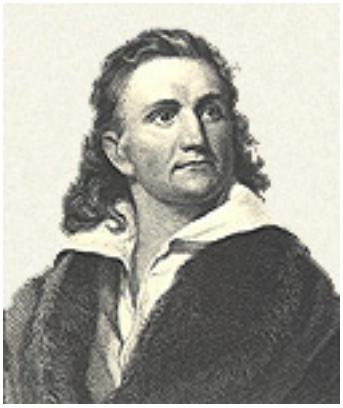
JOHN JAMES AUDUBON



Most often, Henry Thoreau's bird-book information came from Professor Thomas Nuttall, from Alexander Wilson, and from John James Audubon.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

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1785

April 26, Tuesday: John James Audubon was born as the son of a French lieutenant, Jean Audubon, with his mistress, a girl of Les Cayes, *Saint Domingue*, named Mlle Jeanne Rabine and identified in early documents as "Creole de Santo Domingo." She would die while her infant, who as a child created out of wedlock was named Jean Rabine, was but six months old. The mother's having been listed as "Creole," plus John James's illegitimacy, have given rise to the supposition that the infant was racially mixed; however, the term "Creole" as used in that context did not suggest racial mixture but instead implies only that this girl's family had been in the New World for some period of time, long enough to be considered to be local people — rather than having recently emigrated to the French plantations of Haiti from Europe.[1]

1. Present-day usage, affected by the racial passions of the post-Civil War era, has produced one "creole myth" among pure-white people in New Orleans, that "creole" always applied only to "pure white" persons such as themselves, while it has produced another very contrasting "creole myth" among the cafe-au-lait population of New Orleans created by the extensive miscegenation of antebellum years, that "creole" commonly indicated the "cafe au lait" persons such as themselves. And of course, race pride can carry us the rest of the way, and make Audubon out to have been a white man if we are proud of being white, or a black man if we are proud of being black. Looking at New Orleans newspapers in the period 1810-1830, however, it is clear that a child born in New Orleans to New England Yankee parents had absolute recognition as a creole, but a St. Domingue-born resident of the state was never so identified. Audubon, in effect, would never have been called a creole in antebellum Louisiana — so where did this record of his mother being "Creole de Santo Domingo" originate? Native-born slaves, free persons of color, and children of Irish or German immigrants all carried identity as creoles, as the judicial records of Louisiana demonstrate beyond dispute. Much of the confusion in all this resulted from the usages attendant upon the cultural and political conflict between the original colonial population and the American newcomers after the Purchase of 1803. It became a convenience in distinguishing the competing factions to speak of the "*ancienne* population" as "the creoles," but in the singular form, "creole" always meant nothing more than native-born.
Another suggestion that has been made is that an Afro-Cuban slave born in Cuba was a *criollo*, just as much as his Hispano-Cuban master — and vice versa. "Creole de" is most often used to mean "native born" in regard to Santo Domingo, or Louisiana, or some other New World location, as opposed to someone who had been born in Europe and was "fresh off the boat." The term was without any reference to racial identity either way. At no time did it make any suggestion of "mixed blood," a distortion not uncommon outside of Louisiana. The racial connotation we now profess to find is simply absent, although the term might in some populations have indicated Spanish stock in distinction from Northern European stock: technically a Creole was the child of Spanish or French parents born in the New World. The thing to bear in mind is that had Audubon's appearance in any manner suggested any degree of black ancestry, he would have been treated much differently in Jacksonian America than in fact he was treated.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

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1788

August: The 3-year-old illegitimate motherless Jean Rabine was taken to France by his father.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

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1789

March: At the age of four, Jean Rabine was formally adopted in France by his biological father and his biological father's lawful French spouse, and acquired the name Jean-Jacques Fougere.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

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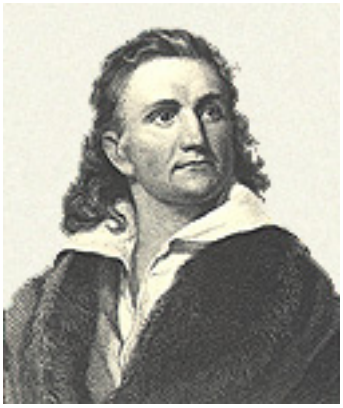
1794

John James Audubon's father took him to France.



