foot of descent. After its vain attempts in the house, I was not prepared for this exhibition. It did not fall heavily as in the house, but struck the ground gently enough, and I cannot believe that the mere extension of the skin enabled it to skim so far. It must be still further aided by its organization. Perhaps it fills itself with air first. Perhaps I had a fairer view than common of its flight, now at 3.30 P.M. [Audubon](#) and [Bachman](#) say he saw it skim "about fifty yards," curving upwards at the end and alighting on the trunk of a tree. This in a meadow in which were scattered oaks and beeches. This near Philadelphia. [Wesson](#) [?] says he has seen them fly five or six rods. Kicking over the hemlock stump, which was a mere shell with holes below, and a poor refuge, I was surprised to find a little nest at the bottom, open above just like a bird's nest, a mere bed. It was composed of leaves, shreds of bark, and dead pine-needles. As I remember, it was not more than an inch and a half broad when at rest, but when skimming through the air I should say it was four inches broad. This is the impression I now have. Captain [John Smith](#) says it is said to fly thirty or forty yards. [Audubon](#) and [Bachman](#) quote one [Gideon B. Smith, M.D.](#), of Baltimore, who has had much to do with these squirrels and speaks of their curving upward at the end of their flight to alight on a tree-trunk and of their "flying" into his windows. In order to perform all these flights, — to strike a tree at such a distance, etc., etc., — it is evident it must be able to steer. I should say that mine steered as a hawk that moves without flapping its wings, never being able, however, to get a new impetus after the first spring. C. saw geese to-night.

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March 24, Saturday: [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) moved to [Concord](#) to start a school.

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March 24. I think that the celandine started as early as the 10th of March and has since been nibbled off by hens, etc., for it shows more green but [is] not longer.

P.M. — Up Assabet by boat.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10


A cold and blustering afternoon after a flurry of snow which has not fairly whitened the ground. I see a painted tortoise at the bottom moving slowly over the meadow. They do not yet put their heads out, but merely begin to venture forth into their calmer element. It is almost as stationary, as inert, as the pads as yet. Passing up the Assabet, by the Hemlocks, where there has been a slide and some rocks have slid down into the river, I think I see how rocks come to be found in the midst of rivers. Rivers are continually changing their channels, — eating into one bank and adding their sediment to the other, — so that frequently where there is a great bend you see a high and steep bank or hill on one side, which the river washes, and a broad meadow on the other. As the river eats into the hill, especially in freshets, it undermines the rocks, large and small, and they slide down, alone or with the sand and soil, to the water's edge. The river continues to eat into the hill, carrying away all the lighter parts [of] the sand and soil, to add to its meadows or islands somewhere, but leaves the rocks where they rested, and thus in course of time they occupy the middle of the stream and, later still, the middle of the meadow, perchance, though it may be buried under the mud. But this does not explain how so many rocks lying in streams have been split in the direction of the current. Again, rivers appear to have travelled back and worn into the meadows of their creating, and then they become more meandering than ever. Thus in the course of ages the rivers wriggle in their beds, till it feels comfortable under them. Time is cheap and rather insignificant. It matters not whether it is a river which changes from side to side in a geological period or an eel that wriggles past in an instant.


The scales of alders which have been broken by the ice and are lying in the water are now visibly loosened, as you look endwise at the catkins, and the catkins are much lengthened and enlarged. The white maple buds, too, show some further expansion methinks (?). The last four days, including this, have been very cold and blustering. The ice on the ponds, which was rapidly rotting, has somewhat hardened again, so that you make no impression on it as you walk. I crossed Fair Haven Pond yesterday, and could have crossed the channel there again. The wind has been for the most part northwesterly, but yesterday was strong southwesterly yet cold. The northwesterly comes from a snow-clad country still, and cannot but be chilling. We have had several flurries of snow, when we hoped it would snow in earnest and the weather be warmer for it. It is too cold to think of those signs of spring which I find recorded under this date last year. The earliest signs of spring in vegetation noticed thus far are the maple sap, the willow catkins (and poplars? not examined early), the celandine (?), grass on south banks, and perhaps cowslip in sheltered places. Alder catkins loosened, and also white maple buds loosened (?). I am not sure that the osiers are decidedly brighter yet.

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 March 25, Sunday: The Daily Alta California reported that a schooner, the *Sea Serpent*, Captain Fish, that had cleared at San Francisco on the 17th of February for San Pedro with 30 passengers, and freight consigned to Alexander & Banning, had not since been heard from and it was feared that she might be sunk. The gazette pointed out, however, that Captain Fish being well acquainted with the coast along his voyage, perhaps the arrival of the vessel was being delayed by prevailing winds to the northward.

 The gazette also reported some scuttlebutt from San Gabriel, that Roy Bean had been shot through the chest in the store of Frank Wahale, while he had been “cutting up his rusties, much to the inconvenience and disgust of the company.” This scuttlebutt had it that he was still alive but it was hardly expected that he would recover (it would appear that nothing like this actually happened — that there had been no such shooting in San Gabriel and Roy Bean was unharmed, although with a stiff neck after an attempt made to hang him with a stretchy rope).



March 25. P.M. — To Ministerial Lot. Still cold and blustering. The ditches where I have seen salamanders last year before this are still frozen up. Was it not a sucker I saw dart along the brook beyond Jenny’s? I see where the squirrels have fed extensively on the acorns now exposed on the melting of the snow. The ground is strewn with the freshly torn shells and nibbled meat in some places.

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 March 26, Monday: August Bondi arrived in the Kansas Territory, aboard the steamboat *Polar Star* heading toward Kansas City.



Louis Moreau Gottschalk went aloft in a hot air balloon piloted by one of the Godards. They ascended from New Orleans and floated north for merely 6 minutes, landing on the tracks of the Pontchartrain Railroad (he had made himself perhaps the first composer to fly).



March 26. 6 A.M. — Still cold and blustering; wind southwest, but clear. I see a muskrat-house just erected, two feet or more above the water and sharp; and, at the Hubbard Bath, a mink comes teetering along the ice by the side of the river. I am between him and the sun, and he does not notice me. He runs daintily, lifting his feet with a jerk as if his toes were sore. They seem to go a-hunting at night along the edge of the river; perhaps I notice them more at this season, when the shallow water freezes at night and there is no vegetation along the shore to conceal them. The lark sings, perched on the top of an apple tree, seel-yah seel-yah, and then perhaps seel-yah-see-e, and several other strains, quite sweet and plaintive, contrasting with the cheerless season and the bleak meadow. Further off I hear one like ah-tick-seel-yah. P. M. — Sail down to the Great Meadows. A strong wind with snow driving from the west and thickening the air. The farmers pause to see me scud before it. At last I land and walk further down on the meadow-bank. I scare up several flocks of ducks. There is but little water on the meadow, and that far down and partly frozen, but a great many acres of the meadow-crust have there been lifted and broken up by the ice and now make hundreds of slanting isles amid the shallow water, looking like waves of earth, and amid these the ducks are sailing and feeding. The nearest are two, apparently middlesized with black heads, white breast and wings and apparently all above but the tail

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or tips of wings, which are black [Probably sheldrakes.]. A third with them is apparently all dark. I do not know what to call them. You are much more sure to see ducks in a stormy afternoon like this than in a bright and pleasant one. Returning, I see, near the Island, two ducks which have the marks (one of them) of the wood duck (i. e. one or two longitudinal white stripes down the head and neck), but when they go over I hear distinctly and for a long time the whistling of their wings, fine and sharp. Are they golden-eyes, or whistlers [[Later:] Were they the harlequin duck? [Later still:] Probably male and female wood duck.]? For several weeks, or since the ice has melted, I notice the paths made by the muskrats when the water was high in the winter, leading from the river up the bank to a bed of grass above or below the surface. When it runs under the surface I frequently slump into it and can trace it to the bed by the hollow sound when I stamp on the frozen ground. They have disfigured the banks very much in some places, only the past winter. Clams have been carried into these galleries a rod or more under the earth. The galleries kept on the surface and terminated perhaps at some stump where the earth was a little raised, where the ice still remained thick over them after the water had gone down. I was surprised to find fishworms only four inches beneath the surface in the meadow, close against the frozen portion of the crust. A few may also be found on the bottom of brooks and ditches in the water, where they are probably food for the earliest fishes. Is that little flat moss-like or jungermannia-like plant on Cheney's shore the Selaginella apus? It reminds me of the finest lace-work.

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March 27, Tuesday: His first treatise a huge success, Father [Isaac Hecker](#), CSSR set out to write a second treatise, *ASPIRATIONS OF NATURE*, demonstrating, by recourse to human reason alone, the true value of the True Church. His intended audience was those persons who had fallen back on simple nature, and his starting point was the Transcendentalist principle that human nature naturally aspires to God. To [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#), he wrote that he would demonstrate "how the dogmas of the Church answer in a way, to the demands of the intellect, as the sacraments do to the wants of the heart." But this second treatise which Father Thomas was here outlining would not appear until 1857.

Crude hydrocarbon compounds had been being distilled from various sources since the process was 1st described during the 9th century by [Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Zakariyya al-Razi](#) (854-925 CE) of Rey, Iran. In his *Kitab al-Asrar* [الاسرار](#) (Book of Secrets) he had termed the substance "naft abyad." At this point [Abraham Pineo Gesner](#) of Nova Scotia obtained a patent for kerosene, a liquid fuel also known as paraffin, lamp oil, and coal oil refined by his process since 1846 from coal, bitumen and oil shale. The advantage of this fuel was that it was cheaper than, and burned cleaner than, whale oil or other usual substances (it is now used as jet fuel).

At 6 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Island (Gleason 73/F6) below Nawshawtuct Hill. In the afternoon he went to Hubbard's Close (Gleason G8) and down Mill Brook (Gleason F7).



March 27. 6.30 A.M. — To Island. The ducks sleep these nights in the shallowest water which does not freeze, and there may be found early in the morning. I think that they prefer that part of the shore which is permanently covered. Snow last evening, about one inch deep, and now it [is] fair and somewhat warmer. Again I see the tracks of rabbits, squirrels, etc. It would be a good time this forenoon to examine the tracks of woodchucks and see what they are about.

P. M. — To Hubbard's Close and down brook. Measured a black oak just sawed down. Twenty-three inches in diameter on the ground, and fifty-four rings. It had grown twice as much on the east side as on the west. The *Fringilla linaria* still here. Saw a wood tortoise in the brook. Am surprised to see the cowslip so forward, showing so much green, in E. Hubbard's Swamp, in the brook, where it is sheltered from the winds. The already expanded leaves rise above the water. If this is a spring growth [Yes.], it is the most forward herb I have seen, as forward as the celandine.

Saw my frog hawk. (C. saw it about a week ago.) Probably *Falco fuscus*, or sharp-shinned, though not well described by Wilson. Slate-colored; beating the bush; black tips to wings and white rump. [No, it is the hen-

harrier (i.e. marsh hawk), male.]

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The ducks sleep these nights in the shallowest water which does not freeze, and there may be found early in the morning. I think that they prefer that part of the shore which is permanently covered.



March 28, Wednesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) lectured at the [Concord](#) Town Hall on “Beauty,” and there introduced [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) to [Henry Thoreau](#). Sanborn’s idea at this time was to reside with [Ellery Channing](#) in Concord, and see much of Thoreau.

[Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “Not a blade of grass but has a story to tell, not a heart but has its romance, not a life which does not hide a secret which is either its thorn or its spur. Everywhere grief, hope, comedy, tragedy; even under the petrification of old age, as in the twisted forms of fossils, we may discover the agitations and tortures of youth. This thought is the magic wand of poets and of preachers: it strips the scales from our fleshly eyes, and gives us a clear view into human life; it opens to the ear a world of unknown melodies, and makes us understand the thousand languages of nature. Thwarted love makes a man a polyglot, and grief transforms him into a diviner and a sorcerer.”

Master Coleman, a young son of Captain Coleman of the ship *Sobella*, fell overboard at about midday while the ship was riding at anchor at Port Wakefield, South Australia, and his body was seen to be carried away by a large shark. Newspaper accounts did not instance the exact age of the victim. The mother, and two of the lad’s sisters were aboard the vessel. It was impossible to discern whether the lad had already drowned or was yet alive while being thus carried away. The sailors only with difficulty restrained their captain from leaping into the water. Later a large shark would be detected and killed in the waters of Gulf St. Vincent. This is the [initial instance](#) on record of a shark taking a human in the waters of South Australia.



March 28. P.M. — To Cliffs, along river. It is colder than yesterday; wind strong from northwest. The mountains are still covered with snow. They have not once been bare. I go looking for meadow mice nests, but the ground is frozen so hard, except in the meadow below the banks, that I cannot come at them. That portion of the meadow next the upland, which is now thawed, has already many earthworms in it. I can dig a quantity of them, — I suspect more than in summer. Moles might already get their living there. A yellow-spotted tortoise in a still ditch, which has a little ice also. It at first glance reminds me of a bright freckled leaf, skunk-cabbage scape, perhaps. They are generally quite still at this season, or only slowly put their heads out (of their shells). I see where a skunk (apparently) has been probing the sod, though it is thawed but a few inches, and all around this spot frozen hard still. I dig up there a frozen and dead white grub, the large potato grub; this I think he was after. The skunk’s nose has made small round holes such as a stick or cane would make. The river has not yet quite worn its way through Fair Haven Pond, but probably will to-morrow.

I run about these cold and blustering days, on the whole perhaps the worst to bear in the year, — partly because they disappoint expectation, — looking almost in vain for some animal or vegetable life stirring. The warmest springs hardly allow me the glimpse of a frog’s heel as he settles himself in the mud, and I think I am lucky if I see one winter-defying hawk or a hardy duck or two at a distance on the water. As for the singing of birds, — the few that have come to us, — it is too cold for them to sing and for me to hear. The bluebird’s warble comes feeble and frozen to my ear. We still walk on frozen ground, though in the garden I can thrust a spade in about six inches.

Over a great many acres, the meadows have been cut up into great squares and other figures by the ice of February, as if ready to be removed, sometimes separated by narrow and deep channels like muskrat-paths, but oftener the edges have been raised and apparently stretched and, settling, have not fallen into their places exactly but lodged on their neighbors.

Even yet you see cakes of ice surmounted by a shell of meadow-crust, which has preserved it, while all around


Thoreau as Ornithologist

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is bare meadow.

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 March 29, Thursday: It was announced in local gazettes that John Mitchel, Esq., known as the “Irish patriot,” had arrived taken rooms at the Coleman House in Knoxville, Tennessee during the previous week. “He has a wife and five children, and comes to settle in this vicinity permanently, as he informs us. His wish is to purchase a farm, not far distant from this city. Mr. Mitchell is a small man, rather spare made, and is, we should say, about forty years of age. He is genteel in his dress, rather easy in his manners, and, in the absence of any information on that point, we should say he has been well raised. We see nothing in his face indicative of superior talents, and in his conversation he is mild and prudent, so far as out observations extend.”



March 29. P.M. — To Flint’s Pond. Flint’s Pond is entirely open; may have been a day or two. There was only a slight opening about the boat-house on the 21st, and the weather has been very cold ever since. Walden is more than half open, Goose Pond only a little about the shores, and Fair Haven Pond only just open over the channel of the river. There is washed up on the shore of Flint’s some pretty little whorls of the radical leaves of the Lobelia Dortmanna, with its white root-fibres. As I stand on Heywood’s Peak, looking over Walden, more than half its surface already sparkling blue water, I inhale with pleasure the cold but wholesome air like a draught of cold water, contrasting it in my memory with the wind of summer, which I do not thus eagerly swallow. This, which is a chilling wind to my fellow, is decidedly refreshing to me, and I swallow it with eagerness as a panacea. I feel an impulse, also, already, to jump into the half-melted pond. This cold wind is refreshing to my palate, as the warm air of summer is not, methinks. I love to stand there and be blown on as much as a horse in July. A field of ice nearly half as big as the pond has drifted against the eastern shore and crumbled up against it, forming a shining white wall of its fragments.

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March 30, Friday: There was an election for the 1st [Kansas Territorial Legislature](#) in which neighboring Missourians came into the region to vote illegally on the issue of being admitted into the United States of America as a free state, or as a slave state. [Samuel J. Jones](#) led a group of proslavery men that destroyed the ballot box at Bloomington. The proslavery faction would be victorious amid much fraud.

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

By the Treaty of Peshawar, Great Britain and Afghanistan united against Persia.

Pierre Jacques François de Decker replaced Henri Ghislain de Brouckère as head of government for Belgium.

The state legislature passed enabling legislation to launch a survey of [New-York](#)'s underwater boundaries.

[Stephen Symonds Foster](#) announced that he had demoted nonresistance to evil from an end in itself to a means toward victory. He could defend himself better, personally, by eschewing violence than by arming himself and defending himself. Others, however, might not be in such a situation. If they could not achieve their objectives best through nonviolence, then they should use violence.



March 30. 6.30 A.M. — To Island. It is a little warmer than of late, though still the shallows are skimmed over. The pickerel begin to dart from the shallowest parts not frozen. I hear many phe-be notes from the chickadees, as if they appreciated this slightly warmer and sunny morning. A fine day. As I look through the window, I actually see a warmer atmosphere with its fine shimmer against the russet hills and the dry leaves, though the warmth has not got into the house and it is no more bright nor less windy than yesterday, or many days past. I find that the difference to the eye is a slight haze, though it is but very little warmer than yesterday. To-day and yesterday have been bright, windy days, — west wind, cool, yet, compared with the previous colder ones, pleasantly, gratefully cool to me on my cheek. There is a very perceptible greenness on our south bank now, but I cannot detect the slightest greenness on the south side of Lee's Hill as I sail by it. It is a perfectly dead russet. The river is but about a foot above the lowest summer level. I have seen a few *F. hyemalis* about the house in the morning the last few days. You see a few blackbirds, robins, bluebirds, tree sparrows, larks, etc., but the song sparrow chiefly is heard these days. He must have a great deal of life in him to draw upon, who can pick up a subsistence in November and March. Man comes out of his winter quarters this month as lean as a woodchuck. Not till late could the skunk find a place where the ground was thawed on the surface. Except for science, do not travel in such a climate as this in November and March. I tried if a fish would take the bait to-day; but in vain; I did not get a nibble. Where are they? I read that a great many bass were taken in the

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Merrimack last week. Do not the suckers move at the same time?

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➡ March 31, Saturday: Charlotte Brontë died in Haworth, Yorkshire at the age of 38. At the age of 8, in 1824, she had been trundled off to the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge in Lancashire for ten months of a poor sort of education. Later this had been an occasion for vengeance, in her *JANE EYRE: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY*. After the vengeful author was safely decomposing, in the summer of 1857, a long string of old girls would take to the newspapers in defense of their own better memories of their *alma mater*.¹⁰⁴



[Walden Pond](#) was open.

104. See [The Halifax Guardian](#), June through August 1857.

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March 31. I see through the window that it is a very fine day, the first really -warm one. I did not know the whole till I came out at 3 P. M. and walked to the Cliffs. The slight haze of yesterday has become very thick, with a southwest wind, concealing the mountains. I can see it in the air within two or three rods, as I look against the bushes. The fuzzy gnats are in the air, and bluebirds, whose warble is thawed out. I am uncomfortably warm, gradually unbutton both my coats, and wish that I had left the outside one at home. I go listening for the croak of the first frog, or peep of a hylodes. It is suddenly warm, and this amelioration of the weather is incomparably the most important fact in this vicinity. It is incredible what a revolution in our feelings and in the aspect of nature this warmer air alone has produced. Yesterday the earth was simple to barrenness, and dead, — bound out. Out-of-doors there was nothing but the wind and the withered grass and the cold though sparkling blue water, and you were driven in upon yourself. Now you would think that there was a sudden awakening in the very crust of the earth, as if flowers were expanding and leaves putting forth; but not so; I listen in vain to hear a frog or a new bird as yet; only the frozen ground is melting a little deeper, and the water is trickling down the hills in some places. No, the change is mainly in us. We feel as if we had obtained a new lease of life. Some juniper (repens) berries are blue now. Looking from the Cliffs I see that Walden is open to-day first, and Fair Haven Pond will open by day after to-morrow [No. *Vide* Apr. 4th.].

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APRIL 1855



April 1, Sunday: [The Freemasons' Monthly Magazine](#) contained articles on [India](#) and on [China](#).

The composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk again ascended in a hot-air balloon over New Orleans. This time he brought with him his harmonicon, a small keyboard instrument. The balloon followed the same trajectory as the flight of March 26th but this time Gottschalk composed "Pensée poétique." This would be the 1st recorded instance of composition in mid-air.



In about this timeframe [Henry Thoreau](#), who had caught a chill in February, fell more seriously ill. He would report in a letter in June:

"I have been sick and good for nothing but to lie on my back and wait for something to turn up, for two or three months."



Apr 1st

The month comes in true to its reputation. We wake — though late — to hear the sound of a strong steady [^& rather warm] rain on the roof — & see the puddles shining in the road. It lasts till the middle of the day & then is succeeded by a cold NW wind.

This pattering rain & sabbath morning combined make us all sluggards.

When I look out the window I see that the grass on the bank on the S side of the house is already much greener than it was yesterday — As it cannot have grown so suddenly — how shall I account for it? I suspect that the reason is that the few green blades are not merely washed bright by the rain — but erect themselves to imbibe its influence while the and so are more prominent while the withered blades are beaten down & flattened by it. It is remarkable how much ~~severer~~ [^more fatal] to all superficial vegetation or greenness is a morning frost in march — than a covering of snow or ice.

In hollows where the ice is still melting I see the grass considerably green about its edges — though further off it shows no sign of life.

Pm to Conantum bend. {Thoreau may have altered this from "Pond"}

[Transcript]



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This rain will help take the frost out of the ground. At the 1st Conant. Cliff I am surprised to see how much the Columbine leaves have grown in a sheltered Cleft — also the cinque-foil {Thoreau put a vertical pencil line through this line} — dandelion? — yarrow? — sorrel — saxifrage &c &c They seem to improve the least warmer ray to advance themselves — & they hold all they get. One of the earliest-looking plants in water is the golden saxifrage.

The last half of last month was cold & windy — excepting the 19th — wind NW — W & SW — It at last ceased to be chilling the 29 & ~~th~~ 30 — which were fine clear cool but windy day — On the 30th a slight haze — — then the 31st was suddenly warm with a thick haze — thawing man & earth — & this succeeded by today's rain. See resting on the edge of the ice in F.H. Pond a white duck — with black head & a dark one — they take to the water when I appear on the hill 1/4 of a mile off & soon fly down the river rather low over the water. Were they not the same with those of the 16th ult?

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April 14, Saturday: The Honolulu newspaper Polynesian offered some insights into the state of island morals. It appeared from the reports of attorneys in the several judicial districts that the number of criminal convictions in all the islands of this chain had gone up considerably, from 1853 to 1854, and that the cause had been a considerable amount of drunkenness on Kauii, and a whole lot of drunkenness plus furious riding in Honolulu on Oahu. On other islands the number of criminal convictions actually had gone down somewhat.

The most common and prominent offenses against the laws are adultery and fornication, drunkenness; larceny; and furious riding; and a majority of these were committed in the ports of Honolulu and Lahaina, which continue to be the great centers of vice. Petty thieving and false swearing are reported as very prevalent in some parts of the Islands, particularly at Waialua, on Oahu. The latter is fearfully common.

However, this newspaper editor pointed out, in all likelihood the trend in the islands was not so much toward greater licentiousness, as it was toward more rigorous law enforcement. It was merely that an increased vigilance and faithfulness on the part of the police had been engendering a false statistic. Were it not for intoxicating drinks, there would not be drunkenness. Also, at the present time the natives are "living like a herd of swine in a small grass hut." If you can find a way to provide Hawaiian youths with a better home life, "you have taken the first and most important step toward a reformation in morals." Another thing that would improve manners on these islands would be, an improved of the prime importance of the civilized principle of Private Property:

What one earns is consumed by the others who do nothing. Many an industrious native has assured me he might as well sit idle as work; for the avails of his labor are all consumed by his friends in and about his house, and he had not the power to send them away, or set them to work.



Ap 14th

6 Am to Island — An overcast — & moist day — but truly April — [^No sun all day] like such as began methinks on Fast day — or the 5th — You cannot foretell how it will turn out. The river has been steadily rising since the ~~last~~ 1st of April though you would not think there had been rain enough to cause it — It now covers the meadows pretty respectably. [^It is perhaps because the warm rain has been melting the frost in the ground — this may be the great cause of the regular spring rise.] I see half a dozen crow black birds uttering their coarse rasping char char — ~~high~~ like great rusty springs on the top of an elm by the riverside — & often at each char they open their great tails. They also attain to a clear whistle with some effort — but seem to have some difficulty in their throats yet —

[Transcript]

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The P. Tremuloides by the Island shed pollen a very few catkins yet at least XX — for some anthers are effete & black this morning — though it is hardly curved down yet & is but 1 1/2 inches long at most. White maples are now generally in bloom. The musk tortoise — stirring on the bottom. Most of the stellaria has been winter killed — but I find a few flowers or a protected & still green sprig — prob — not blossomed long.

A — 8. Am. Took caterpillars eggs from the apple trees at the Texas house — & {perhaps this is "I"} found about 30.

It being completely overcast — having rained a little, the robins &c sing at 4 1/2 as at sundown usually. The waters too are smooth & full of reflections.

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 Mid-April: After a couple of weeks in Lawrence, August Bondi made a trip through the eastern section of the [Kansas Territory](#) to acquaint himself with affairs on the border. With a partner, he would squat on a claim on the Mosquito branch of the Pottawatomie in Franklin County.




[Charles Usherwood](#) wrote about shells falling from the sky, in his service journal outside Sebastopol, as if he were describing spring weather events: “Saturday. Cold and showery day but which did not retard the bombardment. Sunday, weather fine, cannonading rapid. Monday. Another fine day. — Enemy on the offensive before Balaklava, the firing at Sebastopol the same as yesterday.”

[Henry Thoreau](#) began to feel rather limp. Apparently his bad cold from February had lingered. Probably not until his legs were affected did he regard himself as truly “sick and good for nothing but to lie on back.” This feeling persisted through much of the year. During this time of a bad cough and weak knees, Thoreau grew his whiskers.

**THOREAU
HEALTH ISSUE**

“I have been sick and good for nothing but to lie on my back and wait for something to turn up, for two or three months.”

 April 15, Sunday: [Henry Thoreau](#) was on the river near Ball’s Hill (Gleason D9).



Ap 15.

9 Am. to Atkin’s Boat House — (No sun till setting)
Another still moist overcast day — without sun but all day a crescent of light as if breaking away in the north. The waters smooth & full of reflections — A still cloudy day like this is perhaps the best to be on the water —

[Transcript]


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To the clouds perhaps we owe both the stillness & the reflections — for the light is in a great measure reflected from the water. Robins sing now at 10 Am as in the morning — & the Phoebe — & pig — woodpecker's cackle is heard — & many martins (with white-bell — swallows) are skimming [[^]& twittering] above the water — perhaps catching the small fuzzy gnats with which the air is filled. The sound of church bells, at various distances — in Concord & the neighboring towns, sounds very sweet to us on the water — this still day — It is the song of the villages heard with the song of the birds. The great meadows are covered, except a small island in their midst, {Thoreau's comma is possibly altered from a dash or period} but not a duck do we see there. On a low limb of a maple on the edge of the river 30 rods from the present shore we saw a fish hawk eating a fish. 60 rods off we could see his white crest — We landed & got nearer by stealing through the woods His legs looked long as he stood up on the limb with his back to us — & his body looked black against the sky & by contrast with the white of his head. [[^]There was a dark stripe on the side of the head] He had got the fish under his feet on the limb, & would bow his head snatch a mouthful & then look, hastily over his right shoulder in our direction — then snatch another mouthful & look over his left shoulder — ~~When we approached in the boat~~ [[^]At length] he launched off {Thoreau may have altered this from another word} & flapped heavily away — We found ~~in~~ [[^]at the bottom of] the water beneath where he sat numerous fragments of the fish he had been eating parts of the fins (—) entrails — gills &c & some was dropped on the bough. From one fin which I examined, I judged that it was either a sucker or a pout — There were small leaches adhering to it. In the meanwhile — as we were stealing through the woods — we heard the pleasing note of the pine-warbler bringing back warmer weather — & we heard one honk of a goose & looking up saw a large narrow harrow of them steering N. E. Half a mile further we saw another fish-hawk upon a dead limb [[^]midway up] of a swamp white-oak over the water at the end of a small island. We paddled directly toward him till within 30 rods. A crow came scolding to the tree & lit within 3 feet, [[^]looking about as large comp. with the hawk, as a crow b. bird to a crow —] but he paid no attention to him. We had a very good view of him as he sat sidewise to us — & of his eagle shaped head & beak. The white feathers of his head which were erected somewhat mad him look like a copple-crowned hen — When he launched off he uttered a clear whistling note — phe phe, phe phe, phe phe, somewhat like that of a tell-tale — but more round & less shrill & rapid — & another perhaps his mate 50 rods off joined him. They flew heavily, as we looked at them from behind,

more like a blue heron & bittern than I was aware of — their long wings undulating slowly to the tip — like the herons — & the bodies seeming sharp like a gulls — & unlike a hawk's. In the water beneath where he was perched we found many fragments of a pout — bits of red gills — entrails — fins — & some of the ~~fe~~ long flexible black feelers — scattered for 4 or 5 feet. This pout appeared to have been quite fresh and was prob. caught alive — We afterward started one of them from an oak over the water a mile beyond — [[^]just above the boat-house] & he ~~flew~~ skimmed off very low over the water ~~as~~ several times striking it with ~~his~~ a loud sound heard plainly 60 rods off at least — & we followed him with {both} our ~~be~~ eyes till we could only see faintly his undulating wings against the sky in the W. horizon. [[^]You could probably tell if any were] about by looking for fragments of fish under the trees on which they would perch.

We had scared up [[^]but] few ducks some ap. black which quacked — & some small rolling pins prob. teal. Returning — we had a fine ~~b~~ view of a blue-heron standing erect & open to view on a meadow island — by the great swamp S of the bridge — looking as broad as a boy on the side — & then some sheldrakes sailing in the smooth water beyond — These soon sailed behind points of meadow — the heron flew away — & one male shell-drake flew past us low over the water reconnoitering large — & brilliant black & white — When the heron takes to flight what {Thoreau may have altered this from "it" or "is"} a change in size & appearance — it is presto change. There go two great undulating wings pinned together — but the body & neck must have been left behind somewhere.

Before we rounded Balls' Hill — the water now beautifully smooth — at 2 1/2 Pm — we saw 3 gulls [**Herring Gull**  *Larus argentatus*] sailing on the glassy meadow at least 1/2 mile off by the oak peninsula [[^]the plainer because they were against the reflection of the hills.] — They looked larger than afterward close at hand — as if their whiteness was reflected & doubled. As we advanced into the Great Meadows — making the only ripples in its broad expanse there being [[^]still] not a ray of sunshine — only a subdued light through {Thoreau may have altered this from another word} the thinner crescent in the north — the reflections of the maples — of Ponkawtasset & the poplar A wall which ran down to the water on the hill side — without Hill — & the whole township in the SW out any remarkable curve in {Thoreau may have altered this from "it"} it — was exaggerated by the were as perfect as I ever saw — the reflection into the half of an ellipse. meadow was expanded to a large lake — the shore line being referred to the sides of the hills reflected in it —

It was a scene worth many [[^]such] voyages to see — It was remarkable how much light those white gulls — & also a bleached post on a distant shore — [[^]absorbed &] reflected through that sombre atmosphere — conspicuous [[^]almost] as candles in the night — When we got near to the gulls they rose heavily & flapped away answering a more distant one — with a remarkable — lazy, [[^]deliberate] melancholy, squeaking scream — [[^]mewing or piping] almost a squeal. It was a little like the loon. Is this sound the origin of the name Seamew? Notwithstanding the smoothness of the water — we could not easily see black ducks against the reflection of the woods — but heard them rise at a distance before we saw them. The birds were still in the middle of the day — but began to sing again by 4 1/2 Pm. — prob. because of the clouds — Saw & heard a

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Kingfisher — [^do they not come with the smooth-waters of April?] hurrying over the meadow as if on urgent business —
That general — tut tut tut tut — or snoring of frogs on the shallow meadow heard first slightly the 5th — There is a very faint er er er now & then mixed with it.

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Spring/Summer: [Waldo Emerson](#) to his journal:

JONES VERY

Jones Very, who thought it an honor to wash his own face, seems to me less insane than men who hold themselves cheap.



For the benefit of his journal, Emerson superciliously analyzed his friends [Bronson Alcott](#), [Ellery Channing](#), and [Henry Thoreau](#) as small men who vainly supposed they were “the three leading men in America” but who instead “never saw a grander arch than their own eyebrow” (did this mean, to Emerson, that they “had never been to Washington DC” or did it mean, to Emerson, that they “had never been inside a mansion?”) and who “never saw the sky of a principle which made them modest & contemners of themselves”:

Washington, Adams, Quincy, Franklin, I would willingly adorn my hall with, & I will have daguerres of Alcott, Channing, Thoreau.

[Would this have been the occasion (check this) on which Emerson averred that Thoreau had inquired, in regard to Alcott, that “fairly enough, when is it that the man is to begin to provide for himself?”]

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 April 16, Monday: Father [Isaac Hecker](#), CSSR, wrote to [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#).

[Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “I realized this morning the prodigious effect of climate on one’s state of mind. I was Italian or Spanish. In this blue and limpid air, and under this southern sun, the very walls smile at you. All the chestnut trees were en fete; with their glistening buds shining like little flames at the curved ends of the branches, they were the candelabra of the spring decking the festival of eternal nature. How young everything was, how kindly, how gracious! the moist freshness of the grass, the transparent shadows in the courtyards, the strength of the old cathedral towers, the white edges of the roads. I felt myself a child; the sap of life mounted again into my veins as it does in plants. How sweet a thing is a little simple enjoyment! And now, a brass band which has stopped in the street makes my heart leap as it did at eighteen. Thanks be to God; there have been so many weeks and months when I thought myself an old man. Come poetry, nature, youth, and love, knead my life again with your fairy hands; weave round me once more your immortal spells; sing your siren melodies, make me drink of the cup of immortality, lead me back to the Olympus of the soul. Or rather, no paganism! God of joy and of grief, do with me what Thou wilt; grief is good, and joy is good also. Thou art leading me now through joy. I take it from Thy hands, and I give Thee thanks for it.”

At 5 AM [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Nawshawtuct or Lee’s Hill (Gleason F6):

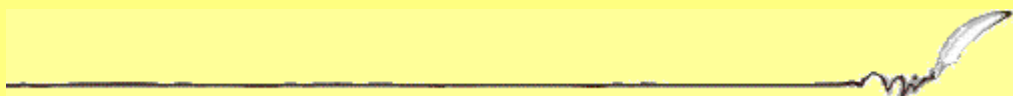



Ap 16th
5 Am to Hill —

[Transcript]

“Downriver,” “To Great Meadow,” and “To Hill” signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball’s Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11



Clear & cool — a frost whitens ground — yet a mist hangs over the village — There is a thin ice reaching a foot from the water’s edge — which the earliest rays will melt. I scare up several snipes [**Common Snipe**  *Gallinago gallinago*] feeding on the meadow’s edge — It is remarkable how they conceal themselves when they alight on a bare spit of the meadow — I look with my glass to where one alighted 4 rods off — & at length detected its head rising amid the cranberry vines — & withered grass blades which [^last] it closely resembled in color — with its eye steadily fixed on me. The robins — &c — blackbirds — songspars — sing now on all hands just before sunrise perhaps quite as generally as at any season Going up the hill I examined the tree tops for hawks — What is that little hawk about as big as a turtle dove on the top of one of the wht oaks on top of the hill? It appears to have a reddish breast — now it flies to the bare top of a dead tree — now some crows join — & it pursues one — diving at it repeatedly from above — down a rod or more — as far as I can see toward the hemlocks — Returning that way I came unexpected close to this hawk perched near the top of a large aspen by the river right over my head — He seemed neither to see or hear me. At first I thought it a [^new] woodpecker — I had a fair view of all its back and tail within 40 feet with my glass. Its back was I should say a [^rather] dark ash — spotted & so barred wings & back with large white spots [^woodpecker like (not well described in books)] — prob — on the inner vanes of the feathers — both 2ndaries & primaries — & prob — coverts. The tail conspicuously barred with black — 3 times beyond the covering & feathers & once at least

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under them. Beneath & undertail mainly a dirty white [^with long & conspic. femoral feathers, unlike Spar. hawk.] — Head darker & bill dark — It was busily pruning itself — & suddenly pitched off downward. What I call a pig. hawk. [^prob. Sharp-shinned V. May 4th {written in ink}] In the mean while heard the quivet through the wood — & looking saw through an opening a [^small] compact flock of pigeons [**American Passenger Pigeons** █ *Ectopistes migratorius*] flying low about. From the Hill top looked to the Great Meadows with glass — They were very smooth — with a slight mist over them — but I could see very clearly the pale salmon of the E horizon reflected there & contrasting with an intermediate streak of skim milk blue — now just after sunrise.

PM to Flints Pond.

A perfectly clear & very warm day — a little warmer than the 31st of March or any yet — & I have not got far before [^for the first time] I regret that I wore my great coat. Noticed the first wasp — & many cicindelae on a sandy place — have probably seen the latter before in the air — but this warmth brings them out in numbers — The grey of Hubbards oaks looks drier & more like summer — [^& it is now drier walking The frost in most places wholly out] I got so near a grass bird [**Vesper Sparrow** █ *Poocetes gramineus*] as to see the narrow circle of white round the eye — The spots on the E. guttatas in a still warm [^leafy-paved] ditch [^which dries up] are exceedingly bright Stows cold pond hole is still full of ice though partly submerged — now — does it last? [^the only pool in this state that I see —] At Callitriche pool — (I see no flowers on it) — I see what looks like minnows an inch long with a remarkably forked tail-fin — Prob. larvae of dragonflies. [^The water ranunculus was very forward here] The eyed-head conspicuous & something like a large dorsal fin They dart about in this warm pool & rest at different angels with the horizon. This pool dries up in Summer. [^The very pools — the receptacles of all kinds of rubbish — now {~~too~~} soon after the ice has melted so transparent & of glassy smoothness & full of animal & vegetable life] The orange copper vanessa are interesting & beautiful objects.

mid-sized is out — & a great many of the large buffedged are fluttering over the leaves in wood paths — this warm pm — I am obliged to carry my great coat on my arm —

A striped snake rustles down a dry open hill side where the withered grass is long. I could not dig to the nest of the Deer-mouse in Britton's Hollow — because of the frost — about 6 inches beneath the surface. [^Yet though I have seen no ploughing in fields — the Surveyors plowed in the road on the 14th ult] As far as I dug their galleries ~~occupied~~ appeared at first to be lined with a sort of membrane — which I found was the bark or skin of roots of the right sizes {possibly this is "size" with the "e" smudged} their galleries taking the place of the decayed wood — ~~of the~~ An oak stump.

At Flints sitting on the rock — we see a great many — ducks — mostly shell drakes on the pond — which will hardly abide us within half a mile. With the glass I see by their reddish heads that all of one party — the main body — are females [**Common Merganser** █ *Mergus merganser*] — You see little more than their heads at a distance & not much white but on their throats perchance — When they fly they look black & white but not so large nor with that brilliant contrast of black & white which the male exhibits — In another direction is a male ~~or 2~~ by himself conspicuous — perhaps several. Anon alights near us a flock of Golden eyes — surely with their great black (-looking) heads [^& a white patch on its side] short stumpy bills (after looking at the mergansers —)

Much clear black — contrasting with much clear white — {drawing} Their heads & bills look ludicrously short & parrot like — after the others — Our presence & a boat [^party] on the pond at last drove nearly all the ducks into the deep easterly cove —

We stole down on them carefully through the woods — at last crawling on our bellies — with great patience — till at last we found our selves within seven or 8 rods [^as I measured afterward] of the great body of them & watched them for ~~15 or~~ 20 [^or 30] minutes with the glass through a screen of catbriar & alders &c There were ~~a do~~ 12 female sheldrakes close together & nearest us [^within 2 rods of the shore where it was very shallow] — ~~4 or~~ 2 or more constantly moving about [^within about the diam. of a rod] & keeping watched while the rest were trying to sleep ~~with~~ to catch a nap with their heads in their backs — but from time to time one [^would] wake up enough to plume himself. It seemed as if they must have been broken of their sleep — & were trying to make it up — having an arduous journey before — them — for we had seen them all disturbed & on the wing within half an hour. [^They were headed {Thoreau may have altered this from "heading" or from another word} various ways] Now & then they seemed to see or hear or smell us — & uttered a low note of alarm — something like the note of a tree toad but [^very] fainter — [^or perhaps a little more wiry & like that of pigeons —] but the sleepers hardly lifted their heads for it. ~~Now & then one of th~~ How fit that this note of alarm should be made to resemble the croaking of a frog — & so not betray them to the gunners! They appeared to sink about mid-way in the water — & their heads were all a rich reddish brown — their throats white — Now & then one of the watchmen would lift his head & turn his bill directly upward showing his white throat — {Thoreau put a horizontal line below "white throat" to above "There were some," presumably to mark paragraph separation} There were some black — or dusky ducks in company with them at first — ap. about as large as they — but more alarmed — Their throats looked straw colored — somewhat like a bitterns & I saw their shovel bills.



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These soon sailed further off

At last we arose {Thoreau may have altered this from another word} & rushed to the shore — within 3 rods of them — & they rose up with a din — 26 mergansers I think all females — 10 black ducks — (& 5 golden-eyes from [^a little] further off — also another still more distant flock of one of these kinds {Thoreau reformed “d” in pencil}

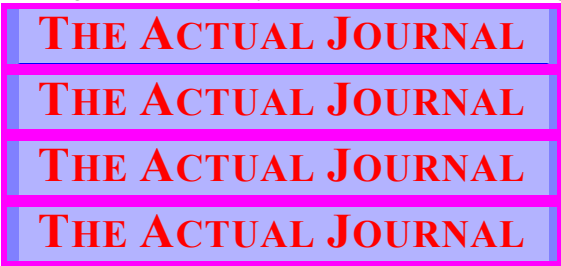
The black ducks alone uttered a sound, their usual hoarse quack —

They all flew in loose array — but the 3 kinds in separate flocks./ {this mark was presumably a false start} We were surprised to find ourselves looking on a company of birds devoted to slumber after the alarm & activity we had just witnessed. Returning at Goose Pond [^which many water bugs — (gyrinus) were now dimpling.] we scared up 2 black ducks — The shore was strewn with much fresh eel grass — & the fine now short eriocaulon with its white roots — ap — all pulled up by them & drifted in.

The spearer’s light tonight — & after dark the sound of geese honking all together very low over the houses — & ap. about to settle on the Lee meadow.

Have not noticed fox-col — spars since Ap. 13th. I am startled sometimes these mornings to hear the sound of {Thoreau may have altered this from “a”} doves [**Mourning Dove**  *Zenaida macroura*] alighting on the roof just over my head — they come down so harrrd upon it, as if one had thrown a heavy stick on-to it — & I wonder it does not injure their organization. Their legs must be cushioned in their sockets to save them from the shock.¹⁰⁵

When we reached Britton’s clearing on our return this Pm — at sunset — The mts after this our warmest day as yet — had got a peculiar soft mantle of blue haze — pale blue as a blue heron — ushering in the long series of Summer sunsets — & we were glad that we had stayed out so late & felt no need to go home now in a hurry —



April 17, Tuesday: [Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the “Swiss [Thoreau](#),” wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: “The weather is still incredibly brilliant, warm, and clear. The day is full of the singing of birds, the night is full of stars, nature has become all kindness, and it is a kindness clothed upon with splendor.

For nearly two hours have I been lost in the contemplation of this magnificent spectacle. I felt myself in the temple of the infinite, in the presence of the worlds, God’s guest in this vast nature. The stars wandering in the pale ether drew me far away from earth. What peace beyond the power of words, what dews of life eternal, they shed on the adoring soul! I felt the earth floating like a boat in this blue ocean. Such deep and tranquil delight nourishes the whole man, it purifies and ennobles. I surrendered myself, I was all gratitude and docility.”

[Charles Usherwood](#) wrote about shells falling from the sky, in his service journal outside Sebastopol, as if he were describing spring weather events: “Today the cannonading along the lines before Sebastopol decreased in rapidity evidently showing that the bombardment had terminated for a while. — In the evening of today the French annoyed the enemy by firing rockets from Victoria Redoubt.”

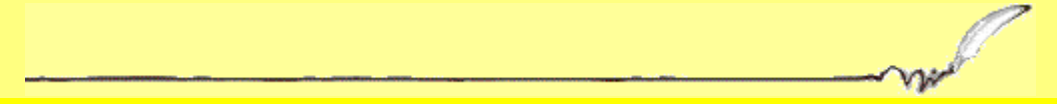
In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Lee’s Cliff (Gleason K6):

105. Francis H. Allen was persuaded that this has been a mistaken identification — that these could not have been light mourning doves but instead must have been heavy domestic pigeons.



"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10



very little frost — a clear — morning — The oars still cold to the hands at this hour — Did I not hear an F. Juncorum at a dist.?? [^Yes] [^Saw some C. b. birds inspecting that old nest of theirs —] I believe I see a tree-sparrow still but I do not remember an F. hiemalis for 2 ~~or 3~~ days. [^v 18] Geese went over at noon — when warm & sunny

P. m. to Lee's Cliff.

I leave off my great coat — though the wind rises rather fresh before I return. It is worth the while to walk so free and light — having got off both boots & great coat. Great flocks of grackles & redwings about the Swamp-B. brook willows — perching restlessly on an apple tree all at once & then with a sweeping or curving flight alighting on the ground. Many robins flit before me in flocks these days. I rarely find a nest (of the right species) near the river but it has a piece of [^a] fish-line in it — The yel — spot tortoises are very common now in the ditches — tumbling in & crawling off — & perhaps burying themselves at your approach — ~~some~~ [^many] are outside. The 2nd sallow catkin (or any willow) I have seen in blossom — there are 3 or 4 catkins on the twig partly open — I am about to clutch — but find already a bee ~~to~~ [^curved close on] each [^half opened catkin intoxicated with its early sweet.] — one perhaps a honey bee — so intent on its sweets or pollen — that they do not dream of flying [^Various kinds of bees — some of the honey bees have little {this is blotched, possibly canceled} yell masses of pollen? on their thighs — some seem to be taking into their mouths.] — so quickly & surely does the bee find the earliest flower — as if he had slumbered all winter at the root of the plant. No matter what pains you take probably — undoubtedly — an insect will have found the first flower before you.

