CAXTONIAN

JOURNAL OF THE CAXTON CLUB OF CHICAGO VOLUME XIII, NO. 4 APRIL 2005

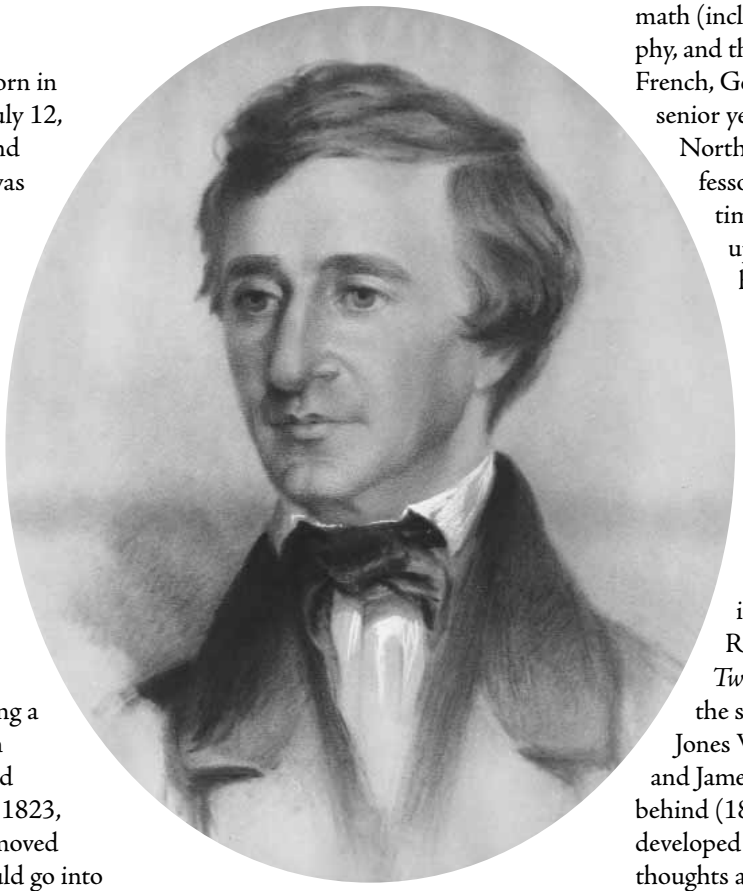
Collecting Thoreau

R. Eden Martin

Henry David Thoreau was born in Concord, Massachusetts, July 12, 1817, the son of John Thoreau and Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau.[1] He was the third of four children. John Thoreau was an easy-going, well-read storekeeper and sometime farmer; Cynthia was a stronger personality, the manager of the Thoreau household, and a born reformer—always sympathetic to the less fortunate, including Indians and blacks. She was a founder of the Concord Women's Anti-Slavery Society.

The Thoreaus lived in several different places in or near Boston during Henry's early years, as his father tried various ways of making a living. They were living in Boston when Henry first started to attend school, at the age of five. Then in 1823, when Henry was six, the family moved back to Concord so that John could go into business with his brother-in-law manufacturing pencils. Henry attended a public grammar school consisting of one large room in which the teacher (and older students) taught students in different grades. He spent much of his free time walking in the hills and woods around Concord and visiting the various ponds in the area—including one two miles south of town, just off Walden Road.

In the fall of 1828, Henry and his brother were enrolled in the Concord Academy, a college preparatory school. The tuition was $5.00 per quarter—a significant sum for a struggling, short-of-cash family. Here Henry learned something of Latin and Greek, as well as geography, botany, and



Henry David Thoreau, 1854. Crayon portrait by Samuel Worcester Rowse. Courtesy Concord Free Public Library.

biology. He was also introduced to English history and literature, and wrote frequent essays and themes. Perhaps more important, Henry was able—along with other townspeople of all ages—to attend lectures and debates at the newly-formed Concord Lyceum, where topics ranged widely over the historical, political, moral, and scientific questions of the day.

In 1833 the Thoreau family scraped together enough money to cover Henry's enrollment at Harvard. He was 16 years old and barely passed his entrance exams. At Harvard Henry studied Greek, Latin, math (including calculus), English, philosophy, and theology. He also sampled Italian, French, German, and Spanish; and in his senior year he studied German and Northern Literature with young Professor Longfellow. He spent his spare time in the college library soaking up English and American poetry, history, and travel literature. He also found time to walk the fields of Cambridge and the banks of the Charles River.

During much of his four-year stay at Harvard, Henry was in the top quarter of his class, though by his senior year he had slipped to the middle—due to periods of absence caused by illness and the need to work. Richard Henry Dana, author of *Two Years Before The Mast*, was in the same graduating class (1837). Jones Very was a class ahead (1836), and James Russell Lowell was a class behind (1838). Like Emerson, Henry developed early the habit of recording his thoughts and snippets of his readings in notebooks—"commonplace books"—which he kept throughout his life. It was probably in his junior year that Henry was first touched by tuberculosis.

Henry's graduation from Harvard at the end of August 1837 was marked by Emerson's great commencement address, the "American Scholar," before the Phi Beta Kappa society. Henry apparently skipped it.

Immediately after graduation, Henry was hired to teach in the same Concord School he had attended as a child years earlier. The country was in a recession, and he was lucky to have a job—particularly a job in his home town. But within a month, he had resigned because of what he perceived as interference from the school's visiting com-

See **THOREAU**, *page 2*

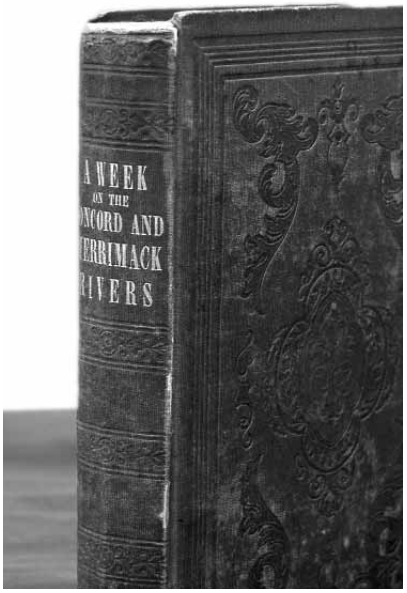
CAXTONIAN

The *Caxtonian* is published monthly by The Caxton Club whose office is in The Newberry Library. Permission to reprint material from the Caxtonian is not necessary if copy of reprint is mailed to The Caxton Club office and the *Caxtonian* is given credit. Printing: River Street Press, Aurora, IL

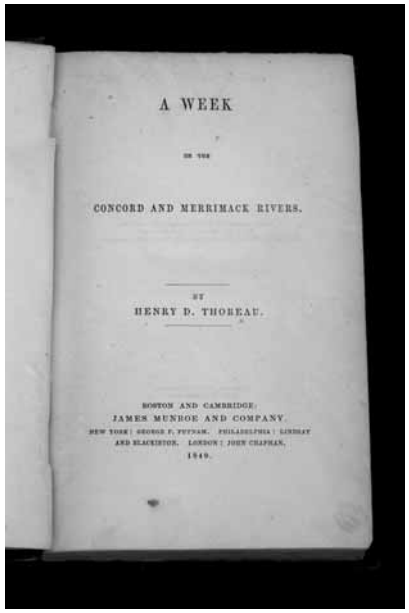
THOREAU, *from page 1*

mittee, which insisted on the physical discipline of boisterous students. Unable to find other employment, Henry went to work in his father's pencil factory.

It was during this period that Thoreau became a friend of his increasingly-prominent Concord neighbor—the author of the commencement address he had missed. Emerson, 14 years his senior, had given up the ministry of his Boston church and moved to Concord three years earlier; and it was in Concord that he had written his first book, *Nature*.[2] Thoreau had read this book during his final year at Harvard, and he later obtained a copy of the first edition, which he kept in his library for the rest of his life. When Emerson's circle met in Emerson's home to discuss the new "Transcendental" doctrines relating to man's innate knowledge and moral sense, or to talk about the German philosophers or the most recent essays of Carlyle, Thoreau was often a participant. As his biographer observed, throughout his life, "whether he was experimenting in life at Walden Pond, going to jail for refusing to pay his poll tax, or defending John Brown's action at Harpers Ferry, he was operating from a base of Transcendentalist principles."[3] Others in the circle included Bronson Alcott (also of Concord), Jones Very (sometime minister, sometime poet), Margaret Fuller (later editor of *The Dial*), and Elizabeth Peabody (of whom more later).



Spine closeup of Thoreau's first book: A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, *published by James Monroe and Company. Of the 1000 copies printed, 294 were sold or given away; Thoreau kept the remaining 706.*


A WEEK
ON THE
CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS.
BY
HENRY D. THOREAU.
BOSTON AND CAMBRIDGE:
JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.
1849.

Title page of same.

Thoreau also became acquainted with another neighbor—Nathaniel Hawthorne—who was not one of his fans. Hawthorne wrote in his journal about this time:

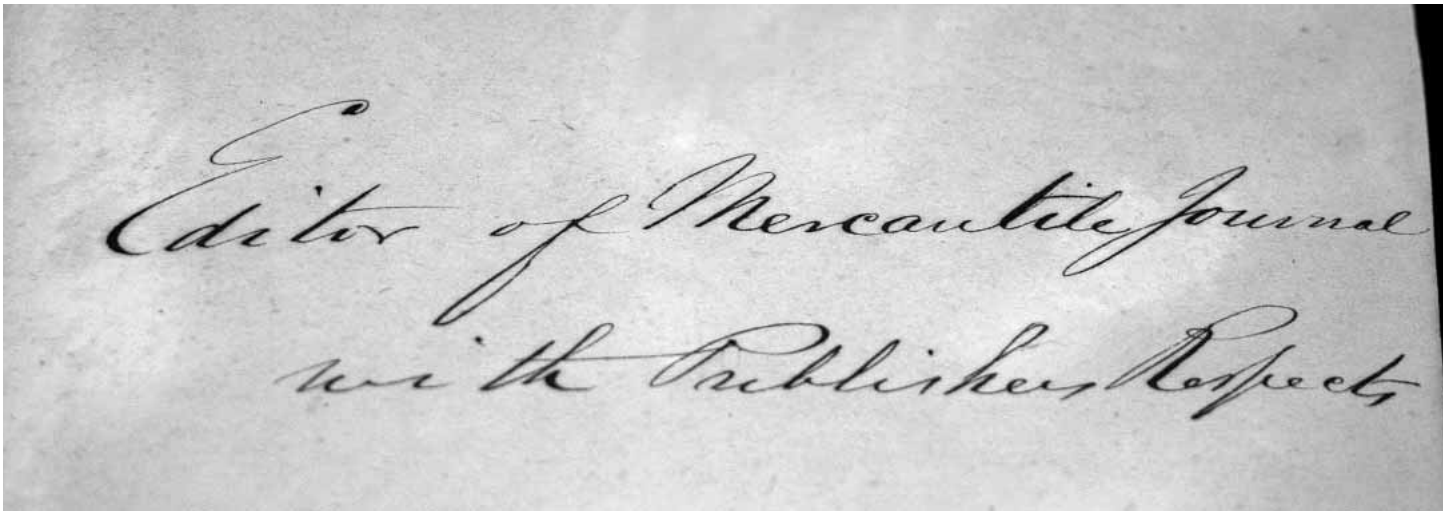
> [Thoreau] is a singular character—a young man with much wild original nature still remaining in him; and so far as he is sophisticated, it is in a way and method of his own. He is as ugly as sin, long-nosed, queer-mouthed, and with uncouth and somewhat rustic, although courteous manners, corresponding very well with such an exterior.…

Hawthorne later added:

> He despises the world, and all that it has to offer, and…is an intolerable bore. 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.[4]

It was probably Emerson who encouraged Henry to try his hand at writing. We know it was during this period that he began making regular entries, including poems, in his journal. At least one article (an obituary) written by him appeared in a local gazette. In the spring of 1838, he made his first appearance as a lecturer at the Concord Lyceum.