From 1794 until 1795 Frenchmen would need to deal with a day that by mandate was to consist of 10 hours, each of which was to be made up of 100 minutes, each of which was to be made up of 100 seconds, each of which would contain 100 tierces: "Le jour, de minuit à minuit, est divisé en dix parties, chaque partie en dix autres, ainsi de suite jusqu'à la plus petite portion commensurable de la durée."

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1796

Eleven-year-old John James Audubon was sent for Naval Training at Rochefort-sur-Mer.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1803

After having purchased an estate in Pennsylvania, John James Audubon's father sent him to the United States to both remove him from the bloody conflict in France, and look after this new possession.

Once upon this new estate, Audubon met Lucy Bakewell, a neighbor — and they became engaged.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1805

On a year-long return to France to visit with family, John James Audubon completed some of his first known sketches of local birds.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1806

May: John James Audubon returned to America accompanied by Ferdinand Rozier, who would partner in Mill Grove, the Pennsylvania estate.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1807

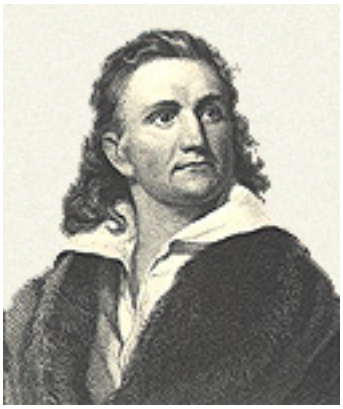
During this year John James Audubon became disenchanted with life at Mill Grove, the family's Pennsylvania estate. He was spending more and more of his time in the drawing of birds, for instance teaching himself to wire the dead birds into lifelike positions to enable accurate sketching and drawing. He and his partner Ferdinand Rozier headed for Louisville intending to start up a commercial venture.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1808

John James Audubon returned briefly from Louisville to Pennsylvania in order to wed his intended, Lucy Bakewell, and then the newlyweds departed for Louisville. From this year into 1826 Audubon would be making numerous journeys through the backwoods United States. On the following two screens is a sample of his stuff.



THE PRAIRIE.

Murder attempt at a frontier cabin; encounter with an Indian.

On my return from the Upper Mississippi, I found myself obliged to cross one of the wide Prairies, which, in that portion of the United States vary the appearance of the country. The weather was fine, all around me was as fresh and blooming as if it had just issued from the bosom of nature. My knapsack, my gun, and my dog, were all I had for baggage and company. But, although well moccasined, I moved slowly along, attracted by the brilliancy of the flowers, and the gambols of the fawns around their dams, to all appearance as thoughtless of danger as I felt myself.

My march was of long duration; I saw the sun sinking beneath the horizon long before I could perceive any appearance of woodland, and nothing in the shape of man had I met with that day. The track which I followed was only an old Indian trace, and as darkness overshadowed the prairie, I felt some desire to reach at least a copse, in which I might lie down to rest. The Night-hawks were skimming over and around me, attracted by the buzzing wings of the beetles which form their food, and the distant howling of wolves gave me some hope that I should soon arrive at the skirts of some woodland.

I did so, and almost at the same instant a fire-light attracting my eye, I moved towards it, full of confidence that it proceeded from the camp of some wandering Indians. I was mistaken:-I discovered by its glare that it was from the hearth of a small log cabin, and that a tall figure passed and repassed between it and me, as if busily engaged in household arrangements.

I reached the spot, and presenting myself at the door, asked the tall figure, which proved to be a woman, if I might take shelter under her roof for the night. Her voice was gruff, and her attire negligently thrown about her. She answered in the affirmative. I walked in, took a wooden stool, and quietly seated myself by the fire. The next object that attracted my notice was a finely formed young Indian, resting his head between his hands, with his elbows on his knees. A long bow rested against the log wall near him, while a quantity of arrows and two or three raccoon skins lay at his feet. He moved not; he apparently breathed not. Accustomed to the habits of the Indians, and knowing that they pay little attention to the approach of civilized strangers (a circumstance which in some countries is considered as evincing the apathy of their character), I addressed him in French, a language not unfrequently partially known to the people in that neighborhood. He raised his head, pointed to one of his eyes with his finger, and gave me a significant glance with the other. His face was covered with blood. The fact was, that an hour before this, as he was in the act of discharging an arrow at a raccoon in the top of a tree, the arrow had split upon the cord, and sprung back with such violence into his right eye as to destroy it for ever.