Yesterday I saw several larger frogs out — perhaps some were small bullfrogs — That warmth brought them out on to the bank — & they jumped in before me. The general stirring of frogs To day I see a rana palustris — I think the first — & a mid sized bull frog. I think I suspect that those first seen in Hub's close were the little croakers

I see by their droppings that many birds perhaps robins — have lately roosted in that wine-glass — apple-scrub on Conantum — an excellent covert from the hawks — & there are 3 old nests in it though it is only 6 or 8 feet in diameter — I also see where birds have roosted in {there is a pencil line through "in"} a thick white pine — in Lees wood — It is easy to detect their roosting places now because they are in flocks — Saw a woodchuck — his deep reddish brown rear — somewhat grizzled about — looked like a ripe fruit mellowed by winter. C. saw one some time ago — They have several holes under Lee's Cliff — ~~& Lees~~ where they have worn bare & smooth sandy paths under the eaves of the rock — & I suspect that they nibble the early leaves there — [^The Arabis is half exterminated by some creature] They, or {Thoreau may have altered this from "&" or "a"} the partridges or rabbits — there & at mid-Conant cliff — make sad havoc with the earliest rad — leaves & flowers which I am watching — & in the village I have to contend with the hens — who also love an early salad.

Sat at the wall corner to see an eagle's white head [^& tail] against the red-hillside — but in vain. The distant ~~whit~~ pines over the Spanish Brook — seem to flake into tiers — the whole tree looks like an open cone. A ~~warm~~ sudden warm day like yesterday & this takes off some birds — and adds others — It is a crisis in their career — The fox-col — spars — seem to be gone & I suspect that most of the tree spars & ~~F.~~ [^F.] hiemalis at least went yesterday. So the pleasanter weather seems not an unmixed benefit. The flowers of the common elm at Lee's are now loose & dangling — as well out ~~some~~ [^a] days [^or 2] in advance of Cheney's — but I see no pollen — Walking und the Cliff — I am struck by the already darker healthier green of early weeds there — e.g. the little thyme-flowering sandwort — before there is any green to speak of elsewhere —

Did I not see the yel — red-poll — on an apple tree with some robins — by chance in the same place where I saw one last year? {Thoreau's penciled notation: "Yes?"} Yet I see no ~~se~~ chestnut on head — but bright yellow breast & blackish further extremity. The early aspen catkins are now some of them 2 1/2 inches long — & white dangling in the breeze



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The earliest gooseberry leaves are fairly unfolding now & show some green at a little dist.

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April 18, Wednesday: [Charles Usherwood](#) wrote about shells falling from the sky, in his service journal outside Sebastopol, as if he were describing spring weather events: “The firing has now subsided into the ordinary pace characterizing a siege — day fine.”



April 18, Wednesday: 6 A.M. — See and hear tree sparrows, and hear hyemalis still. Rained last evening and was very dark. Fair this morning and warm. White-bellied swallow’s and martin’s twitter now at 9 A.M.

P.M. — To Cliffs and Walden and Hubbard’s Close.

The hillside and especially low bank-sides are now conspicuously green. Almost did without a fire this morning. Coming out, I find it very warm, warmer than yesterday or any day yet. It is a reminiscence of past summers. It is perfectly still and inmost sultry, with wet-looking clouds hanging about, and from time to time hiding the sun. First weather of this kind. And as I sit on Fair Haven Hill-side, the sun actually burns my cheek; yet I left some fire; in the house, not knowing behind a window how warm it was. The flooded meadows and river are smooth, and just enough in shadow for reflections. The rush sparrows tinkle now at 3 P. M. far over the bushes, and hylodes are peeping in a distant pool. Robins are singing and peeping, and jays are screaming. I see one or two smokes in the horizon. I can still see the mountains slightly spotted with snow. The frost is out enough for plowing probably in most open ground.

When I reach the top of the hill, I see suddenly all the southern horizon (east or south from Bear Hill in Waltham to the river) full of a mist, like a dust, already concealing the Lincoln hills and producing distinct wreaths of vapor, the rest of the horizon being clear. Evidently a sea-turn, — a wind from over the sea, condensing the moisture in our warm atmosphere and putting another aspect on the face of things. All this I see and say long before I feel the change, while still sweltering on the rocks, for the heat was oppressive. Nature cannot abide this sudden heat, but calls for her fan. In ten minutes I hear a susurrus in the shrub oak leaves at a distance. and soon an agreeable fresh air washes these warm rocks, and some mist surrounds me.

A low blackberry on the rocks is now expanding its leaves just after the gooseberry. A little sallow about two feet high and apparently intermediate between tristis and the next, with reddish anthers not yet burst, will bloom to-morrow in Well Meadow Path. The shad-bush flower-buds, beginning to expand, look like leaf-buds bursting now. Male sweet-gale. One cowslip fully expanded, but no pollen; probably is at Second Division. (Some fully open May 4th, but no pollen till next morning, in chamber!!) Some are plowing. Am overtaken by a sudden sun-shower, after which a rainbow. Elm (American) in tumbler and probably at Cliffs probably a day [or] two before Cheney’s.

In the evening hear far and wide the ring of toads, and a thunder-shower with its lightning is seen and heard in the west.

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April 19, Thursday: [Charles Usherwood](#) wrote about shells falling from the sky, in his service journal outside Sebastopol, as if he were describing spring weather events: “Charming weather. — Exchange of shots between the troops at Balaklava and the enemy during the night.

Detail of duties for the 2nd Brigade Light Division for the trenches tonight:

21 Gun battery, — 19th Regiment 156 men and 90th Regiment 46 men

Advanced Works, — 88 Regiment 224 men and 97th Regiment 189 men

Reserve under Colonel Egerton 77th Regiment, — 77th Regiment 250 men and 90th Regiment 50 men

Total 915 men

Per orders received the 77th and 90th Regiments under Colonel Egerton attacked the Russian Rifle pits, and which after a brief struggle were captured tho’ not without loss, Colonel Egerton with his Adjutant Lempere being among the killed. — The way in which the Colonel was killed was while in the act of removing the body of his Adjutant a mere youth in appearance. They were buried in the graveyard of the 2nd Brigade on the side of the Woronzoff Road.”



April 19. 5:00 A.M. — Up Assabet.

“Up Assabet” is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau’s two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10

Warm and still and somewhat cloudy. Am without greatcoat. The guns are firing and bells ringing. I hear a faint honk and, looking up, see going over the river, within fifty rods, thirty-two geese [[Canada Goose](#) [Branta canadensis](#)] in the form of a hay-hook, only two in the hook, and they are at least six feet apart. Probably the whole line is twelve rods long. At least three hundred have passed over Concord, or rather within the breadth of a mile, this spring (perhaps twice as many); for I have seen or heard of a dozen flocks, and the two I counted had about thirty each. Many tortoise have their heads out. The river has fallen a little. Going up the Assabet, two or three tortoises roll down the steep bank with a rustle. One tumbles on its edge and rolls swiftly like a disk cast by a boy, with its back to me, from eight or ten feet into the water. I hear no concert of tree sparrows. Hear the tull-lull of myrtle-bird [[White-throated Sparrow](#) [Zonotrichia albicollis](#)] in street, and the jingle of the chip-bird [[Chipping Sparrow](#) [Spizella passerina](#)].

This forenoon, sit with open window.

Now plowing and planting will begin generally.

P.M. — To Walden.


Some golden willows will now just peel fairly, though on this one the buds have not started. (Another sudden change in the wind to northeast and a freshness with some mist from the sea at 3.30 P.M.) These osiers to my eye have only a little more liquid green than a month ago. A shad frog on the dry grass. The wild red cherry will begin to leaf to-morrow.

From Heywood’s Peak I thought I saw the head of a loon in the pond, thirty-five or forty rods distant. Bringing my glass to bear, it seemed sunk very low in the water, —all the neck concealed,— but I could not tell which end was the bill. At length I discovered that it was the whole body of a little duck, asleep with its head in its back, exactly in the middle of the pond. It had a moderate-sized black head and neck, a white breast, and seemed dark-brown above, with a white spot on the side of the head, not reaching to the outside, from base of mandibles, and another, perhaps, at the end of the wing, with some black there. It sat drifting round a little, but with ever its breast toward the wind, and from time to time it raised its head and looked round to see if it were safe. I think it was the smallest duck I ever saw. Floating buoyantly asleep on the middle of Walden Pond. Was it not a female of the buffle-headed or spirit duck [[Bufflehead](#) [Bucephala albeola](#)]? I believed the wings looked blacker when it flew, with some white beneath. It floated like a little casket, and at first I doubted a good while if it possessed life, until I saw it raise its head and look around. It had chosen a place for its nap exactly equidistant between the two shores there, and, with its breast to the wind, swung round only as much as a vessel held by its anchors in the stream. At length the cars scared it.




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Goodwin had caught twenty-five pouts and one shiner at the Walden meadow, but no perch.
Slippery elm in tumbler to-day: probably to-morrow at Cliffs.
A partridge [Ruffed Grouse  *Bonasa umbellus* (Partridge)] drums.



CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO

 April 20, Friday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [George William Curtis](#).

Concord Ap. 20th '55
Mr Editor
You may omit
the words "in Scripture",
if you will indicate an
omission somewhat in
this wise—
"Somewhere + +; may be" &c
Yrs
Henry D. Thoreau


Henry Joseph Gardner (1819-1892) wrote from Boston to Charles Wesley Slack about passage of a new "Anti-liquor Bill," and that bill's constitutionality.



Ap. 20
Rains all day — taking out the frost — & imprisoning me. You cannot set a post yet on ac. of frost.

[Transcript]

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 April 21, Saturday: [Professor Henri-Frédéric Amiel](#), who would be referred to as the "Swiss [Thoreau](#)," wrote in his *JOURNAL INTIME*: "I have been reading a great deal: ethnography, comparative anatomy, cosmical systems. I have traversed the universe from the deepest depths of the empyrean to the peristaltic movements of the atoms in the elementary cell. I have felt myself expanding in the infinite, and enfranchised in spirit from the bounds of time and space, able to trace back the whole boundless creation to a point without dimensions, and seeing the vast multitude of suns, of milky ways, of stars, and nebulae, all existent in the point. And on all sides stretched mysteries, marvels and prodigies, without limit, without number, and without end. I felt the unfathomable thought of which the universe is the symbol live and burn within me; I touched, proved, tasted, embraced my nothingness and my immensity; I kissed the hem of the garments of God, and gave Him thanks for being Spirit and for being life. Such moments are glimpses of the divine. They make one conscious of one's immortality; they bring home to one that an eternity is not too much for the study of the thoughts and works of the eternal; they awaken in us an adoring ecstasy and the ardent humility of love."

Near the Cook County Courthouse in Chicago, the [Lager-Beer Riot](#), ending in one death and approximately 60 arrests.

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April 21. 5 A.M. — To Cliffs.

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"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11

Fair and still. There is a fog over the river, which shows at a distance more than near by. Not much. The frost conceals the green of the gooseberry leaves just expanding. The shallow puddles left by yesterday's rain in the fields are skimmed over.

Hear the first seringo [Thoreau frequently called the Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis* the seringo or seringo-bird, but he also applied the name to other small birds. At least once he spoke of the "seringo," that is to say the "song" or "serenade," of the Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*]. The duskyish crown is divided by a lighter line. Above it is ashy-brown and drab (?) a streak of lemon yellow over the eye; some brownish drab or bay making a spot on wings; white lines diverging from throat; reddish legs against sun; breast and sides dashed. It has not the note of [Nuttall](#)'s Savannah, nor, methinks, the blackness of Wilson's. Is it the *passerina* [Savannah Sparrow *Passerculus sandwichensis*], which [Nuttall](#) does not describe? [THOREAU'S NOTE: Yes. He calls it *T. savanurum* (p. 494); says they arrive about the middle of May "occasionally." "On these occasions they perch in sheltered trees in pairs, and sing in an agreeable voice somewhat like that of the Purple Finch, though less vigorously." Thinks they go north to breed.] [1906 EDITOR'S NOTE, BASED ENTIRELY UPON THE FALSE CONCEIT THAT A GIVEN SPECIES'S BIRDSONG DOES NOT CHANGE FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION: It would be hard to describe the grasshopper sparrow's song more inaccurately.]

At Cliffs, I hear at a distance a wood thrush. [IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THE FOLLOWING IS THOREAU'S NOTE OR THE 1906 EDITOR'S: The singer must have been a hermit thrush [[Hermit Thrush](#) *Catharus guttatus*]. The date is conclusive.] It affects us as a part of our unfallen selves. The *Populus grandidentata* there may open to-morrow. The frost saves my feet a wetting probably. As I sit on the Cliffs, the sound of the frost and frozen drops melting and falling on the leaves in the woods below sounds [*sic*] like a gentle but steady rain all the country over, while the sun shines clear above all.

Aunt Maria has put into my hands to-day for safekeeping three letters from Peter Thoreau, dated Jersey (the first July 1st, 1801, the second April 22d, 1804, and the third April 11th, 1806) and directed to his niece "Miss Elizabeth Thoreau, Concord, Near Boston," etc.; also a "Vue de la Ville de St. Helier," etc., accompanying the first. She is not certain that any more were received from him.

The first is in answer to one from Elizabeth announcing the death of her father (my grandfather). He states that *his* mother died the 26th of June, 1801, — the day before he received E.'s letter, — though not till after he had heard from another source of the death of his brother, which was not communicated to his mother. "She was in the 79th year of her age, and retained her memory to the last.... She lived with my two sisters, who took the greatest care of her." He says that he had written to E.'s father about his oldest brother, who died about a year before, but had had no answer; had written that he left his children, two sons and a daughter, in a good way. "The eldest son and daughter are both married, and have children, the youngest is about eighteen. I am still a widower of four children.... I have but two left, Betsy and Peter, James and Nancy are both at rest." He adds that he sends a view "of our native town," etc.

The second of these letters is sent by Captain John Harvey of Boston, then at Guernsey. He says that on the 4th of February previous he sent her a copy of the last letter he had written, which was in answer to her second, since he feared she had not received it. Says they "are still at war with the French; that they received the day before a letter from her "Uncle and Aunt Le Cappelain of London." Complains of not receiving letters. "Your Aunts Betsy and Peter join with me," etc.

According to the third letter, he received an answer to that he sent by Captain Harvey, by Captain Touzel, and

will forward this by the last, who is going *via* Newfoundland to Boston. "He expects to go to Boston every year." Several vessels from Jersey go there every year. His nephew had told him some time before that he "met a gentleman from Boston who told him he [saw or knew? (torn out.)][The previous set of brackets are Thoreau's.] Thoreau & Hayse there," and he (Peter Thoreau) therefore thinks the children must have kept up the name of the firm. Says Captain Harvey was an old friend of his. "Your cousin John is a Lieutenant in the British service, he has been already a campaign on the continent, he is very fond of it." "Your aunts Betsy and Peter join," etc. Aunt Maria thinks the correspondence ceased at Peter's death, because he was the one who wrote English.

MAJOR JOHN THOREAU

P.M. — Sail to meadow near Carlisle Bridge.

A fine, clear, and pleasant day with a little west wind. Saw a painted turtle not two inches in diameter. This must be more than one year old. A female redwing. I see yellow redpolls on the bushes near the water, — handsome birds, — but hear no note. Watched for some time a dozen black ducks on the meadow's edge in a retired place, some on land and some sailing. Fifty rods off and without the glass, they looked like crows feeding on the meadow's edge, with a scarcely perceptible tinge of brown. Examining the ground afterward, found that the whitish lichen thallus (which formed a crust, a sort of scurfy bald place, here and there in the meadow where the water had just risen) was loosened up and floating over the bare spaces mixed with a few downy feathers. I thought the flat meadow islets showed traces of having been probed by them. *All* the button-bushes, etc., etc., in and about the water are now swarming with those minute fuzzy gnats about an eighth of an inch long. The insect youth are on the wing. The whole shore resounds with their hum wherever we approach it, and they cover our boat and persons. They are in countless myriads the whole length of the river. A peep, peewee, on the shore. There is some gossamer on the willows. The river has risen considerably, owing to yesterday's rain, and new drift is brought down. The greater fullness of the Assabet is perceptible at the junction.



The New York *Tribune* said on the 19th, "The caterpillar-blossoms, and the slightest peeping of green leaves among the poplars and willows, and a tolerable springing of grass, are the only vegetable proofs yet to be seen." I should think they were just with our gooseberry.

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Ap 22

[Transcript]

5 1/2 Am to Assabet Stone Bridge —

Tree sparrows still. See a song sparrow getting its breakfast in the water on the meadow like a wader. Red maple yesterday XXX — [^an early one by further Stone bridge] Balm of Gilead prob. to-morrow — The Black currant is just begun to expand leaf — prob yesterday elsewhere — a little earlier than the red. {Thoreau made a false start before this} Though my hands are cold this morning I have not worn gloves for a few mornings past — a week or 10 days. The grass is now become {Thoreau put a vertical pencil line through "become"} rapidly green by the sides of the road — promising dandelions & buttercups.

Pm to Lee's Cliff — Fair — but windy —

Tree-sparrows about with their buntinish head & faint chirp. The leaves of the skunk {Thoreau put a vertical pencil line through "skunk"} cabbage unfolding in the meadows — make more show than any green yet — The yel — willow-catkins pushing out beg. to give {Thoreau put a vertical pencil line through "give"} the trees a misty downy appearance — dimming them. The bluish band on the breast of the king-fisher [**Belted Kingfisher**  *Ceryle alcyon*] leaves the pure white beneath in the form of a heart



The blossoms of the sweet gale are now on fire over the brooks — contorted like caterpillars. The fem. flowers also out like the hazel — with more stigmas — out at same time with the male. I first noticed my little mud turtles in the cellar out of their one of them — some 8 days ago — — I suspect those in the river begin to stir about that time? Antennaria prob yest. XX Skullcap — mead ditch. Many yel — redpolls on the willows now — they jerk their tails constantly like phoebes — but I hear only a faint chirp. Could that have been a female with them with an ash head & merely ? a yellow spot on each side of body — white beneath? & forked tail. [^prob. a myrtle-bird —] Red stemmed moss now — Goosanders male & female — They rise & fly — the female leading — They afterward show that they can get out of sight about as well by diving as by flying. At a dist — you see only the male — alternately diving & sailing — when the female may be all the while by his side.



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Getting over the wall under the mid. Conantum Cliff — I heard a loud & piercingly sharp whistle of 2 notes phe-phe — like — a peep somewhat — could it have been a woodchuck? Heard afterward [^under] at Lees Cliff a similar fainter one — which at one time appeared to come from a Pig. woodpecker — Cowbirds on an apple tree.

Crowfoot on Cliff — XXX Johnswort rad. leaves have grown several {Thoreau put a vertical pencil line from here through bottom of page} inches [^& angelica] shows

Elder leaves have grown 1 1/2 inches — & Thimble berry is forward under rocks — Mead. sweet in some places begs to open today — also barberry under Cliffs & a moss-rose tomorrow —

Say — earliest gooseberry {Thoreau put a vertical pencil line from here through the end of the day's entry} — then elder — thimble berry & raspberry {Thoreau marked "thimble berry" and "raspberry" for transposition} — & low blackberry — (the last 2 under rocks) — then wild red cherry — then black currant yesterday — then mead sweet (& barberry under Cliff) today. — A moss-rose tomorrow & hazel under cliffs tomorrow — {"under cliffs tomorrow —" was possibly a later addition}

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April 22, Sunday: In California, an intriguing article about race slavery appeared in this day's San Francisco Herald (see a following screen):

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A Fugitive Slave Case.

A colored boy named George, belonging to Jesse C. Cooper, of Henry county, Tennessee, was brought to this State in 1849, previous to the adoption of the State Constitution; and shortly after, made his escape. After the admission of the State, the Legislature passed an act in 1852, allowing all persons who had brought slaves to this country while California was only a territory, till the 15th of April, 1851, to remove them from the State. The Legislature of 1854-5 extended the time to the 15th of April, 1855. Proceedings for the recovery of the boy were commenced in San Jose, previous to the expiration of the time, *i. e.* 15th of April; but a decision up to the time of the expiration of the act was not rendered, and Judge Hester, (before whom the boy was brought up on a writ of *habeas corpus*) ruled that all the proceedings subsequent to the statute were absolutely void. Not having obtained redress in the State courts, the attorney of the claimant proceeded to this city and applied to Mr. John A. Monroe, U. S. Commissioner, for a warrant for the arrest of the fugitive, under the Fugitive Slave law of the United States, in which no time within which fugitive slaves must be reclaimed is specified. The boy was brought to this country while it was a territory, as stated above, and then made his escape; and up to the time of his arrest eluded the vigilance of his owner; and it would therefore appear to be plain that the claimant

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can invoke the aid of the United States Courts for the reclamation of the fugitive, as there is no limit in the Fugitive Slave law. As there are some nice questions of law involved in the case, the claimant preferred to wait till he received the advice of counsel before proceeding to file his affidavit—of which the following is a copy. It has not yet been sworn to:

United States of America—Northern District of California, ss.—Be it remembered that on this 20th day of April, in the Year of our Lord 1855, before me, John A. Monroe, a Commissioner duly appointed by the District Court of the United States of America for the Northern District of California, to take acknowledgments of bail and affidavits, and also to take depositions of witnesses in civil causes depending in the Courts of the United States, pursuant to the Act of Congress in that behalf, personally appeared James Kendall, who being duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that George, colored boy, heretofore, to wit: on the 15th day of February, A. D. 1851, within the jurisdiction of the United States aforesaid and the Honorable Court, the said George escaped from his owner, one Jesse C. Cooper, who claims the said George as a fugitive from labor, under and by virtue of an Act of Congress entitled "An Act to amend and supplementary to an Act entitled 'An Act respecting fugitives from justice and persons escaping from the services of their masters,'" approved September 18, 1852; and deponent says that said fugitive from labor refuses to return to his said master, who resides in Paris, in the county of Henry, in the State of Tennessee, contrary to the form of the Statutes of the United States in such cases made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of said United States.

HDT

WHAT?

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Sworn and subscribed, etc.
Whereupon the Attorney of the United States in and for the Northern District of California, asks of the Court that a warrant of apprehension may go against George, colored boy, in said affidavit charged.

SAN FRANCISCO, April 20, 1855.

S. W. INGE, U. S. District Attorney,
Per JOHN A. GODFREY.

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 April 23, Monday: [Roger Fenton](#), war photographer, took a famous staged salted paper print from a paper negative photograph of the Crimean War, for distribution in the newspapers, one in preparation for which for better effect he had tossed a bunch of cannonballs over from a ditch onto a cart path:



(How do we know of his early Photoshopping? –He had also made an exposure prior to his tossing of these cannonballs.)

The *Mississippi* completed her circumnavigation of the globe. Arriving in New-York harbor, docking at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the vessel was greeted a large crowd that included [Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry](#). The vessel had brought with it the memorabilia, ship logs, notes, diaries, and records that would be used to compile the official report of the circumnavigation.




Ap 23d

[Transcript]

River higher than before since winter. Whole of Lee Meadow covered. Saw 2 pig — woodpeckers — approach — & I think put their bills together & utter that o-week — o-week —
The currant — & 2nd goose {Thoreau put a vertical pencil line through “goose”} berry are bursting into leaf.

Pm. to Cedar Swamp via Assabet —

Warm & pretty still — Even the river sides are quiet at this hour (3 P. m.) as in summer — the birds are neither seen nor heard — The anthers of the larch are conspicuous — but I see no pollen. White cedar — tomorrow XXX [^in house the 24th] See a frog hawk [[Northern Harrier](#)  [Circus cyaneus](#)] — beating the bushes — regularly What a peculiarly formed wing. It should be called the kite. Its wings are very narrow & pointed — and its form in front — is a remarkable curve — & its body {drawing} is not heavy & buzzard-like — It occasionally hovers over some parts of the meadow or hedge & circles back over it — Only rising enough from time to time to clear the trees & fences — Soon after I see hovering over Sam Barretts — high sailing — a more buzzardlike brown hawk — black-barred beneath and on tail — with short broad ragged wings — & perhaps a white mark on under side of wings. The chickens utter a note of alarm — (Is it the Broad prob not v May 25 {Thoreau wrote “prob not v May 25” in ink} winged hawk — F Pennsylvanicus?) But why should the other be called F. Fuscus? I think this is called the partridge-hawk — The books are very unsatisfactory on these 2 hawks. Ap. barn swallows over the river. & do I see bank swallows also?

C. says he has seen a yellow legs.

I have seen also for some weeks occasionally a brown hawk with white rump — flying low —? which I have thought the frog-hawk in a diff. stage of plumage — but cant it be at {in pencil:prob — female hen harrier} this season — & is it not the marsh hawk — Yet it is not so heavy nearly as the hen hawk.

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 April 24, Tuesday: [Walenty Karol Kratzer](#) died at the age of 75.

The North American Phalanx, the Fourierite Institution in New-Jersey, having been reported to have failed, an article from The Monmouth Democrat that had falsified that report of failure was copied in the New-York Daily Tribune as follows: "The Phalanx has never suspended, nor has there ever been any talk or probability of any such event. Notwithstanding their heavy losses by fire, their business has never been suspended a moment in consequence. The rumor originated from a statement made at a meeting in New-York by some dissatisfied stockholder, that it had '*failed to meet his expectations.*' The Association is organised on the Fourierite plan, and whether the expectations alluded to were financial or social, we did not learn. Of one thing the public may rest assured, that in a business point of view the North American Phoenix is sound, and likely to continue so."

This day's edition of the New-York Daily Tribune also contained an article about recent arrests of the 5th Ward's bothersome streetwalkers, and an article about a female who had been caught disturbing the peace and good order of the metropolis by walking down the street at night in Greenwich Village fancily attired as a man:

ARRESTS OF THE STREET WALKERS. — There is no rest for the wicked — at least the nymphs of the pave begin to think so. Last evening, the Police of the Fifth Ward captured some of these females, who infect Broadway, and for one night at least they were removed from that thoroughfare.

—*—

A FEMALE IN MALE ATTIRE. — Sarah Jane Williams, a young woman 20 years of age, was arrested about 10 o'clock last night in Greenwich-st., by Officer Martin, of the Third Ward, for walking the streets in male attire. Sarah Jane states that she takes care of the offices in the building No. 161 Broadway; some of the gentlemen having left a suit of clothes there, she embraced the opportunity to have a little adventure. The garments fitted to a nicety, and with the addition of a slouched hat, in the language of the actor, she was "well made up for the character;" but the argus eye of the officer detected some imperfection, and the young woman, although reluctantly, consented to accompany him to the Station-House, where she remained for the night.



April 24, Tuesday. P.M. —To Flint's Pond.

Warm and quite a thick haze. Cannot see distant hills, nor use my glass to advantage. The *Equisetum arvense* on the causeway sheds its green pollen, which looks like lint on the hand abundantly, and may have done so when I first saw it upon the 21st. Young caterpillars' nests are just hatched on the wild cherry.

Some are an inch in diameter, others just come out.

The little creatures have crawled at once to the extremity of the twigs and commenced at once on the green buds just about to burst, eating holes into them.

They do not come forth till the buds are about to burst.

I see on the pitch pines at Thrush Alley that golden-crested wren or the other, ashy-olive above and whitish beneath, with a white bar on wings, restlessly darting at insects like a flycatcher, — into the air after them.

It is quite tame. A very neat bird, but does not sing now. I see a bee like a small bumble-bee go into a little hole under a leaf in the road, which apparently it has made, and come out again back foremost. That fine slaty-blue butterfly, bigger than the small red, in wood-paths. I see a cone-bearing willow in dry woods, which will begin to leaf to-morrow and apparently to show cones. *Pyrus arbutifolia* will begin to leaf to-morrow. Its buds are red while those of the shad-bush are green. I can find no red cedar in bloom, but it will undoubtedly shed pollen to-


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morrow. It is on the point of it. I am not sure that the white cedar is any earlier. The sprigs of red cedar, now full of the buff-colored staminate flowers, like fruit, are very rich. The next day they shed an abundance of pollen in the house. It is a clear buff color, while that of the white cedar is very different, being a faint salmon. It would be very pleasant to make a collection of these powders, — like dry ground paints. They would be the right kind of chemicals to have. I see the black birch stumps, where they have cut by Flint's Pond the past winter, completely covered with a greasy-looking pinkish-colored cream, yet without any particular taste or smell, — what the sap has turned to.

The *Salix alba* begins to leaf. Have not seen the *F. hyemalis* for a week.

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 April 25, Wednesday: A group of white vigilantes encountered a band of 60 Jicarilla Apaches on the banks of the Purgatoire River and killed six of them.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Beck Stow's Swamp (Gleason E9).



April 25. A moist April morning. A small native willow leafing (or say May 1st, if they are bracts) and showing catkins to-day; also the black cherry in some places. The common wild rose to-morrow. Balm-of-Gilead will not shed pollen apparently for a day or more. Shepherd's-purse will bloom to-day, -the first I have noticed which has sprung from the ground this season, or of an age. Say lilac begins to leaf with common currant.

P.M. — To Beck Stowe's.

Hear a faint *cheep* and at length detect the white-throated sparrow [**White-throated Sparrow**  *Zonotrichia albicollis*], the handsome and well-marked bird, the largest of the sparrows with a yellow spot on each side of the front, hopping along under the rubbish left by the woodchopper. I afterward hear a faint *cheep* very rapidly repeated, making a faint sharp jingle, —no doubt by the same. Many sparrows have a similar faint metallic *cheep*, —the tree sparrow and field sparrow, for instance. I first saw the white-throated sparrow at this date last year. Hear the peculiar *squeaking* notes of a pigeon woodpecker. Two black ducks circle around me three or four times, wishing to alight in the swamp, but finally go to the river meadows. I hear the whistling of their wings. Their bills point downward in flying.


The *Andromeda calyculata* is out in water, in the little swamp east of Beck Stowe's, some perhaps yesterday; and C. says he saw many bluets yesterday, and also that he saw two *F. hyemalis* yesterday.

I have noticed three or four upper jaws of muskrats on the meadow lately, which, added to the dead bodies floating, make more than half a dozen perhaps drowned out last winter.

After sunset paddled up to the Hubbard Bath.

The bushes ringing with the evening song of song sparrows and robins, and the evening sky reflected from the surface of the rippled water like the lake grass on pools. A spears' fire seems three times as far off as it is.

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 April 26, Thursday: Believing that French doctors might cure his ailment, the composer [Gioacchino Rossini](#) left [Florence](#) for Paris. He will never again see Italy.

[Thomas Adams](#) began the 2d volume of his [Journal](#).



April 26. A cloudy, still, damp, and at length drizzling day.



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P.M. — To Bayberry and Black Ash Cellar

Wheildon's arbor-vitae well out, maybe for a week.

The silvery abele, probably to-day or yesterday, but I do not see pollen. The blossoms of the red maple (some a yellowish green) are now most generally conspicuous and handsome scarlet crescents over the swamps. Going over Ponkawtasset, hear a golden-crested (?) wren, — the robin's note, etc., — in the tops of the high wood; see myrtle-birds and half a dozen pigeons. The prate of the last is much like the creaking of a tree. They lift their wings at the same moment as they sit. There are said to be many about now. See their warm-colored breasts. I see pigeon woodpeckers billing on an oak at a distance. Young apple leafing, say with the common rose, also some early large ones. Bayberry not started much. Fever-bush out apparently a day or two, between Black Birch Cellar and Easterbrook's.

It shows plainly now, before the leaves have come out on bushes, twenty rods off. See and hear chewinks, — all their strains; the same date with last year, by accident.

Many male and female white-throated sparrows feeding on the pasture with the song sparrow. The male's white is buff in the female. A brown thrasher(?) seen at a little distance. (Heard May 4th.)

We see and hear more birds than usual this mizzling and still day, and the robin sings with more vigor and promise than later in the season.

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April 27, Friday: The Reverend Samuel J. May wrote to Mrs. Kate Pickard of Camillus, New York to give her his thoughts on the Syracuse firm of L.W. Hall & Co. as a potential publisher for her book on Peter Still and his family. That publisher would assume the risk of publishing the book and pay her and Still each 15 cents per copy sold. He urged her to send Dr. Furness' manuscripts and the images for the plates in advance of her text to speed the book's publication. If Peter Still, whom he refers to as "Uncle Peter," and his wife arrived in Syracuse in the following 3 weeks, he would request that they stay with another of their friends, since his wife is currently ailing.



April 27. 5 A.M. — *S. tristis* Path around Cliffs.

Cold and windy, but fair. The earliest willow by railroad begins to leaf and is out of bloom. Few birds are heard this cold and windy morning. Hear a partridge drum before 6 A.M., also a golden-crested (?) wren.

Salix tristis, probably to-day, the female more forward than the male. Heard a singular sort of screech, somewhat like a hawk, under the Cliff, and soon some pigeons [American Passenger Pigeons *Ectopistes migratorius*] flew out of a pine near me. The black and white creepers running over the trunks or main limbs of red maples and uttering their fainter oven-bird-like notes.

The principal singer on this walk, both in wood and field away from town, is the field sparrow. I hear the sweet warble of a tree sparrow in the yard.

Cultivated cherry is beginning to leaf. The balm-of-Gilead catkins are well loosened and about three inches long, but I have seen only fertile ones. Say male the 25th, 26th, or 27th.

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April 28, Saturday: At what would be known as the Battle of Poncha Pass, white vigilantes and soldiers killed 40 native Americans.

The governor of the Washington Territory, Isaac Stevens, was concluding the Yakima War with a treaty binding the native Americans to relinquish their territories and live on a reservation. Although the headman Kamiakin and a group of Yakima refused to sign, twelve days later Stevens would be announcing that their lands were open to white settlement.

The [Know-Nothing](#) governor of Massachusetts signed the school desegregation bill into law. After eleven years of the most intense black boycott, under black leadership Boston's public schools had become again integrated.

SMITH SCHOOL

[Henry Thoreau](#) was on the Concord River near Ball's Hill (Gleason D9):



April 28. A second cold but fair day.
Good fires are required to-day and yesterday.

P.M. — Sail to Ball's Hill.

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11

The *chimney swallow*, with the white-bellied and barn swallows, over the river. The red maples, now in bloom, are quite handsome at a distance over the flooded meadow beyond Peter's. The abundant wholesome gray of the trunks and stems beneath surmounted by the red or scarlet crescents. Are not they sheldrakes which I see at a distance on an islet in the meadow?

The wind is strong from the northwest.
Landed at Ball's Hill to look for birds under the shelter of the hill in the sun. There were a great many myrtle-birds [[Yellow-rumped Warbler *Dendroica coronata*](#)] there, — they have been quite common for a week, — also yellow redpolls, and some song sparrows, tree sparrows, field sparrows, and one *F. hyemalis*.

In a cold and windy day like this you can find more birds than in a serene one, because they are collected under the wooded hillsides in the sun. The myrtle-birds flitted before us in great numbers, yet quite tame, uttering commonly only a *chip*, but sometimes a short trill or *che che, che che, che che*. Do I hear the *tull-lull* in the afternoon? It is a bird of many colors, — slate, yellow, black, and white, — singularly spotted. Those little gnats of the 21st are still in the air in the sun under this hill, but elsewhere the cold strong wind has either drowned them or chilled them to death. I saw where they had taken refuge in a boat and covered its bottom with large black patches.

I noticed on the 26th (and also to-day) that since this last rise of the river, which reached its height the 23d, a great deal of the young flag, already six inches to a foot long, though I have hardly observed it growing yet, has washed up all along the shore, and as to-day I find a piece of flag-root with it gnawed by a muskrat, I think that they have been feeding very extensively on the white and tender part of the young blades.

They, and not ducks, for it is about the bridges also as much as anywhere. I think that they desert the clams now

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for this vegetable food. In one place a dead muskrat scents the shore, probably another of those drowned out in the winter. Saw the little heaps of dirt where worms had come out by river.

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April 29, Sunday: [Giacomo Meyerbeer](#) experienced [Richard Wagner's](#) *Tannhäuser* for the 1st time, in Hamburg. "The opera itself was incontestably a musical-artistic manifestation of the highest interest. There was indeed a great dearth of melody, an unclarity and a formlessness, but nonetheless great flashes of genius in conception, in orchestral coloring, and in purely musical respects, particularly in the instrumental passages."



April 29. This morning it snows, but the ground is not yet whitened. This will probably take the cold out of the air. Many chip-birds [[Savannah Sparrow](#) *Passerculus sandwichensis*] are feeding in the yard, and one bay-wing [[Vesper Sparrow](#) [Pooecetes gramineus](#)]. The latter incessantly scratches like a hen, all the while looking about for foes. The bay on its wings is not obvious except when it opens them. The white circle about the eye is visible afar. Now it makes a business of pluming itself, doubling prettily upon itself, now touching the root of its tail, now thrusting its head under its living, now between its wing and back above, and now between its legs and its belly; and now it drops flat on its breast and belly and spreads and shakes its wings, now stands up and repeatedly shakes its wings. It is either cleaning itself of dirt acquired in scratching and feeding, — for its feet are black with mud, — or it is oiling its feathers thus. It is rather better concealed by its color than the chipbird with its chestnut crown and light breast. The chip-bird scratches but slightly and rarely; it finds what it wants on the surface, keeps its head down more steadily, not looking about. I see the bay-wing [[Vesper Sparrow](#) [Pooecetes gramineus](#)] eat some worms. For two or three days the *Salix alba*, with its catkins (not yet open) and its young leaves, or bracts (?), has made quite a show, before any other *tree*, — a pyramid of tender yellowish green in the russet landscape. The water now rapidly going down on the meadows, a bright-green grass is springing up.

P.M. — By boat to Lupine Hill.

It did not whiten the ground. Raw, overcast, and threatening rain. A few of the cones within reach on F. Monroe's larches shed pollen; say, then, yesterday.

The crimson female flowers are now handsome but small.

That lake grass — or perhaps I should call it *purple* grass — is now apparently in perfection on the water. Long and slender blades (about an eighth of an inch wide and six to twelve inches long, the part exposed) lie close side by side straight and parallel on the surface, with a dimple at the point where they emerge.

Some are a very rich purple, with apparently a bloom, and very suggestive of placidity. It is a true *bloom*, at any rate, — the first blush of the spring caught on these little standards elevated to the light. By the water they are left perfectly smooth and flat and straight, as well as parallel, and thus, by their mass, make the greater impression on the eye. It has a strong marshy, somewhat fishy, almost seaweed-like scent when plucked. Seen through a glass the surface is finely grooved.

The scrolls of the interrupted fern are already four or five inches high.

I see a woodchuck on the side of Lupine Hill, eight or ten rods off. He runs to within three feet of his hole; then stops, with his head up. His whole body makes an angle of forty-five degrees as I look sideways at it.

I see his shining black eyes and black snout and his little erect ears. He is of a light brown forward at this distance (hoary above, yellowish or sorrel beneath), gradually darkening backward to the end of the tail, which is dark-brown. The general aspect is grizzly, the ends of most of the hairs being white. The yellowish brown, or rather sorrel, of his throat and breast very like the sand of his burrow, over which it is slanted. (Four nails on fore feet and five behind. The hind feet are also longer. Are the first not hands partly?)

No glaring distinctions to catch the eye and betray him. As I advance, he crawls a foot nearer his hole, as if to make sure his retreat while he satisfies his curiosity.

Tired of holding up his head, he lowers it at last, yet waits my further advance.

The snout of the little sternotherus is the most like a little black stick seen above the water of any of the smaller tortoises. I was almost perfectly deceived by it close at hand; but it moved.

Choke-cherry begins to leaf. Dandelions out yesterday, at least. Some young alders begin to leaf. *Viola ovata* will open to-morrow. Mountain-ash began to leaf, say yesterday. Makes a show with leaves alone before any tree.

Paddling slowly along, I see five or six snipes within four or five rods, feeding on the meadow just laid bare, or



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in the shallow and grassy-water. This dark, damp, cold day they do not mind me. View them with my glass. How the ends of their wings curve upward!



They do not thrust their bills clear down commonly. but wade and nibble at something amid the grass, apparently on the surface of the water. Sometimes it seems to be the grass itself, sometimes on the surface of the bare meadow. They are not now thrusting their bills deep in the mud. They have dark-ash or slate-colored breasts. At length they take a little alarm and rise with a sort of rippling whistle or peep, a little like a robin's peep, but faint and soft, and then alight within a dozen rods. I hear often at night a very different harsh squeak from them, and another squeak much like the nighthawk's and also the booming.

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 April 30, Monday: A setting of the Te Deum by [Hector Berlioz](#) was performed for the initial time, at St.-Eustache, Paris coinciding with the opening of the Paris Exposition.

[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [[Ticknor & Fields?](#)].

Concord Ap. 30th 1855

Gentlemen,

Is it not time to republish "A Week on the Concord & Merrimack Rivers"? You said you would notify me when it was; but I am afraid that it will soon be too late for this season.

I have, with what were sent to you, about 250 bound, and 450 in sheets.

Yrs truly

*Henry D. Thoreau
Concord Mass.*



April 30. Horse-chestnut begins to leaf, — one of them.

Another, more still, cloudy, almost drizzling day, in which, is the last three, I wear a greatcoat.

P.M. — To Lee's Cliff.

Privet begins to leaf. (*Viburnum nudum* and *Lentago* yesterday).

I observed yesterday that the barn swallows confined themselves to one, place, about fifteen rods in diameter, in Willow Bay, about the sharp rock. They kept circling about and flying up the stream (the wind easterly), about six inches above the water, — it was cloudy and almost raining, — yet I could not perceive any insects ill here. Those myriads of little fuzzy gnats mentioned on the 21st and 28th must afford an abundance of food to insectivorous birds. Many new birds should have arrived about the 21st. There were plenty of myrtle-birds and yellow redpolls where the gnats were. The swallows were confined to this space when I passed up, and were still there when I returned, an hour and a half later. I saw them nowhere else. They uttered only a slight twitter from time to time and when they turned out for each other on meeting. Getting their meal seemed to be made a social affair. Pray, how long will they continue to circle thus without resting?

The early willow by Hubbard's Bridge has not begun to leaf. This would make it a different species from that by railroad, which has.

Hear a short, rasping note, somewhat tweeter — birdlike, I think from a yellow redpoll. Yellow dorbug.

I hear from far the scream of a hawk circling over the Holden woods and swamp. This accounts for those two men with guns just entering it. What a dry, shrill, angry scream! I see the bird with my glass resting upon the topmost plume of a tall white pine. Its back, reflecting the light, looks white in patches; and now it circles again. It is a red-tailed hawk. The tips of its wings are curved upward as it sails. How it scolds at the men beneath! I see its open bill. It must have a nest there. Hark! there goes a gun, and down it tumbles from a rod or two above


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the wood. So I thought, but was mistaken. In the meanwhile, I learn that there is a nest there, and the gunners killed one this morning, which I examined. They are now getting the young. Above it was brown, but not at all reddish-brown except about head. Above perhaps I should call it brown, and a dirty white beneath; wings above thickly barred with darker, and also wings beneath. The tail of twelve reddish feathers, once black-barred near the end. The feet pale-yellow and very stout, with strong, sharp black claws. The head and neck were remarkably stout, and the beak short and curved from the base. Powerful neck and legs. The claws pricked me as I handled it. It measured one yard and three eighths plus from tip to tip, *i.e.* four feet and two inches.' Some ferruginous on the neck; ends of wings nearly black.

Columbine just out; one anther sheds. Also turrilis will to-morrow apparently; many probably, if they had not been eaten. Crowfoot and saxifrage are now in prime at Lee's; they yellow and whiten the ground. I see a great many little piles of dirt made by the worms on Conantum pastures.

The woodchuck has not so much what I should call a musky scent, but exactly that peculiar rank scent which I perceive in a menagerie. The musky at length becomes the regular wild-beast scent.

Red-wing blackbirds [**Red-winged Blackbird**  *Agelaius phoeniceus*] now fly in large flocks, covering the tops of trees — willows, maples, apples, or oaks — like a black fruit, and keep up an incessant gurgling and whistling, — all for some purpose; what is it, White pines now show the effects of last year's drought in our yard and on the Cliffs, the needles faded and turning red to in alarming extent. I now see many *Juniperus repens* berries of a handsome light blue above, being still green beneath, with three hoary pouting lips. The Garfields had found a burrow of young foxes. How old? [Saw the old and tracks of young; thinks they may be one month old.] I see the black feathers of a blackbird by the Miles Swamp side, and this single bright-scarlet one shows that it belonged to a red-wing, which some hawk or quadruped devoured.

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THE 1ST TUESDAY IN MAY WAS THE ANNUAL "MUSTER DAY," ON WHICH ALL THE ABLEBODIED WHITE MEN OF A TOWN WERE SUPPOSEDLY REQUIRED TO FALL INTO FORMATION, WITH THEIR PERSONAL FIREARMS, TO UNDERGO THEIR ANNUAL DAY OF MILITARY TRAINING AND MILITIA INDOCTRINATION.

Read  Henry Thoreau's *Journal for May 1855* (æf. 37) in the 1906 version



Maggio 1-28: The maw of [Mount Vesuvius](#) opened and it transited into its eruptive, non-quiet condition, which phase typically obtains for this particular volcano for between half an year and just shy of 31 years: "Effusiva — Bocche sul versante N tra 898 e 1068 m s.l.m. Colata a NW verso S. Sebastiano, Massa e le Novelle di S. Vito. Distruzione di case e danni alle colture." During the course of the eruption, Charles Sainte-Claire Deville went into the caldera any number of times to collect gas samples.