A few months later, in September 1838, Henry rented the building that the Concord Academy had operated in, and he started his own private school there. By February 1839, his older brother John, having left his teaching position in Roxbury, had joined Henry, and they taught together there until spring 1841. Henry's subjects included Latin, Greek, French, physics, and natural history. As part of their study of nature, his students accompanied him on field



The author's copy of A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers *was sent by the publisher for review.*

trips and sailed down the Concord River.

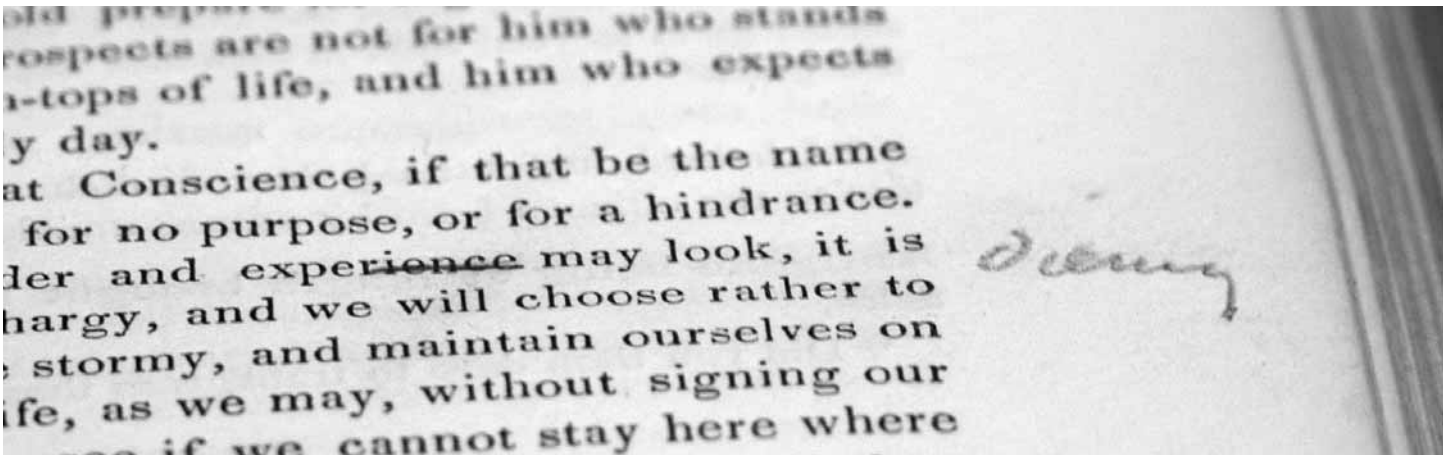
As the end of Henry's first full year as a teacher drew near, he and his brother John began planning a vacation—a boat trip on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. It was eventually to lead to the appearance of his first book—one of only two published during his life. The two brothers spent much of the spring building a suitable boat—15 feet long, and 3 and 1/2 feet at its greatest width. They left Concord in late August 1839, after the end of summer term at the Academy. Their route led them through the Middlesex Canal, into the Merrimac, and up into New Hampshire, past Manchester—exploring and camping out in the evenings. Near Concord, New Hampshire, they stored their boat and started off on foot, and then by stage, traveling into the White Mountains, where they climbed Mount Washington. Then they reversed their steps, traveling back to pick up the boat, and returned via the rivers to Concord. Henry kept notes on the trip, which he later entered into his journal; but it was not until his brother's death several years later that he decided to expand it into a book.

Shortly before this excursion on the Concord and Merrimack, Henry met a 17-year old young women named Ellen Sewall, who was visiting friends in Concord. He began writing poems to her; they took walks together, and went sailing. After the New Hampshire trip, both Henry and his brother John exchanged letters with Ellen. Within a year, John had proposed marriage, and had been rejected. Henry let a few months pass before proposing himself, by letter. Upon advice from her father, Ellen rejected Henry's suit as well. She later married, but she never forgot him. As for Henry, he never proposed marriage to anyone again. Shortly before his death, 22 years later, he told his sister, "I have always loved her."[5]

Within a month of his excursion on the two rivers, Thoreau's Transcendentalist friends, under the leadership of Emerson, decided to publish a magazine which would serve as a vehicle for their philosophical and literary effusions. Margaret Fuller agreed to serve as editor. After months of planning and enlistment of subscribers, the first issue of *The Dial* was published on July 1, 1840. *The Dial* lasted four years and was to be an important stimulus and medium for Thoreau's career as a writer. Until mid-1840, Thoreau had seen none of his literary efforts appear in print.

See **THOREAU**, *page 4*

Thoreau personally corrected "experience" to "expediency" in the author's copy of A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. *He no doubt used a pencil made in the family pencil factory.*



THOREAU, *from page 3*

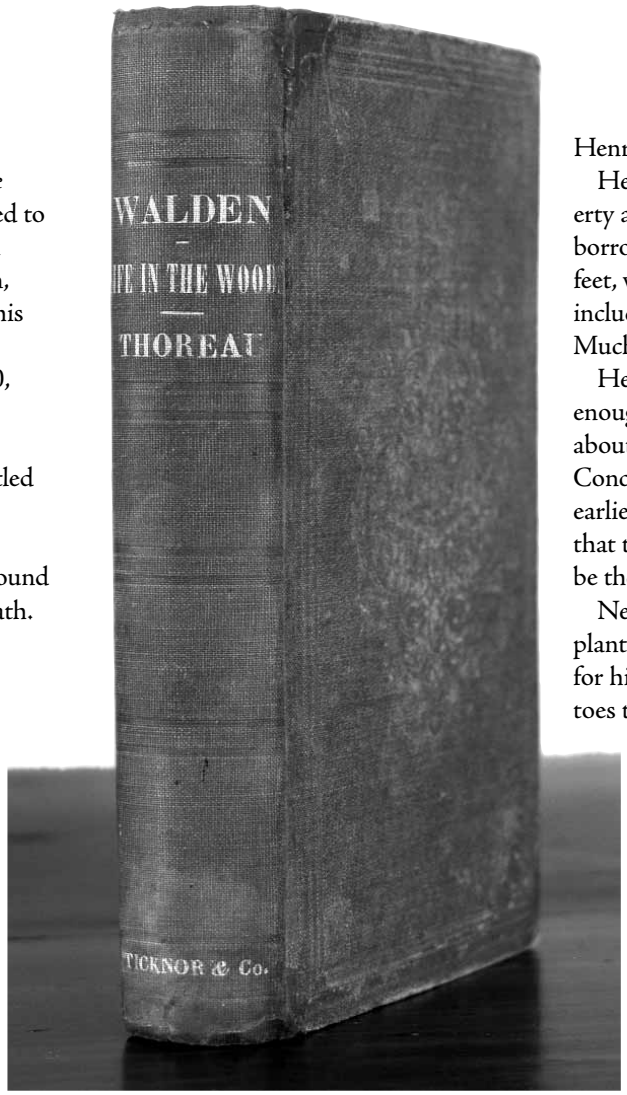
Over the next four years, thanks to *The Dial* and to Emerson, he was encouraged to write essays and poems, many of which appeared in its pages; and these, in turn, were later collected in books that bear his name.

The first issue of *The Dial*, July, 1840, carried one of his poems, "Sympathy." Another appeared in the second issue. Henry also submitted a long essay entitled "The Service," a plan for living a well-rounded life, but it was rejected by Margaret Fuller. The manuscript was found in Emerson's papers after Thoreau's death. It appeared in a separate small book in 1902, issued in 500 copies. It isn't rare, although my copy is unusual because it retains the original early dust jacket. Miss Fuller printed four poems and one translation by Thoreau during her time as editor.

After Emerson succeeded to the editor's chair in 1842, Thoreau's pieces appeared more frequently in *The Dial*. His first major prose work to be published, "The Natural History of Massachusetts" (a review of several other works), appeared in the July 1842 *Dial*, along with one of his poems. Eight more poems appeared in the October 1842 issue. But Emerson was not satisfied with the quality of Thoreau's verses and encouraged him to devote more effort to prose pieces and translations. Thoreau's contemporaries and modern critics tend to agree that his literary strengths ran to prose rather than verse.

Thoreau himself edited the April 1843 issue of *The Dial*, in Emerson's absence—including in it three of his own poems, a translation from Anacreon, and a short essay. Thoreau's more ambitious essay, "A Winter Walk," did not appear until the October 1843 issue, by which time Emerson had resumed his editorial duties. Harding calls it "one of [his] best early pieces."[6]

But *The Dial* was not long for this world. With unpaid bills piling up and few subscribers, the grand experiment ended with the issue of April 1844. Among the magazine's achievements, perhaps none was more important than giving Henry Thoreau the confidence that he could write prose of a quality that he believed should be exposed to the literate public.



Walden *fared better in the bookstores. Of the 2000 copies which were printed, all but 256 had been sold a year later.*

During the period when he was writing for *The Dial*, beginning in the spring of 1841, Thoreau had been looking for an old farmhouse he might rent, or land on which he could build a cabin, so that he could live cheaply and in solitude in the country somewhere near Concord. In the meantime, he moved in with the Emersons, in return for performing odd jobs around the house and gardens.

In the spring of 1845, Henry—then 27 years old—finally settled on a place to build his cabin: near the north shore of Walden Pond, a small glacial lake three-quarters of a mile long and half a mile wide. Emerson had bought the land a few months earlier. (He later made out a will in which he left Henry the land on which the cabin stood.)

Henry cut down pine trees on the property and built the cabin himself, using a borrowed ax. The cabin was 15 feet by 10 feet, with a brick fireplace. The materials, including the nails, cost him $28.12½. Much of the furniture was handmade.

Henry intended to live in the cabin long enough to write the long-planned book about his trip with his brother on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers six years earlier. He apparently did not initially think that the stay at Walden Pond might itself be the inspiration for a further book.

Near the cabin, he cleared two acres and planted a garden that would provide food for his own table and extra beans and potatoes to be sold in town. He later reduced the garden to the size needed to produce only what he needed himself.