Feeling hungry, I inquired what sort of fare I might expect. Such a thing as a bed was not to be seen, but many large untanned bear and buffalo hides lay piled in a corner. I drew a fine time-piece from my breast, and told the woman that it was late, and that I was fatigued. She had espyed my watch, the richness of which seemed to operate upon her feelings with electric quickness. She told me that there was plenty of venison and jerked buffalo meat, and that on removing the ashes I should find a cake. But my watch had struck her fancy, and her curiosity had to be gratified by an immediate sight of it. I took off the gold chain that secured it from around my neck, and presented it to her. She was all ecstasy, spoke of its beauty, asked me its value, and put the chain round her brawny neck, saying how happy the possession of such a watch should make her. Thoughtless, and, as I fancied myself, in so retired a spot, secure, I paid little attention to her talk or her movements. I helped my dog to a good supper of venison, and was not long in satisfying the demands of my own appetite.

The Indian rose from his seat, as if in extreme suffering. He passed and repassed me several times, and once pinched me on the side so violently, that the pain nearly brought forth an exclamation of anger. I looked at him. His eye met mine; but his lock was so forbidding, that it struck a chill into the more nervous part of my system. He again seated himself, drew his butcher-knife from its greasy scabbard, examined its edge, as I would do that of a razor suspected dull, replaced it, and again taking his tomahawk from his back, filled the pipe of it with tobacco, and sent me expressive glances whenever our hostess chanced to have her back towards us.

Never until that moment had my senses been awakened to the danger which I now suspected to be about me. I returned glance for glance to my companion, and rested well assured that, whatever enemies I might have, he was not of their number.

I asked the woman for my watch, wound it up, and under pretence of wishing to see how the weather might probably on the morrow, took up my gun, and walked out of the cabin. I slipped a ball into each barrel, scraped the edges of my flints, renewed the primings, and returning to the hut, gave a favourable account of my

A short time had elapsed, when some voices were heard, and from the corner of my eyes I saw two athletic youths making their entrance, bearing a dead stag on a pole. They disposed of their burden, and asking for whisky, helped themselves freely to it. Observing me and the wounded Indian, they asked who I was, and why the devil that rascal (meaning the Indian, who, they knew, understood not a word of English) was in the house. The mother-for so she proved to be, bade them speak less loudly, made mention of my watch, and took them to a corner, where a conversation took place, the purport of which it required little shrewdness in me to guess. I tapped my dog gently. He moved his tail, and with indescribable pleasure I saw his fine eyes alternately fixed on me and raised towards the trio in the corner. I felt that he perceived danger in my situation. The Indian exchanged a last glance with me.

The lads had eaten and drunk themselves into such condition, that I already looked upon them as hors de combat; and the frequent visits of the whisky bottle to the ugly mouth of their dam I hoped would soon reduce her to a like state. Judge of my astonishment, reader, when I saw this incarnate fiend take a large carving-knife, and go to the grindstone to whet its edge. I saw her pour the water on the turning machine, and watched her working away with the dangerous instrument, until the sweat covered every part of my body, in despite of my determination to defend myself to the last. Her task finished, she walked to her reeling sons, and said. “There, that’ll soon settle him! Boys, kill yon, and then for the watch.”

I turned, cocked my gun-locks silently, touched my faithful companion, and lay ready to start up and shoot the first who might attempt my life. The moment was fast approaching, and that night might have been my last in this world, had not Providence made preparations for my rescue. All was ready. The infernal hag was advancing slowly, probably contemplating the best way of despatching me, whilst her sons should be engaged with the Indian. I was several times on the eve of rising and shooting her on the spot:-but she was not to be punished thus. The door was suddenly opened, and there entered two stout travellers, each with a long rifle on his shoulder. I bounced up on my feet, and making them most heartily welcome, told them how well it was for me that they should have arrived at that moment. The tale was told in a minute. The drunken sons were secured, and the woman, in spite of her defence and vociferations, shared the same fate. The Indian fairly danced with joy, and gave us to understand that, as he could not sleep for pain, he would watch over us. You may suppose we slept much less than we talked. The two strangers gave me an account of their once having been themselves in a somewhat similar situation. Day came, fair and rosy, and with it the punishment of our captives.