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<200,000 BCE	Eruptions began in a fold of the ocean floor between the island of Capri and Mt. Massico
x BCE	eruption (Avellino pliniana)
25,000 BCE	eruption (Codola pliniana)
17,000 BCE	eruption (Sarno-Pomici Basali pliniana)
15,500 BCE	eruption (Pomici Verdoline pliniana)
7,900 BCE	eruption (Mercato pliniana)
5,960 BCE	eruption, one of the largest known of Europe
3,580 BCE	eruption (Avellino pliniana), one of the largest known of Europe
1,000 BCE	eruption (subpliniana)
700 BCE	eruption (subpliniana)
73 CE	The escaped gladiator Spartacus was trapped for a time by the praetor Publius Claudius Pulcher on the barren wasteland of Mount Somma, the high ridge next to Mount Vesuvius , which at that time amounted to a wide, flat depression walled by rugged rocks coated over by wild vines. Spartacus would manage to escape this trap by stealth.
79 CE	Explosion buried Pompeii and Stabiae under ashes and lapilli and buried Herculaneum under a mud flow (the pit left in the side of the cone by this explosion has long since disappeared).
203 CE	explosive eruption
472 CE	eruption (Pollena subpliniana)
512 CE	eruption so severe Theodoric the Goth temporarily released inhabitants of slopes from taxation
685 CE	strong eruption
787 CE	grand eruption
968 CE	strong eruption
991 CE	eruption
999 CE	strong eruption
1007 CE	strong eruption
1036 CE	a grand eruption followed by a long period of quiescence during which there would be forests inside the crater, and three lakes there from which pasturing herds might drink
1139 CE	explosive eruption
1500 CE	strong eruption
December 16, 1631CE	A devastating explosion after six months of gradually intensifying earthquakes marked a major change in the behavior of this volcano. From this point to the present the behavior would be characterizable as stages of quiescence during which the volcano's maw was obstructed, alternating with stages of eruption during which its maw would be almost continuously open. Recording of eruptions began, and it would be noted that the eruptive stages would be varying from 1/2 year to almost 31 years, while the quiescent stages would be varying from 1 1/2 years to 7 1/2 years.



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1660 CE	eruptive stage
1682 CE	eruptive stage
1694 CE	eruptive stage
1698 CE	eruptive stage
1707 CE	eruptive stage
1737 CE	eruptive stage
1760 CE	eruptive stage
1767 CE	eruptive stage
1779 CE	eruptive stage
1794 CE	eruptive stage
1822 CE	eruptive stage
September 1834 CE	eruptive stage witnessed by Thomas Carlyle 's brother Jack
1839 CE	eruptive stage
1845 CE	the local Mount Vesuvius volcano-watch station opened
1850 CE	eruptive stage
1855 CE	eruptive stage
1861 CE	eruptive stage
1868 CE	eruptive stage
1872 CE	eruptive stage
1906 CE	eruptive stage
1944 CE	eruptive stage
May 11, 1964 CE	Mount Vesuvius signalled the beginning of a new eruptive stage (during such periods the vegetation on the slopes typically dies off due to poisonous gasses).

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May 1, Tuesday: In a ceremony presided over by the Reverend [Thomas Wentworth Higginson](#), in West Brookfield, Massachusetts, a Henry Brown Blackwell and a [Lucy Stone](#) became husband and wife. There was, however, what amounted to a written prenuptial agreement, one of the 1st such in history, and the bride kept her own name. For quite a period in America, married women who retained their own names would be referred to as “Lucy Stoners.” The term of art “obey” was omitted from this ceremony, but afterward the minister duly noted that in point of fact “Lucy, the heroic Lucy, **cried**, like any village bride!”



Van Diemen’s Land was separated administratively from New South Wales, and granted self-government.




May 1st

Rained some {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “some”} in the night — cloudy in the fore noon — clears up in the afternoon.

[Transcript]

Pm by boat with Sophia to Conantum a-Maying.

“Up Assabet” is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau’s two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
 — [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10



The water has gone {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through this and following lines} down very fast & the grass has sprung up — There is a strong fresh-marsh scent wafted from the meadows — much like the salt marshes. We sail with a smart wind from the NE — yet it is warm enough. Horsemint is seen {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “seen”} springing up & for 2 or 3 days at the bottom of the river & on shore. At Hill Shore — the anemone nemoralis tomorrow — see none {Thoreau may have altered this from “now”} wide open — The myrtle bird is one of the commonest & tamest birds now It catches insects like a pewee darting off from its perch & returning to it. & sings something like a — chill chill, chill chill, chill chill, a twear, twill twill twee. or it may be all tw — (not loud — a little like the F hiemalis [[Dark-eyed Junco](#) [Junco hyemalis](#)] [[^]or more like pine-warbler].) [[^]rapid &] more & more intense as it advances. There is an unaccountable sweetness as of flowers {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “flowers”} in the air — a true may day — raw & drizzling in the morning. The grackle still. What various brilliant & evanescent colors on the surface of this agitated water — now as we are crossing willow bay looking toward the half concealed sun over the foam spotted flood! It reminds me of the sea.

At Clam Shell the V. blanda XXX I do not look for pollen. I find a clam shell 5 inches long wanting 1/16 & more than 2 1/2 inches broad — [[^]& 2 inches thick.] What that little dusky colored lichen on the ground at Clam Shell end ditch — with a sort of triangular green fruit.?^{“?”} Thoreau may have written “I” or “J”} or Marchantia? The Why have the white pines at a dist. that silvery (dewy?) look around their edges or thin{Thoreau may have written “their”} maples of Potters swamp seen now parts? Is it owing to the wind showing the under sides of the needles? nearly half a mile off against the Methinks you do not see it in the winter. russet hill or reddish hill side — are a very dull scarlet like Spanish brown — but one against a {this is splotched — Thoreau may have altered this from another word} green pine wood Thalictrum anemonoides at Conant is much brighter. Cliff XXX — did not look for pollen. Went to Garfields for the hawk of yesterday. It

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was nailed to the barn in terrorem. [^and as a trophy] He gave it to me with an egg. He called it the female — & prob was right, it was so large — He tried in vain to shoot the male which I saw circling about just out of gunshot & screaming — while he robbed the nest He climbed the tree when I was there The tallest white pine or other tree in its neighborhood over a swamp. yesterday P. m. & found 2 young which he thought not more than a fortnight old — with only ~~pin~~ feathers [^down, at least no feathers] — & one addled egg — Also 3 or 4 white bellied or deer mouse — (mus leucopus) ~~and~~ a perch — & a sucker — & a gray rabbits skin. [^I think these must have been dead fish they found] [^I found the remains of a partridge under the tree —] He had seen squirrels &c in other nests. These fishes were now stale. The reason I did not see my hawks at Well Meadow last year was that he found & broke up their nest there containing 5 eggs.

The hawk measures exactly 22 1/2 inches in length & 4 feet 4 1/2 inches in alar extent. & weighs 3 1/4 pounds. The ends of closed wings almost 2 inches short of end of tail. General color of wings above & back an olivaceous brown, thickly barred with waving lines of very dark brown, their being a much broader bar next to the tip of the 2ndaries & tertiaries — & the first 5 primaries are nearly black toward the ends — A little white appears, especially on the tertiaries. The wing coverts & scapulars glossed with purple reflections. The 12 tail feathers (which Macgillivray says is the number in all birds of Prey — ie. the Falconinae & Striginae) showing 5 3/4 inches a clear brown red or rather fox color above, with a narrow dark band within 1/2 inch of the end, which is tipped with dirty white — A slight inclination to dusky bars near the end of one side feather — [^Lower tail coverts for nearly an inch white barred with fox colored] Head and neck a paler inclining to ferruginous brown & white — the [^Beneath — breast & wing linings brown feathers of] first centered with large dark brown hastate spots — & the wing linings streaked with feruginous. Wings white barred with dusky — “vents & femorals” as Wilson [^Nuttall] says “pale ochreous”.

[^Tail white softened by the superior color]

[^I do not perceive that the abdomen is barred.]

Bill very blue black — with a short stout curved tip — curving from the cere ~~full~~ [^more than] a 1/4 of a circle [^extends not quite 1/4 {Thoreau may have altered this from another word} of an inch beyond the lower mandible. & is proportionally] — Whole visible, including cere {Thoreau may have altered this from another word}, 1 1/8 inch long, & 1 inch deep at base. [^stouter at tip than in any of his {this word is double-underlined} Falconinae, judging from plates of heads] Cere yellowish green. Tarsus & toes very pale yellow — claws blue black — As {Macgillivray} says of Buteos claws flattened beneath, “that of the middle toe with an inner sharp edge.” (He says [^as I gather.] that all the diurnal birds of prey of G — B. i.e. Falconinae — have claws either flattened or concave beneath [^except ~~the~~ Pandion] — the inner edge of the middle one being more or less sharp — but least so in Circus [^or harrier]) Tarsus feathered in front 1/3 the way down. The toes for stoutness [^length] stand {Thoreau may have altered this from another word} in this order — The 1st (or hind) 2nd 4th 3d the 1st being the shortest — — — For stoutness thus 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — Claws for stoutness follow the same order with the toes — Utmost spread of toes & claws 4 1/2 inches. A considerable web. X {Thoreau wrote vertically in margin along length of page: — Circus & Falco much the same; Aquila & Pernis [^& Milvus] have [^several X In this respect] short webs — Haliaeetus — Pandion. & Accipiter are free} bet. 3d & 4th toes — Toes with papillae not rigid beneath.

A wing extends nearly 2 feet from the body & is 10 3/4 inches wide [^from flexure is 15 3/4 inches] When fully expanded it has a rounded outline & a ragged appearances owing to the separation of the 1st 5 or 6 primaries — as I noticed the male bird while sailing. The first primary short — they stand 1st & 8 — 7th — 6th — 2nd 5th — 3d — 4 The 5th & 3d are about the same length & the 4th only 1/4 of an inch longer than the 3d.

As in the Buteo Vulgaris of MacGillivray — found in Europe & in our north — the 4 first primaries “abruptly cut out on the inner web;” the 2d 3d 4th & 5 but not the 1st & 6th “slightly so on the outer”.

If There are ~~but~~ 8 [^10] primaries & ~~then~~ there are 15 [^14] 2ndaries — ~~but I am not sure whether there are 8 or 10 primaries~~ (Mac. says the primaries of the Falconinae are 10 — the 2ndaries from 13 to 18.) The wing, I see, naturally opens at the primaries

This is evidently very closely allied to the Buteo Vulgaris — but ap. the ~~tail~~ wings are not so long compared with the tail — & there is a dif — in the comparative length & stoutness of the toes [^the feet of this are not “Bright yellow;” — (the upper mandible is much stouter & more recurved at tip — judging from his plate of the head — & his description. It is recurved as much as ~~the~~ [^his] Osprey’s.

The ear looked like a large round hole in the side of the head behind the eyes.

The egg is a very dirty brownish white — with brown spots about the smaller end — though one end is about as large as the other — It is larger than a hen’s egg — 2 3/8 inches x 2.

Macgillivray des. the Buteo, as “body full, broad & muscular anteriorly;” — “wings long, broad, rounded, the 3d or 4th quill longest, the first very short;” Of Haliaeetus he says “wings very long, broad, rounded, the 4th & 5th quills longest;” Aquila like last omitting the very — Pandion “Wings very long, comparatively narrow, rounded, with 30 quills, the 3d primary longest, the 2nd nearly equal, the 4th not much shorter, the 1st longer than the 5th;” — Falco “Wings very long, pointed, the 2nd quill longest, the 1st almost as long; primaries 10;” Accipiter “Wings very long, much rounded; primary quills 10, 4th & 5th longest, 1st very short, —”

“Pernis “wings very long, broad, rounded, the 3d quill longest, the first about the length of the 6th;” — Milvus “Wings extremely long, broad, & pointed, the 4th quill longest — — — — 1st much shorter;” — Circus



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“wings long, much rounded; primary quills 10, the 4th & 3d longest, the 1st about equal to the 7th, —” These the genera — of G. Britain.

Says of Buteo — “In form & plumage they are very intimately allied to the eagles & sea-eagles, as well as in the form of the bill, which is, however, shorter and less deep towards the end, and of the feet, which differ, notwithstanding, in being proportionally less robust, and in having the claws smaller. — — — — Usually fly low, & with less rapidity than the falcons & hawks; sail in circles like the eagles & some other species, and prey on heavy-flying birds, small quadrupeds, reptiles, and even insects.”

He says the Buteo-vulgaris {Thoreau double-underlined this word} “greatly resembles the Golden Eagle in his mode of flying” — so that he has mistaken them for it at a distance — that he “rarely gives chase to a bird on the wing.” Neither he [^in this case] — nor Wilson nor Nuttall [^in the case of the red-tail] speaks of their feeding on fishes.

Mac. — says the Falconinae lay from 2 to 5 eggs — & their cries are “seldom heard except at the breeding season”. — “When the young have longitudinal spots on the breast, the old have them transverse,” —

I do not find much in Mac. about the breeding season of the Falconinae. He says the White tailed Sea-eagle — *Haliaeetus albicilla* begs to prepare a nest sometime in March — & the Kestrel near the end of March — & the young of the Golden Eagle “are fledged about the end of July.”

Nuttall says the White-headed Eagle begs to lay early in February. That with *F. Peregrinus* incubation “commences in winter, or very early in the spring” — — & that the Osprey begs to lay early in May. This is all to the purpose about the season of incubation of hawks & eagles.

Early in spring I occasionally see henhawks perched about river & approach quite near them — but never at any other time.

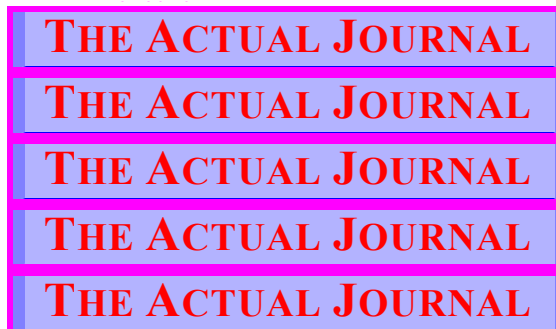
This hawks flesh has a very disagreeable rank scent — as I was cutting it up — though fresh. — cutting off the wings &c &c

I found the feathers of a partridge under the tree where the nest was.

What I have called the frog hawk is prob the male hen-harrier — Nuttalls *Circus cyaneus* — which he says is the same with the European —? (Mac. refers to *C. Americanus*?) [^V. Wilson] [^& says the quest. of identity is undecided.] & the larger brown bird with white rump is the female.

(Prob. my small brown hawk is the *F. fuscus* — or sharp shinned)

Mac. says the harrier occasionally eats dead fish — and also will catch a chicken — not a hen — Sometimes catches its prey in open flight — Will hunt on the same beat — at the same hour for many days — ac to Jardine — (Mac. says that the Golden eagle “seeks for live prey at a small height over the surface.”) Sail in circles. “The male, after the first Autumnal moult, acquires in a considerable degree the plumage of the adult —” — “the change of plumage is effected in the autumn of the year after it leaves the nest, and not in the same year.” The female used to be regarded as a distinct species called the “Ring-tail. Country people name it Blue Kite, Blue Hawk, Ring-tail, Brown Kite, or Gled; and the Highlanders call it Braid-air-toin (rag-on-rump), on ac. of the white tail coverts conspicuous in both sexes.”



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May 2, Wednesday: The Fresnel lens at [California's](#) Point Bonita Lighthouse, a fixed, 2d-order item that had been purchased in Paris for \$7,000, was first lit, 306 feet above sea-level at the top of a cliff. This positioning would prove to have been a serious error, as it placed the beam in the middle of a strata of fog that rendered it invisible to ships in the strait below (eventually the lighthouse would be repositioned).




On this day the moon was plunged into darkness for 1 hour and 37 minutes, in a deep total [eclipse](#) which saw the Moon 55% of its diameter inside the Earth's umbral shadow. The visual effect of this of course depended on the state of the Earth's atmosphere, but the moon may have been stained a deep red color. The partial eclipse lasted for 3 hours and 42 minutes in total. The penumbral eclipse lasted for 5 hours and 46 minutes. The partial eclipse lasted for 3 hours and 42 minutes.



May 2d
Pm. by boat up Assabet.

[Transcript]

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
 — [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10



Quince begs {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "begs"} to leaf — & pear {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "pear"} — perhaps some of last earlier.
 Aspen leaves {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "leaves"} [[^]of young trees] [[^]at 20 to 25 feet high] an inch long suddenly— [[^]say yesterday began] — {Caret positioned under <n->.} (not till the 11th last year).
 Leafing then is differently affected by the season — from flowering — The leafing is ap. comparatively earlier this year than the flowering
 [[^]The young aspens are the first of indigenous trees conspicuously leafed.]
 Diervella say begs to leaf with {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "with"} Viburnums.
 Amelanchier — [[^]bot.] yesterday {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "yesterday"} leafed XXX That small native willow now in flower or say yesterday XXX just before leafs — for the first seem to be bracts — 2 to 7 or 8 feet high very slender & curving. Ap has 3 or 4 lanceolate toothed bracts at base of [[^]petioled] catkin — male 3/4 & fem 1 inch long — scales black & silky haired — Ovary oblong oval stalked — downy — with a small yellowish gland not so long as its stalk — see leaf by & by ?
 Saw many Crow b. birds day bef. yesterday. Vigorous look the little {~~Che~~} spots of triangular sedge (?) springing up on the river banks {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "river banks"} 5-6 inches high yellowish below glaucous & hoary atop — straight & rigid. Many clamshells have round brassy colored spots as big as a fourpence — found one opened by rats last winter — almost entirely the color of tarnished brass within Open the Assabet spring — ~~That~~ The anemone is well named — for see now the nemorosa — amid the fallen brush & leaves — trembling in the wind so fragile. Hellebore seems {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "seems"} a little later than the cabbage.
 Was that a harrier seen at first skimming low then soaring & circling — with a broad whiteness on the wings beneath?

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May 3, Thursday: At 3 PM [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Assabet Bath (Gleason 4/E5) and had a conversation about Jonas Melvin with Humphrey Buttrick, one of the few Concordians who had been able to return from the [War upon Mexico](#).

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May 3d {Thoreau probably added "May 3d"}

Pm to Assabet Bath — {Thoreau probably added "to Assabet Bath"} Small pewee — tchevet [^with a jerk of the head.]. Hard-hack {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through the bottom of the manuscript page} leafed 2 or may be 3 days in one place. Early pyrus leafed yest. or day before [^if I have not named it]

The skull of a horse — (not a mare for I did not see the 2 small canine teeth in the upper jaw — nor in the under —) 6 molars on each side above & below — & 6 incisoris to each jaw. I first observed the stillness of birds &c at noon — with the increasing warmth — on the 23d of April. Sitting on the bank near the stone heaps I see large suckers rise to catch flies insects some times leap —

A Butterfly 1 inch in alar extent — dark velvety brown with slate colored tips — on dry leaves. On the N of Groton Turnpike beyond Abel Hosmers — 3 distinct terrace to river — 1st annually over flows — say 25 or 30 rds wide — 2d 7 or 8 feet higher & 40 or 60 wide — 3d 40 feet higher still — Sweet fern — opened {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "opened"} ap yest. XXX Vac. Pennsylvanicum {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "Pennsylvanicum"} — begs to leaf yesterday. Young red. maple {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "maple"} leaf tomorrow — also some {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "some"} white birch.

& perhaps Sugar maple.

Humphrey Buttrick — one of 8 who alone returned from Texas out of 24 says he can find wood-cocks eggs now [^knows of several nests] — has seen them setting with snow around them — (& that Melvin has seen Partridges [Ruffed Grouse Bonasa umbellus (Partridge)] eggs some days ago.) He has seen crows building this year. Found in a Henhawk's nest once the legs of a cat.

Has known of several Gosshawk's nests (or what he calls some kind of eagle)

Garfield called it the Cape Eagle) one in a shrub oak — with eggs. Last year his dog caught 7 black ducks so far grown that he got 60 cents a pair for them — [^takes a pretty active {Thoreau crossed the "t" and added the "e" in "active" in pencil} dog to catch such] He frequently finds or hears of them. Knew of some a nest this year — Also finds wood-ducks nests — Has very often seen partridges [Ruffed Grouse Bonasa umbellus] drum — close to him, has watched one for an hour — They strike the body with their wings.

[Transcript]



CAT

DOG

CURRENT YOUTUBE VIDEO

He shot a white-headed eagle from Carlisle Bridge — it fell in the water & his dog was glad to let it alone — He suggested that my fish hawks found pouts in holes made by ice

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May 4, Friday: Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha replaced Mustafa Resid Pasha as Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire.

Hector Berlioz and Giuseppe Verdi dined together in Paris. During these few weeks these two giants of Romanticism would become as acquainted as they ever would.

Lawyer-journalist William Walker and 58 mercenaries set sail from San Francisco making for Nicaragua. They had been invited by the Liberals of that country to aid them in their current struggle with conservatives.

Before 5 AM Henry Thoreau heard a robin, and then he went to Nawshawtuct or Lee's Hill (Gleason F6):



May 4th —

A robin [American Robin Turdus migratorius] sings when I in the house cannot distinguish the earliest dawning — from the the full moonlight. His song first advertises me of the daybreak — when I thought it was night — as I lay looking out into the full moonlight — I heard a robin begin his strain — & yielded the point to him — believing that he was better acquainted with the springs of the day than I — with the signs of day —

[Transcript]

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5 {Thoreau may have altered from "4"} Am to Hill —

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11

Many redwings & grackles feeding together on meadows — They still fly in flocks — some dark ash; are they fem. grackles? Hear a brown thrasher. Yel. lily pads are just begining {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "begining"} to show themselves on the surface — the first noticeable on the water. All kinds of young maples & some limbs of large white beg. to leaf.

Red maple blossoms beg. to cover growth. Ostrya will leaf {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "leaf"} tomorrow — (The 2nd Amelanchier {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "Amelanchier"} — sweet fern ~~lea-~~ & early thorn {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "thorn"} beg to leaf today. Small white-barked shrub — (andromeda?) on Island neck ~~today~~ leaf begs. to leaf tomorrow {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "tomorrow"} [[^]or say 7th — & then slow] — I think I hear a warb. vireo. certainly the 10th Birds — still see 3 or 4 crows together though some at least are building. Jays do not scream as early — Chickadee spring notes still — Partridges setting — Have noticed no ducks for some days — All the [[^]black] blackbirds as plenty as ever — & in flocks — Have not noticed robins in flocks for 2 or 3 days. See no gulls — nor F Hiemalis [[^]think I saw one to-day.] [**Dark-eyed Junco** ■ **Junco hyemalis**] — nor tree sparrows — now — Red tail hawk young 14 days old — Snipes feeding in numbers on the 29th Ap. Yel. redpolls in numbers May 1st — Woodcocks setting {Thoreau may have altered "setting" from another word} — Purple finch sings steadily. Myrtle birds numerous — & sing their ~~tea-lee~~ tea lee — in morning — White throated sparrows here [[^]& numerous] — No gold-finches for long time — The water is now {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "now"} generally off the meadows

P.M. to Beeches.

In cut woods a small thrush — with crown inclining to rufous — tail foxy & edges of wings dark ash clear white beneath — I think the Golden crowned? See more White throated sparrows than any other bird today in various parts of our walk — generally feeding in numbers on the ground in open [[^]dry] fields & meadows next to woods — — Then flitting through the woods — Hear only that sharp lisp chip (?) from them. A partridge's grayish tail feather — with a subterminal dark band. Several larger thrushes on low limbs & on ground — with a dark eye (not the white around it of the wood thrush) & I think the nankeen spot on the 2ndaries — a hermit thrush? {the photostat manuscript page is so fuzzy it is difficult to read and some punctuation, misspellings, and other nuances may have been missed; need to checked against the original at the Morgan Library}

Sitting in Abel Brooks' Hollow — see a small hawk [**Sharp-shinned Hawk** ■ **Accipter striatus**] go over high in the air — with a long tail — & distinct from wings — It advanced by a sort of limping flight yet rapidly — not circling — nor tacking — but flapping briskly at intervals & then gliding straight ahead with rapidity — controlling itself with its tail — It seemed to be going a journey. Was it not the Sharp shinned or F Fuscus? I think that what I have called the Sparrow hawk [[^]falsely {Thoreau added this word in pencil}] — & latterly Pig. hawk — is also the sharp shinned. V Ap 26 & May 8 '54 ? & July 58 {Thoreau may have written in pencil} & Ap 16th 55 — for the Pig. Hawks tail is white barred. Found a black snakes skeleton — remarked the globular protuberance on which the vertebrae revolve — & the 4 (?) sharp [[^]recurved] teeth in the lower jaw —

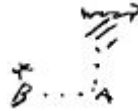
Red cherry not generally {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through "generally"} leafing before yesterday — Sand cherry — yesterday leafs — See where a skunk has probed last night & large black dung — with ap. [[^]large] ants' heads & earth or sand & stubble or insects wings in it — Prob. had been probing a large ants hill.



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Was that a cerasus or prunus on ? Pine hill —? thus from woodpile — AB 2 rods west.

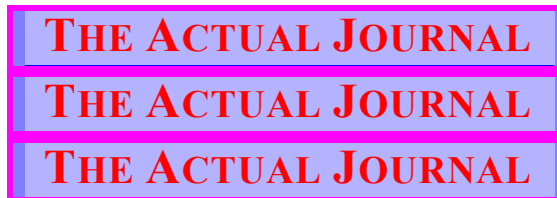


{above drawing includes a word not here transcribed, “wood”}

The beech [^leaf] buds are very handsome [^reddish brown] now — some nearly an inch & a half long & very slender not more than 1/6 of inch in diameter & regularly swelling from each end — will open ap in 3 or 4 days. ? The blossom buds {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “buds”} are still larger — may bloom in 8 days. Potentilla out X What that plant in Baker’s Pool with sessile spat ? ulate leaves toothed at end — now 4 or 5 inches high.

Noticed a perfectly regular circular concavity in a sandy soil in a hollow in birch woods where ap. a partridge had dusted herself —

Yesterday a great many spotted & wood tortoises in the Sam. Wheeler — birch fence mead — pool which dries up — One of the former — gradually settled himself into the sod — by turning round & round & scratching with its claws. A shower



May 5, Saturday: [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) made his entry in his [Harvard College](#) Classbook. He and his buddy [Edwin Morton](#) were graduating at the same time.

In an insane asylum near Bonn, [Robert Schumann](#) wrote to his wife Clara for the last time.



May 5th

[Transcript]

P.m. to Beck Stows

Cold weather for several {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “several”} days. Canada ? plum & cultivated cherry — & Missouri currant look as if they would bloom tomorrow. The sugar maples on the common — have just begun to show their stamens peeping out of the bud — but that by Dr {Thoreau may have altered “Dr” from another word} Barrets has them 1 1/2 inches long or more.

The trees & shrubs which I observe to make a show now with their green — without regard to the time when they began — are to put them in the order of their intensity & generalness

Gooseberry — both kinds

Raspberry

Mead sweet

Choke cherry shoots

Some young trembles

Very young apples

Red currant — & prob. black

Pyrus prob. arbutifolia

Young black cherry

Thimble berry

Prob. wild red cherry in some places

S alba — with bracts?

Some small native willows

Cultivated cherry —


Some Mt {possibly, Thoreau revised this to “Lt”} ash — (ie European) {Thoreau added this in pencil}

Some horse Chestnut.



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Excepting the *S alba* — I am inclined to stop with the *Pyrus arbutifolia*.
The *Andromeda Polifolia* will ap — open ? about the 10th High blueberry beg to leaf in some places yesterday. Larch began to leaf say when it opened the 28th of april — but not noticeably till {Thoreau may have altered “till” from another word} today. I find one bundle with needles 1/4 of an inch long & spreading.
The small andromeda has lost its reddish leaves [^prob. about the time it blossomed] & I can neither get the red cathedral window light looking toward the now westering sun — in a most favorable position — nor the gray colors in the other direction — but it is all a grayish green. But the [^patches of] cranberry [^in the swamp] seen at some distance toward the sun are a beautiful crimson, which travels with you — keeping bet you & the sun — like some rare plant in bloom there densely — I could not believe it was cranberry —
Looking over my book I found I had done my errands & said [^to myself] I would find a crow’s nest — (I had heard a crow [**American Crow**,  *Corvus brachyrhynchos*] scold at a passing hawk 1/4 of an hour before —) I had hardly taken this resolution when {this word might be “then” altered from “when” rather than vice versa}, looking up, I saw a crow wending his way across an interval in the woods towards the highest pines in the swamp — on which he alighted — I directed my steps to them — & was soon greeted with an angry caw — & within 5 minutes from my {possibly altered from “they” or “the”} resolve I detected a new nest close to the top of the tallest white pine in the samp {possibly “swmp”} — A crow circled cawing about it within gun shot — then over me surveying — & perching on an oak directly over {Thoreau may have altered this from another word} my head within 35 feet — cawed angrily — But suddenly, as if having taken a new resolution, it flitted away — & was joined by its mate & 2 more they went off silently 1/4 of a mile or more & lit in a pasture, as if they had nothing to concern them in the wood.

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 May 6, Sunday: Florence Nightingale was visiting Balaclava.

It was reported in the Daily Alta California of San Francisco that:

ANOTHER VICTIM OF INSANITY.—On Friday last, a Frenchman named Joseph Amore, entered the banking house of Page, Bacon & Co., and conducting himself in a very strange manner, some persons in the Bank attempted to put him out, whereupon he became excited to such a degree of desperation that no one could be found willing to approach him. He was finally taken into custody by the police, and it was subsequently ascertained that he had for some weeks labored under mental aberration.

JEALOUSY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.—Miss Mary Darlington and Miss Jeanette Dinglee succeeded in creating a very interesting scene on Clay street yesterday morning. Miss Mary applied indelicate epithets to Miss Jeanette, and made assertions intended to injure her reputation. Miss Jeanette filed an affidavit setting forth the particulars of the offense, upon which Miss Mary was arrested.

BURGLARY.—Two thieves were discovered about one o’clock yesterday morning, making their exit from a rear door of the Mercantile House, on Pacific street, having between them a trunk, which they had taken from a sleeping compartment by picking the door lock. Upon placing the trunk on the ground for the purpose of breaking it open, they discovered that their movements



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were watched by a policeman, and immediately took to their heels. After a long chase, the officer succeeded in capturing one of the thieves in a cellar under a house at the corner of Sansome and Pacific streets. The trunk, in which were contained many articles of value, was restored to the owner.

LAMENTABLE CASUALTY.—A little boy, son of Mr. John Davis, residing on Union street, was drowned yesterday by falling from Broadway wharf. The accident was witnessed by several persons on the wharf, and every exertion was made to save the boy, but all to no purpose. The body was recovered last evening with the end of grappling iron.

FINED FOR STRIKING A FEMALE.—An individual named Ruppole was recently arrested for striking a female. The accused demanded a trial by jury, and employed counsel to defend the case. A number of witnesses were produced to show that the act of assault alleged was justifiable, under the circumstances. The jury rendered a verdict against the defendant, and the Recorder yesterday imposed a fine of one hundred dollars for the offence. The counsel for the defence gave notice of an appeal.

DARING OUTRAGE.—On Saturday night a man named Robert Davis was attacked by two men in the suburbs of the city and severely beaten, and subsequently taken to a house where he was subjected to further outrage, and finally imprisoned in a room and kept there until morning. The cause of the outrage has not transpired. The name of one of the party accused is William Brown.

AN AMAZON.—A degenerated specimen of the female sex, of French extraction, was yesterday fined \$25 for striking a police officer.



May 6th

[Transcript]

The young Sugar maples {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “maples”} leafing are more conspicuous now than any maples. Black oak buds are large {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “large”} & silvery. Peach leafed yesterday —

Pm to Epigaea

S. {Thoreau may have altered this from “I”} Alba opened yest XXX Gilead not leafing yet, but perhaps tomorrow? A Robins nest with 2 eggs — betrayed by peeping. On the 30th of ap. a phoebe flew out from under the arched bridge prob — building.

Saw again — a slender vireo-like bird (seen yesterday — near R. Brown’s) head somewhat crested behind made me think of small pewee — catches insects somewhat like it — As {Thoreau may have altered this from another word} I remember — May be ashy white beneath — dusky olive above with 2 whitish bars on wings & dusky tail — Can it be the solitary vireo? Eq. sylvaticum prob — yest. {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “yest.”} XXX or day before Strawberry X That low sedge-like plant X prob under Clam Shell very common — with brownish somewhat umbelled spikes — prob. Luzula campestris? one of the wood rushes — Viola lancolata — yesterday at least — X High-black berry has begun to leaf say 2 days Hear near near 2nd Div. the Er er twe, ter ter twe [^{Ev.} forest note] Bright yellow head & shoulders & beneath & dark legs & bill — catching insects along base of Pitch pine plumes somewhat creeper like — very active & restless — darting from tree to tree — [^{Ev.} darted at & drove off a chicadee] I find I have thus described its colors last year — at various times — viz — Black throat [^{Ev.} this often] with dark & light beneath — /Again Black streak from eyes — Slate col. back? forked tail — white beneath? Another bird with ye throat near by perhaps female./ Again June 17 black

wings with white bars? —

Is it Black throated Green — or Latham's ? yel. fronted — or [^the] Golden winged warbler? From Wilson I should think it the last which he thinks the same with Pennant & Latham's yel — front.

The small juncus of 2nd div. shows a A field of dark green with reddish top — the flower just beginning to peep out — this the earliest plant of this kind to make a show. More than a foot high Epigaea in full bloom. Myrtle birds very numerous just beyond 2nd division — They sing like an instrument teee te, t t t, t t t, on very various keys. ie high or low — sometimes beginning like ~~th~~ phebe — As I sat by road side one drew near perched within 10 feet & dived [^once or twice] with a curve to catch the little [^black] flies about my head coming once within 3 feet, not minding me much. I could not tell at first what attracted it toward me — It saw them from 25 feet off. There was a little swarm of small flies regularly fly-like [^with large shoulders] about my head.

Many white throated sparrows there.

Road full of cattle going {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “going”} up country. Heard at a dist a ruby? crowned wren so robin like & spirited. After saw one — within 10 or 15 feet — Dark bill & legs — ap dark olivacious ashy head — a little whitish before & behind the full black eyes — ash breast olive yellow on primaries with a white bar. dark tail & ends of wings — white belly & vent Did not notice vermilion spot on hindhead. It darted off from apple tree for insects {Thoreau may have pluralized this from “insect”} like a pewee & returned to within 10 feet of me as if ? curious — I think this the only regulus I have ever seen.

Near Jenny Dugans — perceive {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “perceive”} that unaccountable fugacious fragrance as of all flowers — bursting forth in air — not near a meadow — which perhaps I first perceived on May 1st — It is the general fragrance of the year — I am almost afraid I shall trace it to some particular plant. It surpasses all particular fragrances — I am not sitting near any flower that I can percieve. 2 or 3 rods this side of John. Hosmers Pitch pines beyond Clam Shell some white v. ovatas — some with a faint bluish tinge —

A beautiful sunset — the sun behind a gilt edged cloud — with a clear bright crimson space beneath.

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May 7, Monday: Clara Schumann presented [Johannes Brahms](#) with a Romance in b minor for his 22d birthday.


In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Lee's Cliff (Gleason K6).



May 7

[Transcript]

5 Am to Island. Finger cold — & windy.

The sweet flags showed themselves {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “themselves”} about with pads. Hear Maryland yel. throat. Many grackles still in flocks singing on trees male & female the latter a very dark or black ash but with silvery eye. I suspect the red-wings [**Red-winged Blackbird**  *Agelaius phoeniceus*] are building. Large white maples beg. to leaf yesterday at least {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “least”} generally — one now shows considerably across the river. The aspen is earlier — Vib. dentatum yest. leafed. Bass to-morr (some shoots sheltered now) A crow's nest?? {Thoreau added the question marks in pencil} near the top of a pitch pine about 20 feet high just completed — betrayed by the bird's cawing & alarm — [^a mistake {added in pencil}] as on the 5th one came and sat on a bare oak within 30 40 feet. cawed reconnoitred & then [^both] flew off to a distance [^One comes near to spy you first.] while I discovered {Thoreau may have altered this word from “discover”} & climbed to the nest within a dozen rods. It was about 16 inches over — of the p. pine dead twigs laid across the forks — & white oak leas & bark fibres laid copiously on them — the cavity deep & more than half covered & concealed with a roof of leaves — a [^long] sloping approach or declivity left on one side the nest. Red currant out XX

Pm to Lee's Cliff.

Via Hub's Bath. V. cucullata ap a day or 2. A lady bug — & Humblebee — the last prob some time. A lily wholly above water & yellow [^on the 12th prox. I observed it sunk beneath the water] in Skull-Cap mead. ready to open.

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Climbed to 2 crows nests or — maybe one of them a squirrel's in Hub's grove — [^see *Rana fontinalis*] Do they not some times use a squirrels nest for a foundation? A Ruby crested wren is ap. attracted & eyes me. It is wrenching & fatiguing [^as well as dirty] work to climb a tall pine with nothing or maybe only dead twigs & stubs to hold by. You must proceed with great deliberation & see well where you put your hands & your feet. Saw prob. a femal *F. Fusca* sail swift & low close by me — and alight on a rail fence — It was a rich very dark perhaps reddish slate brown — I saw some white under the head — no white on rump — Wings thickly ~~banded~~ [^barred] {Thoreau corrected his spelling} with dark beneath. It then flew & alighted on a maple Did not fly so irregularly as the last one I called by this {Thoreau may have altered "the" into "this"} name. The early willow on the left beyond the bridge has beg. to leaf — but by no means yet the one on the right. Scared up 2 gray squirrels in the Holden wood which ran glibly up the tallest trees on the opposite side to me & leaped across from the extremity of the branches {Thoreau may have altered this from another word} to the next trees & so on very fast ahead of me —

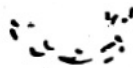
Remembering — aye aching with — my experience in climbing trees this Pm & morning I could not but admire their exploits. — To see them travelling with so much swiftness & ease that road over which I climbed a few feet with such painful exertion —

A partridge [**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] flew up from within 3 or 4 feet of me with a loud whirr & betrayed one cream colored egg in a little hollow amid the leaves.



A Grouse Nest with 10 Eggs Found by Herbert W. Gleason at the Base of a Tree Near Brister's Spring

Hear the tweezer bird — It looks like a bluish slate above — with a greenish? yellow back — & bright orange yel — throat & breast — forked tail 2 white bars on wings — whitish ven — another prob. female paler bluish with fainter yellow — & a conspicuous black crescent on breast.



This is undoubtedly the Particolored warbler — ie Brewers — Blue Yellow Back *Sylvia Americana* of Latham & Audubon — *Pusilla* of Wilson. V June 18 54 & May 9th 53.

I believe the Yel. rump. warbler has a note somewhat like the tweezer's.

Climbed a hemlock to a very large & complete prob. gray squirrel's nest — 18 inch diameter — a foundation of twigs — on which a body of leaves — & [^some] bark fibers lined with the last — and the whole covered with many fresh green hemlock twigs 1 foot or more long with the leaves on — which had been gnawed off — & many strewed the ground beneath having fallen off — Entrance one side.

A short dist. beyond this & the hawks-nest pine — I observed a mid sized red oak standing a little aslant on the side-hill ~~of~~ over the swamp — with a pretty lrg hole in one side about {Thoreau may have altered "at" into "about"} 15 feet from the ground where ap. a limb on which a felled tree lodged had been cut some years before & so broke out a cavity — I thought that such a hole was too good a one not to be improved by some inhabitant of the wood — Perhaps the gray squirrels I had just seen had their nest there — or was not the entrance big enough to admit a screech owl [**Eastern Screech-Owl** **Otus asio**].

So I thought I would tap on it & put my ear to the trunk — & see if I could hear anything stirring within it but I heard nothing. Then I concluded {Thoreau altered this from "conclude" plus another word or letter} to look into it — So I shinned up — & when I reached up one hand to the hole to pull myself up by it the thought passed through my mind perhaps something may take hold of my fingers — but nothing did — The first limb was ~~on~~ the [^nearly] directly opposite to the hole — & resting on this I looked in — & to my great surprise there squatted filling the hole which was about 6 inches deep & 5 to 6 wide — a salmon-brown bird — [^not so big as a partridge] seemingly asleep within 3 inches of the top & ~~rath~~ close to my face. It was a minute or two before I made it out to be an owl — ~~It~~ It was a salmon brown [^or fawn?] above — the feathers shafted with small blackish brown [^] {Thoreau canceled this caret mark} somewhat hastate (?) marks — greyish toward the ends



of the wings & tail as far as I could see.



A large white circular space about or behind eye banded in rear by a pretty broad [¹/₃ of an inch.] & quite conspicuous perpendicular dark brown stripe.

Egret say 1 1/4 or 1 1/2 inches long sharp triangular reddish brown without mainly. It lay crowded in that small space — with its tail somewhat bent up — & one side of its head turned up with one egret — & its large [¹/₁₆ of an inch wide — After visible breathing — After a little while I put in one hand an stroked it repeatedly whereupon it reclined its head a little lower & closed its eye entirely. Though curious to know what was under it I disturbed it no farther at that time.

In the mean while the crows were making a great cawing amid & over the pine-tops beyond the swamp — & at intervals I heard the scream of a hawk, prob — the surviving male henhawk, whom they were pestering (unless they had discovered the male screech owl) & a part of them came cawing about me. This was a very fit place — for hawks & owls to dwell in the thick wood just over a white spruce swamp — in which the glaucous kalmia grows — The grey squirrels — partridges — hawks & owls all together — It was prob these screech owls which I heard in moonlight nights hereabouts last fall. V. end of this day. Birch leafs today — prob some yest. with white maple — The Conantum thorn (cock spur? leafs with earliest

That little red stemmed (?) moss has now yellow green oval fruit hanging densely in the sod. Sweet briar shoots 2 inch long — this one of the earlier rubuses [¹/₂ roses] to leaf. Put it with early rose The r triflorus up 2 inches or more put it next after — raspberry for present

At Lees a carex well out vet rad. leaves ap. one of those on p 554 [² stamens 3 stigmas] — A carex some what like C. caespitosa of Big just beginning in XXX meadows — dark purple [¹/₂ some light colored] linear spikes somewhat 3 sided in tufts. [¹/₂ This makes large tussocks in meadows — the green leaves & debris standing 6 or 8 inches erect on large tussocks of dead many cut edged blades falling weeping on every side 18 to 20 inches long] Polyg. pubescens at Lees in 3 or 4 days — Amelanchier botryapium on rocks partly open will prob shed pollen tomorrow XXX

The long narrow unfolded flower buds — [¹/₂ very pretty with the dark purplish leaves] rose pink without are prettier than the open ones — like little cigarettes to compair fair with foul. The dark purple fruit like fascicles of the staminate flowers of the ash {Thoreau may have altered this from another word} on the rocks are now very remark able — about the size of pignuts & looking some ? what like them against the sky [¹/₂ on the perfectly bare tree] — or like dry alder scales or cones — will shed pollen in a day or 2. Oftener one pedicelled anther or {Thoreau may here have written “&”} stamen than 2 together — in the very minute calyx if it is one — Young bass {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “bass”} from seed an inch high the 2 leaves remarkable cut



Returning by owl’s nest about 1 hour before sunset — I climbed up and looked in again. The owl was gone but there were 4 nearly round dirty brownish white eggs [¹/₂ quite warm] [¹/₂ MacGillivray describes no eggs of this color — only white & the same with Nuttall except the great grey owl.] — on nothing but the bits of rotten wood which made the bottom of the hole — The eggs were very nearly as large at one end as the othe — slightly oblong 1 3/8 inches by 1 2/8 as nearly as I could measure — I took out one. [¹/₂ It would prob. have hatched within a week the young being consid feathered & the bill remarkably developed.] Perhaps she heard me coming {Thoreau may have altered “come” into “coming”} & so left the nest. My bird corresponds in color [¹/₂ as far as I saw it] with Wilson’s {Thoreau added thise apostrophe in pencil} S. asia — (but not his Naevia) which Nuttall & others consider a young? {Thoreau may have inserted this question mark later} bird — though the egg was not pure white — I do not remember that my bird was barred or mottled at all. [¹/₂ “v the 12th,” added in pencil]

Nuttall says

Little Screech Owl — Greenland to Florida — chiefly prey on mice — also small birds beetles, crickets, &c — nests in May & June. & lined with &c &c eggs 4 to 6 — Several blue-birds black birds & song-spars in one — In cloudy weather come out earlier — Wilson’s thrush attacked one. note in autumn — “hō, hō hō hō hō hō hō, proceeding from high & clear to a low guttural shake or trill.”

Was not that an owls feather which I found 1/2 mile beyond downy more than 1/2 & with base & seperate white points ~~at~~ beyond a dark band at the end?


Was not mine a bird of last year? — [¹/₂ But] Macgillivray says of owls that the young dif. very little from the old “the older the individ. becomes, the more simple is the coloring; the dark markings diminish in extent, and the

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finer mottlings are gradually obliterated.” Rhus toxicodendron under rocks leaf.

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 May 8, Tuesday: In Rome, the floor of the Convent of St. Agnes suddenly collapsed, lowering an assembly of prelates into the building’s basement. The Pope was slightly injured, and several of the Cardinals were severely injured.



May 8


5 Am to Gilead — began to leaf yest.

Think I saw bank swallows — {it may be that Thoreau added “began to leaf yest.” or “Think I saw bank swallows” here; therefore the words “still finger cold.” may indicate the beginning of a new paragraph, depending upon which words we suppose to have been the ones that Thoreau added} not at all certain still finger cold.