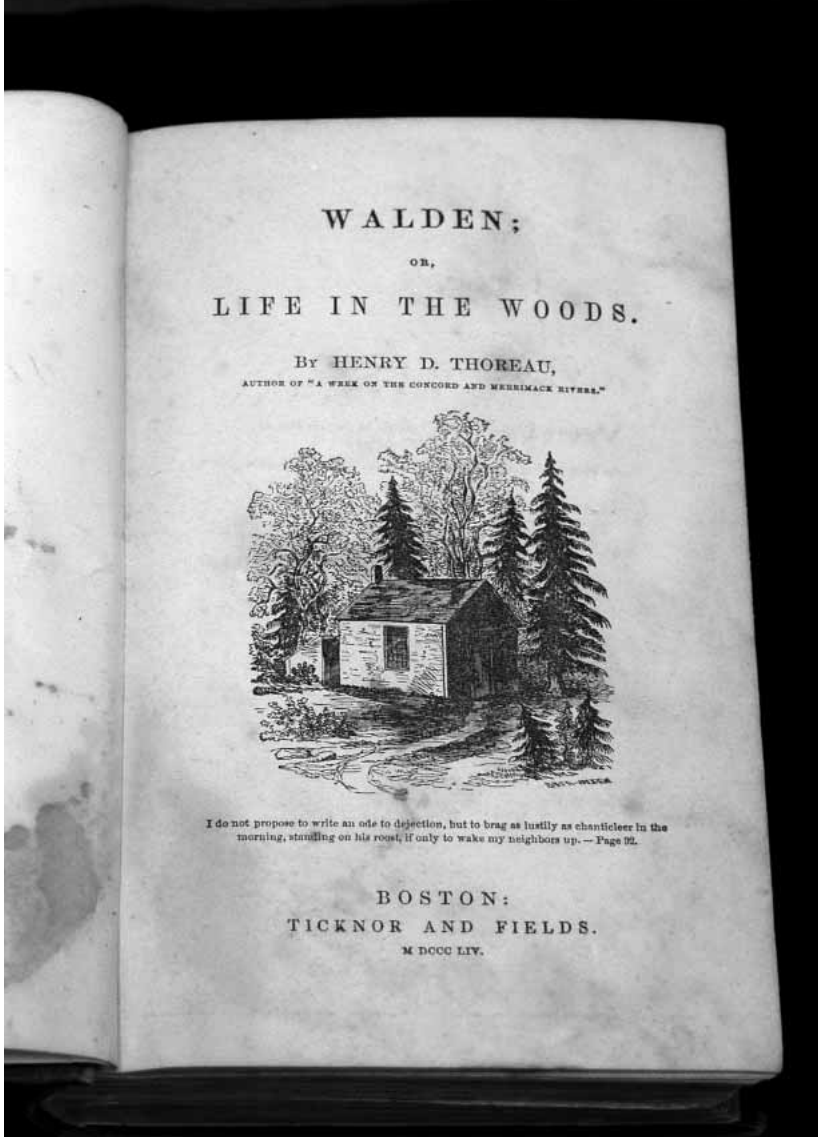
After the cabin was completed and Henry had moved in, he divided his free time between working in his garden and studying the natural surroundings, including both plant and animal life.

By mid-1846, Henry had completed the first draft of his Concord/Merrimack narrative. Emerson urged him to submit it to a publisher, but Henry was unwilling to let it go without further editing and polishing. He inflicted readings of sections of the manuscript on various of his visitors to Walden.

The following year, Thoreau permitted Emerson to write on his behalf to a publishing firm, Wiley & Putnam, proposing that they publish the book. Emerson described it enthusiastically in his proposal letter as a book "of extraordinary merit":[7]

> It will be attractive to lovers of nature, in every sense, that is, to naturalists, and to poets, as Isaak Walton. It will be attractive to scholars for its excellent literature, & to all thoughtful persons for its originality & profoundness.

Fortunately, as it turned out, the publishers who considered it at that time either turned it down or insisted that Thoreau would have to bear the cost of its production. This led to further delay, during which


WALDEN;

OR,

LIFE IN THE WOODS.

By HENRY D. THOREAU,

AUTHOR OF "A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS."

I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up. — Page 92.

BOSTON:

TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

M DCCC LIV.

Title page of Walden.

Henry strengthened the book.

Finally, almost two years later in February 1849, Henry reached an agreement with a Boston publishing firm, James Munroe & Co. As part of this deal, Henry agreed to guarantee that Munroe would be made whole by deducting the publishing costs from the proceeds of sales, if any. If sales were inadequate, he agreed to be personally liable for any un-recovered costs. Henry read galley proofs in March and returned the final proofs to the printer in late April. The 413-page book, Henry's first, *A Week On The Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, was published May 30, 1849.

Munroe printed 1,000 sets of pages, but bound only 550 sets as they were needed—in eight different cloth bindings. Copies were offered for sale through cooperative arrangements with other publishers in New York, Philadelphia, and London.

The work was, of course, the story of Henry's excursion with his brother a decade earlier. But, as Thoreau's biographer Harding observes:[8]

> [S]ixty percent of the book…has little connection with the travel narrative. It is a collection of essays, poems, translations, and quotations, dumped in like plums into a pudding, but there is less artistic justification for their presence.

With the help of Emerson and the publisher, Henry did what he could to publicize the book. Four days before the official publication date, they sent out 75 copies to potential reviewers and literary figures.

As soon as he saw the first copies from the printer, Henry realized that Munroe had failed to make many of the corrections he had made on the proof sheets. In one instance, apparently not discovered by Henry until some time later, the printer had followed one of his instructions but then accidentally dropped several lines of text—rendering the passage meaningless. In the copies sent out to potential reviewers, Henry personally made corrections in pencil to the printed pages.

My copy is one of the copies sent to the reviewers. It is in a presentation binding, in light tan cloth and the most elaborately-stamped format, with this inscribed handwritten note: "Editor of the Mercantile Journal with the Publisher's Respects." Henry made three pencil corrections to the text of this copy before it was sent out.

The reviews ranged from favorable to enthusiastic. Greeley's *Tribune* called it "fresh, original, thoughtful"…but "vaguely" Transcendental and sometimes "imitative." One reviewer called it "rare" and compared it to Emerson's essays. Another labeled it "remarkable"—a narrative on which had been "strung pearls." Others were friendly and balanced.

Notwithstanding the favorable reviews, the sales were depressingly few. Only about 220 of the 550 copies initially bound were sold. Many booksellers returned their unsold copies to the publisher, who looked to Thoreau to make good his agreement to cover the expenses of publishing, which amounted to $290. Paying off this commitment cost Henry many hours in the pencil factory over the next several years.

In 1853, four years after the book appeared, Henry wrote in his journal a famous passage, the last sentence of which regularly appears in most catalogue descriptions of book dealers who offer copies of this first edition of Thoreau's first book:

> For a year or two past, my publisher, falsely so called, has been writing from time to time to ask what disposition should be made of the copies of 'A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers' still on hand, and at least suggesting that he had use for the room they occupied in his cellar. So I had them all sent to me here, and they have arrived to-day by express, filling the man's wagon,—706 copies out of an edition of 1000 which I bought of Munroe four years ago and have ever since been paying for, and have not quite paid for yet. The wares are sent to me at last, and I have an opportunity to examine my purchase. They are something more substantial than fame, as my back knows, which has borne them up two flights of stairs to a place similar to that to which they trace their origin. *Of the remaining two hundred and ninety and odd, seventy-*

See **THOREAU**, *page 6*

THOREAU, *from page 5*

> *five were given away, the rest sold. I have now a library of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself"* [emphasis in the original].[9]

Henry kept his library of "over seven hundred" copies in the attic of the Thoreau family home in Concord for nine years. As time passed, he occasionally sold or gave away some of the copies from this library.

By the time of his death in 1862, Henry had—one way or another—apparently disposed of about 112 copies of the bound version. (Remember, 450 were still in unbound sheets.) Some of the bound copies which he disposed of in this way contained pencil corrections in Thoreau's hand, but not all corrected copies have the same corrections.

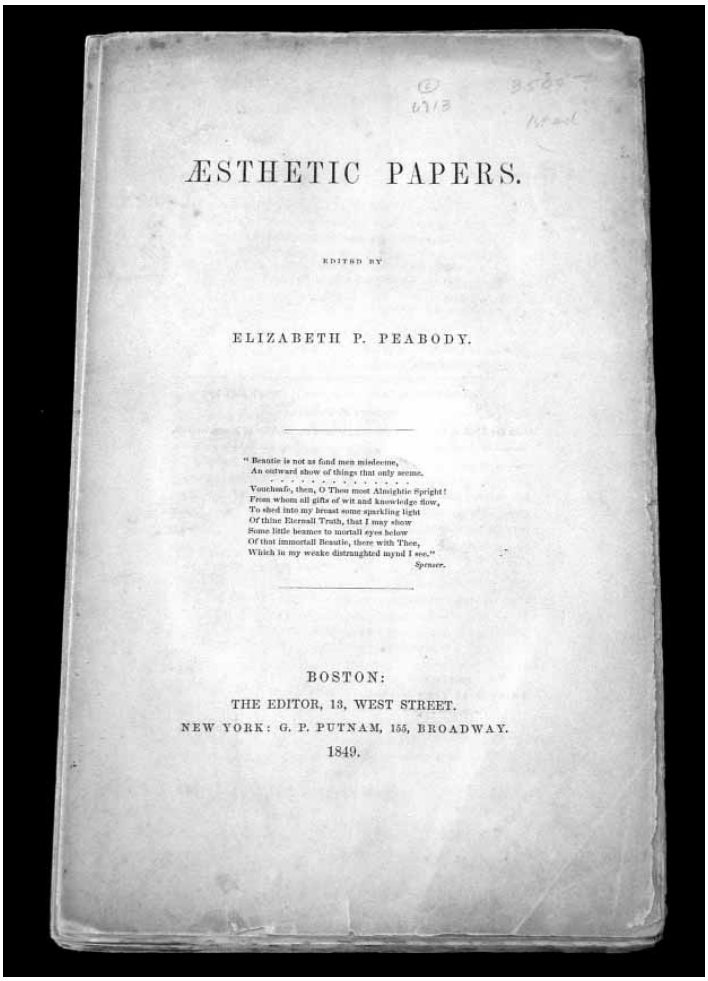
In 1862, after Thoreau died, Ticknor & Fields purchased from Thoreau's family the remaining 145 bound copies, along with the 450 sets of unbound sheets, paying 40 cents for each copy. They sold some of the bound copies over the next few years. As to the 450 sets of sheets, they printed a cancelled title-page carrying their own imprint, bearing the year 1862, and then bound these pages—with the new title page—in slate green cloth.

This 1862 version is technically not a second edition because the type was not reset. It is, instead, the 1862 "reissue" (or "second issue") of the first edition. Most of these copies understandably do not contain pencil corrections by Thoreau. But for some reason my copy of this 1862 "reissue" does have such corrections. There are three, made in pencil—two of which do not appear in any of the other known corrected copies (except Thoreau's own copy, in which he made over 1,000 corrections or changes—perhaps in anticipation of a possible subsequent edition).

One day in July 1846, while he was still living at Walden Pond working on the manuscript of the Concord/Merrimack excursion, Henry walked to Concord to pick up a shoe he had left to be repaired. He was met by Sam Staples, the constable and tax collector, who asked him to pay his "poll tax"—which Henry had not paid for several years. This "poll" tax was not a tax for voting, but a state tax levied on every male between the ages of 20 and 70. Staples offered to pay the tax himself if Henry hadn't the money. But Henry responded that he had not paid it on principle, and that he had not changed his mind. So Staples hauled him off to jail.