They were now quite sobered. Their feet were unbound, but their arms were still securely tied. We marched them into the woods off the road, and having used them as Regulators were wont to use such delinquents, we set fire to the cabin, gave all the skins and implements to the young Indian warrior, and proceeded, well pleased, towards the settlements.

During upwards of twenty-five years, when my wanderings extended to all parts of our country, this was the only time at which my life was in danger from my fellow creatures. Indeed, so little risk do travellers run in the United States, that no one born there ever dreams of any to be encountered on the road; and I can only account for this occurrence by supposing that the inhabitants of the cabin were not Americans.

Will you believe, reader, that not many miles from the place where this adventure happened, and where fifteen years ago, no habitation belonging to civilized man was expected, and very few ever seen, large roads are now laid out, cultivation has converted the woods into fertile fields, taverns have been erected, and much of what we Americans call comfort is to be met with. So fast does improvement proceed in our abundant and free country.

— John James Audubon

AUDUBON'S DELINEATIONS OF AMERICAN SCENERY

AND CHARACTER BASED UPON HIS TRAVELS IN AMERICA

1808-1834

KENTUCKY. Earthquake tremors.

I never can forget the effects of one of the slighter shocks which took place when I was at a friend's house, where I had gone to enjoy the merriment that, in our western country, attends a wedding. The ceremony being performed, supper over, and he fiddles tuned, dancing became the order of the moment. This was merrily followed up to a late hour, when the party retired to rest. We were in what is called, with great propriety, a Log-house, one of large dimensions, and solidly constructed. The owner was a physician, and in one corner were not only his lancets, tourniquets, amputating-knives, and other sanguinary apparatus, but all the drugs which he employed for the relief of his patients, arranged in jars and phials of different sizes. These had some days before made a narrow escape from destruction, but had been fortunately preserved by closing the doors of the cases in which they were contained.

As I have said, we had all retired to rest, some to dream of sighs and smiles, and others to sink into oblivion. Morning was fast approaching, when the rumbling noise that precedes the earthquake began so loudly, as to waken and alarm the whole party, and drive them out of bed in the greatest consternation. The scene which ensued it is impossible for me to describe, and it would require the humorous pencil of Cruickshank to do justice to it. Fear knows no restraints. Every person, old and young, filled with alarm at the creaking of the log-house, and apprehending instant destruction, rushed wildly out to the grass enclosure fronting the building. The full moon was slowly descending from her throne, covered at times by clouds that rolled heavily along, as if to conceal from her view the scenes of terror which prevailed on the earth below. On the grassplat we all met, in such condition as rendered it next to impossible to discriminate any of the party, all huddled together in a state of almost perfect nudity. The earth waved like a field of corn before the breeze: the birds left their perches, and flew about not knowing whither; and the Doctor, recollecting the danger of his gallipots, ran to his shop-room, to prevent their dancing off the shelves to the floor. Never for a moment did he think of closing the doors, but spreading his arms, jumped about the front of the cases, pushing back here and there the falling jars; with so little success, however, that before the shock was over, he had lost nearly all he possessed.

The shock at length ceased, and the frightened females, now sensible of their dishabille, fled to their several apartments. The earthquakes produced more serious consequences in other places. Near New Madrid, and for some distance on the Mississippi, the earth was rent asunder in several places, one or two islands sunk for ever, and the inhabitants fled in dismay towards the eastern shores.

KENTUCKY. Settlers moving West by boat instead of by wagon.