At noon begs. a old drizzling rain. [^a cold may storm wind Easterly] which continues at intervals through the next day. — Grackle here still — Cult — cherry opened flower yest XXX. The rock maples (such sized as we [generally] have) comes {Thoreau may have altered “come” into “comes”} on faster & shows more now {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “now”} than the red —

[Transcript]

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 May 9, Wednesday: John Langston Mercer, who would become the first black American to win elective office (the clerkship of Ohio’s Brownshelm Township), addressed the 22nd annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society of New-York.



May 9th

Pm to Anurnsnack — The black currant will not bloom for 5 or 6 days. A large red maple just {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “just”} begun to leaf — Its keys 1 1/2 inches long — by Assabet bridge.

Castilleja show red one but will not bloom under a week prob. The same of Erigeron ?


C. alternifolia & Paniculata beg — to leaf — Scared up 3 quails in the stubble in G — M Barretts orchard — They go off with partridge like — from within 2 rods, with a sharp whistling whirr. Heard methinks a white throat sparrow? sing very much like the beginning of a cat bird’s song — could see no other bird — thought it a catbird at first. See several of these sparrows yet.

[Transcript]

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 May 10, Thursday: There had never been a way for an immigrating female to obtain US citizenship except through marriage to a man who was himself a US citizen, or a birth certificate demonstrating that she was a legitimate recognized child of such a US male citizen. By an enactment on this day, the husband might already be a US citizen or might simultaneously be becoming a US citizen: “Any woman who is now or may hereafter be married to a citizen of the United States, and who might herself be lawfully naturalized, shall be deemed a citizen.” The name of the wife might, or might not, be mentioned on the document by which she in effect gained citizenship. Her US citizenship would be proved by a combination of the couple’s marriage certificate and her husband’s birth certificate or naturalization record. An immigrant’s ability to naturalize as a United States citizen was also, it goes without saying, dependent upon being of a race not excluded from citizenship. There would also be an exclusion for marriages that occurred suspiciously soon after the bride had been arrested for prostitution.



May 10

Can. Plum opens petals today XX & leafs Domestic Plum only leafs. Sum. yel-bird


[Transcript]

Pm to Beeches

Young red maples are generally later [^{to leaf}] than Young sugar do — hardly {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through this and following lines} began before yest. & large white — are not so forward as young sugar — Muhlenburg’s Willow leafed 4 or 5 days — young—yel — birch leaf — say 2 days. In callitriche pool hear a bull-frog belch — or dump — Is that a proserpinacea with finely divided leaves ? in this pool? Hear a tree toad or maybe a woodpecker tapping. A juncus in Hubb’s Close 2 feet high & big as a crows quill.

Round leafed cornel — leaf tomorrow XXX also pignut leaf today {Thoreau may have altered “in” to “today”} in some places — The beach leaf buds are more back ap. than chestnut {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “chestnut”} — but some leaves are expanding with the flower buds — which are now opened so as to show the separate buds — V. Pennsylvanicum — early blueberry in bloom XXX prob. may shed pollens a yel. red-poll still.

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 May 11, Friday: Orestes Augustus Brownson, “a somewhat noble Roman Catholic writer,” was being reported in newspapers such as the Terre Haute, Indiana Daily American as having recently lectured in New Orleans on the destiny of the Roman Church: “It must become the arbiter between the State and subject. It must guard the man by interposing its flaming sword as a defense. It must construe constitutions and expound laws, deciding where is the limit of centralized power, and what is its absolute duty to perform.” The newspapers were, of course, congratulatory about the openness of this, because such openness helped them understand what it is that the Protestant American people are up against.



May 11

Am. To Island —

Only the lower limbs of Bass begin to leaf yest — A crow-black birds nest — about 8 feet up a White maple over water a large [^{loose}] nest without some 8 inches high — bet. a small twig & main trunk — composed of coarse bark shreds & dried last years grass [^{without mud}] ~~stem~~ — within deep & size of robins nest — with 4 pale green eggs streaked & blotched with black & brown. took one. [^{young bird not begun to form.}] Hear & see Yel. throat vireo. See oatseed spawn — a mass as big as fist on bottom — of brown jelly composed of smaller globules each with a fish-like tadpole color of a seed.

[Transcript]


Pm to Andromeda polifolia


Some young elms beg. to leaf. Butternut leafs ap. tomorrow — Larger rock maples {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “maples”} not yet beg. to leaf — later considerably {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke



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through this and following lines} than large white maples & somewhat than large red. Ap. Andromeda will not open before the 15th or 16 & the buck bean now [^just] budded above the water not before the 20th ~~Jun~~? Juniper repens will not open ap before the 14th or 15th Canoe birch just sheds pollen {"sheds pollen" was possibly altered from "shed pollens"} XXX Very handsome drooping [^golden] catkins sometimes 2 or 3 together some 5 1/4 inches long. The leaves of [^some] youn sprouts already 3/4 inch over — but of the trees not started The 2nd Amelanchier just sheds pollen XXX in a swamp — I trod on a large black-snake which as soon as I stepped again went off swiftly down the hill toward the swamp with head erect like a racer — Looking closely I found another left behind partly concealed by the dry leaves. They were lying amid the leaves in this open wood E of Beck-stow's amid the sweet fern & huckleberry bushes — The remaining one ran out its tongue at me — & vibrated its tail swiftly making quite a noise on the leaves — then darted forward — {this dash may possibly be the up stroke of following "p"} passed round an oak {Thoreau possibly altered other notations into "an oak" — notations such as "&" and "&c"} & whipped itself straight down into a hole at its base 1 1/2 inches over — After its head had entered its tail was not long in following. You can hardly walk in a thick pine wood now — especially a swamp — but presently — you will have a crow [**American Crow**  *Corvus brachyrhynchos*] or 2 over your head, either silently flitting over — to spy what you would be at — & if its nest is in danger or angrily cawing. It is most impressive when — looking for their nest, you first detect the presence of the bird by its shadow —

Was not that a bay wing [**Vesper Sparrow**  *Poocetes gramineus*] which I heard sing — Ah, twar twe twar, twit twit twit twit-twe? V. pedata sheds pollen [^a great many out on the ~~20~~ 13th] — the first I have chanced to see.

I hear some kind of owl partially hooting now at 4 pm I know not whether far off or near —

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May 12, Saturday: The Daily State Sentinel of Indianapolis, Indiana used an icon of a pointing hand to begin the following paragraph of Tough Love advice: "The best method to get rid of professional beggars, who daily apply for money to buy bread for a sick mother and fourteen small children is to offer them some kind of labor, and a fair price for its performance. — They will leave you instantly: they are above work."

The next article in the column was one reprinted from the Greencastle Banner about "Indiana Pork for the Crimea." It was reported that three or four thousand head of hogs were slaughtered in that place last month, for the use of the army in the Crimea (presumably meaning the British army in the Crimea; the gazette added that forty thousand head for the same purpose, had been contracted for in other towns of Indiana).

In an adjoining column was a posting about "Slavery in South Carolina": "The Jacksonville News records the death, at the residence of Col. J. Broward, of a negro woman by the name of Phillis, aged ninety-three years. at the time General Washington visited South Carolina, at the close of the revolution, she was sent by the father of Col. B. to wait on him. For faithful service she was given her freedom; but, finding it too hard a task to maintain herself after a trial of 15 years, she solicited to return to the Colonel and his brother, to be maintained during her life, which was granted her, and fed from his table until her death."

This was followed by brief notice about "Expensive Smoking": "A counsellor-at-law was fined two dollars and cost on Wednesday in a police Court for smoking a cigar in the streets of Boston."

In regard to "Literary" events, the gazette noted that "The first volume of IRVING's Life of WASHINGTON will be published in a few days, and the second later in the summer," and that "It is reported in the literary circles in London that TENNYSON, the poet Laureate, is preparing a poem on the events of the war."

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May 12

1854-1855


[Transcript]

Cold enough for {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “for”} a fire this many a day — 6 Am to Hill. I hear the myrtle bird’s te-e-e, te-e e-, t t t, t. t t clear flute-like whistle. [^white throat sparrows {Thoreau added this in pencil}] & see 8 or 10 crow b. birds together.

Pm to Lee’s Cliff.

“Downriver,” “To Great Meadow,” and “To Hill” signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball’s Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11



C says he saw upland plover 2 or 3 nights ago. The sweet gale begs to leaf. The 1. I perceive the fragrance of the Salix alba now in bloom more than 1/8 of a mile distant — They now adorn the causeways with their yellow blossoms & resound with the hum of [^bumble] bees &c. &c I have found half a dozen robins’ nests with eggs already — 1 in an elm 2 in a salix alba — 1 in a salix nigra — 1 in a pitch pine &c &c



I find the partridge nest [Ruffed Grouse] [Bonasa umbellus](#) (Partridge) of the 7th ult partially covered with dry oak leaves — & 2 more eggs only = 3 in all — cold. Prob — the bird is killed. As I approached the owls nest [Eastern Screech-Owl] [Otus asio](#) I saw her run past the hole up into that part of the hollow above it — & probably she was there when I thought she had flown on the 7th. [^I looked in & at first did not know what I saw —] One of the 3 remaining eggs was hatched — & a little downy white young one 2 or 3 times as long as an egg lay helpless between the 2 remaining eggs — Also a dead white-bellied mouse (mus leucopus) lay with them its tail curled round one of the eggs. [Wilson](#) says of his Red Owl — strix asio — with which this ap. corresponds — & not with the mottled — though my egg is not “pure white” — that “the young are at first covered with a whitish down.” [^heard an oven-bird —]



Passing on into the Miles’ Meadow — was struck by the interesting {Thoreau put a vertical pencil stroke through “interesting”} tender green of the jut springing foliage — of the aspens apples {Thoreau penciled in the “I” in “apples”} cherries (more reddish) &c It is now especially interesting while you can see through it — and also the tender yellowish green grass shooting up in the [^bare] river meadows {am} & prevailing over the dark & sere. Watched a black & white creeper from Bittern cliff — A very neat & active bird — exploring the limbs on all sides — & looking {Thoreau may have altered “look” into “looking”} 3 or 4 ways almost at once for insects.

Now & then it raises its head a little opens its bill & without closing it utters its faint seeser seeser seeser. From beyond the orchard saw a large ~~ha~~ bird ~~far~~ over the Cliff hill — which with my glass I soon made out to be a fish-hawk [Osprey] [Pandion haliaetus](#) advancing. Even at that dist. half a mile off I distinguished its gull like body — (piratlike fishing body fit to dive) & that its wings did not curved upward at the ends like a hen hawk’s — (at least I couldnt see that they did) but rather hung down. It came on steadily, bent on fishing — with [^long &] heavy [^undulating] wings with an easy sauntering flight — over the river to the pond — & hovered over Pleasant meadow a long time — hovering from time to time in one spot — when more than a hundred feet high — then making a very short circle or 2 & hovering again — then sauntering off against the woodside — At length he reappeared passed downward over the shruboak-plain & alighted on an oak (of course now bare) [^standing this time ap. lengthwise on the limb]. Soon took to wing again & went to fishing down the stream [^100 feet high]. When just below Bittern Cliff I observed by its motions that it observed something — It made a broad circle of observation in its course — lowering itself somewhat then by one or 2 ~~side~~ ~~fl~~ [^steep] side wise flights it reached the water = & as near as intervening trees would let me see skimmed over it & endeavored to clutch its pray in passing. — It failed the first time but prob. succeeded the 2nd. Then it leisurely winged its way to a tall bare tree on the east end of the Cliffs. & there we left it [^ap. pluming itself] — It had a very white belly — & indeed appeared all white beneath its body — I saw broad ~~dark~~ black lines between the white crown

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& throat. [^The brown thrasher is a powerful] singer — he is 1/4 of a mile off across the river where he sounded with 15 rods.

Hear the night warbler — Slip. elm leaf more forward than the common — say yest. Only young common yet. White ash begs to shed pollen at Lee's yest. or possibly day before XXX — but no leaves on the same — Hear the first creak of a cricket beneath the rocks there — So serene & composing — Methinks it surpasses the song of all birds — sings from everlasting to everlasting. Ap a thousand little slender catch-flies shooting up on the top of the cliff. The red oak there leafed a day or 2 [^or — 1 day] earlier than hickory — & the black near it not yet. Rhus radicans leafed there a day or 2 — See one white throat [^spar] still. The hearing of the cricket whets my eyes. I see on or 2 long lighter & smoother streaks across the rippled pond from west to east — which preserve their form remarkably — only are bent somewhat at last. The zephyr does not strike the surface from over the broad button bush row — till after a rod or so leaving a perfectly smooth border with a fine irregular shaded edge where the rippling begins. I now begin to distinguish where at a distance the amelanchier botryapium with its white against the russet is waving in the wind. Under Lee's C. about 1 rod east of the ash — am surprised to find some [^pale] yellow columbines — not a tinge of scarlet — [^the leaves & stem also not purplish but a yellowish & light green] with leaves differently shaped from the common — [^at the parts both flower & leaves more slender — & the leaves not so flat] but inclining to fold.

One flower of the polygonum pubescens open there — prob. may shed pollen tomorrow XXX {Thoreau may have added the "XXX" later}

Returning over Conantum I directed my glass toward the dead tree on Cliffs & was surprised to see the Fish-hawk still sitting there about an hour after he first alighted — & now I found that he was eating a fish which he had under his feet on the limb — {this may be "limb. —"} & ate — as I have already described. At this distance his whole head looked white with his breast.

Just before sundown took our seats before the owl's nest & [^sat perfectly still &] awaited her appearance — We sat about 1/2 an hour — & it was surprising what various distinct sounds we heard ~~from~~ there deep in the wood — as if the vistas [^aisles] of the wood were so many ear trumpets — the cawing of crows — the peeping of hylas — in the swamp — & perhaps the croaking of 6? a tree-toad — the oven bird — the yorrick of Wilson's thrush — a distant stake driver — the night warbler — & black & white creeper — the lowing of cows — the late supper horn — the voices of boys — the singing of girls — not all together but separately & distinctly & musically from where the Partridge — & the red tailed hawk & the screech owl sit on their — nests.

{This page in the manuscript is in pencil, in two columns with a vertical line separating the columns. The right column is only occasionally filled in.}

Clearer weather 1 27
 Butterflies 1
 Pratt's sweetbriar 1
 Winged ants 1
 Flowers 1 & 2
 Walk with Pratt 1
 Willow in morning 2
 My little ~~snap~~ turtles 3 — 10 — 26
 To Climbing Fern 3
 Galls 3 — 9 — 13
 To F H. Pond by moonlight 3
 Waterless viscid (?) 4
 Owls 6 — 18
 Berries 7
 River fall {Thoreau may have written "fell"} & wreck 7
 To Sam Barretts Pond 7
 Drought — 8 — 9
 Saw dust in river 8
 Birch lice (?) exuviae 8
 Sam Barretts Pond 9
 Cranberries 9
 Pigeons 10
 Blue Heron 10
 Locusts 10
 Birds 10 — 13
 Distant thunder Shower 11
 Water warm again 12
 Aut. tints 13 — 24
 Acorns 13



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Cracks in ground 13
Fall 14
Marsh hawk 14
To Baker farm by moonlight 15
Sounds in evening 15 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 &c
A-Graping {Thoreau wrote a capital G over a lowercase g} 19 — 26
Clams 19
Garfield 21 — 4 — 6
Snap-turtles 21 — 3
Brant 22
Otter 22
Musquash 22 — 3
Bidens Cernua 23
Aster of Hub. swamp. 23
Pickerel 26
Fall rain 27 & new greenness
Failure of fungi — 28
Birds (what heard) 28.

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May 13, Sunday: The 762-ton immigrant ship *Nashwauk* was merely 18 months old but, during that 18 months, she had caught fire 4 times, and had been dismasted and driven ashore. At about 3AM this troubled vessel ran ashore again, carrying some 300 Irish girls, on the Australian coast just south of the Onkaparinga River. The passengers would be cared for by local people until the steamer *Melbourne* and Government schooner *Yatala* could carry the stranded girls to Port Adelaide; however, some of the girls, traumatized, could only be carried to Port Adelaide in wagons drawn by bullocks. After a north-westerly gale broke up the remains of the *Nashwauk* on May 26th, a local man would purchase hull and cargo for £135, and on May 31st at an auction on the beach the recovered gear, fittings, and cargo would fetch £600. The captain of the ship, distressed, would take ill and die early in June. The ship's bell would come into the possession of a man who indicated that he would donate it to the Free Scots Church at Morphett Vale. The anchor would be placed as a memorial at Moana.

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May 13. P.M. — Down river and to Yellow Birch Swamp.

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[Transcript]

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11

Yesterday was the first warm day for a week or two, and to-day it is much warmer still and hazy — as much like summer as it can be without the trees being generally leafed. I saw a *Fringilla hyemalis* [**Dark-eyed Junco** **Junco hyemalis** (~~Slate-colored Sparrow or Snow-bird or F. Hyemalis~~)] this morning and heard the golden robin, now that the elms are beginning to leaf, also the myrtle-bird's *tealee*. The earliest gooseberry in garden has opened.

As we float down the river through the still and hazy air, enjoying the June-like warmth, see the first kingbirds on the bare black willows with their broad white breasts and white-tipped tails; and the sound of the first bobolink as floated to us from over the meadows; now that the meadows are lit by the tender yellow green of the willows and the silvery-green fruit of the elms. I heard from a *female* red-wing [**Red-winged Blackbird** **Agelaius phoeniceus**] that peculiar rich screwing warble — not *o gurgle ee* — made with *r*, not with *l*. The whole air too is filled with the ring of toads louder than heretofore. Some men are already fishing, indistinctly seen through the haze. Under the hop-hornbeam below the monument, observed a large pellet, apparently dropped by some bird of prey, consisting of mouse-hair, with an oat or two in it undigested, which probably the mouse had swallowed. This reminded me that I had read this kind of birds digested the flesh of the animals they swallowed, but not the vegetable food in the stomachs of the latter. The air is filled with the song of birds, — warbling vireo, gold robin, yellowbirds, and occasionally the bobolink. The gold robin, just come, is heard in all parts of the village. I see both male and female. It is a remarkable difference between this day and yesterday, that yesterday this and the bobolink were not heard and now the former, at least, is so musical and omnipresent. Even see boys a-bathing, though they must find it cold. I saw yesterday some of that common orange rust-like fungus already on a *Potentilla simplex* leaf. Hear the first catbird, more clear and tinkling than the thrasher. Left the boat below N. Barrett's and walked inland. Saw several handsome red-winged grasshoppers in different parts of our walls; but though we saw where they alighted, yet several times we could not find them in the grass for all that. The bayberry apparently will not open under a week. There are now a great many *Viola pedata*. The brook in Yellow Birch Swamp is very handsome now — broad and full, with the light-green hellebore eighteen inches high and the small two-leaved Solomon's-seal about it, in the open wood. Only a part of the yellow birches are leafing, but not yet generally the large ones. I notice no catkins. One white birch sheds pollen. The white birches on the side of Ponkawtasset are beginning to show faint streaks of yellowish green here and there.

A cooler and stronger wind from the east by midafternoon.

The large bass trees now begin to leaf.

Now, about two hours before sunset, the brown thrashers are particularly musical. One seems to be contending in song with another. The chewink's strain sounds quite humble in comparison.

At 9.30 P. M. I hear from our gate my night-warbler. Never heard it in the village before.

I doubt if we shall at any season hear more birds singing than now. [This sentence is queried in the margin.]


Saw an amelanquier with downy leaf (apparently *oblongifolia*) on the southeast edge of Yellow Birch Swamp,

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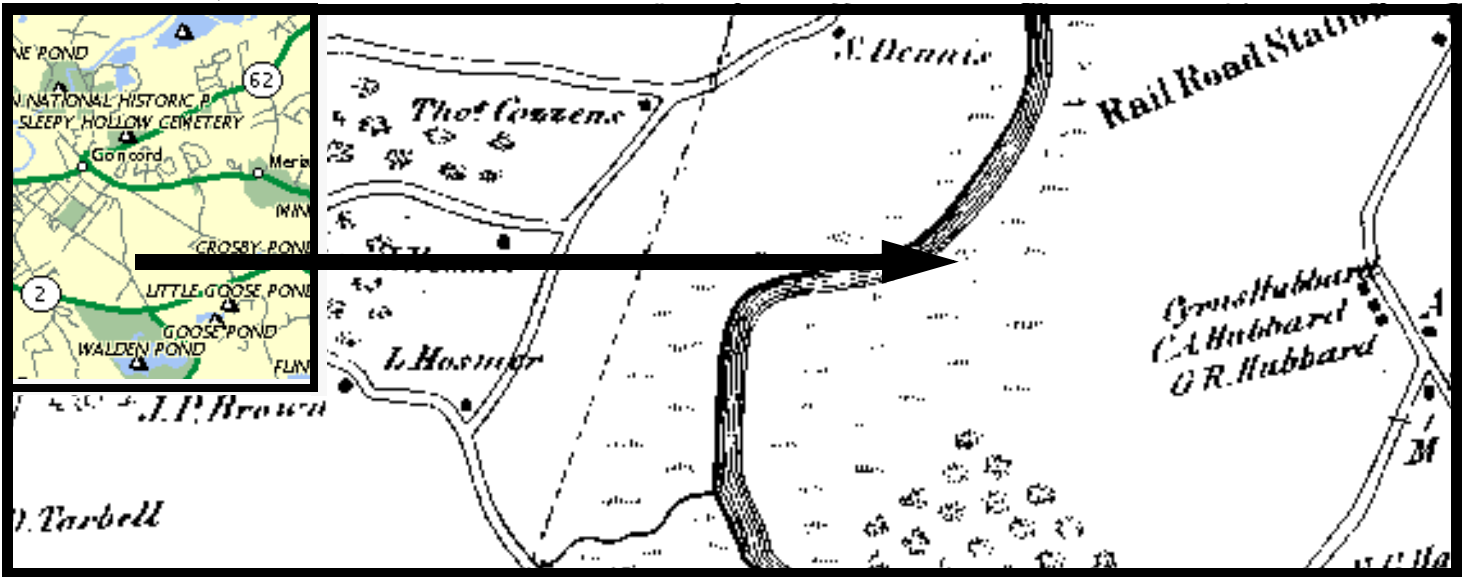
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about eighteen feet high and five or six inches in diameter, — a clump of them about as big as an apple tree.

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 May 14, Monday: Jaguarita l'indienne, an opéra comique by Fromental Halévy to words of Saint-Georges and de Leuven, was performed for the initial time, at the Théâtre-Lyrique, Paris.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Hubbard's Bath and then to the Cliffs of Fair Haven Hill (Gleason 26/J7):



May 14

[Transcript]

Our peaches beg to bloom—others prob. earlier!
 Domestic plums open—some may be yest. Missouri
 currant open yest or day before. XX One apple on
 a roof open XXX. The beech blossom in house opens
 say tomorrow in woods X—& prob. will leaf generally
 by the next day—2nd gooseberry in garden open XXX
 White ash begs to leaf—& wax work—Clethra
 leafs. High blue berry open by Hubbs Bath XXX
 Black scruboak leafs—& chinquapin. Red
 choke-berry leafed say 2 days later than black


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1854-1855

Pm to Cliffs via Hubb's Bath—

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10



See a male hen harrier [**Northern Harrier**  *Circus cyaneus*] skimming low along the side of the river, often within a foot of the muddy shore, looking for frogs—with a very compact flock of small birds, prob. swallows, in pursuit. Occasionally he alight[^s] & walks or hops flutteringly a foot or 2 over the ground— The lombardy poplar & Silvery abele leafed at least 2 days ago. V. vacillans leafed 2 perhaps flowers opened? if that is one near W F. Haven spring. Some hickories just opening their leaves mak quite a show with the red inner sides of the bud scales turned back. All the oak leaves off the shruboak plain except. ap. a few white oaks. Some gaylussacias leafed. Uva arsi at Cliffs out some time—& some new shoots leafing. Under the dead pine [^the 12th ult 1/2 mile from the river] on which the fish-hawk sat, I find a few fish bones—one I am pretty sure from comparison, the jaw of a pout. So that in 3 instances the only ones observed this year, they were feeding on pouts. Probably the mice &c had picked up the rest of his droppings. Thus these inhabitants of the interior get a taste of fish from time to time—crumbs from the fish-hawk's table—Prinos verticilla leafs.

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May 15, Tuesday: [Walt Whitman](#) registered his LEAVES OF GRASS with the United States District Court in New-York.

The Emperor [Napoléon III](#) opened the Exposition Universelle of Paris in the Palais de l'Industrie (a direct result of this would be the introduction of a Bordeaux Wine Official Classification).



May 15. P.M. —To Beck Stow's. Suddenly very warm. hear a hummingbird in the garden. Pear blossomed, — some perhaps yesterday. Locust, black and scarlet oak, and some buttonwoods leaf. A yellow butterfly. I hear from the top of a pitch pine in the swamp that loud, clear, familiar whistle [**Olive-sided**



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Flycatcher ■ *Contopus borealis*] which I have sometimes wrongly referred to the wood pewee, –*whip-ter-phe-ee*. Is it the *whip-tom-kelly* note which Sloane and Wilson gave to the red-eye, but which [Nuttall](#) says he never heard from it? Sometimes *ter-phee-e*. This is repeated at considerable intervals, the bird sitting quite still a long time. I saw it dart out once, catch an insect, and return to its perch muscicapalike. (Probably *M. Cooperi*. *Vide* June 10th.) As near as I could see it had a white throat, was whitish, streaked with dark, beneath, darker tail and wings, and maybe olivaceous [*sic*] shoulders; bright-yellow within bill.

Andromeda Calyculata begins to leaf — separate twigs from blossoming ones. *Andromeda Polifolia* just open. Buck-bean, apparently in three days (in house the 18th).

The 13th, saw large water-bugs (*Gyrinus*) crawled up high on rocks. Watch a pine warbler on a pitch pine, slowly and faithfully searching it creeper-like. It encounters a black and white creeper on the same tree; they fly at each other, and the latter leaves, apparently driven off by the first. This warbler shuts its bill each time to produce its peculiar note. *Rhodora* will apparently open in two or three days. See and hear for a moment a small warbler-like bird in Nemopanthes Swamp which sings somewhat like *tchut a-worieter-worieter-worieter-woo*.

The greater part of the large sugar maples on the Common leaf. Large red maples generally are late to leaf.

Minott says that some years ago, maybe ten or fifteen, a man in Bedford climbed to an owl's nest (probably a cat owl's), and the owl took out one of his eyes and nearly killed him. He read it in the papers.

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May 16, Wednesday: The Daily Express of Peterburg, Virginia carried news that bled:

THE LATEST NEWS.

THE DISASTER TO THE GOLDEN AGE. ALMOST ANOTHER ARCTIC CALAMITY.

The steamer *Golden Age*, of the disaster to which the telegraph gave a brief account yesterday, left San Francisco on the 17th ult., with about 800 passengers, among whom were Mr. Aspinwall, president of the line; Captain Allen McLane, Rev. S. H. Willey, and a large number of ladies. Captain Watkins, of the ill-fated San Francisco, was her commander. All went well until 2 o'clock Sunday morning, the 29th, when she struck opposite the island of Quibo. The scene that followed is thus described: A crash ensued, and the steamer stood still. A silence followed for a moment, tending to inspire the mind with awe, each whispering to a neighbor, "What is it?" "What has happened?" Rushing tumultuously on deck, it soon became too evident to us all what was the matter. The noble steamer was aground in about twelve feet, with the deep water of the mid-channel under her stern-post, her forefoot knocked away, stem broomed and the water coming in rapidly — steam roaring through the escape-pipe, and the beam at 45 degrees, (the engine being on its centre.) — All this required but a few moments for its full comprehension, for the people generally were pretty cool, and discipline prevailed.

"Beach her as quick as God will let you," said Capt. Tyler to the commander, who saw from the quantity of water in the fire-room, to say nothing of the smell of gas produced by the water entering the furnaces, that the leak was a very serious one. The weight of water

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found its way to the after hold, owing to the inclination of the keel, and buoyed her bows from the rocks, by reason of which she came gently off, and, rolling heavily, shifted the immense bulk of passengers from side to side on the hurricane deck. A turn-back cleared her off the reef. A turn ahead and she struck again, being slow to answer her helm now. She struck tremendously [sic], as though the swell set from under her, and so let her down upon the rocks – she careened badly, and took in water on her starboard guard. Once more the passengers on deck shifted sides with the shock, and this time there went up a shriek as though the last moment had come. Once more a revolution back, once more a bell to go ahead, and she swept gently by the hidden danger – fires all out, and but little water, near a smooth, sandy beach. Many of the ladies now begged to be landed, but their fears were soon quelled, and all remained quietly on board till the J.L. Stephens came along and took us to Panama, only two days after. The Golden Age, it is supposed, would be saved in a damaged condition.



May 16. P.M. — Up Assabet.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10

Trees generally leafing. Black willow leaf. Bass leaf is an inch over; probably began about the 14th. Panicked andromeda leafed in some places, probably a day or two. Grape buds begin to open. Swamp white oak leaf, probably yesterday. Silky cornel leaf, two days or three. A woodcock, near river. A blue heron-like bird on a tree over river, but with uniformly fawn-colored throat and breast and red feet. We hear these last two or three warm days the loud sound of toads borne on or amid the rippling wind. A green bittern with its dark-green coat and crest, sitting watchful, goes off with a limping peetweet flight.

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May 17, Thursday: "Jews' Hospital" was dedicated in New-York City (it would open to patients on June 5th and eventually would come to be known under the designation "Mount Sinai Hospital").



May 17. Waked up at 2:30 by the peep of robins, which were aroused by a fire at the pail-factory about two miles west. I hear that, the air was full of birds singing thereabouts. It rained gently at the same time, though not steadily.

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
 May 18, Friday: Marshall Tufts died in Lexington, Massachusetts.

From [Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#)'s journal, comparing [Henry Thoreau](#) with [Waldo Emerson](#):


To-night Mr. Thoreau came in as I was reading Demosthenes, and we fell to talking about Greek, Latin, Milton, [Wordsworth](#), Emerson, Ellery Channing, and other things. But first of all let me describe Thoreau.... He is a sort of pocket edition of Mr. Emerson, as far as outward appearance goes, in coarser binding and with wood-cuts instead of the fine steel-engravings of Mr. Emerson. He is a little under size, with a huge Emersonian nose, bluish gray eyes, brown hair, and a ruddy, weather-beaten face which reminds one of that of some shrewd and honest animal, some retired philosophic woodchuck or magnanimous fox. He dresses very plainly, wears his collar turned over like Mr. Emerson, and often an old dress-coat, broad in the skirts, and by no means a fit. He walks about with a brisk rustic air, and never seems tired. He talks like Mr. Emerson and so spoils the good things which he says; for what in Mr. Emerson is charming, becomes ludicrous in Thoreau, because an imitation.



May 18. P.M. — Boat to Nut Meadow.

Large devil's-needle. Sassafras well open. How long? Celtis will probably shed pollen to-morrow; shoots already an inch long. Sorrel pollen. First veery strain. Green-briar leafed several days. *Veronica serpyllifolia* well out (how long?) at Ash Bank Spring. Saw the yellow-legs feeding on shore. (C[hanning]. now thinks he has not seen it before.) Legs **not** bright-yellow. Goes off with the usual whistle; also utters a long monotonous call as it were [*sic*] standing on the shore, not so whistling. Am inclined to think it the lesser yellow-legs (though I think the only one we see). Yet its bill appears quite two inches long. Is it curved up? Observed a blackbird's (red-wing's) nest finished. (Four eggs in it on the 25th.) [**Red-winged Blackbird**  *Agelaius phoeniceus*] At Clamshell a bay-wing [**Vesper Sparrow**  *Pooecetes gramineus*] sparrow's nest, four eggs (young half hatched) - some **black**-spotted, others not. [Three young partly (slightly) fledged the 26th.] These last warmer days a great many fishes dart away from close to the shore, where they seem to lie now more than ever. I see some darting about and rippling the water there with large back fins out, either pouts or suckers (not pickerel certainly). Apparently their breeding-season arrived. Is not this where the fish hawks get them? Rhodora; probably some yesterday. Black scrub oak pollen. Fir balsam pollen; say begins to leaf at same time. The clump of golden willows west of new stone bridge is very handsome now seen from hill, with its light-yellowish foliage, because the stems of the trees are seen through it.

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 May 19, Saturday-21, Monday: US naval forces protected American interests in [Shanghai](#).

US MILITARY INTERVENTIONS




May 19. Put my little turtles into the river. They had not noticeably increased in size, — or hardly. Three had died within a week for want of attention, — two mud turtles and one musk turtle. Two were missing, — one mud and one musk. Five musk were put into the river.

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 May 20, Sunday: The expedition led by U.S. explorer [Dr. Elisha Kent Kane](#) abandoned the *Advance* and started home in open boats from the Arctic Sea.


Charles Sumner, US Senator from Massachusetts, termed the [Kansas/Nebraska Act](#) of 1854 a “swindle.”

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION



May 20. Rains a little.

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 May 21, Monday: British physician Thomas Addison published in London ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL AND LOCAL EFFECTS OF DISEASE OF THE SUPRA-RENAL CAPSULES. This described the disorder of the adrenal gland which now bears his name.

During the weeks after Company F of the [1st US Regiment of Dragoons](#) had rioted in Taos, New Mexico the mounted unit engaged in a series of skirmishes with native Americans in the southern Rocky Mountains before returning to their quarters at Cantonment Burgwin. At that point 8 of the privates were named as participants in the mutiny of March 8th, and brought before a general courtmartial (for lashing out while intoxicated at these proceedings, Captain Philip Thompson would be cashiered from the service). Farrier Edward O’Meara and troopers William Gray, Robert Johnson, Adam Williams, Daniel McFarland, Henry Jacobs, John White, and John Harper would be sentenced to confinement for their behavior in the mutiny. A few of the others would suffer garrison punishment amounting to a few weeks of hard labor and loss of a month’s pay. On this day courtmartial hearings began in Taos for Privates [Aaron Dwight Stevens](#), John Cooper, Joseph Fox, and John Steele, charged with mutiny under Article 9 of the Articles of War, before [Colonel Thomas Turner Fauntleroy](#) plus a panel of 8 officers. Per the military code of justice, a guilty verdict required only a 2/3ds majority –6 out of these 9– nor would the judge advocate have any problem securing sentences of death for these soldiers unrepresented by counsel and charged with “mutiny, engaging in a drunken riot, and assaulting [Major George \[Alexander Hamilton\] Blake](#)” of the 1st US Dragoons. However, it was a requirement that the transcripts then be submitted to the Secretary of War, [Jefferson Davis](#), and receive the endorsement of the US President, [Franklin Pierce](#).



May 21. P.M. — To Island.

Salix nigra leafs. Is that plump blue-backed, *rufous-rumped* swallow, the cliff swallow, flying with barn swallows, etc., over the river? [Nuttall](#) apparently so describes it, — 5 1/2 by 12. It dashes within a foot of me. Lambkill leaf, a day or two. Choke-berry pollen; perhaps a day or more elsewhere. *Viola palmata* pretty common, apparently two or three days. Some buttonbush begins to leaf. Cranberry well started; shoots three quarters of an inch. Bluets whiten the fields, and violets are now perhaps in prime. Very cold to-day; cold weather, indeed, from the 20th to 23d inclusive. Sit by fires, and *sometimes* wear a greatcoat and expect frosts.

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May 22, Tuesday: In the [Kansas Territory](#), there was a new election for legislative delegates in districts in which there had been demonstrable fraud in the previous election.

In Australia, the province of Victoria was separated administratively from New South Wales.



May 22d

[Transcript]

Cerasus pumila in full bloom—how long?
 Bank swallows—ashy brown above—has[^ve]
 holes at Deep cut have not much distinguished them before, this season. Sage
 willow may have beg. to leaf a week or 10 days ago
 or more. Cuckoo—scared up a night
 hawk— [^from the white on wings] amid the dry leaves on the edge
 of a copse on F.H. Hill—where ap it had
 been scratching—the leaves looking as if they
 had been turned up. Linaria Canadensis on Cliffs X
 open. The deciduous trees leafing beg to clothe
 or invest the evergreens— The oaks are [^a little] more than
 in the gray— Huckleberry open—possibly yesterday
 Fringed polygala how long? herds? grass
 on Channing bank—pollen— Harris tells
 Emerson my cicada is the Noveberacensis? {altered by writing “?” over “-”} known
 to N. Yorkers— Lupine not open yet for 2 or 3 days?
 not yet chinquapin oak—

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May 23, Wednesday: From the 52-volume journal of travels of the Latter-Day missionary [George O. Cannon](#) ([Mormon](#)): “Started a little after 6 a.m. Crossed the stream several times; sand heavy. Where we left the Santa Clara, the missionary brethren had built a house; they were absent. About a mile further passed a spring. From this had a few miles [of] tolerable road & then had it very heavy for 8 or 10 miles till we got up to the summit when we travelled down hill for some 18 miles; road stony. Camped on a small creek – Cottonwood – feed poor.”



May 23d

[Transcript]

Am to Bayberry via river—
 Myrica—not quite— Lousewort [altered by capitalizing the “L”} pollen how long.

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May 24, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) for the 9th time (Dr. Bradley P. Dean has noticed) deployed in his journal a weather term that had been originated by [Luke Howard](#): “Just before six, see in the northwest the first summer clouds, methinks, piled in **cumuli** with silvery edges, and westward of them a dull, rainy-looking cloud advancing and shutting down to the horizon; later, lightning in the west and south and a little rain.”




May 24

[Transcript]

Am to Beck Stow’s— Button wood not open ?
 Celandine pollen XX Butternut pollen ap a

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day or 2. Agricultural—black oak pollen yest.
 at least—XXX Scarlet oak the same but a
 little later. The staminate flowers of the first are
 on long & handsome tassels—for 3 or 4 inches
 along the extremities of last years shoots
 depending 5 inches (sometimes 6) x 4 in
 width—& quite dense & thick. The scarlet oak
 tassels are hardly half as long. The leaves
 much greener & smoother—& now somewhat
 wilted emit a sweet odor which those
 of the black do not. ~~Other~~ [^Both these] oaks
 are ap. more forward at top—where I ?
 cannot see them. Mt ash open ap. yesterday X
 X— In woods by— And. polifolia the
 chestnut sided warbler with clear yellow
 brown & yellow on wings & chestnut sides—
 It is exploring low trees and bushes often
 along stems about young leaves—& frequently
 or after short pauses utters its some
 what summer yellow bird-like note—
 [^1 quick]
 say—tchip tchip, chip chip, tche tche
 ter tchéa—spray & rasping & faint.
 Another—further off—
 ? Andromeda polifolia now in prime
 —but the leaves are apt to be blackened
 & unsightly—& the flowers though
 delicate have a feeble & sickly look
 rose white—somewhat crystalline— Its
 shoots or new leaves unfolding say when
 it flowered or directly after now 1 inch long.
 ? Buck bean—just fairly begun—though
 prob— first the 18th—a handsome flower
 but already when the raceme is only half
 blown some of the lowest flowers are brown
 & withered deforming it— What a -2[^pity!]
 ? Juniper repens pollen not even yet—ap
 ? tomorrow. Ap put back by the
 cold weather. Beach plum pollen
 prob. several days in some places—& leaves
begun as long
 Hear a rose breasted gross beak [**Rose-breasted Grosbeak**  *Pheucticus ludovicianus*]—at
 first thought it a tanager—but
 soon it perceived it more clear &
 instrumental [^should say whistle if one could whistle like a flute]—a noble singer reminding
 me also of a robin—clear loud & flute=like—on the oaks hill side S of Great
 #[^Fields] Black all above except white
 on wing—with a triangular red mark
 on breast {drawing} but, as I saw, all white
 beneath this. Female ~~female~~ [^quite] different
 yellowish olivaceous where more like a musicapa. Song not so sweet as clear
 & strong. Saw it fly off & catch an insect
 like a fly-catcher— An early thorn pollen
 (not crus galli) ap yest. XX
 Picked up a pellet in the wood path of
 a small birds feathers 1 inch in diameter &
 loose—nothing else with them.—some slate—some
 yellow. Young robins—some time hatched
 Heard a purple finch sing more than
 1 minute without pause—loud & rich
 on an elm over the street—another singing very faintly on a neighboring elm.
 Conant. fever-bush had not beg. to leaf the 12th

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I seem to have seen among sedge &c
 1 the Carex Pennsylvanica—also 2 another ?
 similar but later & larger in low ground
 [^with many more pistillate flowers] nearly a foot high 3-sided & rough culm—
 [^The 1st is smooth] Also 3 an early sedge at {^L}ees Cliff. with striped
 & pretty broad leaves [^not rigid] perhaps on 554 p. of Gray—
 4th The rigid tufted are common in meadows with
 cut grass like leaves. call it C. stricta though not
 yet more than 1 foot high. or 18 inches.
 of Juncaceae perhaps Luzula Campestris
 the early umbelled purple leaved—low— {in pencil: Foxtail}
 & ap. her[^of] grasses—herd's grass—on C's bank.
 Naked azalea shoots more than a week old
 and other leaves say a week at least.

Pm to Cliffs
 Wind suddenly changed to S this forenoon
 & for first time I think of a thin coat—
 It is very hazy—in consequence of the
 sudden warmth after cold. & I can-
 not see the mts. Chinquapin pollen XXX
 ? Lupine not yet—lack scrub oak tassels
 some reddish some yellowish. Just before
 6 see in the N.W. the first summer
 clouds methought piled in cumuli with
 silvery edges—& westwardward of them
 a dull rainy looking cloud advancing
 & shutting down to the horizon—later
 lightning in west & South—& a little
 rain— Another king of frog spawn at Beck Stows

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 May 25, Friday: Waldo Emerson's 52d birthday.

Gioachino Rossini and his wife arrived in Paris from Florence.




May 25. A rather warm night the last; window slightly open. Hear buzz of flies in the sultryish morning air on awaking.

8 A.M. — To Hill.


"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11



Late rose shoots, two inches, say a fortnight since. Sali.v nigra pollen, a day at least. Wood pewee. Apparently yellowbirds' nests just completed-one by stone bridge causeway, [One egg in it the next morning. Also a red-wing's nest opposite Dodd's (one egg in it next morning, i.e. 26th).] another on birch by mud turtle meadow. Veronica peregrina in Mackay's strawberries, how long? Most of the robins' nests I have examined this year had three eggs, clear bluish green.

A chip-bird's nest on a balm-of-Gilead, eight feet High, between the main stem and a twig or two, with four very pale blue-green eggs with a sort of circle of brown-black spots about larger end.

Red-wing's [**Red-winged Blackbird**  *Agelaius phoeniceus*] nest with four eggs — white, very faintly tinged with (perhaps) green and curiously and neatly marked with brown-black spots and lines on the large end. Red-wings now generally beginning to lay. ...

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May 26th

[Transcript]

8 Am by boat to Kalmia glauca & thence to Scouring rush—
 Again a strong cold wind from the N by
 west—turning up the new & tender
 pads. The young white lily pads are
 now red or crimson above while greenish
 beneath. Night shade dark green
 shoots are 8 inches long. Button bush
 would commonly be said to begin to leaf.
 At Clam Shell— R. acris & bulbosus pollen
 ap. about 2 or 3 days. Comandra pollen ap 2 days
 there— Arenaria serpyllifolia & scleranthus how long?
 White oak pollen XXX— The oaks ap. shed
 pollen about 4 days later than last year
 —may be owing to the recent cold weather.
 Interrupted fern ~~the~~[^pollen] the 23d may have been a day or 2
 Cinnamon fern today— Checkerberry shoots
 1 inch high. Carex stipata? close spiked
 sedge in Clam shell meadow some time
 Early willow on right beyond Hubb bridge—
 leafed since 12th say 19th or generally before button bush
 At Kalmia swamp— Nemopantes ap several days

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& leaf say before tupelo. White spruce pollen
 1 or 2 days at least. & now begs to leaf.
 To my surprise the *Kalmia glauca*—almost all out—perhaps began with *Rhodora*
 A very fine flower—the more interesting
 for being early— The leaf say just after the
 lambkill. I was wading through this
 white spruce swamp just look at the
 leaf. The more purple *rhodora rose*
 here & there above the small *androme*
 da—so that I did not at first distinguish
 the *K. glauca*— When I did prob— my eyes
 at first confounded it with the
 lambkill—& I did not remember that this
 would not bloom for some time. There
 was^[^were] a few leaves just faintly starting^[^ed].
 But at last my eyes & attention both
 were caught by those handsome Umbells
 of the *K. glauca*—rising one to 3 together
 at the end of bare twigs 6 inches or more
 above the level of the *andromeda* & ~~lambkill~~
 NB The *Rhodora* did not accompany it into the more open & level & wet
 &c—together with the *rhodora* [^{1 1/2} inch diam.] umbells
 parts where was *andromeda* almost alone
 of 5 to 18 flowers on red threads 3/4 to
 an inch long—~~on the extrem~~ at first deep-
 rose color after pale rose—twigs bare except
 2 or 3 small old leaves close to the end of
 the [^{dry looking}] twigs— Flowers [^{corollas}] not arranged in whirls ~~about~~
~~the twig~~ but rising quite above it. The larger flower
 about 9/16 inch diam— [^{flower somewhat larger} [^{methinks}] & more terminal than lambkill] The whole about
 2 feet high in sphagnum— The lambkill
 is just beginning to be flower budded.
 What that [^{neat}] song spar.-like nest [^{of grass merely}] in
 the [^{wet}] sphagnum [^{under the andromeda}] there with 3 eggs—in that
 very secluded place surrounded by the watery
 swamp—& *andromeda*—from which
 the bird stole like a mouse under the
Andromeda. v. egg It is narrower & more
 pointed at one end [^{& lighter a little—the brown less confluent}] than that of the song-
 spar with one spot in breast which took
 from ivy tree tuft 4 egg 1st seen I think the 22nd.
 [^{The last is bluish white very thickly spotted & blotched with brown}]
 Swamp pink leaf before lambkill— A mosquito.
 Lupine in house [^{from F.H. hill}] & prob in field. XX
 A the screech owl's nest [**Eastern Screech-Owl** **Otus asio**] I now
 find 2 young [^{slumbering}] almost uniformly gray
 above—about 5 inches long—with
 little [^{dark}] grayish tufts for [^{incipient}] horns (?) Their
 heads about as broad as their bodies—
 I handle them without their stirring or
 opening their eyes. There are the feathers
 of a small bird & the leg of the
mus leucopus in the nest.
 ? The partridge [**Ruffed Grouse** **Bonasa umbellus** (Partridge)] which on the 12th had





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left 3 cold eggs covered up with oak leaves—



A Grouse Nest with 10 Eggs Found by Herbert W. Gleason at the Base of a Tree Near Brister's Spring

is now sitting on 8. She ap. deserted her nest
for a time & covered it. Already the mouse
ear down begins to blow in the fields &
whiten the grass—together with the bluets.
In Conants thick wood on the White
Pond-ward lane—hear the ev. forest
note—but commonly at a dist, only the
last notes—A[^a] fine sharp té té.
The nut Laurel near Scouring rush ap.
just begun to leaf. Trientalis open ap X
? Do I not hear a tanager? See a
beautiful blue-backe & long tailed pigeon [**American Passenger Pigeon**  *Ectopistes migratorius*]
sitting daintily on a low wht pine limb.
I perceive no new life in the pipes [^Eq. hiemale]—except
that some are flower-budded at top
& may open in a week—and on pulling
them up I find a new one just spring-base at
ing from the [^]root. The flower bud is ap.
on those dry looking last year plants
which I thought had no life in them
Returning I lay on my back
again in Conant's thick wood—
Saw a red start—over my head there—black
with a sort of brick red on sides breast—spot
on wing & under root of tail—note heard once
nes[^x]t day—at kalmia swamp—somewhat like
aveét aveét aveét aveét— In the mean-
while hear another note—very smart & some-
what sprayey rasping—tshrip tshrip tshrip
tshrip or 5 or 6 times with equal force each time
The bird hops near directly over my head—It is black
with a large wht spot [^mark] forward on wings—& a fiery
orange throat above -[^&] below eye & line on crown—yellowish
beneath—white vent—forked tail dusky legs & bill
holds its wings [^(which are light beneath)] loosely— It inclines to examine
about the lower branches of the white pines or
mid way up. The Blackburnian warbler [**Blackburnian Warbler**  *Dendroica fusca*]
very plainly—whose note Nuttall knows nothing
about. 2 leaved sol seal pollen not long
in most places— Ranunculus recurvatus at
corner spring ap several days at least pollen.
Trillium [^pollen] may be several days Arum how long?
The ranunculus Purshii in that large ?
pool in the Holden swamp woods makes
quite a show at a little dist. now—

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See today—(& saw the 23d) a larger peet weet-like bird on the shore—with longer perhaps more slender wings black or blackish without white spots—all white beneath—& when it goes off—it flies higher— Is it not the Totanus solitarius-[^?] which Brown found at Goose Pond. I think that the red-fruited choke-berry has shed pollen about a day—though I have not examined—. The leaves are a little downy beneath & the crimson peduncle & the pedicels stout & quite hairy—while the black-fruited is smooth—& glossy.