This was not the first time such a thing

Thoreau's thoughts on civil disobedience appeared first in Elizabeth Peabody's Aesthetic Papers *of 1849.*

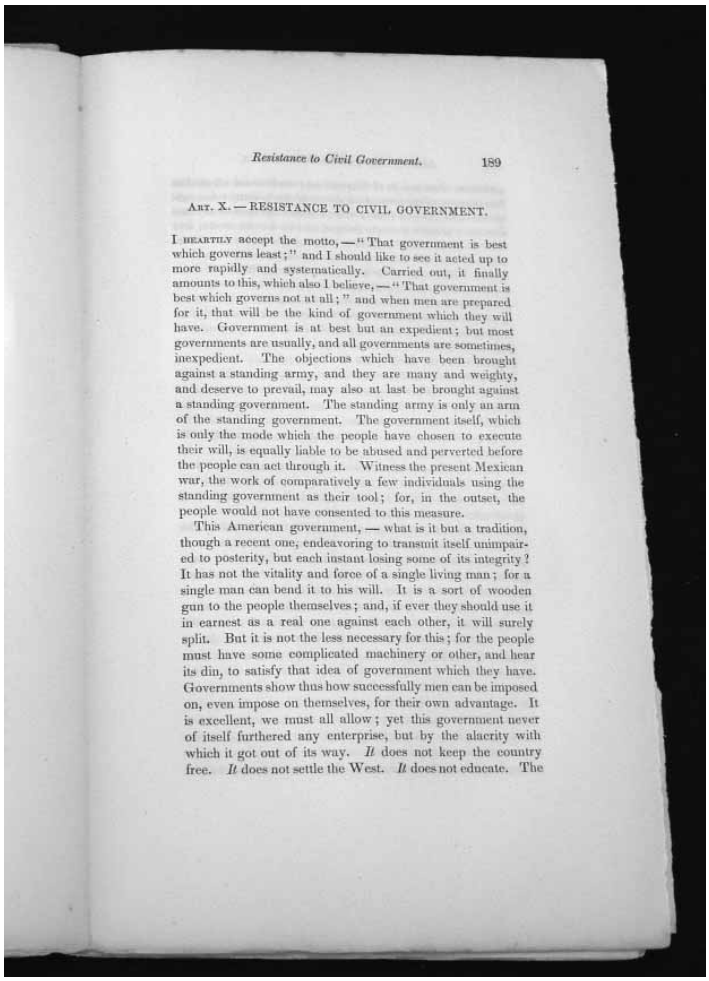

ÆSTHETIC PAPERS.

EDITED BY

ELIZABETH P. PEABODY.

"Beautie is not as fond men misdeeme,
An outward show of things that only seeme.
. . . . . .
Vouchsafe, then, O Thou most Almightie Spright!
From whom all gifts of wit and knowledge flow,
To shed into my breast some sparkling light
Of thine Eternall Truth, that I may show
Some little beames to mortall eyes below
Of that immortall Beautie, there with Thee,
Which in my weake distraughted mynd I see."
Spenser.

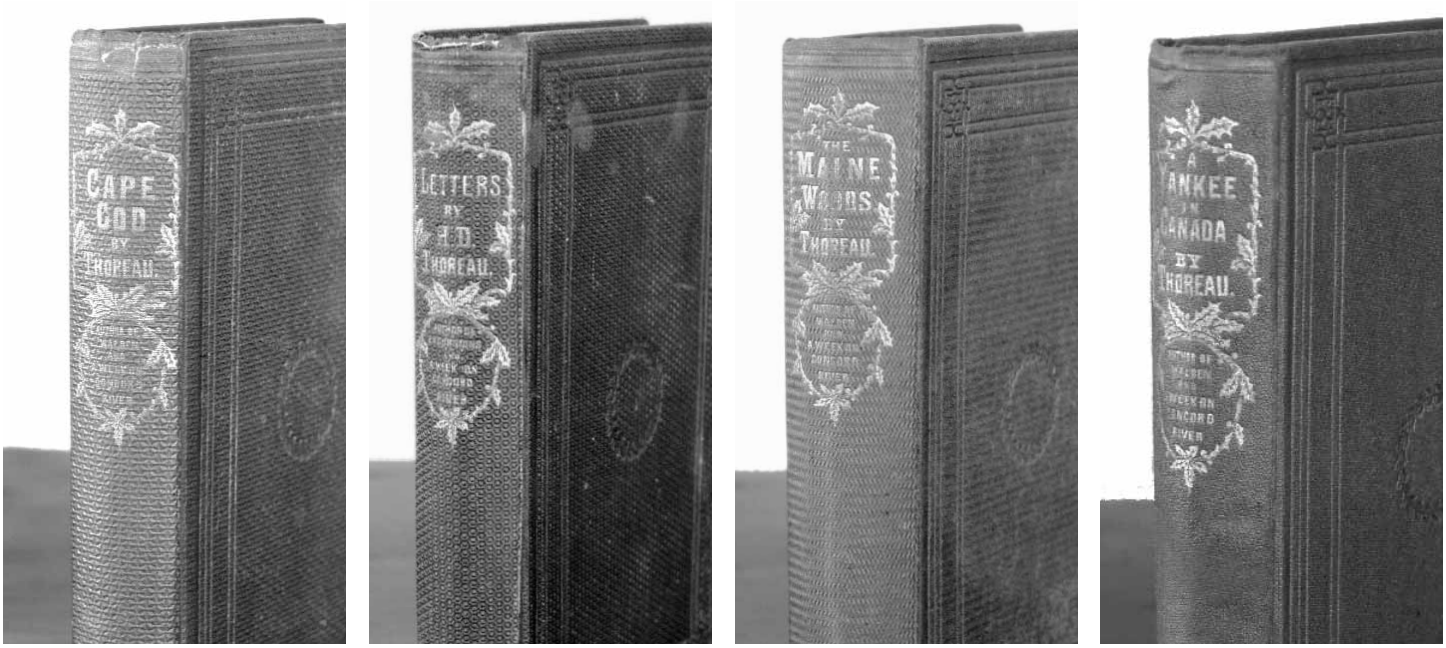
BOSTON:
THE EDITOR, 13, WEST STREET.
NEW YORK: G. P. PUTNAM, 155, BROADWAY.
1849.


Resistance to Civil Government. 189

ART. X. — RESISTANCE TO CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

I HEARTILY accept the motto, — "That government is best which governs least;" and I should like to see it acted up to more rapidly and systematically. Carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe, — "That government is best which governs not at all;" and when men are prepared for it, that will be the kind of government which they will have. Government is at best but an expedient; but most governments are usually, and all governments are sometimes, inexpedient. The objections which have been brought against a standing army, and they are many and weighty, and deserve to prevail, may also at last be brought against a standing government. The standing army is only an arm of the standing government. The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican war, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool; for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure.

This American government, — what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instant losing some of its integrity? It has not the vitality and force of a single living man; for a single man can bend it to his will. It is a sort of wooden gun to the people themselves; and, if ever they should use it in earnest as a real one against each other, it will surely split. But it is not the less necessary for this; for the people must have some complicated machinery or other, and hear its din, to satisfy that idea of government which they have. Governments show thus how successfully men can be imposed on, even impose on themselves, for their own advantage. It is excellent, we must all allow; yet this government never of itself furthered any enterprise, but by the alacrity with which it got out of its way. *It* does not keep the country free. *It* does not settle the West. *It* does not educate. The



After Thoreau's death, Ticknor and Fields brought out uniform editions of Cape Cod, Letters, The Maine Woods, *and* A Yankee in Canada.

had happened. Abolitionists in several Massachusetts towns had refused to pay the tax as a protest against an "unjust" government. Three years earlier, Thoreau's neighbor, Bronson Alcott, had refused to pay the tax. Much to his irritation, his family had paid it for him to keep him out of jail.

In Thoreau's case, not long after his family learned the news, one of them (probably his Aunt Maria) went to the jail, knocked on the door, and left sufficient funds to pay Henry's tax. But by that time, Staples had retired for the night, so Henry remained incarcerated until the following morning. When Staples came to release him, Henry protested on the ground that he had not himself paid the tax. But Staples threw him out anyway.

Henry's arrest and release naturally provoked considerable controversy among his neighbors, including Emerson, who thought Henry in the wrong. He is reported to have asked Henry why he had gone to jail. Henry replied, "Why did you not?"

So many people asked Henry about it that he wrote up a lecture explaining his position and delivered it to the Concord Lyceum on January 26, 1848, a year and a half after the arrest. In this address, he staked out the position that there is a higher law than civil law; and that when the two conflict, the citizen's duty is to obey the former, even if it means going to jail.

A little over a year later, in the spring of 1849, Elizabeth Peabody, Hawthorne's sister-in-law, wrote to Henry asking permission to include his lecture in her new periodical, to be called *Aesthetic Papers*. The Peabodys were a prominent family. Hawthorne had married the youngest daughter, Sophia, in 1842. At the time he received Elizabeth's request, Henry was reviewing the proofs of the Concord/Merrimack book. He complied with her request on condition that she include it in the first issue of her periodical.

The first issue of *Aesthetic Papers* appeared in mid-May, 1849. It contained Thoreau's "Resistance To Civil Government,"[10] and also Emerson's essay, "War," and Hawthorne's story, "Main Street."

Miss Peabody, in her introductory "Prospectus," wrote that she intended to publish a new "number" whenever "a sufficient quantity of valuable matter shall be accumulated to fill 256 pages. This will in no case happen more than twice a year; perhaps not oftener than once a year." But demand was a factor as well as supply. "[W]ho ever is so far pleased with the current number to desire another is requested to send an order to that effect to the Editor, who is also the Publisher.... When a sufficient number of orders are given to pay for the publication, including compensation to the authors, a new number will be printed." The subscription price was set at $1.00 per copy; the bookstore price was to be $1.25.

We do not know whether there turned out to be an insufficient quantity of "valuable matter," or an inadequate number of those "so far pleased" as to desire another. We only know that this first issue was also the final issue.

My copy of *Aesthetic Papers* consists of the original unbound sheets, unsewn, uncut, and unopened.

Thoreau's essay attracted virtually no notice upon its first appearance in 1849. It later appeared in a collection of his essays published after his death, entitled *A Yankee in Canada, With Anti-Slavery and Reform Papers*, Boston, 1866. Here the essay took on the more familiar title, "Civil Disobedience," by which it has been known to generations of moral leaders and college students. The line from the Transcendentalists, with their elevation of individualism and individual judgment in issues of morality and conduct, stretches through Emerson and Thoreau, via John Brown and Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., all the way to the freedom riders of Mississippi in 1961 and to the "days of rage" in Chicago in 1969.

Henry lived at Walden Pond a little over two years and two months. It was not long before his Concord neighbors

See ***THOREAU****, page 8*

THOREAU, *from page 7*
began asking him questions about why he had chosen to live by himself in the woods, how he was able to provide for himself, and what he did with his free time. To answer these questions, he undertook a series of lectures, which he delivered beginning in February 1847 in Concord, Salem, Portland, and other nearby towns—all drawing on his experiences living at Walden Pond. These lectures were the beginnings of his great book.