Others, perhaps encumbered with too much luggage, preferred descending the stream. They prepared arks pierced with port-holes, and glided on the gentle current, more annoyed, however, than those who marched by land, by the attacks of the Indians, who watched their motions. But have they told you, reader, that in those times a boat thirty or forty feet in length, by ten or twelve in breadth, was considered a stupendous fabric; that this boat contained men, women and children, huddled together, with horses, cattle, hogs and poultry for their companions, while the remaining portion was crammed with vegetables and packages of seeds? The roof or deck of the boat was not unlike a farm-yard, being covered with hay, ploughs carts, wagons, and various agricultural implements, to gather with numerous others among which the spinning wheels of the matrons were conspicuous. Even the sides of the floating mass were loaded with the wheels of the different vehicles, which themselves lay on the roof. Have the told you that these boats contained the little all of each family of venturous emigrants, who, fearful of being discovered by the Indians, under night moved in darkness groping their way

from one part to another of these floatin' habitations, denying themselves the comfort of fire or light lest the foe that watched them from the shore should rush upon them and destroy them? Have they told you that this boat was used, after the tedious voyage was ended, as the first dwelling of these new settlers? No, such things have not been related to you before. The travellers who have visited our country have had other objects in view.

THE WOODS. Hospitality in a frontier cabin.

The woodsman remarked that it was a pity we had not chanced to come that day three weeks; "for," said he, "it was our wedding-day, and father gave us a good housewarming, and you might have fared better; but, however, if you can eat bacon and eggs, and a broiled chicken, you shall have that. I have no whisky in the house, but father has some capital cider, and I'll go over and bring a keg of it." I asked how far off his father lived. "Only three miles, Sir, and I'll be back before Eliza has cooked your supper." Off he went accordingly, and the next moment the galloping of his horse was heard. The rain fell in torrents, and now I also became struck with the kindness of our host.

To all appearance the united age of the pair under whose roof we had found shelter did not exceed two score. Their means seemed barely sufficient to render them comfortable, but the generosity of their young hearts had no limits. The cabin was new. The logs of which it was formed were all of the tulip-tree, and were nicely pared. Every part was beautifully clean. Even the coarse slabs of wood that formed the floor looked as if newly washed and dried. Sundry gowns and petticoats of substantial homespun hung from the logs that formed one of the sides of the cabin, while the other was covered with articles of male attire. A large spinning-wheel, with rolls of wool and cotton, occupied one corner. In another was a small cupboard, containing the little stock of new dishes, cups, plates, and tin pans. The table was small also, but quite new, and as bright as polished walnut could be. The only bed that I saw was of domestic manufacture, and the counterpane proved how expert the young wife was at spinning and weaving. A fine rifle ornamented the chimney-piece. The fire-place was of such dimensions that it locked as if it had been purposely constructed for holding the numerous progeny expected to result from the happy union.

The black boy was engaged in grinding some coffee. Bread was prepared by the fair hands of the bride, and placed on a flat board in front of the fire. The bacon and eggs already murmured and spluttered in the frying-pan, and a pair of chickens puffed and swelled on a gridiron over the embers, in front of the hearth. The cloth was laid, and every thing arranged, when the clattering of hoofs announced the return of the husband. In he came, bearing a two-gallon keg of cider. His eyes sparkled with pleasure as he said, "Only think, Eliza, father wanted to rob us of the strangers, and was coming here to ask them to his own house, just as if we could not give them enough ourselves; but here's the drink. Come gentlemen, sit down and help yourselves." We did so, and I, to enjoy the repast, took a chair of the husband's making in preference to one of those called Windsor, of which there were six in the cabin. This chair was bottomed with a piece of deer's skin tightly stretched, and afforded a very comfortable seat.

The wife now resumed her spinning, and the husband filled a jug with sparkling cider, and, seated by the blazing fire, was drying his clothes. The happiness he enjoyed beamed from his eye, as at my request he proceeded to give us an account of his affairs and prospects, which he did in the following words-"I will be twenty-two next Christmas-day," said our host. "My father came from Virginia when young, and settled on the large tract of land where he yet lives, and where with hard working he has done well. There were nine children of us. Most of them are married and settled in the neighbourhood. The old man has divided his lands among some of us, and bought others for the rest. The land where I am he gave me two years ago, and a finer piece is not easily to be found. I have cleared a couple of fields, and planted an orchard. Father gave me a stock of cattle, some hogs, and four horses, with two Negro boys. I camped here for most of the time when clearing and planting, and when about to marry the young woman you see at the wheel, father helped me in raising this hut. My wife, as luck would have it, had a Negro also, and we have begun the world as well off as most folks, and, the Lord willing, may but, gentlemen, you don't eat; do help yourselves—Eliza, maybe the strangers would like some milk." The wife stopped her work, and kindly asked if we preferred sweet or sour milk; for you must know, reader, that sour milk is by some of our farmers considered a treat. Both sorts were produced, but, for my part, I chose to stick to the cider.