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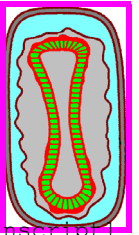


May 27, Sunday: The immigrant ship *Constitution* arrived at its destination port of Sydney, [Australia](#) after a long and arduous voyage made particularly deadly by an outbreak of the [small pox](#).



May 27

Pm To F H. Pond. taking boat op. Puffer's



[Transcript]

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
 — [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10

Still a very strong wind from Northerly & hazy & rather cool for season— The fields now beg. to wear the aspect of June—this grass [^just] beginning to wave [^darker] [^The light col. withered grass seen between the blades.] —foliage thickening & casting shadows over the meadows—elm tree tops thick in distance —deciduous trees rapidly investing evergreens—haze with the strong wind. How important the dark evergreens now seen through the haze in the distance & contrasting with the gauze-like as yet thin clad deciduous trees. They are like solid protuberances of earth. A Thrasher's nest on the bare open ground with 4 eggs which were seen 3 days ago. The nest as open & exposed as it well can be—lined with roots—on a [^slight] ridge where a rail fence has been some rods from any bush. Saw the yel. legs [^on one side] flying over the meadow against the strong wind & at first mistook it for a hawk— It appeared now quite brown with its white rump—& excepting its bill & head I should have taken its for

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a hawk—between the size of male harrier
 & the [^male] pigeon hawk—or say the size of a dove—
 It alighted on the shore—And now again I think
 it must be the large one
 The blue yel— back or parti col— warbler still—
 with the chestnut crescent on breast near my kalmia
 swamp nest. See a painted turtle on a hill
 40 or 50 feet above river— Prob. laying eggs.
 Some mt. sumack has grown 1 inch—some not
 started— Some but. bush 3 inches—some not
 started. The first must be just after the last.
 Myosotis stricta under cliffs how long
 The meadow fragrance today— How
 interesting the huckleberrys now generally
 in blossom on the knoll below the Cliff—
 Countless wholesome red bells—beneath the
 fresh yel-green foliage— The berry bearing
 vaccinium— It is a rich sight. [^Carrion flower a foot high — — — — —] Geranium
 at Bittern Cliff ap several days—& Arabis rhom-
 boidea there in mead ap. still longer—say [^7 or] 8 days
 but I am doubtful about the “slender style tipped with a
 conspicuous stigma”.
 Crimson Gall on a shrub oak—
 A loose spiked sedge at Bittern Cliff meadow X forgot to bring—a foot high

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May 28, Monday: The Sacramento Daily Union reported that “Elsworth, the pedestrian” was intending to “enter upon his long walk of 1,000 miles in 1,000 hours at five o’clock this afternoon, at the Columbus Garden, on O street,” and that he was offering “a reward of \$100 to anyone who would be able to detect him in a violation of his promise in the conduct of the performance.” (On August 11th, newspapers nationwide would be reporting that “Ellsworth, the great pedestrian has completed, at Sacramento, the feat of walking 1000 miles in 1999 consecutive hours.”)



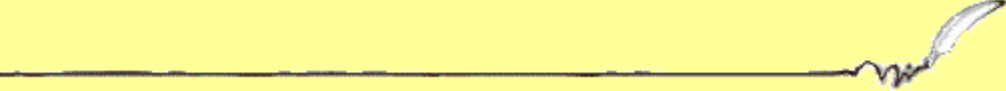
May 28

How— Morus not yet ap for 2 or 3 days—though ?
 the stigmas are obvious— Buttonwood stigmas ?
 are now brown—since the 24th

[Transcript]

Pm to Middle Conant. Cliff.

“Up Assabet” is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau’s two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.
 — Professor Robert M. Thorson, THE BOATMAN, page 10



Yesterday left my boat at the willow op. this Cliff
 the wind NW. Now it is SE—& I can
 sail back. Our quince open this morn X

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possibly yesterday—And some others, I believe, much earlier. Do I not hear a short snappish rasping note from a yel. throat vireo? I see a tanager—the most brilliant & tropical looking bird we have—bright scarlet with black wings—the scarlet appearing on the rump again between wing tips. He brings heat—or heat him. A remarkable contrast with the green pines. At this dist. he has the aspect & manners of a parrot—with a fullness about the head & throat & beak—indolently inspecting the limbs & twigs—leaning of over to it—and sitting still a long time.— The female too is a neat & handsome bird—with the same indolent ways—but very differently colored from the male all yellow below with merely dusky wings & a sort of clay? col— on back— While we sit by the path in the depths of the woods 3/4 of a mile beyond Haydens—



confessing the influence of [^almost] the first summer warmth—the wood thrush [Wood Thrush █ *Catharus mustelina*] sings

steadily for half an hour—now at 2 1/2 Pm—amid the pines—loud & clear & sweet—While other birds are warbling between whiles & catching their prey he alone appears to make a business of singing—like a true minstrel. Is that one which I see at ? last in the path— Above dusky olive brown becoming feruginous on base of tail— eye not very prominent with a white line around it—some dark col feathers ap on outer wing covers—very light col. legs, with dashes on breast which I do not see clearly. I should say it had not the large black eye of the hermit thrush & I cannot see the yellowish spot on the wings— —Yet it may have been this.

I find the feathers ap of a brown thrasher in the path—plucked since we passed here last night. You can generally find all




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the tail & quill feathers in such a case.
 ? The apple bloom is very rich now. Fever
 bush shoots are now 2 inches long. say beg.
 to leaf just before late willow. Black ash
 shoots 3 inch long say with fern late willow.
 White pine & Pitch pine shoots from 2 to 5 inches
 long— Rubus triflorus at Miles swamp
 will ap open tomorrow— Some Krigia
 done some days XXX— Silene antirrhina XX
 Barberry open X (prob 2 or more days at Lees)
 C. says he has seen a green snake—
 Examined my 2 yel— birds nests of the 25th
 both are destroyed—pulled down & torne
 to pieces prob. by some bird—though they
 but just began to lay. Large yell—& black
 butterfly— The leaves of Kalmiana lily ? obvious.
 I have seen within 3 or 4 days 2 or 3
 new warblers which I have not identified
 {written diagonally across this context, in pencil: “Perhaps young & female redstarts”}
 —One today—in the woods—All pure white
 beneath—with a full breast—& greenish olive yel (?)
 above with a duskier head & a slight crest [^very small]
 musicapa like on pines &c high.
 Also one all lemon yellow beneath—
 except whitish vent—& ap bluish above.

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 May 29, Tuesday: The formal opening of the organ in St. George’s Hall, Liverpool took place, with Samuel Sebastian Wesley offering the 1st of 2 recitals.

In the afternoon [Henry Thoreau](#) went to Island Neck (??):



What is that bird I hear much like the first part of the yellowbird’s strain, only two thirds as long and varied at end, and not so loud, –*a-che che che, che-a, or tche tche tche, tche-a, or ah tche tche tche, chit-i-vel?* It is very small, not timid, but incessantly changing its position on the pitch pines, etc. Some a pure dull white, some tawny-white, beneath; some cinereous, others more dusky still, above; with a flycatcher or muscicapa bill and head (head rounded?), but – what is more remarkable – a very deeply forked or divided tail with a broad black tip beneath, and toward its roots a fire-brick color, this last color much brighter on the sides of the breast, and some perhaps have not the last mark. Did I see some of the yellowish on rump? Dark-ash above and some reddish-brown(?). One is very inquisitive; hops down toward me lower and lower on the pitch pine twigs, while I hold out my hand till within five feet, but in such a light that I cannot distinguish its colors. There are at least half a dozen of them about; continually flitting about, sometimes in a circle of a few rods’ diameter, one pursuing another, both male and female, back to near the same spot, but I can hardly bring my glass to bear on them before they change their position. It is undoubtedly young males and the females of the redstart [**American Redstart**  *Setophaga ruticilla*], described by Wilson, –very different from the full-plumaged black males.

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May 30, Wednesday: Franz Liszt and Joseph Joachim spent a musical evening at the home of Clara Schumann in Düsseldorf. They played the music of [Robert Schumann](#), presently in an insane asylum. Clara told her diary of Liszt, "But it was so horrible, that my feelings could find an outlet only in tears. How he banged the piano, and what a tempo he took! I was beside myself that His work should be so desecrated in these rooms..."



May 30. Saw bird's nest on an apple by roadside, seven feet High; one egg.
Cherry-bird on a cherry; also pecking at the apple blossoms. Minott says that within two or three days a stream of winged ants came out from under his doorsill, and the hens and countless swallows and the kingbirds came and fed on them. Buttonwood flowers now effete; fertile flowers were not brown on the 24th, but were the 28th; say, then, about the 26th.
Nuttall thus describes the note of the white-eyed vireo: It is much varied; in March in Florida, "ss't (with a whistle) wa witte witte we-wa (the first part very quick);" in June at Fresh Pond, "'tslt,ippeweewd- say tshi,ppewee-wee-was-say, sweetly whistled," with great compass of voice and loudness, etc., etc.; other variations. Also "whip to woi wee, the last syllable but one considerably lengthened and clearly whistled." [A 31 annual of the Ornithology of the United States and of Canada, second edition, vol. i, p. 3"1'8.1]
Lepidi-iim riryiwcum, roadside bank at Minott's.
The myrica, bayberry, plucked on the 23d, now first sheds pollen in house, the leaf being but little more expanded on the flowering shoot. Gray says, "somewhat preceding the flowers." The catkins about a quarter of an inch long, erect, sterile, oval, on the sides of last year's twigs.

P.M. — Up railroad.

A strong west wind and much haze. Silvery potentilla, four or five days at least. In the thick of the wood between railroad and Turnpike, hear the evergreen forest note, and see probably the bird, - black throat, greenish-yellow or yellowish-green head and back, light-slate (?) wings with two white bars. Is it not the black-throated green warbler? I find close by a small fresh egg on the forest floor, with a slight perforation, white (with perhaps a tinge of flesh-color (?) when full), and brown spots and black marks at the larger end. In Brewer's synopsis the egg of the black-throat is described as "light flesh-color with purple spots." But these spots are not purple. I could find no nest.

Senecio in open meadows, say yesterday. See a small black snake run along securely through thin bushes (alders and willows) three or four feet from the ground, passing intervals of two feet easily, - very readily and gracefully, - ascending or descending. Cornus Canadensis out, how long?

Green lice from birches (?) get on my clothes. Is it not summer now when the creak of the crickets begins to be general?

Poison-dogwood has grown three or four inches at ends of last year's shoots, which are three to six feet from ground.

Hear a familiar warbler not recognized for some years, in the thick copse in Dennis's Swamp, south of railroad; considerably yellowbird-like (the note) - tsh tsh tshar tshar tchit, tchit tit to vet. It has apparently a yellow head, bluish or slaty wings with two white bars, tail even, wings dusky at tips, legs light, bill dark, beneath all bright-yellow, remarkably striped lengthwise with dusky, more or less dark in different specimens. Can it be the S. macu.losa, or black and yellow warbler, seen formerly? I did not see the black — nor indeed the back at all well. It may have been a female, not described by Wilson. Frequents the tops of trees.

Ladies' slipper, apparently.

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May 31, Thursday: Lieutenant Hartstein sailed from [New-York](#) to search for [Dr. Elisha Kent Kane](#).

The last 500 members of the Taiping expedition to take [Peking](#) were captured by Imperial troops (they would be executed).



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May 31st

Another windy—washing day—but warm
See a yel— bird building a nest on a
white oak on the Island. She goes to
a fern for the wool— In evening
hear distinctly a tree-toad. (& again the 4th of June

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[Transcript]

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JUNE 1855

Read  [Henry Thoreau's Journal for June 1855 \(æt. 37\) in the 1906 version](#)



June 1, Friday: On about this day, [Orestes Augustus Brownson](#) wrote to the Reverend [Isaac Hecker](#) S.S.R.

US filibusterer William Walker reestablished human slavery in Nicaragua.

The Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward was able again to made a brief visit to Ireland, but this time not as a mere tourist at leisure but on a scheduled antislavery lecture tour. He embarked upon a steamer at Greenock, at 7PM, down the Clyde headed for Belfast:

A most pleasant trip down the Clyde, on a moonlight night, and across the placid waters betwixt the Scotch and the Irish coasts, brought us into Belfast at five the next morning. Breakfasting at the Imperial Hotel, and taking the first morning train, I started on my way, having to be in Sligo the next day. I travelled by railway only to Armagh; the remainder of the journey, seventy or eighty miles - Irish miles, in that brief period - had to be made in such conveyances as I could find. At Armagh I found in the coach a most ladylike fellow passenger, in the person of Mrs. Caldwell, of Clogher. By this kind lady I was introduced to Mrs. Maxwell,¹⁰⁶ the Secretary of Clogher Anti-Slavery Society. I seemed to Mrs. M. no stranger, as she had been corresponding with my good friend Mr. Armistead, of Leeds, concerning me. Professor Allen was to speak there the following Tuesday, and both Mrs. Caldwell and Mrs. Maxwell kindly and politely invited me to attend with him. It was with deep regret that I found myself unable to do so.

I went on to Enniskillen, arriving at about five p.m. I there learned, to my dismay, that there was no public conveyance thence to Sligo, until the next morning. I had no other way than to post on twenty-one miles, to Manor Hamilton, which I reached at eleven o'clock that night.



June 1st

A very windy day—the 3d—drowning
the notes of birds—scattering the re-
maining apple blossoms— [[^]Rye to my surprise 3 or 4 feet high—& glaucous] Cloudy &

[Transcript]

106. A relative of Lord Cavan, I believe.



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rain threatening withal—Surveying
at Holden Woodlot—I notice the
Equisetum Hiemale—its black scaled
flowerrets now in many cases separated
so as to show the green between—but
not yet in open rings or whorls like
the limosum p. they will be in 2 or 3 days
? I find the Linnaea borealis growing
near the end of the ridge in this Lot
toward the meadow—near a large wht
pine stump recently cut. C. has found
the Arethusa out at Hubb's close
say 2 or 3 days—at a venture—there being considerable

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June 2, Saturday: Jenny Bell, an opéra comique by Daniel-François-Esprit Auber to words of Scribe, was performed for the initial time, at the Théâtre Favart, Paris.

There was a “rum riot” in Portland, Maine.

Bijouterie-Quadrille op.169 by [Johann Baptist Strauss II](#) was performed for the initial time, in Ungers Casino, Vienna.

Latter-day Saint [George Q. Cannon](#) recorded in his journal the missionary journey events of the previous day, and of this day:

Encamped until sun down when we again hitched up and started, being desirous of getting over the worst of the road in the night. We reached the summit of the divide – a distance of from twelve to fifteen miles, all up hill & some of it quite heavy – a little while before break of day. Bro. M.F. Wilkie's horse gave out & he had quite a time with him. We travelled down the kanyon a few miles and stopped at a patch of excellent bunch grass, but no water, to take breakfast. We then started, it being Saturday, the 2nd, for the Mohave, about eighteen miles distant, most of the road down hill, and reached there with the teams about 2 o'clock p.m. This water was very acceptable to many of the men and the animals, who seemed as though they never would be satisfied. We had travelled thirty-five miles, and the latter part of the journey was oppressively hot; what little breeze there was, was hot that it brought with it a suffocating sensation, and the heat was more endurable out of the breeze than in it. Bro. Wilkie suffered extremely having stayed with his horse to bring him in. It was truly delightful to get once more under the shade of trees; we had a fine camping ground, it seemed positively lovely in our eyes after passing thro' the arid, sterile wilderness thro' which our road had ran for some hundreds of miles, and we enjoyed it much.



June 2nd

[Transcript]

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Still windier than before & yet
 no rain. It is now very dry indeed &
 the grass is suffering. Some springs com-
 monly full at this season are dried up.
 The wind shakes the house night
 & day— From That cocoon of the Atta-
cus Crecropia which I found—I think
 it was on the 24th of May on a red
 maple shrub 3 or 4 feet from the ground
 on the edge of the Meadow by the New Bedford
 Road {"R" written over "r"} just this side of Beck-Stows—came
 out this forenoon a splend Moth.
 I had {"had" written over "I"} pinned the cocoon to the sash
 at the upper part of my window &
 quite forgotten it. About the mid. of the
 forenoon Sophia came in & exclaimed
 that there was a moth on my window—
 At first I supposed that she meant
 a cloth-eating moth—but it turned out
 that my A. Crecropia—had come out
 & dropped down to the window sill, where
 it hung on the side of a slipper (which
 was inserted into another) to let its wings
 hang {"hand" altered to "hang"} down & develop themselves. At first
 the wings were not only not unfolded
 laterally—but not longitudinally, the thinner
 ends [^{of the forwards} ones] for perhaps 3/4 of an inch being
 very feeble & occupying very little space.
 It was surprising to see the creature unfold
 & expand before our eyes—the wings gradually
 elongating as it were by their own gravity
 & from time to time the insect assisted
 this operation by a slight shake. It was
 wonderful how it waxed & grew revealing
 some new beauty every 15 minutes—which I
 called Sophia to see—but never losing its
 hold on the shoe— {Thoreau here indicated that lines 12-15 of his manuscript should be transposed with lines
 5-12} It looked like a
 young emperor just donning the most
 splendid ermine robes—that ever emperor
 ever has— At first its wings appeared double
 one within the other. The wings every moment acquiring greater expansion & their at first wrinkled edge
 becoming more tense— This occupied several hours—
 At last it advanced so far as to spread its wings completely [^{but feebly}] when we approached— It continued
 to hang to the shoe with its wings
 ordinarily closed erect behind its back—
 the rest of the day—& at dusk—when
 ap. it was waving its wings preparatory to
 its evening flight— I gave it ether—&
 so saved it in a perfect state. As it lies
 not spread to the utmost—it is 5 9/10 {"5/9/10" was here altered to "5 9/10"} inches x 2 1/4

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Pm to Hill

"Downriver," "To Great Meadow," and "To Hill" signified a northward trip down the Concord River below the triple point of the confluence. After passing through a straight reach aligned by the local bedrock strike, arched by two bridges, and flanked by gravel bars of historic sediment that were repeatedly dredged, he entered the north side of Great Meadow. Bounded by the site of the Old North Bridge to the southwest and Ball's Hill to the northeast, it was two miles long and half a mile across. When in flood, the meadow was his favorite inland sea to sail upon because the wind was least impeded and the waves were highest.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11

Eq. linosum pollen a few ap 2 or 3 days.

The late Crataegus on the hill is in full bloom while the other is almost entirely out of bloom.

3 yel. birds nests—which I have marked since the 25th of may—the only ones which I have actually inspected—have now all been torn to pieces—Though they were in places (2 of them at least) where no boy is at all likely to have found them.

I see in the meadow grass a fine cobweb—or spiders nest 3 or 4 inches diameter & another—, on 2 twigs—2 collections of little yellowish spiders containing a thousand or more [^about 1/2 as big as a pin head]—like minute fruit buds or kernels clustered on the twig {drawing}— One of the clusters disperses when I stoop over it & spreads over the nest on the fine lines.

Hemlock—leafed—2 or 3 days the earliest young plants. The black-spruce beyond the hill has ap. just begun to leaf. XXX but not yet to blossom—Pinus rigida pollen a day or 2 or 3 on the plain—Sweet flag pollen about 2 days X

Mr Hoar tells me that Dea Farrar's son tells him that a white robin robin has her nest on an apple tree near their house. Her mate is the usual color— All the family have seen her—but at the last accounts she has not been seen on the nest.

Silene—or wild Pink—how long?

The azalea nudiflora now in its prime—what splendid manes of pink—with a few [^glaucous] green leaves sprinkled here & there just enough for contrast.

[^in pencil: Nest in thorn on hill—& Cat birds by fallen birches]

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June 3, Sunday: The Reverend Samuel Ringgold Ward continued on his antislavery lecture tour in Ireland:

On Sunday morning I drove eleven miles into Sligo, in time to preach for the Rev. Noble Shepherd, as per appointment. The next day (Monday, 4th) a very large meeting was convened in Mr. Shepherd's beautiful church, to hear me speak on slavery. The Right Honourable John Wynne, at Mr. Shepherd's request, favoured the meeting and the cause by taking the chair. He did so in a manner that showed his interest in the anti-slavery question to be of no recent origin. Mr. Wynne being connected with the first families of the Irish aristocracy, both by birth and by marriage, and having been Secretary to Her Majesty's Representative in Ireland, I may be justly proud of that gentleman's services and favour on that occasion. In that meeting I saw a feature of Irish Protestantism which one does not see in England. The Rev. the Rector attended this meeting, and took a lively interest in it. The place was completely filled, in every part, with a generous auditory, no small proportion of them being Episcopalians. A rector would not have attended a meeting in an Independent chapel in England; there it would have been considered necessary to hold the meeting on "neutral ground" - in a hall, or school-house, or some such place. Except in the case of the Rev. J. McConnel Hussey, of Kennington, who took the chair on the 17th of October, 1854, at a meeting held to promote education in a Dissenting community,¹⁰⁷ I do not recollect ever to have seen an Episcopal clergyman in England so favouring the objects, and so countenancing the movements, and so recognizing the brotherhood, of Independents. It is a beautiful feature, I repeat, of Irish Protestantism - of true catholicity.

On the 5th, I journeyed a long, long way, sixty-six miles, from Sligo to Mullingar, in a coach. Coaches, in these railway days, are "slow" enough. Sixty-six Irish miles are equal to eighty-four English. Packed, four of us, in a coach of no very ample dimensions, was, if comfortable, what we were not quite aware of. At a certain stage of our journey, I asked the guard (a most perfect specimen of an Irishman, "a broth of a boy") - "How far is it to Mullingar, guard?"

"Two-and-twinty miles, yer honor."

"Irish miles are longer than English miles, are they not?"

"Yes, yer honor, and quite as wide."

We travelled over both dimensions till we reached Mullingar, heartily tired of our day's jolting, and heartily glad to be once more in sight of a railway; at least, that was my feeling, and my fellow passengers acted as if they felt so too. After a very pleasant passage from Mullingar to Dublin, some forty miles, I was glad to secure rest at the Hibernian Hotel, my Dublin home.

Early on the morning of the 6th I took the railway to Limerick, being met there by Rev. Wm. Tarbotton, and a gentleman whose "Irish jaunting car" and large Irish heart were ready to welcome me. It's meself that's to blame for niver remimbering the gintleman's name, at all at all; and what is worse, I cannot

107. Rev. William Leask's school.

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remember the name of his kind lady, nor the name of his brother, nor his brother's lady. Being almost cured of my lameness, I was able, in the excellent company of Mr. Tarbotton, to walk over most of Limerick, which is a fine thrifty town, one of which the people of that country may well be proud. Some of its warehouses are the most massive structures of the sort I ever saw. The elements of wealth in the trade and resources of the town, and the surrounding country, but more in the enterprise of its inhabitants, ensure for Limerick not only the continuance of its high place among the commercial towns of Ireland, but mark out for it a most brilliant future.

A very full meeting did me the honour to listen to me, in Mr. Tarbotton's church; William Cochrane, Esq., kindly taking the chair, in the absence of the gentleman who had generously consented to do so, but to whom an accident had occurred the day before, rendering him unable. The account given of the meeting, the speech and the speaker, and the interest shown in the cause, by the Limerick newspaper, were full and kind; and I was grateful to see in them tokens of the most genuine anti-slavery feeling, set off with real Irish warmth and cordiality.

Reluctantly leaving my kind Limerick friends, who seemed like old acquaintances, I took the railway on the 7th to Cork, where a most crowded and attentive meeting greeted me, presided over by the Worshipful the Mayor, Sir John Gordon. The Rev. M.A. Henderson had kindly arranged the meeting for me. It was convened in his church, the same in which Rev. John Burnet had preached when labouring in Cork. A most devoted anti-slavery family invited a number of the Professors of the College to meet me, and these learned gentlemen kindly participated in the proceedings of the meeting, which was the most enthusiastic one I ever held, even in Ireland. Every one seemed as if he came to the meeting on purpose to be pleased, and was pleased accordingly. I am sure the feeling of the audience, on their own part, had much more to do with that enthusiasm than the speech; and if the speech were worth anything, it caught much of its inspiration from them. Perhaps the best way to state the matter is, that we had a good meeting altogether. To the Mayor, to Rev. Mr. Henderson, to the Professors of the University, and to our excellent friends the Jenningses, are especial thanks due, for the arrangements and good influences with which the meeting was appointed and hold. It was my last meeting in Ireland.

Wishing to visit my beloved friends Dr. Collis Browne and his lady, at Queen's Town, and knowing the necessity of being in Dublin on the evening of the 8th, I rose early on the morning of that day, and took what I think is the most delightful little trip Ireland affords — from Cork down to the Cove of Cork, or Queenstown Harbour as it is now called. Returning in the afternoon, I bade the Doctor and Mrs. B. farewell, taking the three p.m. train to Dublin, hoping to see them again in a few days; but, alas! the time has not yet come, and it may be that we shall meet no more on earth. I reached Dublin at ten p.m., and on the morning of the 9th set off for Wales and England. Being then able to walk without crutches, I gave mine to two servants at the Hibernian. May they never need them! That day I breakfasted in Dublin, dined at Holyhead, and supped in Preston. Thus far extends the account of my two short tours in Ireland.



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I beg now to say a few words about what I saw while rapidly passing through that most interesting country.

1. I have already spoken of Rev. Joseph Denham Smith, of Kingstown, and his labours. I now add, that the Rev. Wm. Tarbotton, Rev. Noble Shepherd, and Rev. M. A. Henderson, occupy positions of like difficulty, influence, responsibility, and usefulness.¹⁰⁸

They are, in like manner, devoted most earnestly to the land in which, and the people among whom, their lot is cast. I saw the same in the excellent Presbyterian minister at Queenstown; and cannot help repeating my solemn conviction, that the Independent ministers, so far as I was able to judge, have specially the position which gives them, in spite of all opposition, the greatest advantages of all others in Ireland, in "contending for the faith once delivered to the saints." That position is one of real issue with Papal Catholicism. Their Church government, their independence of both the control and patronage of the State, and the success of their labours, are all-potent Protestant arguments in themselves. The standpoint from which one party sees things, and the ground occupied by another party, when exhibiting truth, are manifestly matters of great importance. The Roman Catholic population see Protestant truth from a standpoint whence they view all apparently coercive State machinery in religion, with the feeling of a persecuted party. Hence, in my humble judgment, the peculiarly happy adaptation of the Independent branch of the Christian Church to Ireland; for what denomination soever is there connected with the State, less or more, has, in that respect, an unfortunate standing-place for influence with our Roman Catholic fellow subjects: and surely the same remark applies to all other Papal countries.

That Ireland is hopeless, no one believes. The truth that prevailed in this and other countries will prevail there. Advancing light, increasing education, material improvement, the very increase of wealth, will aid partly in undermining and partly in openly assaulting, but at all events, finally, in the utter overthrow of the Papal power in Ireland, as elsewhere. In no part of Europe, Protestant or Papal, is that system, either temporally or spiritually, what it was a hundred years ago. It can never regain its lost prestige, but it must certainly lose its hold, upon the minds of its own votaries. It has no elements adaptable to the middle of the nineteenth century. Its doom is sealed in Ireland, as elsewhere. It is menaced by the emigration of Irishmen, by the spread of education, by the elevation of tenants, by landlords, by Agricultural Societies, and by the onward, rolling tide of progress, which, having once set in upon Ireland, will never ebb, but sweep before it all systems and customs which accord not with itself. Yet it is right and dutiful to do what has to be done in the very best way: and one who loves Ireland as I do, cannot but grieve that among Protestants things should exist which weaken their power to do good; while one rejoices to know that other and better ideas prevail to some extent, and that, in spite of the defects hinted at, good is being done – the proclamation of the gospel is being blessed, and its truths will finally become triumphant – in that island

108. Doubtless the same is true of other ministers, but these are the only men in such circumstances I had the pleasure of meeting.



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gem.

2. The resources of Ireland must be immense. The mountains, from all appearance, are rich in coals and slate. The rivers are large, and capable of an indefinite increase of commercial advantage. Some of the harbours are equal to any in the three kingdoms. The situation of Ireland for commercial purposes is most fortunate and convenient, being nearer than any other part of Britain to America. Why Galway, for example, should not be the point of entrée, I cannot imagine. We sail along the coast of Ireland four-and-twenty hours before we reach Holyhead. Why should we not land on that coast? we should greatly shorten the voyage by so doing. But if it be objected, that another sea must be crossed before reaching England, let it be remembered, that those who wish to go to Ireland from England must cross that same sea, and so must all the goods for Ireland landed here; and, descendant of an Irishman though I be, I will not admit that it is any further from Ireland to England than it is from England to Ireland! Besides, there is to be a very great increase of agricultural produce and of manufactured commodities, especially in the north of Ireland; and there are now six millions of population, which doubtless will be very greatly increased, in numbers and in wealth. These will give ample employment, at no very distant day, to a line of steamers devoted to Ireland and America, with one occasionally, or at regular periods, to the West Indies. Hence, whatever may be said about Ireland's being the point of arrival from and departure to America, surely Ireland need not always be tributary to this island in that respect, so far as her own commerce is concerned. The soil of that island is most surprisingly rich. The moisture of the atmosphere, and the mildness of the climate, make it the most natural grazing soil in the world. With anything bordering upon Scotch cultivation, there could scarcely be any limits to the agricultural wealth of this country. It was indeed sad to leave Scotland one evening, and to arrive in Ireland the next morning, and witness the great, too great, contrast between the culture of the soil, in the two countries. Ireland never looks worse than when entered from Scotland. The neatly trimmed hedge, the smoothly turned furrow, the air of industry and thrift, with their abundant reward smiling on every hand, were left behind, on the other side. The neglected broken hedge, the slovenly-looking field, the air of neglect, and their legitimate consequences, frowned on every hand upon us and around us, with the rarest exceptions, from Belfast to Sligo, from Sligo to Mullingar, from Dublin to Cork.¹⁰⁹

Like frowns upon the face of beauty, these Irish farms gave abundant evidence that they were capable of presenting a very different aspect. They told us plainly enough, that what had made sterile Scotland what it is, would have done far more for Ireland. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich," indeed. One could not but be smitten with the unwelcome thought, that the neglect of such land, affording such opportunities for the most ample supply of all needs, is a species of sinfulness upon which our Heavenly Father looks with the deepest disapprobation. It

109. The most perfectly Irish thing I saw in my tour was a field whose fences were completely destroyed; but it had iron gates, every one of which was locked.

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is the neglect, the misuse, of a very valuable talent. It is most gratifying to know, however, that very important improvements are being introduced, and that a spirit of reform has entered the bosoms of landlords and tenants, from which the best consequences are to be expected. Having so practical a man as Viceroy in the Earl of Carlisle, it is quite certain that no suggestion will be withholden by his Excellency, and no aid sought refused, by which the improvement of Ireland, so greatly needed, and now happily begun, may be promoted.

In manufactories, Ireland must ere long be among the first of nations. There is every natural and artificial facility for manufacturing, in the north of Ireland, that there is in the north of England. Ulster might be another Yorkshire or Lancashire. Nor is this confined to the North. When speaking of these facilities, I was frequently told that want of capital is an obstacle. But English capitalists wish to make good investments, and would as readily invest in Ireland as in England, if they could only be "secure," if it would "pay." Belfast and its vicinity answer any query on those points; so does Limerick. In these material temporal matters, most brilliant is the future of Ireland.

3. Would that I could speak as hopefully of the Irish working classes as of the soil and resources of the country. Happily, the two are so connected, that the improvement of the one will develop the other. In America, where land is cheap, and in Canada, where corrupting influences are less common than in the United States, I have seen the material improvement of the Irish pauper elevate him above the depressions of mind and morals which were considered inseparable from his lot in Ireland. Then, the next generation almost seem to belong to another race - to have lost the degradations, and to have cultivated the upward tendencies, of the Celt, to a most commendable degree. That, doubtless, is the reason why they rise superior to the influence of their priests, in the colonies and in America. It is impossible to treat Patrick Thaddeus Mulligan, Esq., now, as you treated him, when he was nobody but poor, ignorant, ragged, barefoot, Pat Mulligan. What raises Pat to Mr. Patrick, in America, will do it, in spite of any naturally depressing system, in Ireland. I know a man in the county of Kerry, who is a Freemason. He has been to America, made a little fortune, and returned, able to live upon his property, although he gratifies his industrious inclination by actively pursuing business. When a poor man, no one was more subject to his priest than he; now, Dr. Cullen the Primate, and all the priesthood together, are unable to drive him out of Masonry, or to hinder his forming a Lodge in the town of his residence. He told me this with his own lips. Of course I give here no expression of opinion as to Masonry; but mention this instance to illustrate my idea, that improvement in the temporal circumstances of our Irish fellow subjects will elevate them mentally and morally, and that in spite of any religious system. The best thing which the Papal system can do for itself is, to adapt itself, so far as it can, really or seemingly, to this inevitable and approaching state of things. If it does not this, it must submit, in Ireland as on the Continent, to be shorn of its power over that people whom it has so long enthralled; and when it wanes visibly, palpably,

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in Ireland, its power for evil in this world is gone for ever. I verily believe Ireland to be its last stronghold, the place where it is to receive its deathwound.

I am aware that this full expression of my candid and, it may be, mistaken opinion, will not be palatable to some who may cast a glance over these humble pages. I have, however, been so accustomed to speak plainly, that, to write at all, I must write plainly. I am aware of no reason for withholding my honest sentiments, being myself alone responsible for them; and if it is my duty to write, it is included in that duty to do more than seek to offer amusement for the passing hour, on so grave a subject. To offer a book to the public, under any circumstances, seems, in me, little less than presumption; but that I should impose upon my fellow men a book both brainless and heartless – shallow enough, at best, in thought, and destitute of soul – is more than I can consent to attempt. Roman Catholics freely express their opinions: why should not one of the humblest of Protestants? I am conscious of doing so kindly, and should be sorry to speak otherwise. After all, I expect less fault-finding, with what is said on this and a preceding page, from Romanists, than from squeamish, timid Protestants. Be that as it may, "I have believed, therefore have I spoken."

To return from this digression: I could but grieve, joyous as is the prospect before the Irish peasant, that his present condition is so degraded. I belong to a degraded race. Of the one hundred and sixty-four millions of my unfortunate race, one hundred and fifty millions are heathens, eight millions are slaves! In speaking, therefore, of the Celt's degradation, I do not forget the Negro's, nor my own sad inheritance of and share in it. How can I forget an ever-present fact? But I must be permitted to say, as I said freely when in America, that in no part of that country where Negroes are nominally free, much less where they are really free (and I doubt if the same remark will not, with some exceptions, apply to the enslaved class), did I ever see such degradation as abounds not only in the towns, but in the rural districts, of Ireland. In other countries, poverty is deepest in towns – it recedes as you reach the farming districts; but in Ireland, the roadside cabin and its inhabitants are as dirty, as unthrifty, as scantily fed and clad, as those who swarm in the most densely populated towns. I have seen Ann Street, the worst haunt of the most debased coloured population of Boston – the Five Points, the Acelanda of New York – the Moyamensing District, the incomparable, unfathomable slough of Philadelphia's indecency; but never saw so large a proportion of a population so utterly degraded, as that in the neighbouring island.

I may be told, on the one hand, of Saxon rule as the prolific parent of this terrible state of things; on the other hand, I am told of Papal religion as the producing cause of it. I will not discuss either of these, but admit the force of both. Who can deny the fact of Saxon rule? Who can deny the fact of Papal religion? Who denies that the Irish peasantry have for generations been subject to both? Neither is perfect. All that is true. I will not stop to compare dates as to the priority of these; nor inquire what have been the tendencies of either, or both, in other countries. It is aside from my present purpose

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either to consult history or to express my opinion upon these points; for I maintain that degradation, idleness, filth, such as abound in Irish dwellings – and beggary, the abominable profession of a very great number of hale, strong, Irish men, women, and children – are self-chosen, self-imposed. Neither Saxon rulers nor Papal priests can hinder a peasant's cleanliness of person, nor his wife's use of the broom and the brush. It is not owing to the rule of the one or the religion of the other that a peasant's cabin is, by the peasant's election, a pigstye. Begging, instead of working, is the choice of the Irish beggar. A decent self-respect would make it impossible; but you cannot enter a town, nor stop at a country tavern, nor walk the streets, nor stroll on a country road, nor take your way to "the place of prayer and praise," but at every yard or two you are beset and besieged with persons sound in health and strong of limb, covered with rags and reeking with filth, begging, and doing nothing else, that you can see, for a living. Kingstown swarms with them; in Dublin they dog your footsteps at every turn. The same is true of them in Cork, in Sligo, everywhere. That you will not find among my unfortunate people, in any part of America or elsewhere.

"They are poor:" so are the Welsh. "They are taxed to support a religion in which they do not believe:" so are the Welsh. "Wages are low:" so they are in Wales. "Their cabins are small, and rudely constructed:" so are Welsh cabins. "The landlords do not encourage them:" nor do Welsh landlords. "They cannot purchase comforts:" but they purchase whiskey. "They are under other than Irish rule:" what were they before that? the Welsh are under other than Welsh rule. Why I compare these two nations shall appear in another chapter. I introduce it here for the purpose of remarking once more, that, in spite of all other causes, it must be admitted that the degradation of our Irish fellow subjects is a matter of their own choosing: so I say of the degradation of the Negro, who in many points is very like the Celt. After all that slavery, like original sin, has done to give us wrong tendencies, it is our business, with God's help, to bid defiance to those tendencies, by cultivating self-respect – at least, by imitating the good qualities of those around us. Can I say less of the condition and duty of the Irishman? The latter is, to rise above his present condition, and be a man; the former is of his own election, and therefore his own fault.

4. I now come to the most unwelcome part of my task. Ireland furnishes my native country with a larger proportion of immigrants than any other country in Europe – except, perhaps, Germany: I can only say "perhaps," not having statistics before me, and not recollecting the figures accurately. Of all Europeans, the Irish immigrant becomes, as a rule, the most ready dupe of the pro-slavery men. His low, vulgar habits at home – the general readiness of one low class of population to prey upon another – the example of the Americans, and the quickness of the immigrant to learn evil habits – most fully account for it, I know; and know as well, that human nature is such a poor, cowardly, knavish thing, that it will readily join in trampling into the dust him whom everybody treads upon: and I see nothing in the low Irish department of human nature to make it differ from the common type. It turns out, that the man

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who on his native bog is unwashed and unshaved, a fellow lodger with his pig in a cabin too filthy for most people's stables or styes, is, when arriving in America, the Negro's birthplace, the free country for which the Negro fought and bled, one of the first to ridicule and abuse the free Negro – the Negro, who has yet to learn how to sink into such depths of degradation as the Irishman has just escaped from! The bitterest, most heartless, most malignant, enemy of the Negro, is the Irish immigrant. Nevertheless, were the Irishman true to the sentiments I found prevalent in every part of his native country on this subject, he would with but little exertion turn the tide of persecution from the Negro, and, proving himself his friend, receive his gratitude; then the two would grow up as brethren. The wit, warmth, and enthusiasm – the capacity to imitate, to improve, and to endure – the cheerfulness, bravery, and love of religion – said to be peculiar to the Celt, are well-known natural characteristics of the Negro. They are in these points, when degraded and ignorant or when educated and refined, alike, in a most remarkable degree. The Negro, perhaps, has most of natural mildness of temper: indeed, if he had not, he would be a terror to the Irishman, as the Irishman is to him. How I wish that the immigrant from the Emerald Isle understood the doctrine of the brotherhood of man, and practised it towards his coloured fellow citizen! If he did, one of the most serious obstacles to the cause of the Negro would disappear, in America. I do hope that Irish abolitionists will be true to emigrants, exhorting them to save themselves from the abominations of pro-slaveryism, and rebuking those who ruthlessly trample upon the Negro – who found friends in O'Connell and Madden, and who now, for the best of reasons, blesses the names of Richard Webb, Mr. Jennings, the Marquis of Sligo, and the Right Honourable John Wynne. If, however, the present hostility of the Irish towards the black continue, it may pass the bounds of even a Negro's endurance, and provoke such a reaction as all must regret. The increasing numbers, growing intelligence, and advancing progress, of the Negro in America, will one day make him no mean foe for the Celt to contend against. Before such disaster befall both races, and that a spirit of mutual good will may prevail,

“—let us pray, that come it may,
An' come it will for a' that;
That man to man, the world all o'er,
Shall brithers be, an' a' that.”




June 3. A rainy day at last. Caraway in garden apparently three days out.

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 June 4, Monday: [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#) began to look over the printer's proof-sheets for THE SONG OF "HIAWATHA". It would be published on November 10th.



The [Russian](#) delegation to the [Crimean](#) Peace Conference in Vienna refused all allied demands and walked out.

I am including here 1st, [Henry Thoreau](#)'s journal as I have captured it out of the 1906 print edition, and then 2d as I have captured it from the current Princeton typescript in conjunction with images of the holograph pages — so that you can compare and contrast these two versions obtained in these different manners:



June 4. P.M. — To Hubbard's Close.

Clears up in forenoon. Some of the scouring-rush gathered the 1st begins to open its whorls or stages in the chamber; say sheds pollen to-morrow. Not quite yet the How mulberry pollen. White clover out probably some days, also red as long.

It leas just cleared off after this first rain of consequence for a long time, and now I observe the shadows of massive clouds still floating here and there in the peculiarly blue sky, which dark shadows on field and wood are the more remarkable try contrast with the light yellow-green foliage now, and when they rest on evergreens they are doubly dark, like dark rings about the eves of June. Great white-bosomed clouds, darker beneath, float through the cleared sky and are seen against the deliciously blue sky, such a sky as we have not bad before. Thus it is after the first important rain at this season. The song of birds is more lively and seems to have a new character; a new season has commenced. In the woods I hear the tanager and chewink and red-eye. It is fairly summer, and mosquitoes begin to sting *in earnest*. I see the dandelions now generally gone to seed amid the grass — their downy spheres. There are now many potentillas ascendant, and the *Erigeron bellidifolius* is sixteen inches high and quite handsome. by the railroad this side of turn-off.

Redstarts still very common in the Trillium Woods (yesterday on Assabet also). Note *tche tche, tche vit*, etc. I see some dark on the breast.

The *Lycopodium dendroideum* now shows fresh green tips like the hemlock. Greenish puffs on panicked andromedas. Lint comes off on to clothes from the tender leaves, but it is clean dirt and all gone when you get home; and now the crimson velvety leafets of the black oak, showing also a crimson edge on the downy under sides, are beautiful as a flower, and the more salmon white oak. The *Linnaea borealis* has grown an inch. But

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are not the flowers winter-killed? I see dead and blackened flower-buds. Perhaps it should have opened before. Wintergreen has grown two inches.