Henry's acquaintance and unofficial literary agent, Horace Greeley, published in the New York *Tribune* a letter Henry had written about life at Walden. Henry was sufficiently pleased with the way it turned out that he inserted several of these paragraphs into his *Walden* manuscript. The book was slowly taking shape.

In September 1850, Henry and his friend Ellery Channing took a train excursion to Canada where they spent several days exploring Quebec and Montreal, and the scenery and falls along the St. Lawrence. This trip stimulated Henry to work up a lecture, parts of which were published (unsigned) as an article in the new *Putnam's Monthly*. The first section of the essay appeared in the January 1853 issue; and successive sections appeared in February and March. But when the editor and Thoreau disagreed over proposed editorial changes (dealing primarily with remarks that might have been construed as anti-Catholic), publication of the essay halted—with less than half of it in print.

The entire essay did not appear until 1866, four years after Thoreau's death, when it was published in its complete form—along with "Civil Disobedience"—in *A Yankee In Canada*.

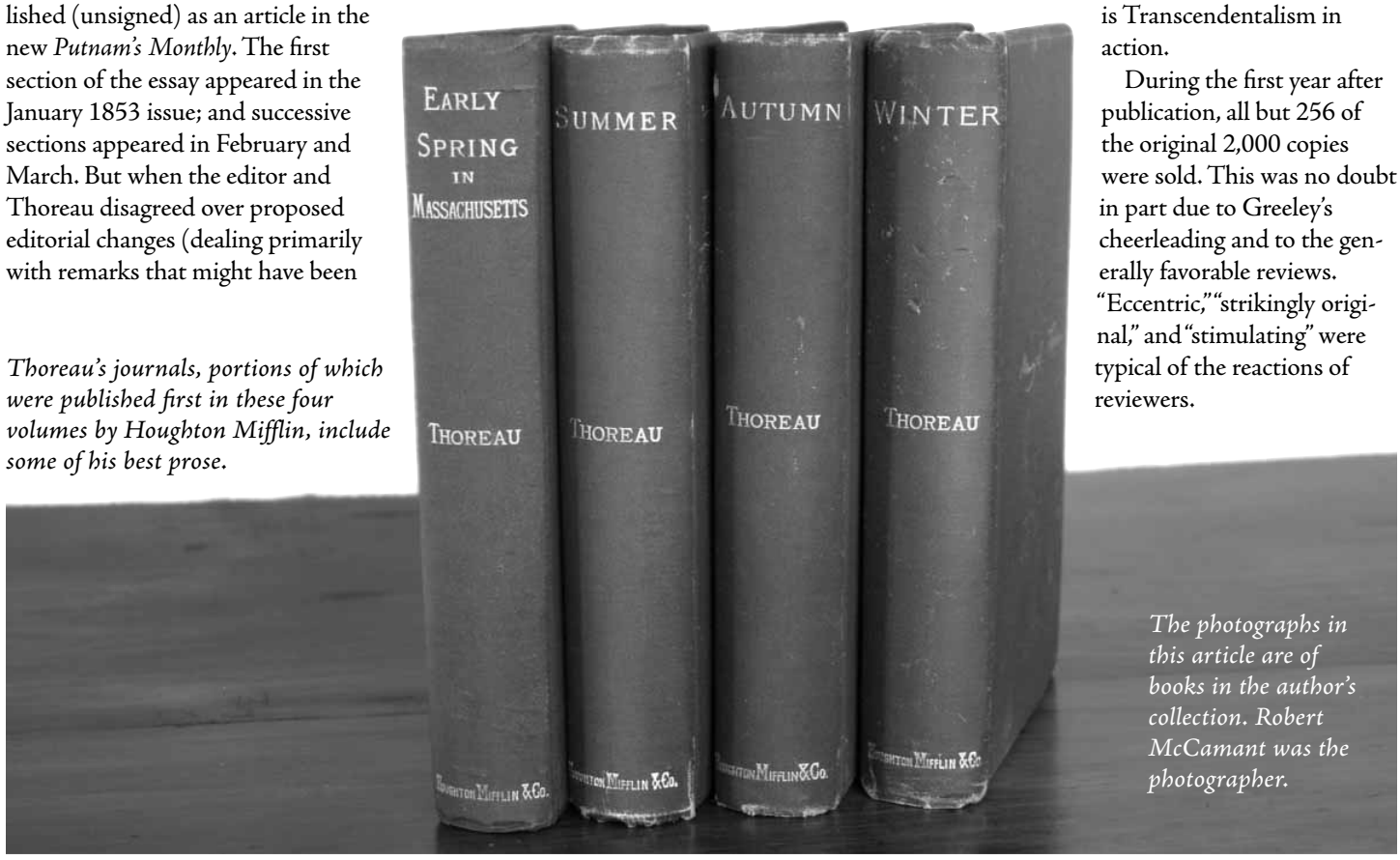
Another of the papers to appear in *A Yankee In Canada* was an address Henry delivered in July 4, 1854, at an anti-slavery gathering in Framingham. His talk had been precipitated by the arrest in Boston of a fugitive slave named Anthony Burns, who was later shipped back (temporarily) to slavery in Virginia. In his speech, Thoreau went beyond the passive resistance argument of his earlier essay and advocated a more activist posture against the acts of a wicked government.

He also continued to work over his *Walden* manuscript, the first version of which he had composed in 1846-47. He rewrote major sections in 1849, 1852, and again in 1853. Much of the material came from his journals of 1850-54.[11] Some pieces became lectures. Others appeared in magazines or newspapers. In early 1854, he took a further revised version to Ticknor & Fields, who had become by that time the leading literary publishing firm in the country. They agreed to publish the manuscript, giving Thoreau 15% royalties (the standard at that time was 10%). Revisions and proofreading continued through the spring of 1854. Meanwhile, Horace Greeley gave the forthcoming book ample advance publicity in the columns of the *Tribune*.

Walden was published on August 9, 1854, in an edition of 2,000 copies. Henry had celebrated his 37th birthday a month before. The book, bound in brown, blind-stamped cloth, sold for $1.00, of which Henry received his royalty of 15 cents per copy. Thoreau's survey map of Walden Pond was one of the two illustrations, the other being his sister's drawing of his cabin. My copy once belonged to Thoreau's Concord neighbor, Simon D. Hatch.

Walden is regarded by some as a "nature book," which of course it is. But as Harding, Thoreau's biographer, observed, it is also "a guide book to a higher life."[12] It is Transcendentalism in action.

During the first year after publication, all but 256 of the original 2,000 copies were sold. This was no doubt in part due to Greeley's cheerleading and to the generally favorable reviews. "Eccentric," "strikingly original," and "stimulating" were typical of the reactions of reviewers.



Thoreau's journals, portions of which were published first in these four volumes by Houghton Mifflin, include some of his best prose.

The photographs in this article are of books in the author's collection. Robert McCamant was the photographer.

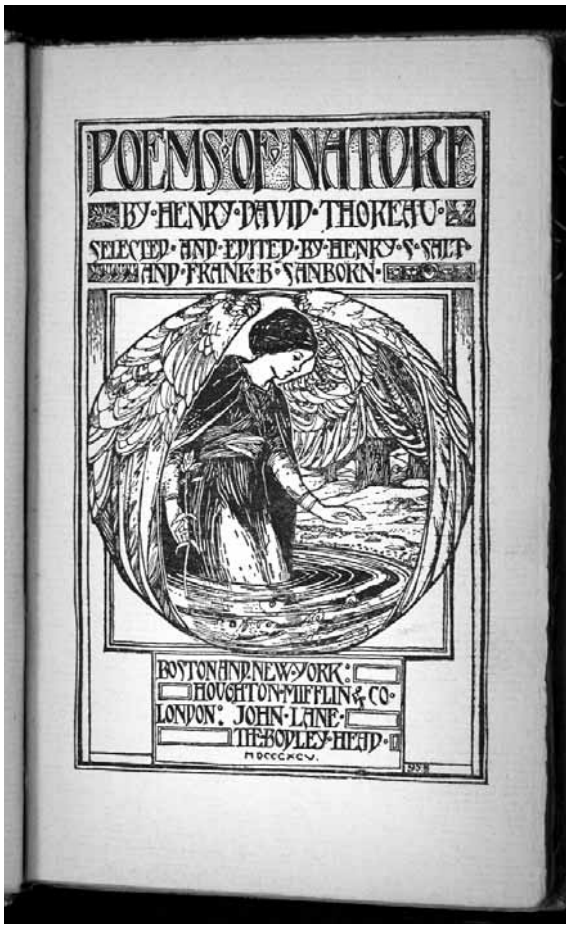
Walden was the second—and last—of Thoreau's books to be published during his lifetime. The second printing of *Walden* from the original stereotype plates did not appear until a few weeks before his death in 1862. Since then, it has never been out of print.

Thoreau's work continued to appear in magazines. Part of his essay on his trips to Cape Cod, for example, appeared (unsigned) in *Putnam's*[13] , which had earlier published part of the essay "Yankee in Canada." The full text of the Cape Cod piece was published after his death in a collection, *Cape Cod*, Boston, 1865. Harding calls it his "sunniest, happiest book… bubbl[ing] over with jokes, puns, tall tales, and genial good humor."[14]

In late 1856, Henry and his friend Bronson Alcott paid a visit to Walt Whitman in Brooklyn. Henry was already familiar with Whitman's poems through Emerson, who had highly praised *Leaves of Grass* when it first appeared a year before, in 1855. Thoreau owned a copy of the 1855 first edition.[15] Almost no one became chummy with Thoreau, but Whitman and he seem to have enjoyed a mutually respectful conversation. Thoreau told Alcott as they were leaving that Walt was "a grand man," and he later praised *Leaves* to friends. As they departed, Whitman inscribed a copy of the new, much-expanded 1856 version of *Leaves* to Thoreau. Just thinking of that copy makes one salivate.

Henry continued his personal studies of plant and animal life and made periodic trips—to Cape Cod, Maine, and New Hampshire. He also gave occasional lectures.

He had met John Brown, leader of the anti-slavery forces in "bleeding" Kansas, in 1857 and again in 1859 when Brown was traveling in the East raising money for his guerrilla activities. When news of Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry in October 1859 reached Concord, Thoreau was moved to prepare a lecture in defense of Brown's conduct. He delivered his speech on October 30, 1859, at the Concord Town Hall and repeated it in Boston on November 1, filling Tremont Temple, one of the largest auditoriums in Boston. At least one newspaper published the entire speech. In it Thoreau moved beyond a defense of passive disobedience (refusal to pay his poll tax) to support for the leader of an armed insurrection against the government. When Brown was executed on December 2, 1859 ("Old Governor Wise put the goggles on his eyes"), Thoreau participated in a memorial service in Concord.



Thoreau might have been amused by the elaborate title page of his posthumously-published Poems of Nature.