See a warbler much like the black and white creeper, but perched warbler-like on trees; streaked slate, white, and black, with a large white and black mark on living, crown divided by a white line and then chestnut (?) or slate or dark, and then white above and below eye, breast and throat streaked downward with dark, rest beneath white. Can it be the common black and white creeper? Its note hardly reminds me of that. It is somewhat like *pse pse pse pse, psa psa, weese weese weese*, or longer. It did not occur to me that it was the same till I could not find any other like this in the book. Cotton-grass apparently two or three days out. Geum, apparently some days. In the clintonia swamp I hear a smart, brisk, loud and clear whistling warble, quite navel and remarkable, something like *te chit a wit, te chit a tit, tchit a unit, tche tche*. It is all bright-yellow or ochreous orange (?) below except vent, and a dark or black crescent on breast, with a white line about eye. Above it appears a nearly uniform dark blue slate, legs light, bill dark (?), tail long and forked. I think it must be the Canada warbler, seen in '37, I though that seems *short* for this. It is quite different from the warbler of May 30.

The recent high winds have turned the edges of young leaves by beating and killing them.

Ellen Emerson finds the *Viola pubescens* scarce today, but the *Actæa alba* in full bloom. Eddy has brought a great polygonatum from Medford, which he says grew in the woods there. I do not find a satisfactory account of it. It differs from the *pubescens* of Gray, in that the leaves can hardly be called downy beneath and are clasping, the peduncles are two to five flowered (instead of one to two) and the perianth is four fifths of an inch long (instead of a half). Perianth white or whitish with green lobes. It differs from the *canaliculatum* in not being channelled obviously (though angled *between the leaves*), the filaments not being smooth nor inserted in the middle of the tube.

Carex scoparia (?) in meadows some days.



June 4th

Pm to Hub's Close

Clears up in forenoon— Some of the scouring rush gathered the 1st begins to open its whirls in stages in the chamber—says sheds pollen tomorrow. XXX

Not quite yet the How mulberry pollen— ?

White clover out prob some days—also red as long— It has just cleared off after this first rain of consequence for a long time & now I observe the shadows of massive clouds ~~which~~ still floating her & there in the peculiarly blue sky—which dark shadows on field & wood—are the more remarkable by contrast with the light yellow-green foliage—now—& when they rest on evergreens they are doubly dark—like dark rings about the eyes of June. Great

[^shadows of the clouds (which float in the cleared air) contrasting with the sun-lit light green foliage.] white bosomed clouds darker beneath

float through the cleared sky—& are seen against the deliciously blue sky—such a sky as we have {"has" altered to "have"} not had before— Thus it is after the first important rain at this season. The song of birds is more lively and seems to have

a new character—a new season has commenced. In the woods—I hear the tanager—& chewink—& red-eye. It is fairly summer. [^& mosquitoes begin to sting in earnest] I see the dandelions

now generally gone to seed amid the grass their downy spheres— There are now many potentillas ascendant—& the erigeron bellidifolium is 16 inches high & quite handsome. by the RR. this side of turn off. ? Redstarts still very common—in the trillium woods (yest on assabet also) note tche tche, tche vit &c I see some dark on the breast.

? The Lycopodium dendroideum—now shows

[Transcript]

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fresh green tips like the hemlock. Greenish puffs on Panicked andromeda. Lint comes off on to clothes from the tender leaves— but it is [^clean dirt &] all gone when you get home & now the crimson [^velvety] leaflets of the black oak—showing {“shown” altered to “showing”} also a crimson edge on the downy undersides are beautiful as a flow— & the rose salmon a Wt oak. The *Linnaea borealis* has grown an inch— but are not the flowers winter killed— I see dead & blacked flower buds—perhaps it should have opened before. Winter green has grown 2 inches—

See a warbler much like the black & white creeper but perched warbler like on trees—streaked slate white & black—with a large white & black mark on wing—crown divided by a white line & then chestnut(?) or slate or dark—& then white above & below eye—breast or throat streaked downward with dark—vest beneath white— Can it be the common black & white creeper—? Its note hardly reminds me of that— It is somewhat like pse pse pse pse—psa psa,—weese weese weese. or longer— I did not occur to me that it was the same till I could not find any [^other] like this in the book.

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—the peduncles are 2 to 5 flowered (instead of 1-2—) & the Perianth is 4/5 of an inch long instead of 1/2) Perianth white or whitish with green lobes.

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Carex scoparia? in meadows some days.

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 June 5, Tuesday: [Herbert Wendell Gleason](#) was born in [Malden, Massachusetts](#), 1st child of Herbert Gleason and Elizabeth Upton Gleason.

The initial convention of a new political party, the anti-foreign, anti-Roman Catholic party that would come to be identified as “The Know-Nothings” on account of its membership’s adherence to the Mafia rule of “omerta,” a pledge of silence and non-cooperation in the face of all government law enforcement.

Jacques Offenbach was granted a license to open the Salle Lacaze in Paris and produce various types of shows. This theatre would come to be known as the Bouffes-Parisiens.



June 5. P.M. — To Clamshell by river.

Yellow Bethlehem-star in prime. Aphyllon, or orobanche, well out apparently several days. Nuphar Kalmiana budded above water. Green-briar flower out apparently two or three days. Low blackberry out in low ground. That very early (or in winter green radical leaf) plant by ash is the Myosotis laxa, open since the 28th of May, say June 1st. Ranunculus reptans, say two days out, river being very low. Common cress well out along river. Side-flowering sandwort apparently three days out in Clamshell flat meadow. Some oxalis done, say two or three days, on ditch bank. Ranunculus repens in prime. Yellow clover well out some clays. Flowering ferns, reddish-green, show on meadows. Green oak-balls.

Walking along the upper edge of the flat Clamshell meadow, a bird, probably a song sparrow (for I saw two chipping about immediately after), flew up from between my feet, and I soon found its nest remarkably concealed. It was under the thickest of the dry river wreck, with an entry low on one side, full five inches long and very obscure. On looking close I detected the eggs from above by looking down through some openings in the wreck about as big as sparrows' eggs, through which I saw the eggs, five in number. I never saw the nest so perfectly concealed.

I am much interested to see how Nature proceeds to heal the wounds where the turf was stripped off this meadow. There are large patches where nothing remained but pure black mud, nearly level or with slight hollows like a plate in it. This the sun and air had cracked into irregular polygonal figures, a foot, more or less, in diameter. The whole surface of these patches here is now covered with a short, soft, and pretty dense moss-like vegetation springing up and clothing it. The little hollows and tic cracks are filled with a very dense growth of reddish grass or sedge, about one inch high, the growth in the cracks making pretty regular figures as in a carpet, while the intermediate spaces are very evenly but much more thinly covered with minute sarothra and whitish Gnaphalium uliginosum. Thus the wound is it once scarred over. Apparently the seeds of that grass were heavier and were washed into the hollows and cracks. Is it likely that the owner has sprinkled seed here? [No.]



June 5th

[Transcript]

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Pm. to Clam Shell by river

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), *THE BOATMAN*, page 10

Yel. Beth [{"beth" altered to "Beth"}] Star in Prime. Aphyllon or

23 Orobanch well out ap several days. Nuphar

24 ? Kalmiana budded above water. Green briar

25 flower out ap 2 or 3 days Low blackberry

26 out in low ground ap X. That very early (or in

27 winter green rad leaf) plant by ash is the myo-

28 sotis laxa open since the 28th of May say June 1st

29 Ranunculus reptans say 2 days out—river

30 being very low— Common cress well out

31 along river. Side-fl. sandwort ap 3 days out

32 in Clam Shell flat meadow. some oxalis done—

33 say 2 or 3 days. on ditch bank. Ranunculus

34 repens in prime—Yel— clover well out.

35 some ~~days~~ [time]. Flowering ferns reddish green

36 show on meadows. Green oak balls

1 Walking along the upper edge of the flat



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2 Clam Shell meadow—a bird, prob. a

3 song spar (for I saw 2 chipping about im4

mediately after) flew up from between my

5 feet & I soon found its nest remarka-

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7 of the dry river wreck with an entry

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10 detected the eggs from above by looking down

11 through some openings in the wreck about

12 as big as sparrow eggs through which

13 I saw the eggs 5 in number. I

14 never saw a {large lowercase “a” written over “the”} nest so perfectly concealed.

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17 where the turf was stipped off this meadow—

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36 sarothra & [^whitish] gnaphalium uliginosum. Thus the wound

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4 that the owner has sprinkled seed here?

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 June 6, Wednesday: [Waldo Emerson](#) purchased some land from [E. Hosmer](#).

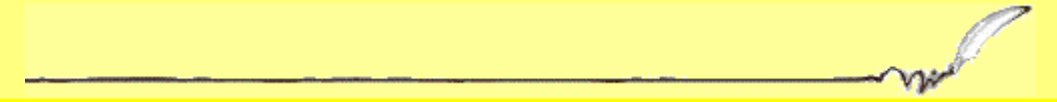
<http://aschmidt01742.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/cmth125.jpg>



June 6. P.M. — Up Assabet by boat to survey [Hosmer's](#) field.

"Up Assabet" is probably the most common opening phrase in Thoreau's two-million-word journal. This was his favorite destination under default conditions, meaning the wind was light and the river stage was neither in flood nor in drought.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 10




On the Island I hear still the redstart -tsip tsip tsip tsip, tsit-i-yet, or sometimes tsip trip trip trip, ise vet. A young male. It repeats this at regular intervals for a long time, sitting pretty still now. Waxwork open and pollen one or two days. I notice a clam lying up, and two or three cleared or light-colored places, apparently" Bream-nests commenced.

You see the dark eye and shade of June on the river as well as on land, and a dust-like tint on river, apparently from the young leaves and bud-scales, covering the waters, which begin to be smooth, and imparting a sense of depth. Blue-eyed grass maybe several days to some places. One thimble-berry blossom done - probably several do.Fs. "There are now those large swarms of black-winged millers (?) a half-inch long, with two long streamers ahead, fluttering three to six inches over the water; not long, methinks; also other insects. I see a yellow-spotted tortoise twenty rods from river, and a painted one four rods from it which has just made a hole for her eggs. Two catbirds' nests in the thickest part of the thicket on the edge of Wheeler's meadow near Island. One done laying (I learn after); four eggs, green, — much darker green than the robin's and more slender in proportion. This is loosely placed in the forks of a broad alternate or silky cornel bush, about five feet from the ground, and is composed of dead twigs and a little stubble, then grapevine bark, and is lined with dark root-fibres. Another, eight rods beyond, rests still more loosely on a Viburnum dentatum and birch; has some dry leaves with the twigs, and one egg, - about six feet high. The bird hops within five feet. (This egg gone on the 9th.)

The white maple keys are about half fallen. It is remarkable that this happens at the time the emperor moth (cecropia) comes out. Carex crinita (?), a few days, along bank of Assabet. Whiteweed, Merrick's pasture shore, these two or three days.

The Salix cordata (which apparently blossomed some (lays after the S. sericea) is very common on Prichard's shore and also Whiting's. Also at the last. place is a small shrub, —a little of it, — perhaps S. lucida, which apparently blossomed about same time [as], or a day or two after, the sericea.

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 June 7, Thursday: On the day of the taking of the Mamelon quarries there was a council of war between Turkish General Omar Pasha (1806-1871), Ambassador and marshal of France Aimable Jean Jacques Pélissier, 1st duc de Malakoff (1794-1864), and Commander in the Crimea FitzRoy James Henry Somerset, 1st Baron Raglan (1788-1855). This council of war was captured for posterity in a salt print by the Daguerreotypist Roger Fenton, a leading photographer of the mid-Victorian period (I will refrain from showing you this image, since it amounts to nothing more than 3 dudes in costume, sitting at a table covered by a rather pretentious tablecloth and looking portentously grave and important, or silly).



June 7

Rain— In Pm—mizzling weather to Abel Hosmer woods. Cistus ap. yest open.

[Transcript]

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A yel— birds nest on a willow bough against
a twig 10 feet high—4 eggs. I have
heard no musical gurgle-ee—from black-
birds for a fortnight— They are so busy
breeding.

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June 8, Friday: [Hector Berlioz](#) and his wife arrived in London for concerts with the New Philharmonic Society.



June 8 Am {Thoreau altered "Pm" to "Am"}. Goose Pond.

[Transcript]

High blue berry X A crow 2/3 grown tied
up for a scare-crow. A tanagers (?) nest
in the topmost forks of a pitch pine|
about 15 feet high by {this worde written over "in"} Thrush Alley—
the nest very slight—ap. of pine needles
twighs &c can see through—it, bird on.

In that pitch pine wood see 2 rabbit
forms(?) very snug & well roofed retreats
formed by the [^dead] pine needles falling about
the base of the trees where they are upheld
on the dead stubs from the buds at from 6
inches to a foot from the ground—as if
the carpet forest floor were puffed
up there—gnawed {"g" written over "G"} acorn shells in them.

2 ~~baywings~~ [^F. pusilla] nests in my red potatoe
field at the foot of little white pines
each—made of dried grass lined with hair— [^This bird is ash side head—ferruginous above—mahogany bill
& legs—2 whitish bars. eggs do not agree with account? [Nuttall](#) says this birds eggs are so thick with
ferruginous as to appear almost wholly of that color!!]

snug in the sod 4 eggs to each—one lot
nearly hatched—with reddish brown spots espec-
ially toward larger end—but a light
opening quite at that end—smaller
slenderer & less spotted than the song-
sparrow's. A Jay's nest with 3 young
half fledged—in a pitch [^white] pine 6 feet high (in it)

by the Ingraham cellar. Made of coarse
sticks. Hear I am pretty sure a rose-
breasted gross beak sing— See ap. a
summer duck in Goose pond. C. says
E say 2 other dark ducks here yesterday.
A great many devils needles in woods
within a day or 2. G. Brooks told me
on June 1st that a few evenings before
he saw as many as a thousand chimney
swallow pour down into Goodknow's
chimney.

A catbirds nest—on the peninsula of
Goosepond 4 eggs in a blueberry bush
4 feet from ground—close to water—as usual
of sticks—dry leaves—& bark lined with roots.
What was that [^little] crest—on the ridge
near-by made of [^fine] grass lined with a little [^few]
hairs & containing 5 smalls [^eggs—(2 hatched the 11th)] nearly as broad



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as long yet pointed white with fine dull brown spots especially on the large end—nearly hatched. The nest in the dry grass under a shrub—remarkably concealed—the ground away just like a night-hawk—cant trace [^(June 11th It is a Maryland-Yel— Throat. runs & flies along it off—it goes so low in the grass &c at first. very shy it is—] Found in this walk—of nest—one tanager— 2 baywing—1 blue-jay—1 catbird—& the last named.

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June 9, Saturday: The Sacramento, [California](#) [Daily Union](#) reported on the 5:30PM departure from a San Francisco wharf two days earlier, of the *Fanny Major* with [Lola Montez](#) and her manager Augustus Noël Follin for Sydney, [Australia](#):

A large crowd assembled yesterday afternoon at Cunningham's wharf, to see the Fanny Major leave for Sydney. Among the passengers were Lola Montez and the dramatic troupe who are proceeding to Australia under her direction on a professional trip. Much curiosity was manifested by the crowd to see the celebrated Countess. *There's Lola! That's her, with the green parasol! See, quick! Hurrah for Lola! J-s, look at her, there!* These, and similar exclamations, were muttered on all sides. The rigging, the ship's bulky boats, the bustle and crowd on the deck of the Fanny Major, required some tip-toe effort on the part of the spectators to see and follow the movements of "the observed of all observers." When the vessel got clear of the wharf, (5.30,) several faint attempts were made to get up three cheers for Lola; but except an occasional enthusiastic yell, the multitude only laughed or remained silent. The pink ribbons and green parasol of the lady fluttered and glistened on deck, till the Fanny Major got into the stream, loosed her wings, and sped westward through the Golden Gate.

"All that's bright must fade,
 The brightest still the fleetest."
 [*Chronicle, Thursday.*]



June 9th

Pm. to Wheeler azalea swamp—across meadow. Early primrose done—say 2 days XX An orchis—prob. yellowish will be common ? in Wheeler's Meadow—Side saddle up a day or 2 petals hang down— A song spar's nest low in Wheeler meadow with 5 eggs—made of grass lined with hair. Rhus Toxicodendron ap. X on Island rock. The nest prob. of the small pewee—looking from the ground like a yel— birds showing reddish

[Transcript]

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wool of ferns—against a ~~small~~ white
 birch on a small twig 18 feet from ground
 4 [^little] eggs all pale cream color before blowing
 white after—fresh.
 A yel— bird's nest 8 feet from ground in crotch
 of a very slender maple
 A chip bird in a white thorn on the Hill
 one egg.
 A catbirds nest 3 eggs in a high
 blue berry 4 feet from ground with rather
 more dry leaves than usual— [^above assabet spring] Lambkill
 ap. X out. Catbirds nest 1 egg on
 a blueberry bush 3 feet from ground—
 of as usual sticks—leaves bark—roots
 Another near {this word written over "is"} same (also in V. Muh-
 lenbergii swamp) on a bent white birch
 & andromeda 18 inch from ground 3 eggs
 stubble of weeds mainly instead of twigs
 otherwise as usual. A chewink's nest
 sunk in ground under a bank covered
 with ferns dead {this word written over "&"} & green & huckleberry bushes
 composed of dry leaves then grass
 stubble & lined with a [^very] few [^slender] reddish moss-
 stems 4 eggs—rather fresh—merely
 enough moss stems to indicate its choice.
 Fever root perhaps several days—
 ? See very few hawks for several weeks—
 Found today of nests 1 song spar— 1 small
 pewee(?) 1 yel— bird 1 chip bird—3 cat birds
 1 chewink—1 robin (the last on a black willow
 2 feet from ground 1 egg
 I think I have hardly heard a bobolink
 for a week—or 10 days.

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June 10, Sunday: Queen Victoria opened the Crystal Palace in London. As part of the festivities, 1,500 voices sang the Hallelujah Chorus of Handel. Among them was Arthur Sullivan.

Heinrich August Marschner got married with his 4th wife, Theresa Janda, a 28-year-old singer, in Hanover.

[Brigham Young](#) “got married with” Catherine Reese.



According to the U.S. Nautical Magazine and Naval Journal (Volume IV, 1855, page 259), there were two steamboat disasters on this date:

The steamboat *City of Newark*, plying between this city and Newark, took fire June 10th, on her morning trip to this city, at about a quarter to 9 o'clock, when off Staten Island, just before entering the bay. The fire took place in the fire room from the boilers, and the boat was actually on fire, while the captain was giving a lady passenger assurances that in case of fire there would be no danger, the boat being well supplied with all the appliances for extinguishment. The sequel proved that no attempt was made to use them if they were on board, as the boat burned to a shell, and three passengers were drowned by their eager haste to leave the burning wreck, by a lady passenger jumping on the gunwale of a boat already full. Fortunately the fire was discovered by the *Achilles*, the *Commodore*, and the *Thomas Hunt*, all of whom promptly came to her assistance, and with their small boats took off all the passengers, the steamboats themselves not daring to approach near enough to take them, lest they should take fire. The *Achilles* came up to the bow, the flames driving aft toward the stern. But for the prompt and efficient aid afforded by these three steamboats, few of the sixty passengers would have been saved from the flames or a watery grave, and as it was, quite a number were scorched by the falling cinders and the intensity of heat. The wreck was towed upon Jersey flats by the *Commodore*. How long will the Insurance Companies of this city take Ferry or Steamboat risks on such boats as have their boilers encased with wooden bulkheads – wooden boxes to hold fire? The *City of Newark* had an iron tank aboard to hold fresh water for the boilers. What a glaring inconsistency – iron tanks to hold water, and wooden tanks to hold fire!

On the same day an explosion took place of the boilers of the Ferry-boat running in connection with the Grand Trunk Railroad, Montreal. The explosion occurred about one o'clock in the afternoon – the two boilers, although disconnected, were thrown clear of the boat, making her a complete wreck. Twenty-seven

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persons were killed by this reckless carelessness. How long before the engineers of the United States will furnish a steam-boiler, that will be safe beyond the possibility of explosion unless by design, economize coal, and make the necessary amount of steam, without occupying so large a portion of the vessel's capacity? Their number is very great, and but few agree upon the best mode of filling this great want. Engineers have given more attention to the engine than to the boilers, seemingly forgetting that the steam is the power, and that the boiler was quite as important, if not indeed more important, than the engine itself.



June 10th

[Transcript]

Pm. to Owl's nest—

A remarkably strong wind from the SW all day—wracking the trees very much & filling the air with dust—I do not remember such violent & incessant gusts at this season. Many eggs if not young must have been shaken out of birds nests—for I hear of some fallen. It is almost impossible to hear birds—or to keep your hat on—
The waves are like those of march—
That common grass [^{in pencil: on our bank red-top?? June grass}] which was in blossom a fortnight since & still on riv bank—began a week ago to turn white here & there killed by worms. Veronica scutellata ap a day or 2 X Iris Versicolor also a day or 2 X A red maple leaf with [^{those}] crimson spots Clintonia ap 4 {"4" written over "3"} or 5 4 days (not out at Hub's close the 4th.
A catbirds nest of usual construction 1 egg 2 feet high on a swamp pink. and old nest of same near by on same.
Some viola cucullatas are now 9 inches high & leaves nearly 12 inches wide.
Archangelica staminiferous umbellets say yest. X but some ap. only. pistilliferous ones look some days at least older—seed vessel pretty large.
Oven birds nest with 4 eggs 2/3 hatched under dry leaves—composed of pine needles & dry leaves & a hair or 2 for lining about 6 feet S.W. of a white oak which is 6 rods SW of the Hawk pine. The young owls are gone
The Kalmia glauca is done before the lambkill is begun here—ap was done some days ago. A [^{very}] few rhodoras linger.
Nest of a king bird or [^{wood}] Pewee [^{prob. of Musicappa Cooperi or Pe-pe disc. by Nuttall(?)}] [^{in pencil: "V. May 15"}] on a white spruce in the Holden swamp about 15 feet high on a small branch near the top—of a few twigs & pine needles & an abundance of ~~pine~~ usnea {—} heavily composing & lining & overflowing from it Very open beneath & carelessly built—with a small concavity with 3 eggs pretty fresh—but ap. all-told—cream color

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before blowing with a circle of brown spots about larger end. The female (?) looked darker beneath than a king bird & uttered that clear plaintive till tilt like a robin somewhat—sitting on a spruce. C. finds an egg today somewhat like a song sparrow but a little longer & slenderer or with less dif. between the ends in form—& more finely [~~& th or thickly~~ & regularly] spotted all over with pale brown. It was in a peurile nest of grape vine bark—on the low branch of a maple—prob. a cow-bird's.—fresh laid

He has found in nests of grass in thick bushes near river—what he thought red wing eggs [^{in pencil: “yes”}]—but they are pale blue with large black blotches one with a very large black spot on one side— Can they be bobolinks? or what? [^{in pencil: “Prob red wings”}]

My partridge still sits on 7 eggs. The black-spruce which I plucked on the 2nd ult expanded a loose rather light brown cone on the 5th say—can that be the pistillate flower— The white spruce cones are now a rich dark purple more than 1/2 inch long.

? Nuttall thus describes the Musicappa Cooperi Olive-sided Flycatcher or Pe-pe “Sp. Ch. Dusky-brown, head darker without discolored spot; sides olive-grey; lateral space beneath the wing white; lower mandible purplish brown color; tail nearly even, & extending but a little beyond the closed wings.” No white on tail—2aries & coverts edged with whitish. “rictus bright yellow as well as the inside of the mouth & tongue.” chin white. “Sides dusky olive, a broad line down the middle of the breast, with the abdomen and rump yellowish white; a broadish white space on the side, beneath the wing towards the back—”

“This species though of the size of the King bird, is nearly related to the wood pewee, yet perfectly distinct.”

Of note— — — —her “oft repeated, whining call of pu pu, then varied to pu pip, and pip pu, also at times pip pip pu, pip pip pip, pu pu pip, or tu tu tu, & tu tu. This shrill, pensive, & quick whistle sometimes dropped almost to a whisper, or merely pu. The tone was in fact much like that of the phu phu of the fish hawk. The male, however, besides this note, at long intervals, had a call of eh'phēbēē, or h'phebéa, almost exactly in the tone of the circular tin whistle, or bird call,—”

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June 11, Monday: [Queen Victoria](#) and [Prince Albert](#) attended the 6th of [Richard Wagner](#)'s 7 philharmonic concerts in London. The composer visited with the royal couple in their box at intermission. They requested an encore to the overture to *Tannhäuser*.

Since 1833, when the giant sequoias of the [California](#) mountains had been first sighted and described by white men, there had been considerable confusion. Some presumed that the measurements, given in feet, were misprints, and that what had been meant was inches. The trees were called *Sequoia* in honor of native representative to the United States federal government *Sequoyah*, using the latinized version of that Cherokee name. However, in 1853 some specimens of the mountain giant version of this tree reached England and botanist John Lindley created as a new genus *Wellingtonia gigantea* in honor of the just-deceased Duke of Wellington. Some Americans immediately protested that as this was a gigantic American tree, it ought by rights to be named after that gigantic American, General/President George Washington (and indeed, eventually this species would come to be recognized as the *Sequoiadendron giganteum*). On this day, however, the issue was still undecided, and the [Daily Alta California](#) therefore carried a most intriguing botany article:

Wellington Gigantea, or the Great Tree and the Great Man.

The above was the title of a very interesting lecture, delivered recently in England, on California Trees, by J[ames] Bateman, Esq., M.A., F.R.S., of Biddulph Grange, in the Assembly Room, Congleton. It is worth while to call the attention of readers to it both as a matter of science and State pride.

Mr. Bateman commenced the lecture by observing that perhaps some present would be already acquainted with the extraordinary tree which had recently been discovered in North America, and to which had been given the name of a still more extraordinary man. The subject of the lecture might strike some as strange and curious, but he hoped that, as they proceeded, they would find that it opened out into interesting and profitable trains of thought. The arrangement of the lecture would be briefly this: — He should first give some information as to the district in which the *Wellingtonia* was discovered; then he should describe the tree itself, and afterwards make some allusions to the great man from whom the great tree had derived its name; and, in conclusion offer some general reflections, which it would be seen that the subject naturally suggested. If they were to ask for a detailed description of the scene in which the subject of the lecture was laid, it would be requisite that he should refer to an atlas published within the last four or five years, as on the maps issued previously to that time, they would find the country described under the vague designation of 'unknown.' But how great a change had taken place within those few years! Where at that time stretched a wild and unknown desert, now stood a magnificent city; and in the Bay of Sao Francisco, which was then scarcely ruffled by the oars of a solitary canoe, now floated vessels from all countries. The magician that had waved his hand over the desert and the waters, and produced this fairy change, was gold. They would already have discovered that he alluded to California. (Loud applause.) The discovery of gold in California caused a great tide of emigration to set in that way, and, as might have been expected, a large proportion of those who immigrated from all countries were characters of the very worst description. Then followed those scenes of rapine,

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violence and blood, the recitation of which made Europe shudder; and what should have been the inauguration of the "golden age" more nearly resembled the breaking loose of hell. These scenes, he said, were occurring on one side of the great range of hills dividing the California coast from the inland territories of North America; and at the foot of the hills on the other side was going on a spectacle equally strange and deplorable. For on the other side of those hills lay Utah, the great Salt Lake, around which swarmed a great Mormon population, under the rule of that licentious potentate, Mr. Brigham Young. He would not, however, dwell upon these painful scenes, but alike leave the Mammonites and the Mormonites, and turn to the calm and peaceful solitudes of primeval nature.

Among the travelers who visited California when the gold discoveries began to attract the attention of Europe, was Mr. Lobb, who traveled as the agent of the most enterprising nurseryman this country ever produced – he alluded to Messrs. Veitch of Exeter and London, who sent him out not to carry away auriferous spoils from the country, but to examine into its vegetable productions. Mr. Lobb made numerous interesting Discoveries, and after ascending the hills to a height of about 3000 feet, his eye first rested on these monarchs of all trees, which were afterwards named Wellingtonia Gigantea. They towered to a majestic stature, some among them rising to a height of 400 to 500 feet, or three or four times the height of the tallest factory chimneys in Congleton, and with a proportionate girth, in some instances having a circumference of 90 feet, and a diameter of 30 feet, thus capable of furnishing single planks so large that one only would be sufficient to floor that room. Of course it was out of the question to think of bringing to this country an actual specimen of this monster tree, but Mr. Lobb made an accurate drawing of it, from which he (Mr. Bateman) had copied the diagram to which he then directed their attention. He very lucidly explained a diagram representing a Wellingtonia, 300 feet high, and 3000 years old, which had been drawn on a scale of 1 foot to 10 yards. For the purpose of affording means of comparison, he had inserted in the drawing a ladder, of a common length, leaning against the trunk, and a man ascending it. The gigantic size of the tree dwarfed the ladder to an appearance like that of a walking-stick, and the man half way upon it seemed about the size of a beetle. He had also drawn a Scotch Fir and an Oak tree on the same scale; but, by comparison they both sank into the appearance of insignificant shrubs; still, however, he said, the eye had a difficulty in comprehending its astounding dimensions, and he had adopted another means of comparison. He had drawn sketches of the tallest buildings in the world, selecting the pyramids of Egypt, St. Peter's at Rome, Salisbury Cathedral and St. Paul's at London. They would, however, see that the Wellingtonia left St. Paul's far behind; it was some feet higher than Salisbury Cathedral, the highest building in England; it contested the palm with St. Peter's, and was but a small distance below the Pyramid. He then compared it with drawings of other trees, and, in comparison he said, the Palm tree appeared only like a Sugar Cane, the Spruce Fir like Juniper, and even the famed Cedar of Lebanon only as a bush. To convey a more perfect idea of of

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astonishing size, he related several anecdotes concerning it. The method by which these trees were felled, he said, was to bore them through with immense augurs [sic], and then wait for a strong wind to complete the work. He described the great violence which attended the fall, and mentioned that, on one occasion, a traveler on horseback rode up in the trunk of one of the felled trees, to a distance of nearly a hundred yards. Some of the hollow trunks of these trees, he said, would have served for the smaller tubes of the Britannia Bridge, and here was a hint for railway contractors. If they were to bridge over a stream, they had only to plant one of these trees on the bank, and when it was full grown, fell it so as to reach across unto the other side, and there would be a bridge already made. The only difficulty in the way was one which he would confess was rather a strong objection – that they would have to wait for 3000 years before the tree had matured itself, that being the period it occupied in attaining to its full growth. He then directed attention to a specimen of the bark of the Wellingtonia, which he produced, and which was of an astonishing thickness. He said it had a cocoa-fibre texture, and gave forth a pungent smell. He related an amusing story of a clever practitioner in the land of Barnum, where he told there were men always ready to turn an honest or dishonest penny, who stripped one of these trees of its bark, and then joined the bark together and produced an actual representation of the Wellingtonia, and made a show of it in San Francisco, furnishing it inside with a pianoforte and carpets, and receiving parties in it. The interior of one of these trees, he said, would furnish an area large enough to contain all the wives of Mr. Brigham Young, and all the husbands of Lola Montes, who, by the way, was at present in San Francisco. He then pointed attention to a diagram representing the lower portion of the trunk of a young Wellingtonia, about 1000 years old! He proceeded to explain the general characteristics of the tree, and placed it as a distinct genus between the Pine and the Juniper, having the cone of the pine, though proportionably smaller, and the foliage of the Juniper. It belonged, he said, to that most useful race to which we were indebted for Deal or Pine, and for masts for our shipping; which also furnished rosin, pitch, turpentine, and many other useful articles. It was also stated that from the bark of this class of trees the wretched Russian serfs obtained a sort of bark bread, which, of necessity, must be a very disagreeable compound. And while on this topic, he would mention that a writer in the Quarterly Review says, that it is possible, by skilful manipulation, to manufacture a respectable loaf out of a deal board, and as it is well known that sawdust contained some grains of albumen, it was possible that, as the writer wittily remarked, "bread" and "board" might come to be synonymous terms. The Wellingtonia, it would be seen, was valuable from considerations of utility, and, in addition, it was a magnificent ornament to the landscape.

Considering the fitness of the name which had been given to the tree, he reminded the audience that figures of trees were often emblematically used in Scripture to represent great or good men. He drew a distinction betwixt the senses in which the Palm and the Cedar were employed in the Bible, and read a lengthy passage



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in illustration from Ezekiel (chap xxxi.) These authorities, he said, would justify the title of the lecture, altho' they destroyed all claims to originality on that point, when it was seen that, twenty-five centuries ago, Scriptural writers had compared the great tree with the great man.

He then explained the method by which they arrived at the age of the Wellingtonia, by counting the number of eccentric rings in the trunk, it having been ascertained that these rings were formed annually, and that each circle stood for a year. He explained in a very simple manner the process of restoration and growth taking place annually in the vegetable kingdom, by the circulation of the sap, which enabled them to arrive at the results above mentioned. This, he said, related to what they might term "arboreal" time, of which nature regulated her proceedings in the vegetable world, and which was at times useful in checking the vagaries of antiquarians. He related an instance in which naturalists had been able to indicate the age of ruins in Central America, by ascertaining the period of their desertion by the age of the trees that had grown over their walls. To prove the correctness of the principle by which they thus measured the existence of trees, he produced a wedge cut out of a Scotch Fir tree, grown on the Knypersley estate, and, being able by the aid of other circumstances to fix the date when it was planted by a former occupant of the estate, he counted the concentric circles, and found that they exactly agreed with the number of years which had intervened. He then applied this reasoning in the case of the Wellingtonia, and by a diagram on which spaces were marked, representing each 100 rings, which he said were found to exist in the specimen on the scale of 25 rings to the inch, and by calculating the diameter they ascertained that the age of the tree could not be less than 3000 years. He observed to what a remote period of time the existence of one of these trees led them. Pointing to the wand with which he explained the diagrams, he said, when that tree was but the thickness of this wand, there occurred a siege which was then as important, and had since been as famous in history as would be the present siege of Sebastopol – he alluded to the memorable siege of Troy. He would however add, that he hoped it would not occupy Lord Raglan 10 years in reducing Sebastopol. To turn to Scriptural history, they found that the tree began to live in the days of the Judges – it would be quite a youth in the time of David. At the period of our blessed Lord's incarnation it would be about 1200 years old, and it completed its second millennium during the dark ages of the Papacy. When it was about 2600 years old, a sad event, as far as concerned itself, occurred – viz: the discovery of America; for it was certain that when the enterprising European set foot on the shores of the New World, the tree would not remain "monarch of all it surveyed." That period was the most remarkable of preceding history. Then Constantinople was captured by the Turks, and artillery for the first time made an appliance of war. Also about that time the printing press was discovered, and soon followed by the circulation of Bibles, which led to the glorious Reformation. At the time of that event, in the 16th century, the tree would be in a green old age, and so it continued until the 19th century so remarkable in history, as

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being inimical to crowned beads, and then this monarch of the American woods fell before the axe of European aggression. But the tree was as yet without a name. They would be aware already, he remarked, that botanists frequently gave the names of princes, nobles and great men to their discoveries. He mentioned several instances in illustration, and said that this had been carried out until, for some time past, there had scarcely been a family of note which had not furnished a name for some plant. But it strangely happened that in this particular the Great Duke had been omitted. But about the time that we lost our great man, the great tree was discovered; and a specimen was submitted to Professor Lindley, who, finding that it belonged to a new genus, proceeded to name it, selecting for that purpose the title of the great Duke. He read the dedication as made by the Professor, which concluded by saying that the most appropriate name for the greatest tree was the title of our greatest man, and, therefore, it should be henceforth known as *Wellingtonia Gigantea*. He did not know but we should have to go to war with America about this choice of name. He read an extract from an article in the *California Farmer*, in which Dr. Winslow, writing on this subject, complained vehemently of an English name having been given to an American tree, and characterized it as indicating scientific arrogance and indelicacy, to select the name of Wellington is that of the greatest of trees, when the name of Washington would have been in every way more suitable. And the Doctor, in magniloquent language, proposed that the name of the tree could be changed, and it should henceforth be called "*Washingtonia Californica*." He observed that both law and equity, however, were against the Doctor — equity, because the Americans were at full liberty to have discovered the tree themselves, if they could, and to named it after Washington, if they chose; and they were now at liberty to discover, if they could, a tree still more magnificent, and might designate that by the name of their great founder. Botanical law was also against him, for it was a principle established by scientific men, for their own convenience, that, unless it could be shown that the discoverer was wrong as regarded the structure of a plant or tree, the name that he had given to it would continue to designate it to the end of time.



June 11th

How's Morus—staminate flowers ap only a day or 2 pollen—the pistillate a long time.

The locust ap 2 or 3 days. open.

When I would go a visiting I find

that I go off the fashionable

street—not being inclined to change

my dress—to where man meets man

& not polished shoe meets shoe.

Ac to [Holland's](#) Hist of Western

Mass— In Westfield "In 1721, it was voted

that the pews next the pulpit should be

highest in dignity. The next year it was voted that

persons should be seated in the meeting house

according to their age & estate, and that so

much as any man's estate is increased by

his negros, 'that shall be left out.' If a

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man lived on a hired farm, 'or hath obtained his property by marrying a widow, it shall be reckoned only one-third,' that is, he shall have only 1/3 as much dignity as if he owned his farm, or had acquired his money by his own industry."

—What if we feel a yearning
to which no breast answers? I walk
alone— My heart is full—feelings
impede the current of my thoughts—
I knock on the earth for my friend—
I expect to meet him at every turn—
but no friend appears—& perhaps
none is dreaming of me.


I am tired of frivolous society—in
which silence is for ever the most
natural & the best manners. I
would fain walk on the deep waters
but my companions will only
walk on shallows & puddles.

I am naturally silent in the
midst of 20 from day to day—from
year to year— I am rarely reminded
of their presence— 2 yards of po-
liteness do not make society for
me.

One complains that I do not take
his jokes— I took them before he had
done uttering them & went my way.
One talks to me of his apples & pears
& I depart with my secrets untold.

His are not the apples that tempt me.
Now (Sep 16th 55) after 4 or
5 months of invalidity & worthlessness
I begin to feel some stirrings of life
in me—

Is not that *Carex Pennsylvanica*-like
with a long spike (1 inch long x 1/2 inch wide)
C. bullata?

What a diff. between one [red wing] black bird's [Red-winged Blackbird  *Agelaius phoeniceus*] egg
and another's— *C.* finds one long as a
robin's but narrow with large black spots
on larger end & on side on or bet. the bushes
by river side—like the red wings—another
much shorter with a large black spot
on the side. Both pale blue ground.

The early willows at the bridge
are ap. either *S. discolor* or *Erioccephala*
or both.

I have noticed the green oak balls
some days.— Now observe the dark
evergreen of June.

The target leaf is eaten above
In order to get the deserted tanager's
nest at the top a pitch pine which
was too weak to climb—we carried
a rope in our pockets & took 3 rails
1/4 of a mile into the woods, & there
rigged a derrick by which I climbed
to a level with {"with" written over "of"} the nest—& could see
if there were eggs in it. I have the
nest. Tied the three tops together and

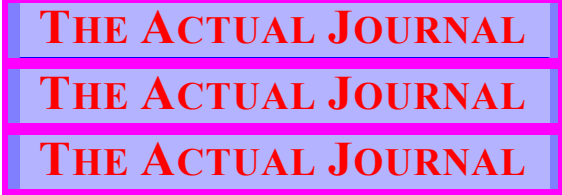
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spread the bottoms.
Carex cephalophora?? on Heywood's Peaks
That fine dry wiry wild grass in hollows
in woods & sproutlands—never mown—
is ap—the C. Pennsylvanica or early sedge.
There are young blue-birds.



June 12, Tuesday: William A. Rockefeller, father of John D. Rockefeller, bigamously married Margaret Allen of Ontario, Canada in Nichols, New York, and began to visit her in Canada once a year.

An act to limit [Chinese](#) immigration into the Colony of Victoria was given royal assent.



Tuesday June 12th 55
down River to Swamp E— of Poplar Hill
I hear the toad, which I have called spray
frog falsely—still— He sits close to
the edge of the water & is hard to
find—hard to tell the direction though
you may be within 3 feet. I detect
him chiefly by the motion of the great
swelling bubble in his throat—A
peculiarly rich sprayey dreamer—now
at 2 Pm—How serenely it ripples
over the water! What a luxury life is to
him! I have to use a little geometry to de-
tect him—Am surprised at my discovery
at last—while C. sits by incredulous—
Had turned our prow to shore to
search. This rich sprayey note possesses
all the shore. It diffuses itself far
and wide over the water—& enters into
every crevice of the noon—& you cannot tell
whence it proceeds.
Young redwings now begin to fly feebly amid
the button bushes—& the old ones chatter their
anxiety. At mouth of Mill Brook {"B" written over "b"}—a red-
wings nest tied on to that thick high grass
& some low willow—18 inch from ground—with
4 eggs—variously marked—full of young.
In a hedge thicket by meadow near Peter's
path a Catbird's nest—1 egg—as usual
in a high blueberry—in the thickest & darkest
of the hedge—& very loosely built beneath on
joggle sticks.
In the [[^]thick] swamp behind the hill I look at
the vireo's nest which C found on the 10th
ult. within reach on a red maple [[^]forked] twig—
[[^]8 feet from ground] He took one cow bird's egg from it & I now

[Transcript]

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take the other which he left— There is no vireo's egg—& it is said they always desert their nest when there are a cow birds eggs laid in it. I saw a red-eye lurking near. Have the nest. Near by in a part of the swamp which had been cleared & then burnt ap. by accident—we find the nest of a veery on a tussuck 8 inches high—which like those around has been burnt all off close & black— The nest is directly in the top the outside burnt— It contains 3 eggs which have been scorched discolored & cooked—1 cracked by the heat. though fresh. Some of the sedge has since sprung up green 8 inches high around here & there. All the lower part of the nest is left—an inch thick with dead leaves—maple &c & well lined with moss stems (??) It is a dry swamp. In a [^high] blueberry bush—on the Poplar Hill-side 4 ft from ground—a Catbirds nest with 4 eggs—40 feet high up the hill. They even follow the blue berry uphill.

A Field sparrow's nest with 3 young—on a v. vacillans—rose & grass—6 inches from ground—made of grass & hair.

A C. Tomentosa Hickory on the hill well out—& froth on the nuts—almost all out & black—perhaps 3 or 4 days.

A Hawthorn grows near by—just out of bloom. 12 feet high. C. oxyacantha ? A veronica at Peetweet Roc kind. A crow b. bird's nest high in an elm by river side just below the Island. C. climbed to it & got it. I have it There were eggs. Bottom of mud & coarse grass & sedge—lined with finer grass & dry weed-stems. Another in an elm seen of Lorings—in a recess where a limb was once broken off open on one side 18 ft high— Young with heads out almost ready to fly

Nuttall says—of the Cowbird's egg— “If the egg be deposited in the nest alone, it is uniformly forsaken;”—has seen “sometimes 2 of these eggs in the same nest, but in this case one of them commonly proves abortive.”— “is almost oval, scarcely larger than that of the blue bird.” He says it is “thickly sprinkled with points & confluent touches of olive brown, of 2 shades, somewhat more numerous at the greater end, on a white ground tinged with green. But in some of these eggs the ground is almost pure white, and the spots nearly black.”

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June 13, Wednesday: *Les Vêpres siciliennes*, an opéra by Giuseppe Verdi to words of Scribe and Duveyrier, was performed for the initial time, at the Paris Opéra. Presented during the Paris Exposition, this would enjoy a good success.

L'inconsolable, an opéra comique by Fromental Halévy under the pseudonym Alberti, was performed for the initial time, at the Théâtre-Lyrique, Paris.

[Hector Berlioz](#) conducted the New Philharmonic Society at Exeter Hall, London. The room was packed with a very appreciative audience, but one member of the audience, [Richard Wagner](#) was un impressed.

Five men reported that while boating on Silver Lake they had sighted a giant lake serpent.

[Ellery Channing](#) spotted a peewee's [[Spotted Sandpiper](#), [Actitis macularia](#)] nest that he would want to point out to [Henry Thoreau](#).

Alicia M. Keyes was born, a daughter of [John Shepard Keyes](#) and Martha Prescott Keyes.

The birth of Alicia in the summer was the event of the household, and we got through it well and enjoyed another daughter. She was named for Aunt Alicia and has taken from the beginning after and for me.

J.S. KEYES AUTOBIOGRAPHY



June 13th

C. finds a pigeon woodpecker's nest in an appletree 5 of those pearly eggs about 6 feet from ground—could squeeze your hand in— Also a peewees—with 4 eggs in Hubbards meadow beyond the old swamp oak site—& 2 kingbirds nests with eggs in an apple & in {this word written over “-”} a willow by river side.

[Transcript]

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June 14, Thursday: The US Navy's new steamer *USS Arctic* along with the bark *USS Release* departed from New-York harbor in an attempt to rescue Passed Assistant Surgeon Elisha K. Kane's arctic expedition. The ships would rescue the expedition, which after a hazardous 84-day journey over pack ice and through water in open boats, had arrived off the west coast of Greenland at Disko Island in Baffin Bay, and during the Fall would return these men to civilization and safety.



June 14: Thursday. Up river.

See young red-wings; like grizzly-black vultures, they are still so bald. See many empty red-wing nests now amid the *Cornus sericca*. The bluebird's nest high in the black willow at Sassafras Shore has five eggs. The gold robin's nest, which I could pull down within reach, just beyond, has three eggs. I have one. I told C. [[Ellery Channing](#)] to look into an old mortise-hole in Wood's Bridge for a white-bellied swallow's nest, as we were paddling under; but he laughed, incredulous. I insisted, and when he climbed up he scared out the bird. Five eggs. "You see the feathers about, do you not?" "Yes," said he.