His October 30 Concord speech, "A Plea for Captain John Brown," and a companion piece, "The Last Days of John Brown," appeared in the posthumous volume, *A Yankee in Canada*, 1866, immediately following his great essay, "Civil Disobedience." Read them today—they ring out with a Cromwellian righteousness and anger, conveying the passions that swelled within the abolitionist movement in New England before the War:

> It was [Brown's] peculiar doctrine that a man has a perfect right to interfere by force with the slaveholder, in order to rescue the slave. I agree with him.… I think that for once the Sharpe's rifles and the revolvers were employed in a righteous cause.
> ***
> I am here to plead his case with you. I plead not for his life, but for his character,—his immortal life; and so it becomes your cause wholly, and is not his in the least. Some eighteen hundred years ago Christ was crucified; this morning, perchance, Captain Brown was hung. These are two ends of a chain which is not without its links. He is not Old Brown any longer; he is an angel of light.
> I see now that it was necessary that the bravest and humanest man in all the country should be hung.[16]

At age 43 in mid-1860, Thoreau was clearly not an old man, but his health was failing. He gave a few lectures. He studied tree growth patterns by analyzing annual rings in tree stumps. In December, 1860, a cold turned into what was called bronchitis—almost certainly a recurrence of tuberculosis.

Early in the next year, 1861, he suffered serious coughing episodes and was confined to his house. When spring came, he was able to get out for brief walks. He even managed a train trip in May 1861, via Chicago to St. Paul and back, but it left him weaker. In the fall, his friends reported that he had lost weight, and that his fits of coughing were worse.

During the last few months of his life, Thoreau refused to see doctors. He made the last entry in his Journal on November 3, 1861. The winter added to his discomfort.

In February 1862, Thoreau wrote to Fields about the possibility of a new edition of *Walden* and reminded him that he still had the 450 unbound sets of pages of *Concord/Merrimack* in his attic.

On April 12, 1862, Fields came to Concord and purchased all the unsold copies (both bound and unbound) of *Concord/Merrimack*. He reissued the unbound copies with a new title page and binding two months later. But by that time,

See **THOREAU**, *page 10*

THOREAU, *from page 9*
Thoreau had died, on May 6, 1862.

Emerson read the eulogy at his memorial service. He was buried in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, east of the village center.

Thoreau's collected essays appeared over the next four years, all published by Ticknor & Fields: *Excursions,* 1863 (1500 copies); *The Maine Woods*, 1864 (1450 copies); *Cape Cod*, 1865 (2000 copies); *Letters to Various Persons*, 1865 (2100 copies); and *A Yankee in Canada*, 1866 (1500 copies). The 1865 volume of *Letters* was the first edition of Thoreau's correspondence and was prepared for publication by Emerson. At the end of this volume, Emerson included in an appendix those few of Thoreau's poems he believed worthy of saving for posterity.

Thoreau's poetry was not collected into a separate book until 1895, when his Concord friend, Frank Sanborn, brought together two-thirds of those which had been preserved into a single volume, *Poems of Nature*, London, 1895. There were only 750 copies, 250 of which constituted the American issue.

The first publication of major selections from his Journal—perhaps his greatest literary achievement—consisted of four volumes, edited by another of Thoreau's friends, H.G.O. Blake, beginning in 1881: *Early Spring in Massachusetts*, 1881; *Summer*, 1884; *Autumn*, 1892; and *Winter*, 1888.

Thoreau's works—his essays, books, and journal—were later collected in a 20-volume set in 1906. In 1966 a new scholarly edition was begun under the auspices of the National Endowment for the Humanities, published by Princeton University Press. This new edition, *The Writings of Henry D. Thoreau*, will consist of 30 volumes, 14 of which have been published to date.

Thoreau was as much a puzzle to his contemporaries as he is to modern readers. Some respected and valued him greatly. Others thought him bizarre. His young friend, Abby Hosmer, was fascinated by his ability to absorb himself in the natural world:

> One day…we children saw Mr. Thoreau standing right down there across the road near the Assabet. He stood very still, and we knew he was watching something in the water. But we knew we must not disturb him, and so we stayed up here in the dooryard. At noontime he was still there, watching something in the water. And he stayed there all afternoon.
> At last, though along about supper time, he came up here to the house. And then we children knew that we'd learn what it was he'd been watching. He'd found a duck that had just hatched out a nest of eggs. She had brought the little ducks down to the water. And Mr. Thoreau had watched all day to see her teach those little ducks about the river.[17]

What a young Abby Hosmer found enchanting, some of Thoreau's older acquaintances found offensive or incomprehensible. An old farmer neighbor of his ran into him one day out near a mud pond, but this time he was watching the frogs:

> [H]e wasn't doin' nothin' but just standin' there—lookin' at that pond, and when I came back at noon, there he was standin' with his hands behind him just lookin' down into that pond, and after dinner when I came back again if there wan't *Da*-a-vid standin' there just like as if he had been there all day, gazin' down into that pond, and I stoped and looked at him and I says, 'Da-a-vid Henry, what air you a-doin?' And he didn't turn his head and he didn't look at me. He kept on lookin' down at that pond, and he said, as if he was thinkin' about the stars in the heavens, 'Mr. Murray, I'm a-studyin'—the habits—of the bullfrog!' And there that darned fool had been standin'—the livelong day—a-*studyin'*—the habits—of the *bull*-frog!'[18]

Thoreau didn't mind—or if he did, he didn't let on. He lived and thought for himself—freshly. What other people thought didn't seem to matter much. He embodied the Emersonian fascination with nature and independence of judgment. His great book, *Walden*, follows no one else's pattern.

Today, it is not Thoreau's fixation with ducks or frogs that elicits different responses. It is his papers on civil disobedience and, particularly, John Brown. Brown was perhaps America's most articulate thug. Far from an "angel of light," he was an ice-cold-blooded killer. Lincoln's point applied fully to him and people like him: If the minority has the right to secede whenever it disagrees with the majority, then there is no democracy. If an individual can, in effect, secede whenever he or she believes a law is immoral—and if that is a principle which all can equally follow—then there is no civil government.

Thoreau's life and doctrine represent in a sense the high point of American individualism. He would have been right at home in Chicago in 1969.

NOTES

[1] For basic biographical details of Thoreau's life, I rely primarily on two books by Walter Harding: *The Days of Henry Thoreau*, New York, 1962, and *Thoreau as Seen By His Contemporaries*, New York, 1989. For bibliographic information, I have used Borst, Raymond, *Henry David Thoreau, A Descriptive Bibliography*, Pittsburgh, 1982; Shanley, J. Lyndon, *The Making of Walden,* Chicago, 1957, and the *Bibliography of American Literature* (*BAL*). Professor Elizabeth Witherell, editor of the new edition of Thoreau's writings now being published by Princeton University Press, kindly read the manuscript of this article, made helpful suggestions, and helped me avoid errors.

[2] Boston, 1836

[3] Harding, *Days*, p. 64.

[4] Harding, *Thoreau As Seen,* p. 154-55, 175.

[5] Harding, *Days*, p. 104.

[6] Harding, *Days*, p. 119.

[7] Letter, March 12, 1847

[8] Harding, *Days*, p. 247

[9] Thoreau, *Journal*, V, 459.

[10] P. 189-211

[11] See Shanley's *The Making of Walden*, Chicago, 1957, for details.

[12] Harding, *Days*, p. 334.

[13] June, July, August, 1855

[14] Harding, *Days*, p. 361.

[15] Catalogue of the Wakeman Collection, 1924, item 1071.

[16] *A Yankee In Canada*, 174-175, 179.

[17] Harding, *Thoreau As Seen*, p. 182.

[18] *Ibid*., p. 153.

An Illinois Yankee in the Pope's Library

Introduction in hand, our reporter ventures past the armed guards and into the *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*

Junie Sinson

I entered St. Peter's Basilica in Rome in search of the Vatican Library.[1] As I veered to the right, I saw a line of metal detectors staffed by multiple security guards. I remained confident. In my hand was a letter of introduction from an Illinois bishop, and I was certain that I would soon be in the Vatican Library. My objective was to do research relating to St. Thomas' *Summa Theologica*. I specifically wanted to review manuscripts that contained St. Thomas' writings on Natural Law.

After a thorough inspection of my person, I continued to move to the right. I soon reached stairs that I assumed would be my portal of entry. At the top of the stairs were two knickers-clad members of the Pope's Swiss Guard. Their bright orange-colored garb, I had anticipated. I had not foreseen that one of them would be locked at attention and holding a six-foot spear.

I explained my mission to the guard and showed him my credentials. I was informed that I was at the wrong entrance and that I had to find Porta Santa Anna. He advised me that I would have to depart the Basilica, leave the Vatican, and go out onto the adjacent streets. There on my left, I would then find the entrance to the area that housed the Vatican Library and the Vatican Archives. The second Swiss Guard remained at attention. He continued to look menacing and continued to grip his spear tightly.

It was at that moment that I speculated that I was about to engage in an extraordinary venture. I concluded that I might be proceeding like Mark Twain's A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. This Illinois Yankee in Pope John Paul II's Library was beginning his quest.

After I made several wrong turns, the elusive driveway was discovered. It, not surprisingly, was also protected by members of the Swiss Guard. They seemed somewhat less menacing in their blue pantaloons absent any spears. I told them my objective and showed them my letter of introduction. They let me pass and directed me to a small door approximately 75 feet ahead.

On passing through that door, I learned that I was in the Pass Office. There I filled out a form, and again showed my passport and letter of introduction. I received an Admission Pass that allowed me to exit the Pass Office. I made a right turn and moved ten feet only to be confronted with two very serious police-type guards.

They looked at my pass, my credentials and then directed me down a roadway to an arch that would allow me to enter a compound which housed both the entrance to the Vatican Archives and the Vatican Library. It was raining fairly hard as I approached the arch. There, a second line of guards stopped me. They looked at my credentials and directed me to the first door on the right which I was told was the entrance to the Vatican Library.

As I entered the door, I was met and directed about fifty feet to an area that had three chairs. The area also had two doors in which the glass had been covered to prevent inward viewing. Over the doors was a big sign that said "The Secretary." I took the third seat and looked at my waiting companions: one was a rather attractive blonde woman, and the other an elderly gentlemen who looked like a scholar from Eastern Europe. We seemed to have little in common and neither of them smiled. We waited quite some time for the doors to open. I was sure that I had experienced this wait in some story by Kafka and that impression did not prove relaxing. Finally, the door opened and a man exited. He appeared to be unharmed and the blonde woman then entered. After about fifteen minutes, she exited "The Secretary's" office. The routine was repeated and eventually I entered.

First, I showed my letter of introduction from the Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago, Rev. Thomas J. Poprocki. Next, I showed my passport, and finally identified the Vatican Library's Director of the Printed Books Department who was expecting my arrival. Without any explanation, a series of very serious phone calls was made by my interrogator. I did not know what was being said. I was directed to a chair where my picture was taken. After an additional wait, a two-day library pass card, with my picture, was produced. I was then directed out of the Secretary's Office to the entrance area from which I had initially entered the building. The guard gave me a key bearing "Number 14." That was done after he made sure that the man pictured on his screen resembled me, my library card, and my passport. With that key, I went to a locker bearing number 14 and deposited all of my possessions except for the material I would be allowed to use in the Library.

"The walls contained paintings of various former Popes. It was obvious that they, like the library aides, were not smiling."

I was then directed by the guard to some marble steps, and at their top I found a cell-like elevator that looked more threatening than the stairwell. I elected to ascend the stairs, but after the second floor, I realized I had made a bad decision. Short of breath, I reached the top and realized I was about to enter the Library's vestibule.