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Kalmiana lily, several days. The little galium in meadow, say one day. A song sparrow's (?) nest in ditch bank under Clamshell, of coarse grass lined with fine, and five eggs nearly hatched and a peculiar dark end to them. Have one or more and the nest. The bird evidently deserted the nest when two eggs had been taken. Could not see her return to it, nor find her on it again after we had flushed her. A kingbird's nest with four eggs on a large horizontal stern or trunk of a black willow, four feet high, over the edge of the river, amid small shoots from the willow; outside of mikania, roots, and knotty sedge, well lined with rootfibres and wiry weeds. *Viburnum dentatum*, apparently not long, say two days, and carrion-flower the same.

Looked at the peewee's [Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia*] nest which C. found yesterday. It was very difficult to find again in the broad open meadow; no nest but a mere hollow in the dead cranberry leaves, the grass and stubble ruins, under a little alder. The old bird went off at last from under us; low in the grass at first and with wings up, making a worried sound which attracted other birds. I frequently noticed others afterward flying low over the meadow and alighting and uttering this same note of alarm. There [were] only four eggs in this nest yesterday, and to-day, to C.'s surprise, there are the two eggs which he left and a young peewee beside; a gray pinch of down with a black centre to its back, but already so old and precocious that it runs with its long legs swiftly off from squatting beside the two eggs, and hides in the grass. We have some trouble to catch it. How came it here with these eggs, which will not be hatched for some days? C. saw nothing of it yesterday. J. Farmer says that young peewees run at once like partridges and quails, and that they are the only birds he knows that do. These eggs were not addled (I had opened one, C. another). Did this bird come from another nest, or did it belong to an earlier brood? Eggs white, with black spots here and there all over, dim at great end. A cherry-bird's nest and two eggs [Cedar Waxwing *Bombycilla cedrorum*] in an apple tree fourteen feet from ground. One egg, round black spots and a few oblong, about equally but thinly dispersed over the whole, and a dim, internal, purplish tinge about the large end. It is difficult to see anything of the bird, for she steals away early, and you may neither see nor hear anything of her while examining the nest, and so think it deserted. Approach very warily and look out for them a dozen or more rods off.

It suddenly began to rain with great violence, and we in haste drew up our boat on the Clamshell shore, upset it, and got under, sitting on the paddles, and so were quite dry while our friends thought we were being wet to our skins. But we had as good a roof as they. It was very pleasant to lie there half an hour close to the edge of the water and see and hear the great drops patter on the river, each making a great bubble; the rain seemed much heavier for it. The swallows at once and numerously began to fly low over the water in the rain, as they had not before, and the toads' spray rang in it. After it began to hold up, the wind veered a little to the east and apparently blew back the rear of the cloud, and blew a second rain somewhat in upon us.

As soon as the rain was over I crawled out, straightened my legs, and stumbled at once upon a little patch of strawberries within a rod, — the sward red with them. These we plucked while the last drops were thinly falling. *Silene antirrhina* out on Clamshell, how long?



Thursday June 14th

[Transcript]

"Upriver," "To Fairhaven," and "To Clamshell" were other common opening phrases. This signified a southward trip up the lakelike Sudbury River, which zigzagged between rocky cliffs and lush meadows. Its current could be detected only at narrows and shallows. Parallel lines of sweet-scented lily pads, aquatic flowers rooted in shoreline mud, and buttonbush swamps flanked the river for much of its length. With a breeze from the north or east, he would usually sail. Otherwise he would row.

— [Professor Robert M. Thorson](#), THE BOATMAN, page 11

Up river— See young redwings—like

17 grizzly black vultures—they are still so bald—

18 See many empty redwing nests now amid



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19 the Cornus sericea. The blue-birds nest high

20 in the black willow at sassafras shore has

21 5 eggs. The gold robins nest which I could

22 pull down within reach just beyond has 3

23 eggs. I have one. I told C [[Ellery Channing](#)] to look into

24 in old mortice hole in Wood's bridge

25 for a white bellied swallow's nest—as

26 we were paddling under—but he

27 laughed incredulous—I insisted—& when

28 he climbed up he scared out the bird.—

29 5 eggs— You see the feathers about

30 do you not? yes said he.

31 Kalmiana lily several days. The little

32 galium in meadow say 1 day—A song spar's (?)

33 nest in ditch bank under Clam Shell {"S" written over "s"} of coarse

34 grass lined with pine—& 5 eggs nearly hatched & a

1 peculiar dark end to them—have one or more

2 & the nest. The bird evidently deserted the

3 nest when two eggs had been taken. Could

4 not see her return to it—nor find her

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- 5 on it again—after we had flushed
- 6her— A king-birds nest with 4 eggs
- 7 on a large horizontal stem or trunk of
- 8 a black willow 4 feet high over the edge
- 9 of the river—amid small shoots from
- 10 the willow— outside of mikania, roots,
- 11 & knotty sedge—well lined with root fibres
- 12& wiry weeds. Vib. dentatum ap not long—say
- 132 days & carrion flower the same.
- 14 Looked at the Pewee's nest which
- 15 C. [[Ellery Channing](#)] found yesterday. It was very difficult
- 16 to find again in the broad open meadow—no
- 17 nest but a mere hollow in the dead cranberry
- 18 leaves the grass & stubble ruins—under
- 19 a little alder. The old bird went off at last
- 20 from under us—low in the grass at first
- 21 & with wings up making a worried sound
- 22 which attracted other birds. I frequently
- 23 noticed others afterward flying low over the
- 24 meadow—& alighting & uttering this same note

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25 of alarm. There only 4 eggs in this nest

26 yesterday & today to C's surprise—there

27 are the 2 eggs which he left & a young

28 pewee beside—a grey pinch of down

29 with a black centre to its back—but

30 already so old and precocious that

31 it runs with its long legs swiftly off

32 from squatting beside the 2 eggs &


33 hides in the grass— We have some

1 trouble to catch it. How came it here

2 with these eggs—which will not be hatched

3 for some days—C. saw nothing of

4 it yesterday. J Farmer{"F" written over "f"} says that young

5 peewees [**Spotted Sandpiper**  *Actitis macularia*] run at once like partridges &

6 quails & that they are the only birds

7 he knows that do. These eggs were

9 not addled (I [[^]had] opened one C another) Did

10 this bird come from another nest—or did

11 it belong to an earlier brood.

13 A cherry birds nest & 2 eggs [**Cedar Waxwing**  *Bombycilla cedrorum*] [in pencil: “^v 16”] in an apple

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15 2 tree 14 feet from ground—eggs [^of Peetweet] White with

16 black spots here & there all over & some dim at

17 1 great end

18 1 egg round black spots & a few oblong

19 about equally about equally but thinly

20 dispersed over the whole—& a dim internal

21 purplish tinge about the large end. It

22 is difficult to see any thing of the bird—for

23 she steals away early—& you may neither

24 see nor hear anything of her while examining

25 the nest—& so think it deserted— Approach

26 very warily & look out for them a dozen

27 or more rods off.

28 It suddenly began to rain with great vio²⁹

lence—& we in haste drew up our boat

30 on the Clamshell shore upset it & got

32 under sitting on the paddles—& so were [^quite] dry

33 while our friends thought we were being

34 wet to our skins. But we had as good

35 a roof as they— It was very pleasant

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36 to be there a half an hour close to

38 the edge of the water & see [^& hear] the great

39 drops patter on the river, each making

1 a great bubble—the rain seemed

2 much heavier for it— The swallows

3 at once & numerously began to

4 fly low over the water in the rain—

5 as they had not before—& the toads

6 spray rang on it— After it began to

7 hold up the wind veered a little to the

8 east & ap. blew back the rear of the

9 a 2nd

10 cloud & blew the rain somewhat in upon us—

11 As soon as the rain was over I

12 crawled out—straightened my legs—&

13 stumbled at once upon a little patch

14 of strawberries within a rod—the sward

15 red with them. These {"These" altered from "Then"} we plucked while

16 the last drops were thinly falling.

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17 Silena antirrhina out on Clam Shell how long?

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June 15, Friday: Friend [William Henry Harvey](#) departed from Sydney, [Australia](#) on his way to New Zealand, the Friendly Islands, Tonga, and the Fiji Islands.¹¹⁰

Stamp duty was removed from British newspapers, resulting in the creation of mass media in the United Kingdom.

The hilly peninsula upon which Boston had been being created had been bordered by shallows which, when filled, in and of themselves had over the years more than double the relatively level area available for construction:

- Mill Pond or North Cove had been filled over a period of 25 years.
- South Cove had been filled over a period of almost 40 years.
- Town or East Cove had been filled over a period of almost 50 years.
- West Cove had been filled over a period of 60 years.



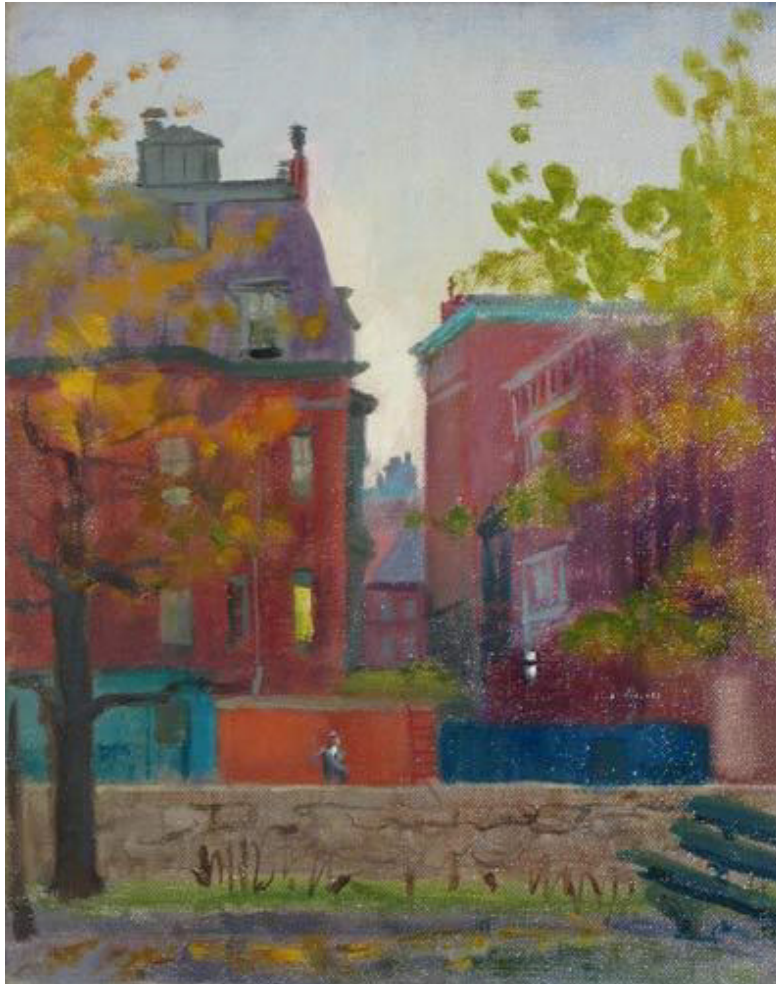
At this point the ready availability of immigrant labor, its destitution, made possible an enormous [Back Bay](#) fill project, the largest earth-altering operation ever attempted in America, almost as much as all these other projects combined: 600 acres requiring 47 years. This biggie would be complete in 1894 after transport of fill materials (over and above trash tipping of course) costing the city more than \$1,600,000 even at these immigrant bargain desperation rates of pay.

110. On Fiji he was amused to learn that the title of his guide, "Koroe," as an honorific, was awarded to those who had killed at least five times.

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It would be many, many years before the Back Bay of Boston began to look like this:



In addition there would be some 250 acres filled on Dorchester Neck in South Boston, at Commonwealth Flats, and in East Boston at what had been Noddle's and Breed's Islands.

By these fill operations which also functioned as a convenient means of municipal trash disposal, and by annexation of the neighboring towns –Dorchester Neck in 1804, Washington Village in 1855, Roxbury in 1868, Dorchester in 1870, Charleston in 1874, Brighton in 1874, West Roxbury in 1874, and Hyde Park in 1912– Boston would be growing to more than 38 times its original colonial extent.

The work of filling in Boston's Back Bay was of course officially and ceremonially begun by a group of officials who had never so much as hefted a shovel in their lives, and would presumably never touch one again. (Some things never change.) A 10-mile railroad was being constructed to convey the earth of Needham Heights to the area which would become Back Bay Station.¹¹¹ Swamp no more!

111. The Back Bay district would not be completely covered with structures as now, until about the year 1910.

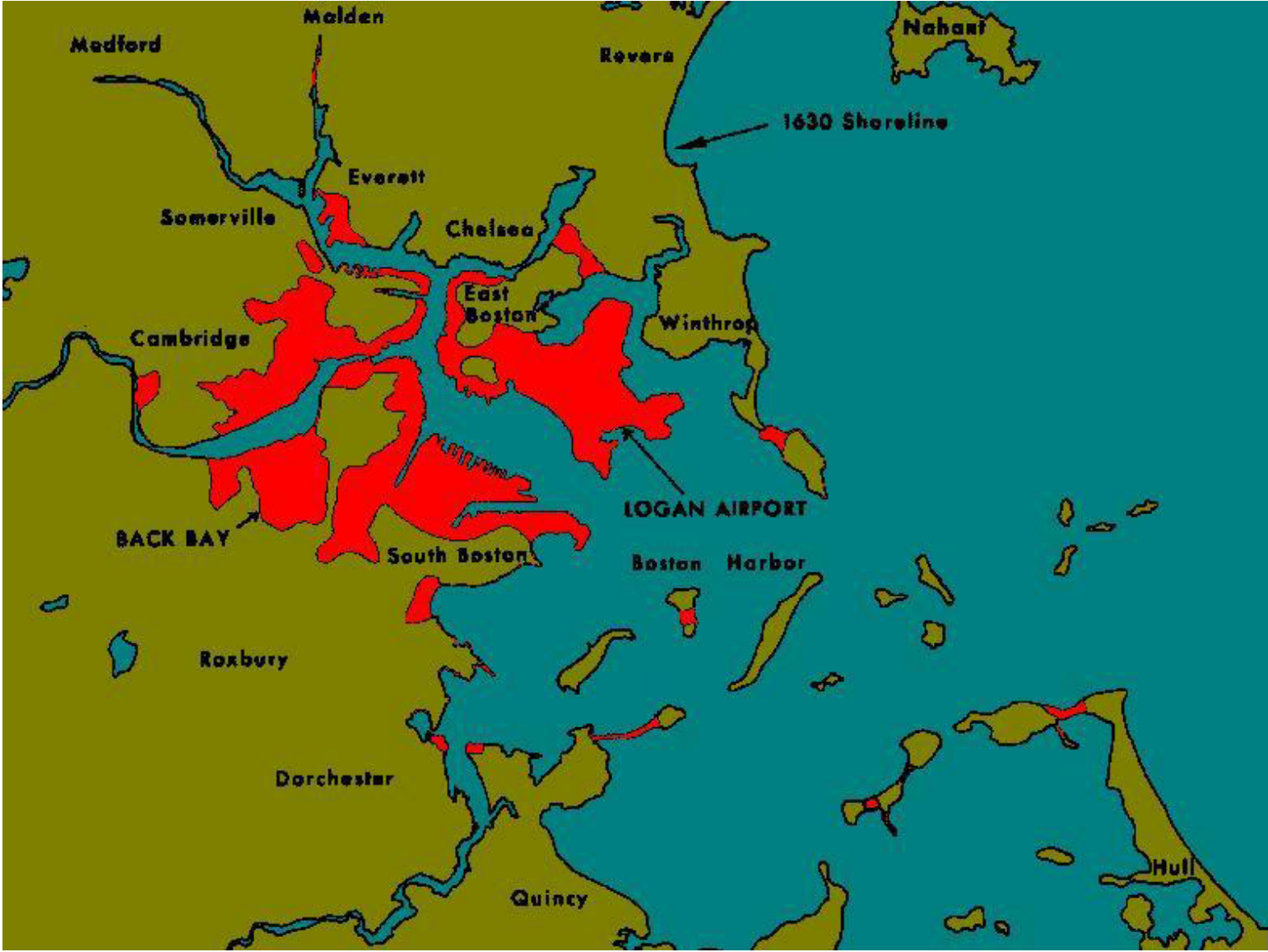
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WHAT?

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PROVENANCE



GOD IN CONCORD by Jane Langton © 1992

13

*The twelve labors of Hercules were trifling in comparison with those which my neighbors have undertaken. . . .
Walden, "Economy"*

Viking Penguin **Penguin Books USA Inc.**

Julian Snow's two-week vacation was over. He was back at work at the landfill next to Pond View. His boss at Public

ISBN 0-670-84260-5 — PS3562.A515G58



Friday June 15th '55

[Transcript]

To Moore's Swamp. Robin's nest in apple tree 12 feet high—young nearly grown—Hair birds nest on main limb of an appletree—horizontal 10 feet high. Many polly-wogs an inch long.

In the swamp—a catbird's nest in the darkest & thickest part in a high blueberry. 5 feet from ground—2 eggs—bird comes within 3 feet while I am looking.

Viburnum nudum how long? not long.

Wool(?) grass X

I see a strange warbler still in this swamp
A chestnut & grey backed bird 5 or 6 inches long with a black throat & yellow crown—note—chit chit chill le le—
(or) chut chut a wutter chut a wut—
che che


Crimson frosting on maple leaves.

The swamp pyrus twigs are in some places curving over & swollen—& curling up at ends forming bunches of leaves.

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 June 16, Saturday: William Walker and his mercenaries arrived at Realejo, Nicaragua. They were greeted by Liberal leader Francisco Castellón who lofted Walker to the rank of colonel.



Saturday June 16th

[Transcript]

The cherry birds egg was a oatin color or very pale slate—with an internal or what would be called black-& blue ring about large end.

Pm to Hub's Grove on River—
 a Sparrow's nest with 4 grey eggs in bank beyond ivy tree—~~Have one or more for she deserted them~~
~~—nest low in ground.~~ 4 cat-birds half fledged in the green-briar near bathing place—hung 3 feet from ground. Grape ap X


Examined a kingbirds nest found before [¹³th ult] in a black willow over edge of river— 4 feet from ground 2 eggs. W. of oak in Hubb's meadow— Catbird's nest in an alder 3 feet from ground—3 fresh eggs.

See young & weak striped squirrels now a days with slender tails—a sleep in horizontal boughs above their holes—or moving feebly about— Might catch them. Red starts in the swamp there— Also see there a blue-yellow-green backed warbler, with an orange breast & throat—white belly & vent—& forked tail—indigo blue head &c.

Ground nut how long?

A painted tortoise just burying 3 flesh colored eggs in the dry sandy plain—near the thresher's nest—It leaves no trace in the surface—~~f~~[^F]ind near by 4 more—about this business—When seen they stop stock still in whatever position & stir not nor make any noise—just as their shells may happen to be tilted up—

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 June 17, Sunday: The French/British bombarded [Sebastopol](#) in the [Crimea](#) during this entire day, killing more than 2,000. Russian General Todleben was wounded during this bombardment and would not be available for the remainder of the war. Per plan, there was to be an hour's bombardment the following day, followed immediately by an infantry assault.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JUNE 17th]

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June 18, Monday: The [St Mary's Falls ship canal](#) opened at the Soo (Sault Ste Marie), in northern Michigan, connecting lakes Michigan and Superior. The schooner *Illinois* became the initial ship through the Soo.

Thoreau made careful closeup observations as a painted turtle laid her eggs.

On a date signifying Anglo-French solidarity, the 40th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, after an hour's bombardment the British and French forces launched a general assault on the [Russian](#) defenders of [Sebastopol](#) in the [Crimea](#). The offensive was bungled by allied military leaders and ended in retreat.

The 1st locks of the Sault Ste. Marie canal opened creating a navigable link between Lake Superior and lake Huron. This rendered the Great Lakes completely navigable.



June 18th to Hemlocks—

[Transcript]

Sparganium. A yellow-bird feigns broken wings— Wood cock—

At 3 p.m. as I walked up the bank by the hemlocks I saw a painted tortoise just beginning its hole— Then another a dozen rods from the river on the bare barren field near some pitch pines—where the earth was covered with a ~~thin soil~~ [^{^mixed} covered with] cladonias cinquefoil—sorrel &c— Its hole was about 2/3 done. I stooped down over it, and to my surprise after a slight pause it proceeded in its work, {T used “—” to form “,”} directly under & within 18 inches of my face.

I retained a constrained position for 3/4 of an hour or more for fear of alarming it. It rested on its fore legs, the front part of its shell about one inch higher than the rear, & this position was not changed, essentially to the last. The hole was oval broadest behind, about 1 inch wide & 1 3/4 long, and the dirt already removed was quite wet or moistened. It [^{^made the hole &}] removed the dirt with its hind legs only, not using its tail or shell,—which last of course could not enter the hole—though there was some dirt on it. It first scratched 2 or 3 times with one hind foot; then took up a pinch of the loose sand & deposited it directly behind that leg—pushing it back ward to its full length & then deliberately opening it—& letting the dirt fall. Then the same with the other hind foot. This it did rapidly using each leg alternately with perfect regularity, standing on the other one the while, & thus tilting up its shell each time now to this side then to that. There was half a minute or a minute between each change.

The hole was made as deep as the feet could reach, or about 2 inches. It was very neat about its work, not scattering the dirt about any more than was necessary. The completing of the hole occupied perhaps 5 minutes.— {Thoreau marked the following as a new paragraph} It then without any pause drew its head completely into its shell, raised the rear a little, and protruded & dropt

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a wet flesh colored egg into the hole, one end foremost—the red skin of its body being considerably protruded with it. Then it put out its head again a little slowly—& ~~while~~ it place the egg a one side with one [[^]hind] foot. After a delay of about 2 minutes it again drew in its head & dropt another, & so on to the 5th—drawing in its head each time. & pausing somewhat longer between the last. The eggs were placed in the hole without any particular care—only well down flat {“f” of “flat” written over “?”} & out of the way of the next, & I could plainly see them from above.

After these 10 minutes or more, it with-out pause or turning began to scrape the [[^]moist] earth into the hole with its hind legs and when it had half filled it it carefully pressed it down with the edges of its hind feet dancing on them alternately, for some time, as on its knees—tilting from side to side, pressing by the whole weight of the rear of its shell. When it had drawn in thus all the earth that had been moistened, it stretched its hind legs further back & to each side, & drew in the dry & lichen-clad crust, and then danced upon & pressed that down, still not moving the rear of its shell more than one inch to right or left all the while, or changing the position of the forward part at all. The thoroughness with which the covering was done was remarkable— It persevered in drawing in & dancing on the dry surface which had never been disturbed long after you thought it had done its duty—but it never moved its fore-feet nor once looked round—nor saw the eggs it had laid. There were frequent pauses throughout the whole—when it rested, or ran out its head & looked about circumspectly, at any noise or motion— These pauses were especially long during the covering of its eggs—which occupied more than half an hour— Perhaps it was hard work.

When it had done it immediately started for the river at a pretty rapid rate (The suddenness with which it made these transitions was amusing), pausing from time to time & I judged that it would reach it in 15 minutes. It was not easy to detect that the ground had been disturbed there— An Indian could not have made his caché more skillfully. In a few minutes all traces of it would be lost to the eye

The object of moistening the earth was perhaps to enable it to take it up in its hands (?) & also to prevent its falling back into the hole. Perhaps it also helped to make the ground more compact & harder

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when it was pressed down. v. Sep 10th

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

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 June 19, Tuesday: The Daily Alta of San Francisco, California provided its readers with a column by a “lady correspondent” in New York City, datelined May 20th:

The Quakers and the anniversaries are here, and it is the month of the Virgin Mary.

All around me rise the spires and crosses of Catholic churches, and their bells daily ring in the devout to vespers. The Holy Church calls the thoughts of “lord and peasant, of laborer and merchant, for a few short moments from the cares of this world to the repose of the next.”

We do not see the Quakers in this region; East Broadway and its purlieus is the Quaker quarter. How is it that the Quakers, denying ceremony, present to us in dress and manner a type of rigid form?

The anniversaries have gone on, for all Horace Greely is in Europe, especially the strong-minded female anniversary. Horatious has in common with the New Englanders, an innate fondness for platforms, debates, and “organizations.” One always meets him at all sorts of out and out meetings. He looks very well, as I have seen him, seated amid the strong-minded, his golden hair, (poetic for towey,) gleaming in delicate contrast with the pipe-stem ringlets of Mrs. Nichols, and the brown knobs of Miss Lucy Stone. By the way, Miss Lucy Stone has recently married a Mr. Blackwell, brother of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, and Miss Blackwell, the translator of George Sand’s “Jacques,” homely and honorable women all.

Miss Lucy Stone and Mr. Blackwell made a public protest against marriage, and took sundry precautions, one against the other, by contract beforehand. The *Evening Post* says that the unusual precautions they took not to be cheated in the bargain, doubtless had their origin in an acquaintance with each others character and propensities, which the public does not possess. Dry old *Post*!

I think a miserable egotism was at the bottom of the whole affair, a desire to gain notoriety. Or was the habit of virtue more powerful than their adopted beliefs? They have proved neither high-souled to each other, nor courageous before the world.

George Sand, a true prophet of what a woman can be, has lived consistently with her theory. Her religion and her philosophy are of the heart. Her senses have led her astray, but only to give her a truer knowledge, however sad, of the benevolence to be exercised toward the



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frailties of human nature. When Chopin, the musician, ceased to be her lover, and she his mistress, they remained friends, and from their position, certain duties belonged to him which she nobly fulfilled. But long life to Mr. Blackwell.

I wear a portrait of Miss Lucy Stone on my imagination. I saw her first at a rail-way depot; she was conversing with a number of colored gentlemen. Dirty white woolen stockings characterized her feet, and a shabby straw bonnet her head. Mousseline de laine pantalettes were an obvious part of her costume; she wielded an immense cotton umbrella; either that, or Miss Lucy had a damp, mouldy smell. She was accompanied by a tall delicate woman with a razor like mouth, who owned a husband that appeared to be utterly extinguished; but he paid the fare, and had just strength enough to carry the carpet bag.

I am sorry to notice the death of Mrs. Asanath Nicholson, a right-minded as well as strong minded woman. She traveled in Ireland during the famine, and her letters and appeals to the people of this country through Mr. Greeley, and other editors, were instrumental in procuring large supplies of food, some of which she distributed herself. Mrs. Nicholson wrote much for newspapers and magazines. She had commenced her own memoirs, which will doubtless be published.

Strawberries have arrived, judging by their looks from very distant parts. Weller obligingly tied to the handle of his door a card inscribed "Strawberries and Cream." Unwary persons enter, and behold on plates minute piles of pale berries in the last stages of exhaustion; to be eaten at the rate of two cents apiece; the cream is not visible! The unwary order Vanilles, and smother their disappointment in them.

The weather has fallen upon us, a fiery dragon. Nobody is prepared for it. Four days ago we were swathed in our flannel waistcoats, and fires were burning on our hearths.

The trees are now hurrying up their leaves and blossoms, being altogether behind in their millinery and mantau making. Madame Peach, I see is beginning to look coquettish in her pink robe; and old Captain Pear, in the next yard, is struggling into a white coat. I put my nose out of doors, and in spite of the stony, dirty streets, I detect the pleasant odor of the rejuvenating earth.

Opposite my window is Phalen's garden, and although I see little beside low-roofed hot houses and shanties, I know that beautiful flowers are there. Troops of ladies visit Phalen's to buy little pots of Verbenas, Fuschias and Heliotropes, to decorate their windows or garden plats.

I fancy the souls of little children might live in flowers. Now if I could transfer to this column of the *Alta* a certain violet that is blooming near me, would'nt it refresh your commercial, ledgery minds? Would'nt you



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think of some little, blue-eyed girl, that sleeps in the country church-yard of your native village? Charles Sumner's lecture at Niblo's, "The Anti-Slavery Enterprise," made a sensation. In his blue dress coat and gilt buttons, did he talk for two hours and a half to willing listeners.

New England grows our best orators and speechmakers. The howling tempests of the east wind, thorough sea that forever falls on noisy rocky shores, the resonant pine forests that sentinel our hills, attune the soul to earnestness, and men grow up in the habit of eloquence. The hardness and glitter of New England's granite soil are in Edward Everett's orations, and other peculiarities of configuration and climate may be found in those of Webster and Choate.

We have another poem from Florence, by an American resident there, Mrs. Kinney, wife of the Sardinian charge. I do not know whether Read praised Mrs. Kinney's poem before it was published, I know Mrs. Kinney praised Read's in her letters to the Newark Advertiser. The enterprising egotism of the Americans, possibly has established a "Mutual Admiration Society," which in force may rival the one established long since in the "Athens of America" by the Literati. Mrs. Kinney's "Felicita, a Metrical Romance," is less a poem than Read's "New Pastoral;" for in that is something in the way of landscape painting, and we know that Read has been, or can be a poet. The classic air of Florence, perhaps, leaves no poetic suggestions in the mind. Naples, travellers say, so fills and satisfies the imagination, that there is no room for mental activity, or aspiration. One of the Misses Warner (there are two, the eldest the author of the "Wide, Wide World," the youngest the author of "Dollars and Cents," has just published a new evangelical novel, "My Brother's Keeper." It is very pious, for it pushes the idea of watching and praying for our friends, not into the ground exactly, but 'tother way, to an alarming extent. According to Miss Warner, goodly young ladies have nothing to do in this world but to be their brothers' keepers. The Warners have talent, and write well in certain directions. A personal inspection of them would convince you that their line of writing is limited. I have seen them at literary parties, and they even took their coffee and nibbled their biscuits with a self-righteous air, most exasperating to behold. The authoress of the "Wide, Wide World," is exceedingly lank and tall, a *la Giraffe* in style, the "Long, Long World" would have been a more appropriate title. Derby advertises a volume by Henry Ward Beecher, "The Star Papers." It is to consist of the Rev. gentleman's contributions to "The Independent," a weekly paper, edited by a batch of clergymen, and devoted to God and Mammon. Talking of Beecher, reminds me that the authoress of "Uncle Tom" has lately re issued a volume of early sketches, "The Mayflower." Plutarch, or some

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other "literary cove," tells us of an old lady whose son took a prize at the Olympic games. In the heat of her motherly rejoicing, she advised her son to die while he was a victor, lest he should try to win some future prize and fail. So with Mrs. Stowe. I wouldn't really advise her to die, (for she mightn't be quite prepared, notwithstanding her husband is a minister,) but I would advise her to rest on the laurels of "Uncle Tom." The Appletons have published "Kenneth" and "The Two Guardians," a couple of pretty books, by a Miss or Mrs. Yonge, the author of "The Heir of Redelyffe," and "Heart's Ease," a new and shining light, just rising in England.' But the book of books so far is Hue's "Travels in China." M. Huc is a French Catholic Missionary, who has spent many years in the Celestial Empire. We first heard of him this side of the water in 1852, when the Appletons republished a translation of his "Recollections of a Journey through Tartary and Thibet" This journey was performed in 1844, '45, and '46. It was suddenly brought to a close by the Chinese government arresting M. Huc and sending him back through China. The journey back is the subject of the last book. It is written with much quaint humor, and gives us a good insight of Chinese insincerities. Had M. Huc been a native he could not have seen or known more of the Tsing-jin race. The book is crammed with information of all sorts, and is vastly amusing. For my own part, I like the Thibet book the most. It is full of queer pictures, and reminds you of the old chroniclers. You Californians must catch some glimpses of Chinese life in ordinary, and I should think these books which contain so much information of the Chinese institutions would please you. Apropos of Chinese matters. Two young authors belonging to my coterie have been writing real Chinese stories; they are excellent. I shall not say how much they stole, as thievery is Chinese. You will see "The Silken Chord" in "Graham's," for June, and the other, "The Dragon's Fang," in some future number of Harper's.

I wish I had something astounding to write about theatricals, but theatricals are growing grey. The old managers, Burton and Wallack, do themselves over and over again. Some new things are brought out at Burton's, ephemerals though; the last was a farce called "Take that Girl away." Forrest is the gem of the Broadway. Davenport and Fanny Vining are now playing an engagement there, but do not have as full houses as they separately deserve. Hackett has reopened the dead Metropolitan, with Falstaff. He plays a gentleman Falstaff, rather savoring of cotton wool; quite different from the unctuous Falstaff of Burton.

You will see that the *Grapeshot* found Baker, Poole's murderer, and that Napoleon has been shot at on the Boulevards. Eugenie cried about the latter. Wasn't that pretty in her? The Crimean affairs assume more and more the appearance of the greatest disaster of the age.



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Yours, E.D.B.



Tuesday June 19th 55

[Transcript]

Pm. up Assabet—
 A Pewee's nest (bird ap small Pewee—nest ap wood Pewee's) on a white maples nearly horizontal bough 18 feet above water op. Hemlocks—externally of lichens [^& hemlock (?) twigs] from the maple trunk—Very inconspicuous—like lichen covered knot. [^empty on July 25th] I hear many wood pewees about here—
 Young song sparrows flutter about.
 A yellow-bird's nest [^saddled] on a horizontal [^or slanting down amid twigs] branch of a swamp White oak within reach—6 feet high—of fern down & lint—a sharp cone bottom—4 eggs just laid—pale flesh color with brown spots—have one.
 There are a great many glaucous & also hoary & yellowish green puffs on the andromea paniculata now—some 4 inch in diameter. Wood tortoises united with heads out of water—
 Did I enumerate the sharp shinned hawk among ? ours?
 Mr Bull found in his garden this morning a snapping turtle about 20 rods from the brook—which had there just made a round hole (ap with head) 2 1/2 inches in diameter & 5 x deep in a slanting direction. I brought her {this word written over "him"} home & put her {this word written over "him"} into a pen in the garden that she might lay—(she weighed 7 lbs 5 oz.) but she climbed over an upright fence of smooth stakes 22 inches high.

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THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



June 20, Wednesday: Commissioners were appointed to lay out new streets for San Francisco, California west of Larkin street.

"I have been sick and good for nothing but to lie on my back and wait for something to turn up, for two or three months."




June 20

[Transcript]


A catbird's nest 8 ft high on a pitch pine in Emerson's Heater Piece—partly of paper— A Summer yel— bird's [^saddled] on an apple of cotton wool lined with hair & feathers

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3 eggs white with flesh colored tinge.
 & purplish brown & black spots. 2 hair birds
 nests 15 feet high on apple trees at R.W.E's
 (one with 2 eggs.) A robin's nest with young [American Robin  *Turdus migratorius*]
 which was lately in the great wind blown
 down & somehow lodged on the lower part
 of an evergreen by arbor—without spilling
 the young!

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 June 21, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) surveyed a 2-acre woodlot above Flints Pond in Lincoln for Augustus Tuttle (showing location of land of Cyrus Smith, Nancy Smith, and Asa White).



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

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

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

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

http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_surveys/132a.htm



June 21st

Saw a white lily XXX in Everett's Pond.
 Sparrow's nest 4 eggs [^deep] in the moist bank
 beyond cherry birds nest (have 3) of peculiar
 color—she deserted the nest after one was taken.
 Outside of stubble scantily lined with fibrous
 roots.— Clams abundant within 3
 feet of shore & bream nests— The early

[Transcript]



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grass is ripe or browned & clover is drying—
—Peetweets make quite a noise calling
to their young with alarm.
On an apple at R.W.Es a small
pewee's nest on a horizontal branch
7 feet high—almost wholly of hair—cotton
without—not incurved at edge—4 eggs
pale cream color.

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June 22, Friday: The Daily Alta California of San Francisco reported that Mormon families attempting to emigrate from Utah to California were being so carefully watched by the religious elders of their Salt Lake government that sometimes they were unable to sneak away with their cattle even during the dead of night:

IMMIGRATION AND CATTLE.— The Mountain Democrat, under date of Friday, states that during the past week upwards of two thousand head of cattle, from Salt Lake and Carson Valley, in fine order, passed through Placerville, on their way south. A number of families from Salt Lake, with wagons, also passed through. They represented the road as being free from snow, and in most excellent condition for travelling. Grass was abundant all along the road, and the streams easily fordable. Preparations were being made on a large scale, last winter and spring, by a number of families, to immigrate to California as soon as the weather would permit. Times were dull, money scarce, and labor in no demand when they left Salt Lake. A large number of the "Saints" were dissatisfied and anxious to leave, but the Governor would not permit them, and had them watched closely to prevent their departure after night.



June 22nd

A 6 Pm the temperature of the air 77° at
River one rod from shore 72°. Warmest day yet

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



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June 23, Saturday: In rural Callaway County, Missouri a 19-year old slave, [Celia](#), struck her white owner with a large stick as he attempted to force himself on her in her brick cabin at night. Robert Newsom had told Celia that he intended to visit her that night, and had arrived at around 10PM after his children had gone to bed up in the main house 50 feet away. When he began to make his moves, she grabbed a stick she had secreted in her cabin and struck him over the head. The 1st blow knocked him away and a 2d blow killed him. Knowing that such self-defense was illicit in a slave/slaveowner relationship in the United States of America, land of the brave and home of the free, knowing that this self-defense would if detected provoke the most severe punishment, she attempted to incinerate the evidence in her fireplace, smashing bone fragments with a rock and throwing them back into the fire, and spreading ashes outside. The next morning she would persuade 12-year-old James “JC” Coffee Winscott (a grandson of the victim, son of his older daughter Virginia Robinette Newsom Winscott) to come down out of a cherry tree and help conceal these bone fragments, by promising to feed him two dozen walnuts. This would all prove fruitless since, when Newsom went missing, everybody knew that commonly he would walk down to his slave’s brick cabin at night. The family would be able to find some scorched bone fragments along a path, and collected them in a box. They would also find a buckle, buttons, and a knife which they were able to identify as having belonged to their father. Celia told them what had happened, after the family advised her that unless she did so they had a rope and were going at the very least to separate her from her children, and if necessary to [hang](#) her by the neck until dead (as it was indeed their right to do if they wished, since they owned her and what America is all about is private property).

Newsom’s white wife Elizabeth “Betsy” Gwinn Newsom had died on July 3, 1849. Celia had been purchased in the following year at the age of 14, evidently to use her as a domestic cook. He raped her the 1st time before he had even gotten her home. In the 1850 census Newsom had been listed as owning 800 acres and 5 male slaves. Celia eventually had 2 enslaved children, at least one a mulatto fathered by him. However, in this year Celia had taken the slave George as her lover and he had been pressuring her to end her other sexual relationship, telling her that he “would have nothing more to do with her if she did not quit the old man.” Celia had even asked her owner’s daughters Rebecca Newsom (1814-1891), Susan Newsom (1823-1857), and Mary Lewis Newsom (1835-1915) to intervene, to no avail. After Celia had become pregnant a 3d time, by George or by her owner, on around June 23d, Celia begged her owner to leave her alone because she was ill and because she was pregnant.

Judge William Augustus Hall would instruct the jury of 12 white men that if they believed she killed him, it would not be a defense if they also considered that she had done this to stop him from raping her. Under Missouri law it was a crime “to take any woman unlawfully against her will and by force, menace or duress, compel her to be defiled,” and whatever resistance necessary to prevent this would have been considered justifiable except for the fact of ownership. America is all about private property, and no elected white judge was about to set a legal precedent that there was any limit to what a slaveowner might do with his own human property. She would of course not be allowed to testify, for a number of reasons: in the 1st place, nowhere in America were slaves being allowed to offer testimony, and also, in Missouri, no defendant could ever testify on his or her own behalf. The jury would therefore on October 10th find Celia guilty of 1st-degree murder. While in prison she would deliver a stillborn child. Scheduled to be “hanged by the neck until dead” on November 16th, by that date she had been moved out of jail to an unknown location, possibly because an appeal was still under consideration by the state appeals court. However, on December 14th the appeal was rejected and this rape victim would on December 21st at 2:30PM be [hanged](#) by the neck until dead for the crime of having wrongfully attempted to defend her person from defilement by her owner.



June 23

Prob. a red starts nest? on a white oak sapling 12 feet up on forks against stem—Have it See young red starts about.

[Transcript]

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Hear of flying squirrels [*Glaucomys sabrinus*] now grown.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 June 24, Sunday: [Giacomo Meyerbeer](#) met Charles Dickens for the 1st time, in London.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JUNE 24th]

 June 25, Monday: Before [Richard Wagner](#)'s final concert in London, [Hector Berlioz](#) dined with him. Afterward they retired to Wagner's lodgings and drank together until 3:00AM. This was the 3d time in two weeks that they have been together and they seemed to part great friends, with promises to exchange future scores.


The Great Western Railroad steamboats Canada and America began service between Hamilton, Ontario, and Oswego.



June 25th
 [^Under] E Wood's Barn—A phoebe's nest with 2 birds ready to fly—also barn[^barn]-swallow's nest lined with feathers hemisphere a cone against side of sleeper—5 eggs—delicate as well — White bellied swallows.

[Transcript]

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

 June 26, Tuesday: In the House of Commons Mr. Scholefield "rose to move for a Select Committee to inquire into the adulteration of food, drinks, and drugs. Adulteration had so greatly increased of late years that some inquiry was absolutely necessary; but if fraud had increased so as to outstrip existing legislation, the means of detecting fraud had been still more increased by the knowledge which had been acquired of organic chemistry. A gentleman who had been a Member of that House, Mr. Wakley, to whom the public owed a debt of gratitude, had made some startling disclosures with regard to the adulteration which took place, although in the course of that task he was subjected to various annoyances, and even to threats of personal violence, and some of the details which that gentleman had published were well worthy of attention. He could adduce numerous and startling instances of the adulterations in food, &c., which wore practised, but he would content himself with giving the House a few samples 219 to show the average condition of those adulterations. He found that out



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of thirty-four samples of coffee all were adulterated except three; and in many instances there was really no coffee at all in the compositions. Chicory itself was adulterated very considerably with ground acorns, carrots, horse chestnuts, and stuff mixed with bullocks' liver. Out of fifty-six samples of cocoa eight only were genuine, and 30 per cent of the adulterated cocoas was clay. The adulteration of food, however, was not the worst. After people had been injured by adulterated food they were obliged to have recourse to medicine, but he was sorry to say that the adulteration in drugs was equally great, if not greater; in fact, there was hardly a single article in the materia medica but what had been found to be adulterated. Efforts to arrest the evil in France, America, and Prussia had been successful, and there was no reason why they should not be so in England." There being doubt that such an inquiry could be completed during the present session, a Select Committee was appointed to investigate and consider this disturbing problem of food adulteration.



June 26

[Transcript]

C. [Ellery Channing] has found a Wood pewee's nest on a horizontal limb of a [^small] swamp whit oak 10 feet high with 3 fresh eggs cream colored with spots of 2 shades in a ring about large end— Have nest & an egg.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



June 27, Wednesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) wrote to [H.G.O. Blake](#).

*Concord June 27th
1855
Mr Blake,
I have been sick
and good for nothing
but to lie on my back
and wait for something
to turn up, for two
or three months. This
has compelled me to post-
pone several things,
among them writing to
you [—] to whom I am
so deeply in debt, and
inviting you and Brown
to Concord. — not having
brains adequate to such
an exertion. I should
feel a little less ashamed
if I could give any*

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*name to my disorder,
but I cannot, and our
doctor cannot help*

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*me to it, and I will not
take the name of any
disease in vain. However,
there is one consolation in
being sick, and that is the
possibility that you may
recover to a better state than
you were ever in before.
I expected in the winter to be
deep in the woods of Maine
in my canoe long before this,
but I am so far from
that that I can only take
a languid walk in Concord
streets.
I do not know how the
mistake arose about the
Cape Cod excursion. The
nearest I have come to that
with anybody is this.
About a month ago*

Page 3

*Channing proposed to me
to go to Truro, on Cape Cod,
with him & board there awhile,
but I declined. For a week
past however I have been
a little inclined to go there
& sit on the sea-shore a
week or more, but I do
not venture to propose
myself as the companion
of him or of any peripa-
tetic man. Not that I
should not rejoice to have
you and Brown or C.
sitting there also. I am
not sure that C. really
wishes to go now — and
as I go simply for the
med[i]cine of it, while I need
it, I should not think
it worth the while to
notify him when I am
about to take my bitters.
Since I began this,*



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*or within 5 minutes,
I have begun to think
that I will start for
Truro next [S]aturday morn-
ing—the 30th. I do not
know at what hour
the packet leaves Boston,
nor exactly what kind of
accommodation I shall
find at Truro.
I should be singularly
favored if you and Brown
were there at the same
time, and though you
speak of the 20th of July,
I will be so bold as to
suggest your coming to
Concord Friday night (when,
by the way, Garrison &
Phillips hold forth here)
& going to the Cape with
me. Though we take
short walks together there
we can have long talks,
and you & Brown will*

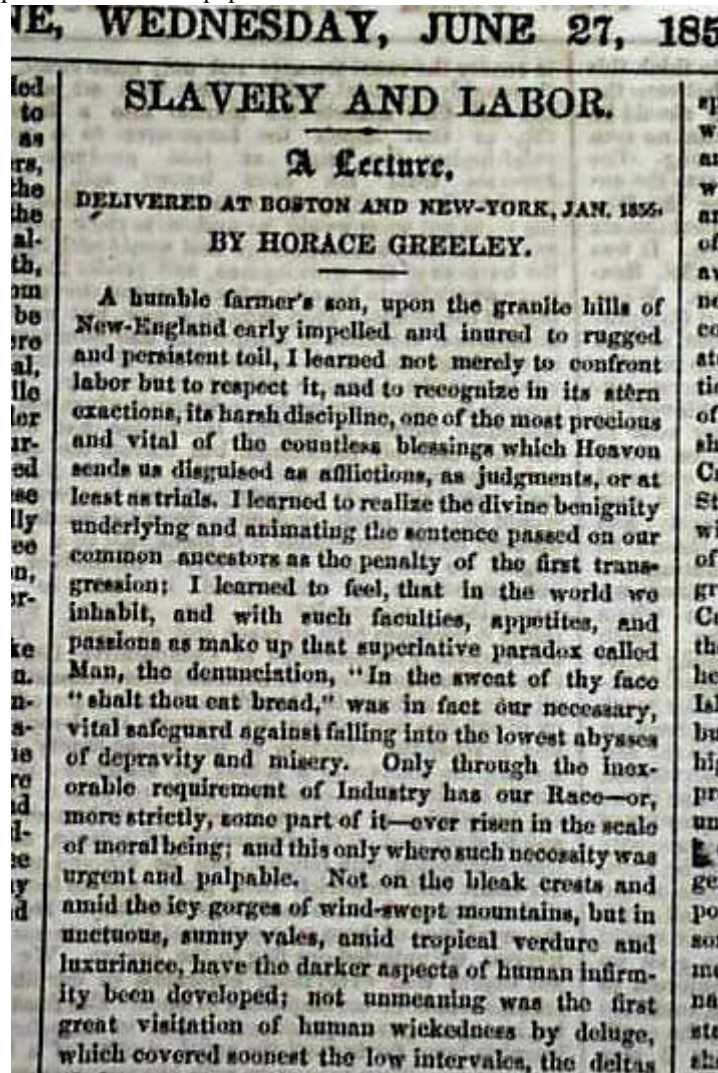
Page 5

*have time enough for your own excursions besides
I received a letter from Cholmondely last
winter, which I should like to show you[]as well
that as his book. He said he had “accepted the
offer of a [C]aptaincy in the Salop Malitia[,”]
and was hoping to take an active part in
the war before long.
I thank you again and again for the en-
couragement your letters are to me. But I
must stop this writing, or I shall have
to pay for it
Yours Truly
H. D. Thoreau*

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1854-1855

The "Slavery and Labor" lecture that [Horace Greeley](#) had been delivering during January, in Boston and in [New-York](#), was printed in his newspaper:



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JUNE 27th]



June 28, Thursday: A [New-York](#) captain named Bell raises the sunken British schooner Bulrush, lost in 1854, off Connecticut's Stonington Point, recovering a cargo of copper ore estimated to be worth \$75,000.