From the vestibule, one door led into the Printed Books and Reading Room. A second door led into the Manuscript Reading Room. On entering the Printed Books Room, I saw that it was a narrow room approximately 150 ft. long and 30 ft. wide. At the place of entrance was a counter behind which was a group of non-smiling library aides. The ceiling of this long room was beautifully decorated and arched. The walls contained paintings of various former Popes. It was obvious that they, like the library aides, were not smiling. At the far end of the room was a desk used by the

See ***VATICAN LIBRARY****, page 12*

VATICAN LIBRARY, *from page 11*
Director of the Printed Book Collection, Father William Sheehan.

THE VATICAN LIBRARY COLLECTION

Let us divert from my venture and discuss this facility which had accepted me. The Vatican Library possesses a history marked by war, plunder, fire, inspiration, collecting, and scholarship. In 1303, King Philip IV of France plundered what was the then existing Papal book collection. The departure of the Papacy to Avignon in 1305 compromised the collection. In 1450, Pope Nicholas V, a humanist collector, began the collecting of manuscripts. Pope Sixtus IV (1471-84) advanced not only the Sistine Chapel but also began the existing Vatican Library.

The Library acquired over the centuries many valuable collections. As a prize of war, it obtained the Palantine Library of Heidelberg collection in 1623. In 1658, it received the Duke of Urbano's collection of Renaissance manuscripts. Queen Christina of Sweden converted to Catholicism and gave her entire collection to the Vatican Library. Many well-known Italian families, like the Borgheses and Barberinis, donated their collections.

The collection has grown to 70,000 manuscripts. It contains 100,000 handwritten documents and numerous maps and engravings. The Printed Book Room, Sala degli Stampati, owns 1,000,000 printed books which include 7,200 incunabula.

USE OF THE FACILITY

The first aide I encountered, who could not speak English, signaled me to sign a sheet and instructed me to report to my selected seat location. He then took my key and told me to wait. I sat for approximately fifteen minutes at my seat and no one acknowledged my presence. I finally left my perceived post and approached a different library aide. I showed him my list of books. He examined my list of books and signaled to me that I was in the wrong room and directed me to the Manuscript Reading Room.

I retrieved my key and headed to the Manuscript Reading Room. There, I found a similarly narrow room about one-third the size of the Printed Book Room. At the end of the room was a large vault door. This room also had a counter manned by two non-smiling library aides. Adjacent to the entrance was a scholar whose desk and table were filled with notes and rare manuscripts with which he was working. I later learned that he was Dr. Paolo Vian, who proved, despite his lack of fluency in English, to be both friendly and helpful.

I went to the counter and presented my key and selected a seat assignment which was location 44. After surrendering my key, I returned to my seat and awaited my three manuscripts. There actually were a total of seven manuscripts I wanted to review. I was told that I could see only three of them in the morning. I was further told that I could, after use, return them and receive two new manuscripts that afternoon. If I wished to see my remaining two books, I would have to return the next day unless I could persuade someone to make an exception to their "five books per day rule."

After a thirty-minute wait, my three books appeared. I could take one at a time to my study area. To record my research, I was allowed a pencil, a ruler, a laptop computer and a magnifying glass. The room contained approximately twenty-five scholars looking at their manuscripts. Library rules required appropriate attire. The scholars were neatly dressed, but all men were not wearing coats and ties. The quiet that engulfed the room made it clear that they were enforcing their Rule of Strict Silence.

My fourth and fifth books could not be ordered that day until 2:00 p.m. They could not be delivered to me until the messenger returned from lunch. The two books were delivered at about 2:45 p.m. I worked until about 4:00 p.m. I returned my manuscripts. I retrieved my key and returned to the Printed Book Room where I explored the category "St. Thomas Aquinas" in a card catalogue which was in a side room, adjacent to the Printed Book Room. It also had dimensions of approximately 150 ft. x 30 ft. That room contained numerous computers that also identified the books in their collection. I made a list of books for the next day and prepared to leave just before the 5:00 p.m closing.

I left the library and reversed the procedures that had given me access to the library. I was relieved that I did not have to again visit The Secretary. I have, during a half century of engaging in professional legal litigation, not generally been intimidated by my venues. As I left the library, I felt totally exhausted by my day's experiences. Perhaps lawyers are more easily intimidated in libraries than those of you who have degrees in Library Science or frequently engage in scholarly research. Irrespective of my fatigue, I walked with a bounce as I anticipated my next day's research in what was gradually becoming a familiar forum.

The next day, I returned to the Vatican. I approached each checkpoint and confidently waived my Library Card at the sentinels. Entrance was quickly gained and with my new key, I retraced my steps. This time, I used the elevator.

The Papal manuscripts of St. Thomas' *Summa Theologica* are in every instance written in Latin and each contain marginalia in a strange form of shorthand. I was curious to know whether any of that marginalia was the shorthand of St. Thomas Aquinas.

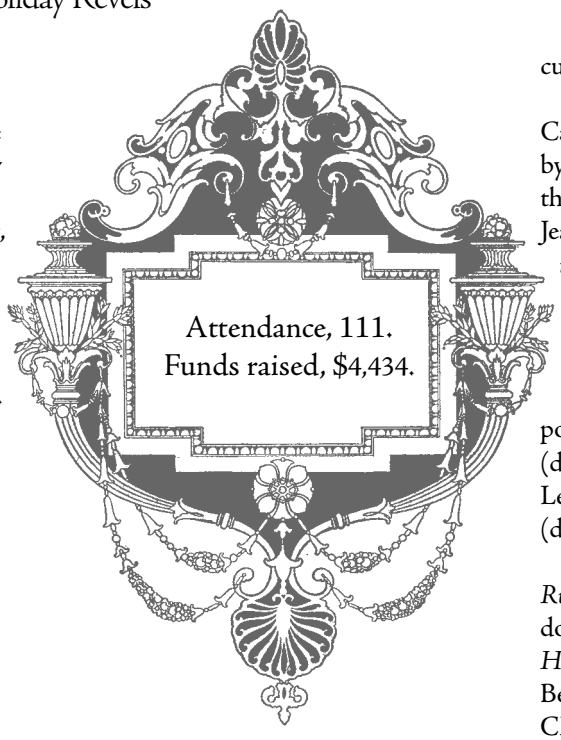
On this, my second day, on entering The Printed Book Room, I ordered three books. Books for the day in that room may total six in number. They must be ordered before 11:00 a.m. One book was catalogued as reflecting the handwriting of St. Thomas Aquinas. I requested and received that book. A photo duplicating procedure is available to any researcher. I advised the Director of the Printed Book Room of my wish to duplicate a page of Aquinas' writing. He informed me that the photo of St. Thomas's shorthand, which I wanted duplicated, was not possible. During my prior day's studies, I had ordered duplicating of several pages of rare manuscripts. The reason that my latest request to obtain photos of St. Thomas' shorthand would not be permitted was because the sample before me was but a copy of a manuscript owned by a distant convent. The pages could not be duplicated by the Vatican Library

See ***VATICAN LIBRARY****, page 14*

You Bid on Mine...

...and I'll Bid on Yours: the 2004 Holiday Revels

Dan Crawford



The Caxton Club's Holiday Revels were once again entirely symbolic of the holiday tradition: good food, something to drink with it, a sense of togetherness, jolly music, and just a TOUCH of greed and cut-throat competition. Getting so many booklovers together ensures a certain camaraderie, but also makes for a book auction filled with intrigue and conspiracy. Even with the Savoyaires providing music from Gilbert and Sullivan to soothe the savage breast, members found themselves drawn in by the array of rare, beautiful, and/or unusual auction offerings.

The Official Book Hauler and Statistician was again present. Like any fan of contact sports, he kept a list of interesting trivia:

Attendance: 111, the largest Caxton gathering since the opening of the "Inland Printers" exhibit

Bidders: 73

Buyers: 44

Donors: 48

Lots that arrived in time to make the catalog: 82

Lots brought to the auction and shoehorned in somehow among the other goodies: 7

Most auctioneers ever at a Caxton auction: 2, Kate Hammond and Alyssa Quinlan, who also turned into bidders during the silent auction

Items bid upon by the busiest bidder: 14

Items that bidder bought: 4

Items bid upon by the most active bidder who did not win a single thing: 7

Bidders who bid on their own donation: 3

Absentee bidders (whom we know about) 4

Bidders who wailed "Didn't I win that?" 3

Bidders who cried "Oh, good! I didn't win anything!" 2

Items most hovered over by zealous bidders: *Karta Ofver Sverige* (donated by Roger S. Baskes) and *The Story of Trinity Church, Highland Park* (donated by R.R.Donnelley & Sons)

Youngest donors: Mardy Sears and Benjamin Blount, this year's Caxton Club Scholarship recipients, donated a hand-made drop-spine box

Most distant donor: Lee J. Harrer sent books from Florida

Oldest item: There were two 15th century objects: a pair of illuminated leaves (donated by Michael Thompson) and an illustration of the Last Judgement from the *Nuremberg Chronicle* (donated by Adrian Alexander)

Newest item: *Just as Leaf*, a miniature book concerning leaf books, hot off the presses that week (donated—and printed, sewn, and illustrated—by Muriel Underwood)

Largest item: "Samantha," a signed, limited print of John Updike's remarks to his dog (donated by Junie L. Sinson)

Smallest item: *Olde Christmas* by Washington Irving (donated-and printed and bound and so on-by Suzanne Pruchnicki)

Heaviest item: Two large reference books appeared, *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* (donated by Bill Locke) and *Women Building Chicago* (donated by Adele Hast). By the way, both of these were purchased by the same athletic bidder

Items written, printed, or published by current or former Caxtonians: 28

Bibliophilic groups represented: The Caxton Club (*The Pickwick Papers*, donated by Morrell Shoemaker), The Brothers of the Book (*Peter and the Fairies*, donated by Jeanne Goessling), the Typophiles (*A Commonplace Book*, donated by Lee J. Harrer) and the Rowfant Club (*The Emerson-Clough Letters*, donated by R.R.Donnelley & Sons)

Books autographed by award-winning poets: *Collected Poems* of Vachel Lindsay (donated by Susan Hanes and George Leonard) and Mark Strand's *89 Clouds* (donated by An Anonymous Gentleman)

Obscure books by famous authors: *Villa Rubein* (John Galsworthy's 3d book, donated by Raymond Epstein) and *The Hero of Santa Maria* (the second book with Ben Hecht's name on it, donated by Charles Miner)

Book printed in the smallest edition without being unique: *Of Windes*, one of 25 copies (donated-and printed-by Bob Karrow)

First cookbook offered at a Caxton auction: *The Spanish Cook* (donated by Bob McCamant)

First audiobooks offered at a Caxton auction: a selection of books on tape or CD, ranging from *Diary of a Young Girl* to *The DaVinci Code* (donated by Dorothy Sinson)

Items by U.S. Presidents published during their lifetime: *My Life* by Bill Clinton (donated by Dorothy Sinson), *The Hornet's Nest* by Jimmy Carter (donated by Dorothy Sinson), and *Address to the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society* by Abraham Lincoln (donated by Thomas J. Joyce)

Books with metal dustjackets: *Elements* (donated by Robert S. Brooks)

Number of unbid-on silent auction lots included in the Surprise Lot at the end of the live auction: 7

Number of dollars raised: 4,434 (pending the collection of certain IOUs)

Best bargain of the evening: Deciding to attend the Revels instead of staying home to watch "Mr. Supersmellysneakers Saves Christmas"

VATICAN LIBRARY, *from page 12*
without the convent's permission.