June 28 On River

Two red-wings' nests, four eggs and three — one without any black marks. Hear and see young golden robins which have left the nest, now peeping with a peculiar tone. Shoals of minnows a half-inch long.

1854-1855

1854-1855

Eel-grass washed up.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL



June 29, Friday: The London Daily Telegraph began publication.

The North American mercenaries under William Walker attacked Rivas, Nicaragua. They fought their way into the town and then, finding themselves surrounded, fought their way right back out again. They lost 12 killed and 10 wounded.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JUNE 29th]



June 30, Saturday: Comment on CAPE COD and on WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS under the heading "Putnam's Monthly for July" in the New-York Evening Post 2:2.

The first number of the sixth volume of Putnam has been received, and appears to be one of unusual interest. ... "Cape Cod" is continued, and displays the minuteness of observation and mixture of Yankee shrewdness and German transcendentalism which distinguish the author of "Walden."



June 30. 2 P.M. — Thermometer north side of house, 95°; in river where one foot deep, one rod from shore, 82°.

THE ACTUAL JOURNAL

JULY 1855

Read Henry Thoreau's Journal for July 1855 (æf. 37-38) in the 1906 version



July 1, Sunday: Nachtveilchen op.170, a polka mazur by Johann Baptist Strauss II, was performed for the first time, in Ungers Casino.

A treaty signed by headmen of the Quinault and Quileute tribes ceded their territories to the United States.



[THOREAU MADE NO ENTRY IN HIS JOURNAL FOR JULY 1st]



1854-1855

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July 2, Monday: Frisch auf, zu neuem Leben for male chorus by Franz Liszt to words of Hoffmann von Fallersleben, was performed for the initial time, in Weimar.

When the legislature of the [Kansas Territory](#) met at Pawnee, it refused to seat delegates who had been chosen in the new post-fraud election and began enacting proslavery legislation.



July 2. Young bobolinks are now fluttering over the meadow, but I have not been able to find a nest, so concealed in the meadow-grass.

At 2 P.M. —Thermometer north side of house. 93°

Air over river at Hubbard's Bath 88°

Water six feet from shore and one foot deep 84 1/2 "near surface in middle, where up to neck 83 1/2 °" at bottom in same place, pulling it up quickly 83 1/2

Yet the air on the wet body, there being a strong southwest wind, feels colder than the water.

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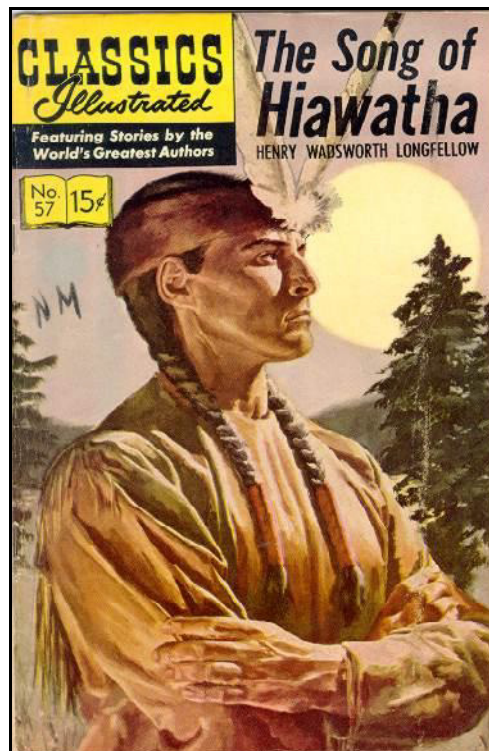


July 3, Tuesday-September 12: The Longfellows were renting “Periwinkle,” the home of Joshua Perry at #58 Perry Street in [Newport, Rhode Island](#) (the structure presently on that lot may or may not have been the one the Longfellows used). At the time [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](#) was whacking away at the printer’s proof sheets of his [THE SONG OF “HIAWATHA”](#):

July 19th: In the revision I have now got to the parts I wrote last summer at Nahant; and I have to change and rewrite a good deal of it. But it is next to impossible to do anything here, with so many people in the house and no school for the children.

July 26th: To-day is very hot. How can I work? If I shut the window blinds, darkness! If I open them – glare! Chamber-maids chattering about – children crying – and everything sticky except Postage stamps, which having stuck all together like a swarm of bees, refuse further duty. Such is the state of affairs this morning at ten o’clock, when having come to my room to work upon “Hiawatha,” ...

August 20th: In great doubt about a canto of Hiawatha, – whether to retain or suppress it. It is odd how confused one’s mind becomes about such matters from long looking at the same subject.



July 3. 4 P.M. — Air out-of-doors generally, 86.

On the sand between rails in the Deep Cut, 103.

Near the surface of Walden, fifteen rods from shore, 80. Three feet below the surface there, and everywhere nearer shore (and probably further from it), 78.

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Our national birthday, Wednesday the 4th of July:¹¹² It was while the Emerson gate was festooned with its usual 4th-of-July black mourning cloth for the slave that [Walt Whitman](#)'s anonymous book LEAVES OF GRASS, hot off the Brooklyn press at the author's expense, arrived in the mail.

In Worcester, Massachusetts, citizens demonstrated against city officials who had refused to fund the usual drunken 4th-of-July event. In Columbus, Ohio there was a parade of firemen, Turners, and other local tough-guy societies, and after awhile this segued into a downtown riot, leaving one corpse and several citizens injured.

CELEBRATING OUR B-DAY

Inspired by the George and Godfrey Frankenstein panorama of [Niagara Falls](#), the poet Corilla rhapsodized the birthday of our nation by a reference to these painters/presenters in a poem ending:

“America, Niagara, Frankenstein—
Three names united in a kindred bond—
Glad freedom's home — her voice of Praise — her mind.”

The poet was equating this name, not at all sarcastically, with the collective mentation of America! (George Frankenstein would later be renowned for his [Civil War](#) scenes while Godfrey Frankenstein's painting “Lagonda Creek” has been described as representing the “Emersonian Transparent Eyeball,” the eye of inner man transcending the ego to view God's nature, in the surrounding landscape, and himself, as one.)



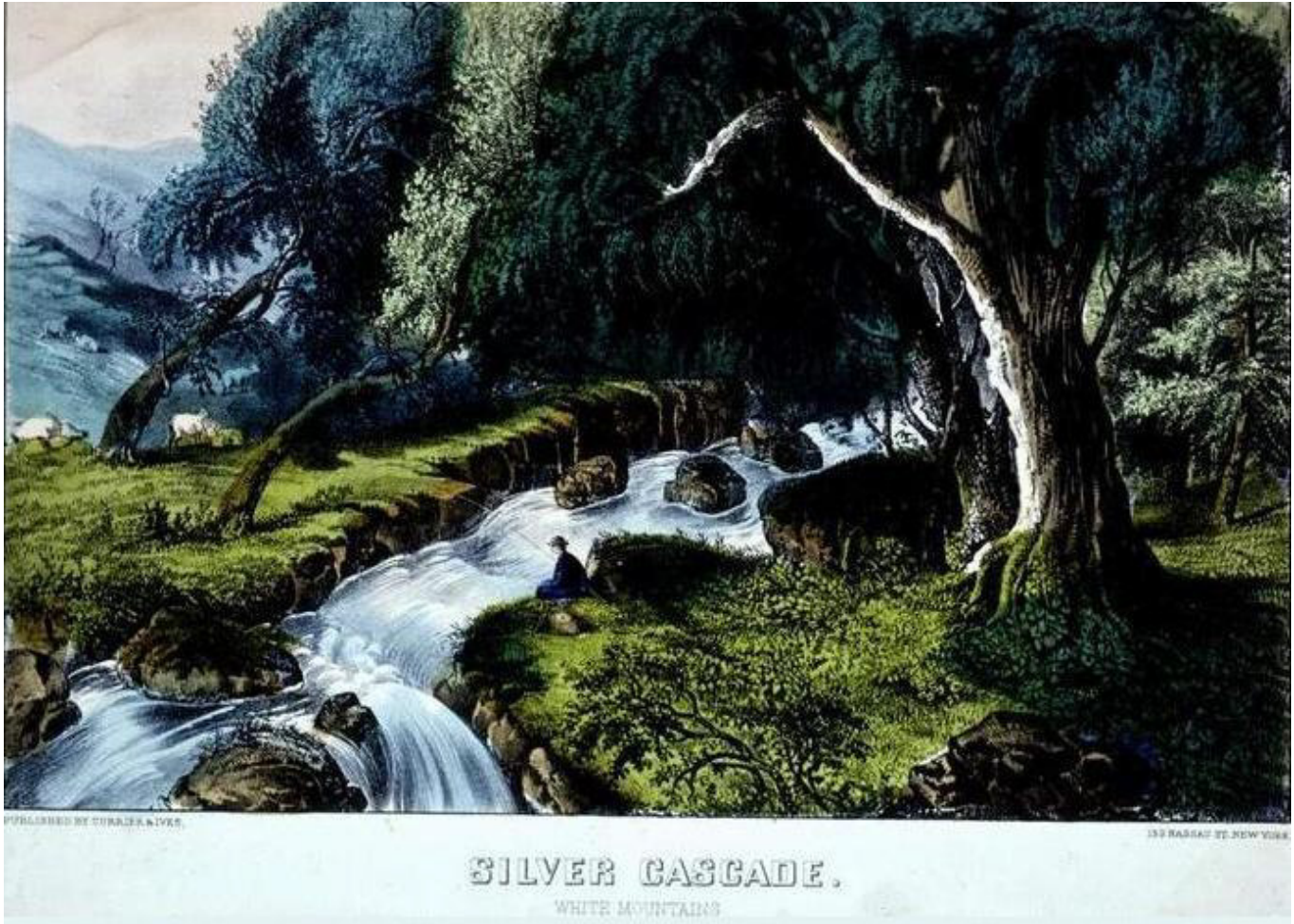
Godfrey enjoyed the romantic setting of the White Mountains of [New Hampshire](#), painting dramatic scenes of the rugged landscape. (Well, lots of people enjoyed the romantic settings of the White Mountains of New Hampshire. In fact, in this year Currier & Ives was issuing a print featuring fishing at “Silver Cascade” in this

112. [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#)'s 51st birthday.



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area.)



Frankenstein Cliff in Crawford Notch was named after Godfrey by Dr. Bemis, who owned land in the area. Dr. Bemis, like Dippel and like the “Victor Frankenstein” of [Mary Godwin Wollstonecraft Shelley](#)’s romance *FRANKENSTEIN; OR, THE MODERN PROMETHEUS*, was fascinated with technology. He invented artificial teeth, developed a new genetic strain of apples, and is credited with taking the very first Daguerreotype landscape images (scenes in the White Mountains). This venue would be remarked upon by [Henry Thoreau](#), [Waldo Emerson](#), Thomas Cole, [Daniel Webster](#), and [Hawthorne](#). For instance, in *SKETCHES FROM MEMORY* Hawthorne would describe the area around Frankenstein Cliff:

A demon it might be fancied or one of the Titans, was traveling up the valley elbowing the heights carelessly aside as he passed, till at length a great mountain took its stand directly across his intended road. He tarries not for such an obstacle but rendering it asunder a thousand feet from peak to base, discloses its treasures of hidden minerals, its guileless water, all the secrets of the mountain’s innermost heart, with a mighty fracture of rugged precipices on each side. This is the Notch of the White Hills.

It is only today that a name such as “Frankenstein” evokes either an image of a monster from a Hollywood makeup lab or an image of the “Mad Scientist” of Hollywood.



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Hoping to promote South Carolina's trade in sea island cotton, [William Elliott](#) was serving as South Carolina's commissioner to the Paris Exposition, and on this day addressed the Imperial Agricultural Society of France (in a letter home from Europe, he wrote of having seen [Queen Victoria](#)'s legs).



[Thoreau](#) saw Frederic Edwin Church's "The Andes of Equador" at the Athenaeum gallery in [Boston](#).



July 4. To Boston on way to Cape Cod with C.
The schooner Melrose was advertised to make her first trip to Provincetown this morning at eight. We reached City (?) Wharf at 8.30. "Well, Captain Crocker, how soon do you start?" "To-morrow morning at 9 o'clock." "But you have advertised to leave at 8 this morning." "I know it, but we are going to lay over till to-morrow."!!! So we had to spend the day in Boston, — at Athenaeum gallery, Alcott's, and at the regatta. Lodged at Alcott's, who is about moving to Walpole.

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 July 5, Thursday-19, Thursday: [Henry Thoreau](#) made the 3d excursion of 4 to [Cape Cod](#), with [Ellery Channing](#) by schooner from Boston to Provincetown and back:

[TIMELINE OF CAPE COD](#)

**Cruikshank
commentary**

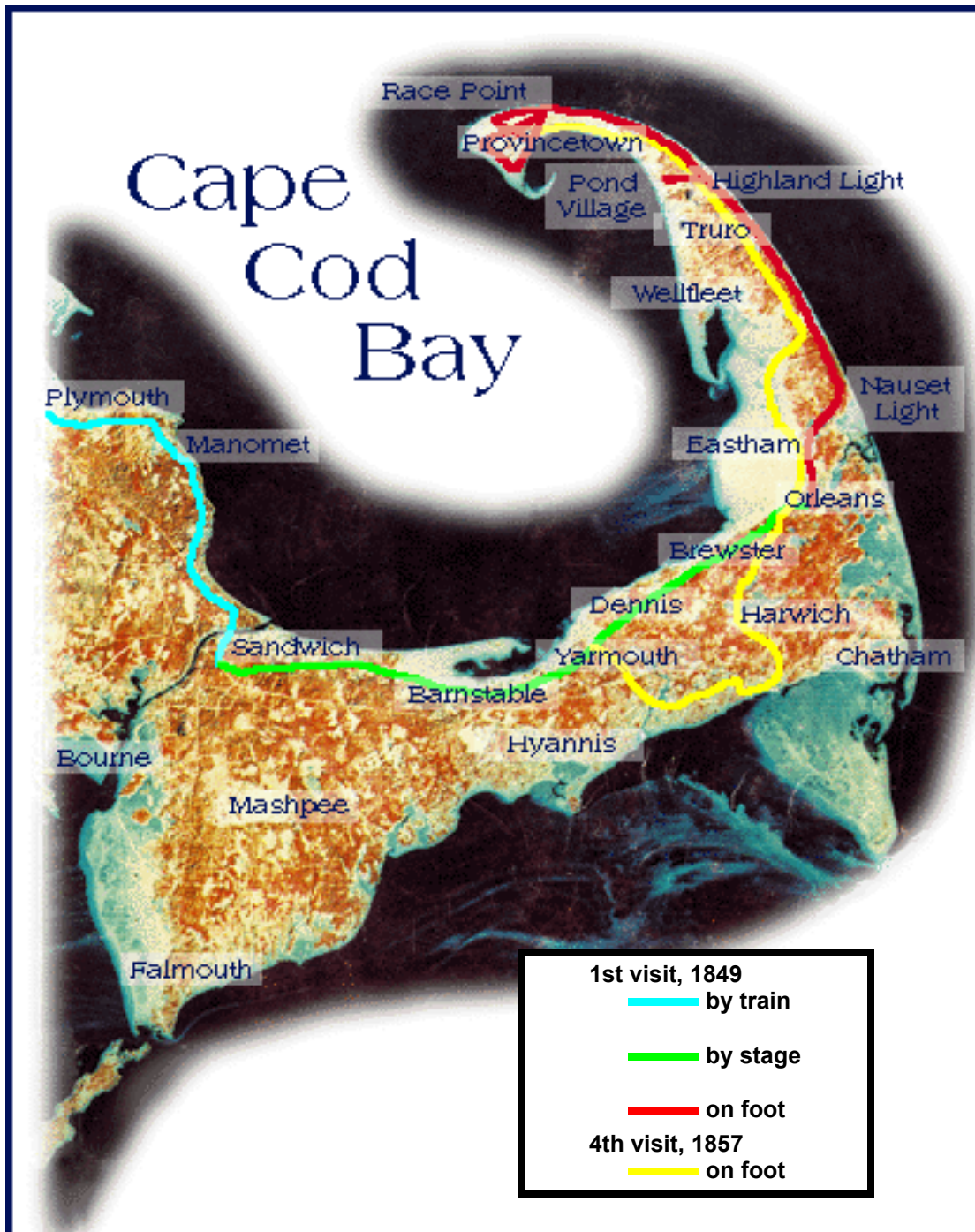
WISHING to get a better view than I had yet had of the ocean, which, we are told, covers more than two-thirds of the globe, but of which a man who lives a few miles inland may never see any trace, more than of another world, I made a visit to Cape Cod in October, 1849, another the succeeding June, and another to Truro in July, 1855; the first and last time with a single companion, the second time alone. I have spent, in all, about three weeks on the Cape; walked from Eastham to Provincetown twice on the Atlantic side, and once on the Bay side also, excepting four or five miles, and crossed the Cape half a dozen times on my way; but, having come so fresh to the sea, I have got but little salted. My readers must expect only so much saltiness as the land-breeze acquires from blowing over an arm of the sea, or is tasted on the windows and on the bark of trees twenty miles inland after September gales. I have been accustomed to make excursions to the ponds within ten miles of Concord, but latterly I have extended my excursions to the sea-shore.

**Ross/Adams
commentary**

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THOREAU'S 3D VISIT TO CAPE COD



Jacques Offenbach rented the Théâtre Marigny on the Champs Elysées to put on a program of comedy sketches by a group under the title Bouffes-Parisiens. Performed for the first time were Offenbach's: Entrez, messieurs, mesdames to words of Mery and Halévy (under the pseudonym Servières), Les deux

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aveugles, a bouffonerie musicale to words of Moinaux, Une nuit blanche, an opéra-comique to words of Plouvier, and the ballet Arlequin barbier to a scenario by Placet after Rossini. They were very successful through the Paris Exhibition.



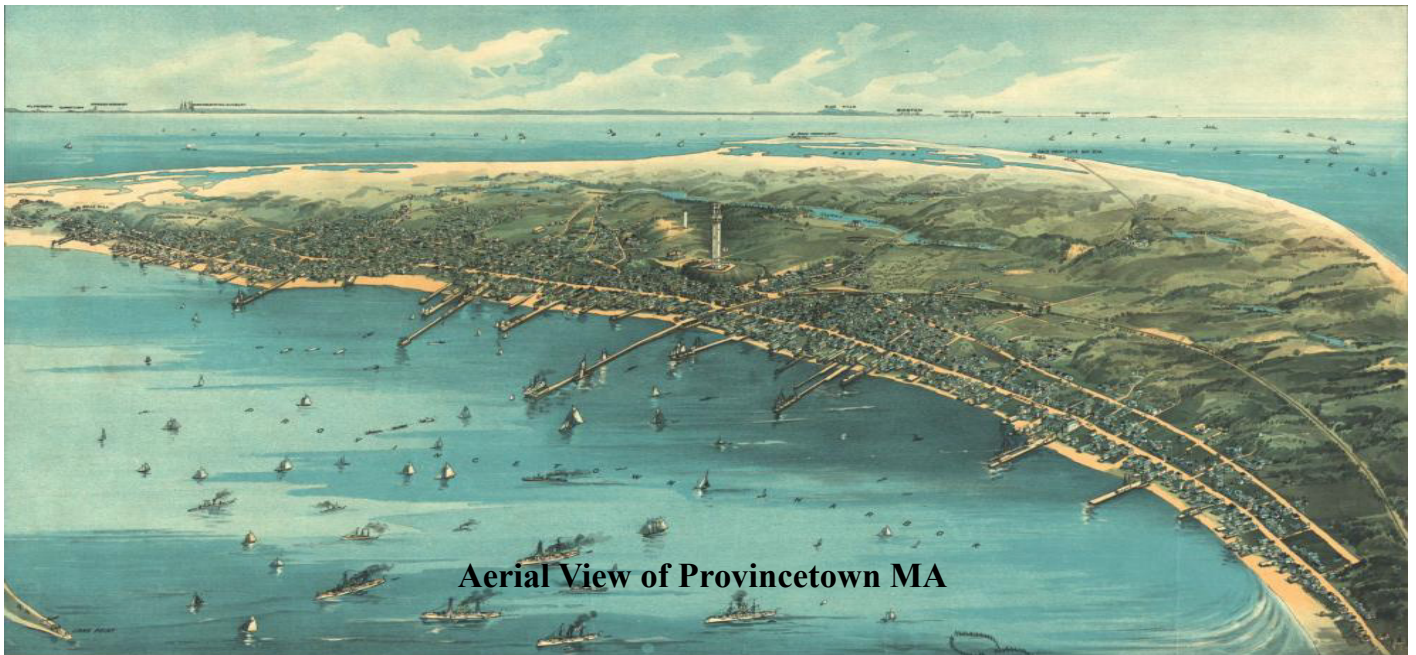
July 5. In middle of the forenoon sailed in the Melrose. We hugged the Scituate shore as long as possible on account of wind. The great tupelo on the edge of Scituate is very conspicuous for many miles about Minot's Rock. Scared up a flock of young ducks on the Bay, which have been bred hereabouts. Saw the Petrel. Went to Gifford's Union House (the old Tailor's Inn) in Provincetown. They have built a town-house since I was here — the first object seen in making the port. Talked with Nahum Haynes, who is making fisherman's boots there. He came into the tavern in the evening. I did not know him — only that he was a Haynes. He remembered two mud turtles caught in a seine with shad on the Sudbury meadows forty years ago, which would weigh a hundred pounds each.

Asked me, "Who was that man that used to live next to Bull's, — acted as if he were crazy or out?"

Talked with a man who has the largest patch of cranberries here, — ten acres, — and there are fifteen or twenty acres in all.

The fishermen sell lobsters fresh for two cents apiece

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Aerial View of Provincetown MA

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July 6, Friday: The legislature of the [Kansas Territory](#) removed to the [Shawnee Methodist Mission](#). Its session would enact "Bogus Laws" based primarily on Missouri code, protecting human enslavement in the course of creating governmental structure.

THE 2D GREAT AMERICAN DISUNION

[William Cooper Nell](#) registered the following in [William Lloyd Garrison's The Liberator](#):

COLORED PATRIOTS OF THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION.

As a means of enlightening public sentiment on an interesting, but much-neglected, department of American History, the subscriber has been induced to make a compilation of facts portraying the patriotism and bravery exhibited by Colored Americans, on land and sea, in 'times that tried men's souls,' embracing the old French War of '55; the Revolution of '76, the struggle of 1812, and subsequent periods. These facts have been gleaned from military records, State documents, private correspondence, and fireside conversations, confirmed by oral and written testimonies of John Hancock, Governor Eustis, the late Judge Story, Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, Hon. Tristram Burgess, Hon. Charles Pinckney, etc., etc., and by the tributes of Washington, Lafayette, Kosciuszko, Thomas Jefferson and Gen. Jackson.

The subscriber is indebted for further interesting facts and testimonies to John G. Whittier, (the Bard of Freedom); Wendell Phillips, Esq.; J. W. O. Pennington, D.D.; William Howard Day, Esq.; Rev. Theodore Parker, Charles Lenox Remond, Hon. Charles Sumner, Prof. Wm. G. Allen, Lydia Maria Child, James McCune Smith, M.D.; Hon. Henry Wilson, J. Mercer Langston, Esq.; David Leo Child, Esq.; Rev. Daniel A. Payne, Hon. Anson Burlingame, James M. Whitfield, (the Poet); Robert Purvis, Esq.; Hon. J. R. Olddings, Rev. Henry Highland Garnet, Prof. Geo. B. Vashon, Edmund Jackson, Esq.; Robert Morris, Esq.; Rev. Amos G. Beman, Dr. M. R. Delany, William Wells Brown, Lewis and Milton Clark, Rev. Henry F. Harrington, the late Henry Bibb, Angolina J. Knox, Rev. John W. Lewis, Hon. Gerrit Smith, Wm. Yates, Esq.; Wm. J. Watkins, Esq.; and several others.

The work will contain an extract from the Address of the National Convention of July, 1853, and will be interspersed with interesting sketches (public and personal) of the Battle of New Orleans, the Insurrection of Nat. Turner in Virginia, and Denmark Vesley in South Carolina, and the New York Plot of 1741, as in part detailed by Peleg W. Chandler, Esq., in his 'Criminal Trials.' Also, an account of the strikes for liberty by Joseph Cinquez, on board the *Armistad*; by Madison Washington, on board the *Creole*, and by the heroes of Christiana.

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Among other contents of the work will be found proofs of the noknowledged Citizenship of Colored Amerloans, with a Letter of Hon. Wm. H. Soward; an account of the proscription of colored citizens by the Federal government; New England Colonial action on the treatment of colored persons, bond and free; sentiments of the colored people on Colonization, the Fugitive Slave Law, and Self-Elevation; together with reminiscences of Phillis Wheatley, Paul Cuffe, (Navigator) David Walker, Richard Bannekar, (Astronomer,) James Forten, J. B. Vashon, Richard Potter, (Ventriloquist,) Moses Easton, David Ruggles, (Hydropathist,) Rev. Lemuel Haynes, and other celebrities.

The book will be graced with an introduction by Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, and illustrated by engravings of prominent historical events; among them, Crispus Attucks at the Boston Massacre, 5th March, 1770, and the Colored American's valor on Bunker Hill. Also, a *fac simile* autograph certificate of General Washington, conveying an honorable discharge to a colored soldier.

In the effort to publish this edition, a heavy responsibility (pecuniary and otherwise) has been assumed by the subscriber, which he believes will be appreciated by the friends of humanity and progress, who are invited by this circular to forward their names and subscriptions for copies.

Should sufficient encouragement be extended, the work will be issued in May, at the price of \$1 per copy. On receipt of price, the book will be mailed (postage paid) to subscribers.

WM. O. NELL, 21 Cornhill.

Boston, April, 1855.



July 6. Rode to North Truro very early in the stage or covered wagon, oil the new road, which is just finished as far as East Harbor Creek. Blackfish on the shore. Walked from post-office to lighthouse. Fog till eight or nine, and short grass very wet. Board at James Small's, the lighthouse, at \$3.50 the week. *Polygala polygama* well out, flat, ray-wise, all over the fields. *Cakile Americana*, sea-rocket, the large weed of the beach, some time and going to seed, on beach. Pasture thistle (*Cirsium pumilum*), out some time. A great many white ones. The boy, Isaac Small, got eighty bank swallows eggs out of the clay-bank, i. e. above the clay. Small says there are a few great gulls here in summer. I see small (?) yellow-legs. Many crow blackbirds in the dry fields hopping about. Upland plover near the lighthouse breeding. Small once cut off one's wing when mowing in the field next the lighthouse as she sat on her eggs. Many seringo-birds, apparently like ours. They say mackerel have just left the Bay, and fishermen have gone to the eastward for them. Some, however, are catching cod and halibut on the back side. Cape measures two miles in width here on the great chart.

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July 7, Saturday: [Hector Berlioz](#) departed London having been offered musical directorship of a series of concerts to be held at the Crystal Palace (he would eventually decline the offer).



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July 7th

Smilax Glauca in blossom running over the shrubbery— Honkenya peploides sea sandwort just out of bloom on beach. the thick leaved & dense tufted—upright plant Salsola Kali Saltwort—prickly & glaucous in bloom. Beach Pea (Lathyrus Maritimus) going out of bloom. C. [Ellery Channing] says he saw in the Catalogue of the Mercantile Library N.Y. Peter Thoreau on Book-keeping London—



THE ACTUAL CATALOGUE

The piping plover running & standing on the beach— & a few mackerel gulls skimming over the sea & fishing. Josh pears (Juicy suggests Small) [^do not cook them] just begun XXX—few here compared with Provincetown. Seaside goldenrod [^S. Semper virens] not nearly yet Xanthium echinatum Sea Cockle-Burr [^or Sea Burdock] not yet—(I saw its burrs early {"early" written over "in"} in Oct. in New Bedford) What that smilacina like plant very ?? common in the shrubbery—a foot high with now green fruit big as peas at end of spike with reddish streaks— Uncle Sam calls it Make-Corn— [^in pencil: { }] brought home some fruit Just south of the light house near the bank on a steep hillside the savory leaved aster [^Diplopappus linarifolius & mouse-ear G. plantaginifolia] forms a dense sward—being short & thick—not yet out— [^out July 10th X] Scarlet pimpernel or Poor Man’s Weather Glass Anagallis arvensis in bloom same time—very common on sandy fields & sands & very pretty—with a peculiar scarlet.

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July 8, Sunday: William Edward Parry, Arctic explorer, died at Ems in Germany (the body of this Rear Admiral would be returned to England for burial; the cemetery would eventually be cleared to create a pocket park but his name would appear with others on an “Officers Monument”).

Henry Thoreau wrote to H.G.O. Blake in North Truro.

{No MS—printed copy FL, 1894}

*North Truro, July 8, 1855.
There being no packet, I did not leave Boston till last Thursday, though I came down on Wednesday, and Channing with me. There is no public house here; but we are boarding in a little house attached to the Highland Lighthouse with Mr. James Small, the keeper. It is true the table is not so clean as could be desired but I have found it much superior in that respect to a Provincetown hotel. They*

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[Transcript]

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are what are called "good livers." Our host has another larger and very good house, within a quarter of a mile, unoccupied, where he says he can accommodate several more. He is a very good man to deal with, —has often been the representative of the Town, and is perhaps the most intelligent man in it. I shall probably stay here as much as ten days longer. Board \$3.50 per week. So you and [Theo] Brown had better come down forthwith.

You will find either the schooner Melrose or another, or both, leaving Commerce Street, or else T Wharf, at 9 A.M. (it commonly means 10), Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, —if not other days. We left about 10 A.M., and reached Provincetown at 5 P. very good run. A stage runs up the Cape every morning but Sunday, starting at 4 A.M., and reaches the postoffice in North Truro, seven miles from Provincetown, and one from the lighthouse, about 6 o'clock. If you arrive at P. before night, you can walk over, and leave your baggage to be sent: . You can also come by cars from Boston to Yarmouth, and thence by stage forty miles more, — through every day, but it costs much more, and is not so pleasant. Come by all means, for it is the best place to see the ocean in these States. I hope I shall be worth meeting.



July 8th

[Transcript]

A N.E. storm— A great part of beach
bodily removed & a rock 5 feet high ex-
posed—before invisible op. light house—(V
story) The black-throated bunting
common among the shrubbery— Its note much
like the Maryland Yel— throats—Wittichee
te chea—tche te tchea—tche—
The ~~Eupetrum~~ [^Corema] Conradii Broom crowberry
is quite common at edge of higher bank just south
of the light house— It is now full of small
green fruit [^Small pin head size It spreads from a center raying out &]. It forms peculiar handsome
rooting every 4 or 5 inches. {drawing}
shaped mounds 4 or 5 feet in diameter—
x 9 inches or a foot high {drawing}
—very soft [^springy] beds to lie on—A woodman's
bed already spread.
I am surprised at the number or large
light colored toads every where hopping over
these dry & sandy fields.
Went over to Bay side— That pond at
Pond village 3/8 of a mile long & densely
filled with cattail flag 7 feet high—
Many red wing black birds [**Red-winged Blackbird**  *Agelaius phoeniceus*] in it. Small
says there are two kinds of Cattail there one
the barrel flag for coopers the other shorter
for chairs—he used to gather them.
See the Kildeer a dozen rods off in pasture
anxious about its eggs or young—with its
shrill squeaking note—its ring of white
about its neck & 2 black crescents on breast—
They are not so common & noisy as in June.



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A milkweed out some days. For shells
see list—(For shells see story)
Hudsonia Tomentosa the downy still lingering
& ericoides even yet up to 17th
The last is perhaps the most common—
Euphorbia polygonifolia sea-side spurge—
small & flat on pure sand— Did nt notice flower
Lemna Minor Duck weed— Duck-meat covering
the surface at the Pond—Scale-like— See a
night-hawk at 8 am sitting lengthwise on
a rail. Asked Small if 1/4 of the fuel
of N Truro was drift wood— He thought it
was—beside some lumber—
None of the {mya} arenaria on back side—but
a small thicker shelled clam— [^Mesoderma arctata] with a golden ye-
low epidermis—very common on the flats—which
S. said was good to eat. The shells washed up were
commonly perforated—could dig them with your hand.
S. said that 19 small yel— birds (prob. gold-
finches) were found dead under the light
in the spring early

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July 9, Monday: In the House of Commons, Mr. Walter rose “to put a question to the right hon. Baronet the President of the Board of Health upon a subject of vital importance to the inhabitants of London — namely, the impure and pestiferous state of the river Thames. A letter from Professor Faraday appeared in The Times of that morning, containing a description of the impure condition of the river, the correctness of which he was able to confirm by his own observation. Under these circumstances, he begged to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether any plan had been decided on by the Government for diverting the sewage of the metropolis from the river Thames; and, if so, at what period that plan would be likely to come into operation? Sir Benjamin Hall [responded] that he was sorry that at present there existed no power whatever, either in the Government or in any other authority, to remedy the nuisance which had been so justly complained of as arising from the state of the river Thames. Up to last year, there was a Commission of Sewers appointed for the metropolis, the appointment being made wholly by the Crown; but by a Bill of last Session a new body was constituted, part of which was appointed by the Government; the ratepayers and vestries of the districts appointing the other part. But those Commissioners had no power whatever to acquire land for outfall works; and before any attempt could be made to divert the sewage from the Thames, it would be necessary to acquire that power. In the Metropolitan Government Bill, which had passed through Committee, he had taken power for the Metropolitan Board of Works to take land for outfall works, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State, and to take it compulsorily for that object. He understood that the present Commissioners of Sowers had before them a variety of plans, suggested by Mr. Stephenson and other eminent engineers, for the purpose of effecting that object. The Metropolitan Board of Works, supposing the Legislature to pass the Bill, would be constituted before the close of the year; those plans would be submitted to that Board, and would be presented to them in such a state that the Board might act upon them as soon as they thought proper. And they would have ample power, not only to take land for outfall works, but to raise the necessary funds for carrying out the object.”



July 9th—
Peterson brings word of black fish— I went over

[Transcript]



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& saw them &c—(v. story.) The largest about 14 feet long. 19 yrs ago 380 at this (Great) Hollow in one school. [^Small says they generally come about the last of July] Sometimes eat them— some yield 5 barrels—average one barrel

A kind of Artemisia or sea wormwood **near** [^by] Bayside on sand hills—not out. Bay-wings here.

I find the edible muscle generally in bunches as they were washed off the rocks 30 or 40 together held together by their twine-like byssus. Many little muscles on the rocks exposed at low tide.

Uncle Sam {"S" written over "s"} Small half blind—66 years old—remembers the building of the Light house & their prophecies about the bank wasting.

Thought the now overhanging upper solid parts might last 10 years. His path had some-times lasted so long (??—Saw him making a long diagonal slanting path with a hoe—in order to get up a small pile of stuff— —on his back—(There lay his hooked pike staff on the bank ready for immediate use)— But this path was destroyed before we left— told of a large rock which was carried along the shore half a mile. He gets all his fuel on the beach.

At flood tide there is a strong inshore current to north— We saw some perhaps bales of grass or else dried bits of marsh 6 feet long carried along thus very fast 1/4 of a mile out. Told us of man eating sharks—one **14** [^12] feet long which he killed & drew up with his oxen—

No quahogs on this side

Now with a clear sky—& bright weather—we see many dark streaks & patches where the surface of the ocean is rippled by fishes mostly menhaden—far and wide—in countless myriads— Such the populousness of the sea— Occasionally when near can see their shining sides appear—(& the mackerel gulls dive probably for brit?) Also see bass—whiting cod &c turn up their bellies near the shore.

The distant horizon a narrow blue line from distance (?) like mts. They call peet weets shore birds here. Small thought the waves never ran less than 7 or 8 feet on the shore here—though the sea might be perfectly smooth. Speaks of mackerel gulls breeding on islands in Wellfleet Harbor—



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July 10, Tuesday: In San Francisco, the Daily Alta California carried interesting local material:

DAINGEROUS COUNTERFEITS. — We were shown this morning at the Banking-House of Messrs. Wells, Fargo & Co., a spurious *slug* so ingeniously manufactured from a genuine one, as



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to defy detection except by weighing in the scales. The community cannot be too careful in taking the \$50 pieces in circulation. The counterfeiters take a slug and saw it in two, leaving only a thin scale on each face; the space between is filled with copper and nicely milled over, so that no one can detect the cheat except by weight. Here is an opportunity for our new Marshal to try his hand at rogue catching, as this is most successful counterfeit in circulation.

THE JOLLY WATERMAN. — J.S. Wilmont has been for some time supplying the inhabitants of a small alley, leading from Mercer street, with pure fresh water. Yesterday he was about delivering his usual amount, when another aspirant for the aquatic [*sic*] honors made his appearance, and hardly demanded by what authority he attempted to get away his customers? The reply not being satisfactory, the two waterman pitched in and a fight ensued, in which the antagonist of Mr. Wilmont got decidedly the worst of the affair. The case was brought before the Recorder this morning, and continued until tomorrow.

DARKIES IN TROUBLE. — Two negroes, named Benjamin Bias and Peter Douglas, were arrested a few days since, charged with highway robbery. There being not enough evidence to convict them, they were discharged this morning.



July 10

[Transcript]

The sea like Walden is greenish within half a mile of shore— [then blue. The purple tinges near the shore run far up or down] — Walked to Marsh head of E. Har. Creek— Marsh Rosemary—
Statice limosum “meadow root” says small out sometime with 5 reddish petals. Also see there Samphire of 2 kinds herbacea & mucronata.
Juncus Gerardii Black grass in bloom. The Pig weed about sea shore is remarkably white & mealy— Great Devils needles above the bank ap. catching flies. I see a brood of young peeps running in the heath under the sand hills.—ahead of me— Indigo out X
Heard a cannon—~~which~~ from the sea which echoed under the bank dully as if a part of the bank had fallen—then a distant outw saw a pilot boat standing down & the pilot looking through his glass toward a distant outward bound vessel which was putting back to speak with him. The latter sailed many a mile to meet her— She put her sails aback & communicated along side.

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 July 11, Wednesday: [Walt Whitman](#)'s father Walter Whitman, Sr. died.



July 11th

[Transcript]

See young [^piping] plover running in a troop on the beach like peet weets— Patches of shruboaks bay-berry—beach plum & early wild roses over run with woodbine— What a splendid show of wild roses—whose sweetness is mingled with the aroma of the bayberry!! Small made 3000 shingles of a mast—worth 6 dolls. a thousand.

A bar wholly made within 3 months— first exposed about 1st of May—as I paced now 75 rods long & 6 or 8 rods wide at high water—& bay within 6 rods wide— The bay has extended 2c as far but is filled up.

~~An arenaria(?) still amid shrubbery.~~

Lespedeza Stuvei(?) or procumbens (?) I see 5 young swallows dead on the sand under their holes—fell out & died in the storm?

The upland Plover hovers almost stationary in the air with a quivering note of alarm— Above dark brown interspersed with white [^darkest in rear] —gray-spotted breast—white beneath bill dark above—yellowish at base beneath & legs yellowish. Totanus Bartramius— “Gray”— “grass”— “field” P. Bank at light house—170 feet on the slope perpendicular 110 say shelf slopes 4 & ordinary tide is[^fall] is 9—makes 123 in all. Saw bank south 15 to 25 feet higher.

Small says cantle. [^in pencil: for quintel] Mackerel fishing not healthy like cod fishing— Hard work packing the mackerel—stooping over—

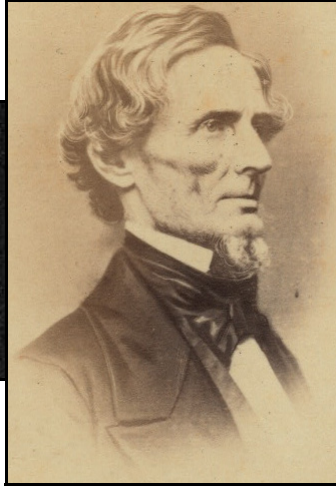
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July 12, Thursday: Thomas Crawford proposed to create, in his studio in Rome, a statue “Freedom” to top the dome of the Capitol Rotunda in [Washington DC](#). The statue is a female figure nearly 20 feet tall weighing in at about 15,000 pounds, holding in her right hand a sheathed sword and in her left a laurel wreath of victory



and the shield of the United States of America, but Crawford supposed that our big bronze lady ought to be sporting as her chapeau a liberty cap adorned with stars. It was Secretary of War [Jefferson Davis](#), one of the South’s major slaveholders, who was overseeing the building plans, and he of course pointed out the obvious — not only had this liberty cap been outlawed in England as suggestive of the French Revolution but, since it had been the classic Roman symbol of a [manumitted](#) slave, was a non-starter.



(If you zoom in with a telephoto lens, you will see that our big bronze lady has been attired instead in

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something resembling a military helmet bearing an eagle head and crest of feathers. It's a much improved design because such a chapeau can't be made to mean anything.)¹¹³



"It is simply crazy that there should ever have come into being a world with such a sin in it, in which a man is set apart because of his color – the superficial fact about a human being. Who could **want** such a world? For an American fighting for his love of country, that the last hope of earth should from its beginning have swallowed slavery, is an irony so withering, a justice so intimate in its rebuke of pride, as to measure only with God."



– Stanley Cavell, MUST WE MEAN WHAT WE SAY? 1976, page 141



July 12

[Transcript]

Peterson says he dug 126 dols— worth of small clams near his house in Truro one winter— 25 buckets full at one time. One man 40. Says they are scarce because they feed pigs on them. I measure a horseshoe on the backside 22 inches x 11. The low sand—down bet E Harbor head & sea methinks covered with beach grass—seaside goldenrod & beach pea— flog wets your beard till 12 o'clock. Long slender sea side plantain leaf? At E. Harbor head. Solanum (with white flowers) nigrum? in marsh. Spargularia rubra [^great Many little shells by edge of marsh Auricula biden-] var. marina— tata? and Succinea avara? Great variety of beetle dawbugs &c on beach—I have one green shining one. Also butterflies over bank Small thought the pine land was worth 25 cts an acre. I was surprised to see great spider holes in fine sand & gravel with a firm edge—where man could not make a hole without the sand sliding in—in tunnel form. They [^are] gone off for mackerel & cod—also catching mackerel, halibut & lobsters about here for the market. The upland plover begins with a quivering note somewhat like a tree toad and ends with a long clear somewhat plaintive (?) or melodious (?) hawk-like scream. I never heard this very near to me. & when I asked the inhabitants about it they did not know what I meant. [^v side {Thoreau wrote the following in 4 lines vertically up the left margin:

113. Legally, there was a distinction between a slaveowner and a slaveholder. The owner of a slave might rent the custody and use of that slave out for a year, in which case the distinction would arise and be a meaningful one in law, since the other party to such a transaction would be the holder but not the owner. However, in this Kouroo database, I will ordinarily be deploying the term "slaveholder" as the normative term, as we are no longer all that concerned with the making of such fine economic distinctions but are, rather, concerned almost exclusively with the human issues involved in the enslavement of other human beings. I use the term "slaveholder" in preference to "slaveowner" not only because no human being can **really** own another human being but also because it is important that slavery never be defined as the legal ownership of one person by another — in fact not only had human slavery existed before the first such legislation but also it has continued long since we abolished all legal deployment of the term "slave."



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“Frank Forester in Manual for Young Sportsmen ’56 p 308 says ‘This bird has a soft plaintive call or whistle of 2 notes, which have something of a ventriloquial character, and possess this peculiarity, that when uttered close to the ear, they appear to come from a distance, and when the bird is really 2 or 3 fields distant, sound as if near at hand.’”} It hovers on

quivering wing & alights by a steep dive.
My pape so damp in this house I cant press flowers
without mildew—nor dry my towel for a week—
Small thought there was no stone wall W of orleans.
Squid the bait for bass. Small said the black-fish
ran ashore in pursuit of it. Hardly use pure salt
at Smalls. Do not drink water— S. repeates a
tradition that the backside was frozen out 1 mile
over in 1680 (?) Often is on Bay—but never since
on Atlantic.

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GO TO THE FOLLOWING YEAR

(39TH YEAR OF HDT’S LIFE)

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

– Remark by character “Garin Stevens”
in William Faulkner’s INTRUDER IN THE DUST





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Prepared: July 20, 2018

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ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



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



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

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