All of my efforts and requests were not frustrated. I next returned to the Manuscript Room. I again presented my key, ordered my final two books, and visited with the Director of the Manuscript Room. I expressed to him my confusion in locating the numbered Questions applicable to my research. He patiently explained to me why the Aquinas dialogue, in many of the manuscripts, contained conflicting language although bearing identical Question numbers. I completed my review of the manuscripts. I completed my study and returned my books. I then retrieved my key and prepared to depart.

I no longer felt intimidated. I had been perplexed by the seeming inattention, the inflexible rules of deportment, and the disdain to my needs. I did appreciate that the apparent disdain had been more due to my inability to speak Italian than the aides' unwillingness to cooperate.

Later, when I had reported to the former Head of the Vatican's Archives my frustration with what often seemed like arbitrary rules, the Monsignor gently reminded me that I had not been in a public library. He explained that I was being permitted to see and study the personal collection of Pope John Paul II. That reminder seemed reasonable to me and reinforced the special nature of my study and the special nature of my experience.

"The reason that my latest request to obtain photos of St. Thomas' shorthand would not be permitted was because the sample before me was but a copy of a manuscript owned by a distant convent. The pages could not be duplicated by the Vatican Library without the convent's permission."

This primer was intended as a roadmap for anyone wishing to study a portion of the Vatican's collection. If you follow the above outlined procedure, you will still be like Twain's Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. You also could well be labeled an Illinois Yankee in Pope John Paul II's Library. Irrespective of labels, you will know that you have had an extraordinary research experience in a very special place.

EDITOR'S NOTE

[1]The episode recounted took place before the Pontiff's recent illness. As the *Caxtonian* was going to press, he was recuperating. The author and editors hope for his full recovery.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Vatican Library, Its History and Treasures. Edited under the patronage of His Eminence Alfons Maria Cardinal Sticler and Prefect of the Vatican Library, Father Leonard Eugene Boyl. Besler Incorporated, Publishers, 1989.

Rules for Readers in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Web site of Vatican Library

---

Coming in May:
Virtue and Vandalism: The Ethics of Breaking Books
A Symposium sponsored by the Caxton Club at the Newberry Library
May 20, 2005, 1 pm to 4 pm; reception following

On May 20, in conjunction with the leaf book exhibition at the Newberry, the club will sponsor a symposium on the ethics and the economics of making leaf books. Four speakers will represent unique viewpoints on this controversial subject. The event is open to the public, free, and no reservations are needed.

The first speaker will be Sarah Harding, an Associate Professor of Law at the Chicago-Kent College of Law and Co-Director of the Institute for Law and the Humanities. She will address the broader legal and ethical context in which cultural property is protected worldwide, and will explain how concern for this protection has recently evolved into a serious movement within the international legal community.

Paul Gehl, Custodian of the John M. Wing Foundation on the History of Printing at the Newberry Library, and a member of our Club, will speak about the preservation of cultural property, including printed books, from the perspective of a curator at an independent research institution.

Max Yela, Special Collection Librarian at the University of Wisconsin/Milwaukee, will address the same issue, but from the perspective of using leaf books and individual leaves for pedagogical purposes at a teaching institution.

Finally, John Windle, an antiquarian bookseller from San Francisco, will address the economics of leaf books: who buys them (that group would include many of our own members), what they're worth, and how they're marketed. John not only sells leaf books but was actually responsible for the production of one involving the *Kelmscott Chaucer.*

Collectors and Their Collections
Sunday, May 22, 2-4 pm
Caryl Seidenberg: The Vixen Press
360 Ridge Avenue, Winnetka

Caryl's home is also home to her Vixen Press, and she will be showing us both examples of her work from the past 30 years and also the machinery and techniques she has mastered in producing hand-made books of exceptional beauty. Caryl has published her own work and illustrations as well as works by Robert Pinsky, Saul Bellow, and others, using hand-set type and unusual formats. She will show us how her hand press and slug-casting work and give us a hands-on view of how fine-art books are made.

Because space is limited, advance reservations are necessary, and attendance must be limited to 20. The cost is $25.00. Refreshments will be served. Please call the Club at (312) 255-3710 if you would like to attend.

Caxtonians Collect: Helen Sclair

Fifth in a series of interviews with members

Interviewed by Kathryn R. J. Tutkus

Helen Sclair lives in a house on the grounds of the Bohemian National Cemetery at Foster and Pulaski. She says "one of the joys of living here is that I have parking for hundreds." The cemetery is 126 landscaped acres bordered on one side by the Chicago River. The house was built in 1924 for the comptroller of the cemetery. The other two homes were built for the groundskeeper and the superintendent. That superintendent died 20 years ago and his house has remained vacant since. Not because of ghosts—Sclair insists she hasn't heard a peep—but because the next superintendent preferred to keep his family in the home they'd made in the suburbs.

Sclair tells me the cemetery is one of the earliest ethnic cemeteries. The unconfirmed story is that a woman was refused burial in the family's chosen cemetery because she did not receive last rights. The family had to bury her in Graceland. So the Bohemians said this would never happen again and opened their own cemetery.

Cemeteries were/are a good business. The land is tax exempt. In the old days the surplus money was used to run orphanages and old peoples homes. She says, "I just love the intricacies; no one writes about this stuff."

Sclair loves to do research. When she first started, "the entire Chicago Public Library collection of books on cemeteries amounted to something like 18 books." So she started advertising, and amassed her current collection of books and ephemera. When she was collecting something purchased from an antique store or a person who had answered her advertisement, "it was 10 or 25 cents. Now with E-Bay it is priced right out of my market."

When she moved to her new home in 2001 her entire back room was packed, floor to ceiling, and spilled over into the rest of her home. It is a collection that she describes and titles, "a collection related to cemeteries and the death care industries." Her ephemera includes, among other interesting objects, receipt books from burial societies from the times when burial services were routinely paid for on a layaway plan; Georgia Marble Company Sales books; a Sears Roebuck catalog of Monuments (Sears was in the monument business from about 1902 to 1985); thank you notes on white with black bordered paper; a three dimensional jigsaw puzzle of the Taj Ma'hal; casket lid metal plates engraved with the name of the deceased, the birth and death date; prayer cards; fans advertising mortuaries and ambulance services; a plate advertising the tallest woman buried, and an advertisement for a casket company featuring Felix the cat.

In her research about restoring gravestones, she found that many of them are man-made using artificial materials and asbestos, a carcinogen that is actually mined from the earth. Around 1905 a Chicago company had serious problems getting whole pieces of Carrera marble, so they used pieces and marble dust, and molded statuary. The company had a branch in Canada that exported the asbestos, and the fiber of that was mixed with marble dust and also molded into statuary.

Sclair stopped the restoration of a statue in the Fort Sheridan Cemetery by warning the company contracted to do the work that it would not be feasible to restore the asbestos-ridden statue. She stopped the restoration of the Greenstone church in Pullman; it was made entirely of asbestos. As if the asbestos threat weren't enough, between 1840 and 1920 the embalming fluid of choice was arsenic. It is a myth that there is a law that people must be embalmed. This material is getting into our water tables, and is a genuine concern of hers. She wonders, "Is the water filtration plant making allowances to take this all out?" There is also a concern about lead. Ribbon lead is used to put stones together and is now squeezing out of the monuments. "Children might think that this is a wonderful thing to play with."

Helen joined the Caxton Club more than a year ago. She became acquainted with the Club through Dan Crawford and Evelyn Lampe when she volunteered for the Newberry Library Book Fair. For now she is sorting and cataloging her many pieces. At the time of this writing she said this effort will be completed very soon. She also teaches classes at the Newberry Library, gives tours, and has a number of speaking engagements lined up.

When asked her favorite thing to read she demurs. Finally she comes up with a favorite book: *The Loved One* by Evelyn Waugh. She also loves reading bibliographies, which makes her a thoroughgoing Caxtonian.

Bookmarks...

Luncheon Program
April 8, 2005
Steve Tomashefsky
"2004, the Year of my Audubon Odyssey"

Although it has been 154 years since the death of John James Audubon (1851), there has been a significant revival of interest in the persona and works of this extraordinary naturalist, artist and author. Last year alone saw the publication of three new Audubon biographies. Christie's auctioned off a magnificent set of Audubon prints, a prior owner having been HRH Adelaide, Queen of England.

Caxtonian Steve Tomashefsky will tell us about his attendance and bidding at this auction, why Audubon's work has such enduring appeal and his influnces on future ornithological illustration and writing. Steve will illustrate with items from his collection.

Steve's book-collecting interests through the years have included Sherlockiana, William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement, English usage, food and wine, and most recently: ornithology. Steve is presently a partner in the law firm of Jenner and Block. His wife, Rebecca Sive, is a leading collector of modern American ceramics, so she can't complain about all his books.

Dinner Program
April 20, 2005
Christopher de Hamel
"Single Leaves" and gala opening of Leaf Book exhibit

Bibliophilic scholar Christopher de Hamel will be the keynote speaker at the gala dinner opening of "Disbound and Dispersed: The Leaf Book Considered," the club's traveling exhibit which makes its first appearance at the Newberry Library. His talk will establish the context of the exhibit, including the history of the leaf book genre as well as its cultural significance.

De Hamel is the Donnelley Fellow Librarian and Sandars Reader in Bibliography for 2004 at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge University. "There are two themes in the pre-history of leaf books," writes de Hamel in the exhibition catalog. "The first is the practice of cutting up one book so that its pieces might be used to ornament or improve another book. The second is relic collecting. Both practices go back into the Middle Ages."

The evening, held at the Newberry Library, 60 West Walton, begins at 5:00 pm with a cocktail reception and exhibition viewing. At 5:30, Joel Silver, curator of the exhibition (and Curator of Books at the Lilly Library of Indiana University), will lead a gallery tour. At 6:30, dinner will be served, followed by de Hamel's talk. Reservations for this special evening are required by Thursday, April 14; the cost for the evening is $75.

Beyond April...

MAY LUNCHEON:
Friday, May 13, John Chalmers will talk about the *Confederate Book of Common Prayer* and the Union blockade.

See page 14 for two additional May events.

MAY DINNER:
Wednesday, May 18, Peter Koch talks on "The Pre-Socratic Project and Fine Printing in the 20th Century." He will include philosophical thoughts about the meaning of fine printing.

JUNE LUNCHEON:
Friday, June 10, Malcolm Hast will talk about developing an online version of one of the treasures of Renaissance bookmaking, Vesalius' *On the Fabric of the Human Body*. For a preview, visit http://vesalius.northwestern.edu

JUNE DINNER:
Wednesday, June 15, David Schoonover of the University of Iowa Library will talk about the Szathmary Collection of Culinary Arts, assembled by late Caxtonian Chef Louis Szathmary, and now housed at Iowa.

See above right for details on arrangements for the April dinner meeting. Luncheon and usual dinner meetings are held in the Mid-Day Club, 56th floor of BankOne, Madison & Clark, Chicago. Luncheon: buffet opens at 11:30; program 12:30-1:30. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or email caxtonclub@newberry.org. Members and guests: Lunch $25.