Supper over, we all neared the fire, and engaged in conversation. At length our kind host addressed his wife as follows.-"Eliza, the gentlemen would like to lie down, I guess. What sort of bed can you fix for them?" Eliza looked up with a smile, and said: "Why, Willy, we will divide the bedding, and arrange half on the floor, on which we can sleep very well, and the gentlemen will have the best we can spare them." To this arrangement I immediately objected, and proposed lying on a blanket by the fire; but neither Willy nor Eliza would listen. So they arranged a part of their bedding on the floor, on which, after some debate, we at length settled. The Negroes

were sent to their own cabin, the young couple went to bed, and Mr. Flint lulled us all asleep, with a long story intended to show us how passing strange it was that he should have lost his way.

MAINE WOODS.
Account of one family's flight from forest fire.

"Poor things," said the lumberer, "I dare say that what I have told you brings sad recollections to the minds of my wife and eldest daughter, who, with myself, had to fly from our home, at the time of the great fires." I felt so interested in his relation of the causes of the burnings, that I asked him to describe to me the particulars of his misfortunes at the time. "If Prudence and Polly," said he, looking towards his wife and daughter, "will promise to sit still, should another puff of smoke come down the chimney, I will do so." The good natured smile with which he accompanied this remark, elicited a return from the women, and he proceeded:—

"It is a difficult thing, Sir, to describe, but I will do my best to make your time pass pleasantly. We were sound asleep one night, in a cabin about a hundred miles from this, when about two hours before day, the snorting of the horses and lowing of the cattle which I had ranging in the woods suddenly wakened us. I took yon rifle, and went to the door to see what beast had caused the hubbub, when I was struck by the glare of light reflected on all the trees before me, as far as I could see through the woods. My horses were lesping about, snorting loudly, and the cattle ran among them with their tails raised straight over their backs. On going to the back of the house, I plainly heard the crackling made by the burning brushwoods, and saw the flames coming towards us in a far extended line. I ran to the house, told my wife to dress herself and the child as quickly as possible, and take the little money we had, while I managed to catch and saddle the two best horses. All this was done in a very short time, for I guessed that every moment was precious to us.

"We then mounted, and made off from the fire. My wife, who is an excellent rider, stuck close to me; my daughter, who was then a small child, I took in one arm. When making off as I said, I looked back and saw that the frightful blaze was close upon us, and had already laid hold of the house. By good luck, there was a horn attached to my hunting clothes, and I blew it, to bring after us, if possible, the remainder of my live stock, as well as the dogs. The cattle followed for a while; but, before an hour had elapsed, they all ran as if mad through the woods, and that, Sir, was the last of them. My dogs, too, although at all other times extremely tractable, ran after the deer that in bodies sprung before us, as if fully aware of the death that was so rapidly approaching.

"We heard blasts from the horns of our neighbours, as we proceeded, and knew that they were in the same predicament. Intent on striving to the utmost to preserve our lives, I thought of a large lake, some miles off, which might possibly check the flame; and, urging my wife to whip up her horse, we set off at full speed, making the best way we could over the fallen trees and the brush heaps, which lay like so many articles placed on purpose to keep up the terrific fires that advanced with a broad front upon us.

By this time we felt the heat; and we were afraid that our horses would drop every instant. A singular kind of breeze was passing over our heads, and the glare of the atmosphere shone over the daylight. I was sensible of a slight faintness, and my wife looked pale. The heat had produced such a flush in the child's face, that when she turned towards either of us, our grief and perplexity were greatly increased. Ten miles, you know, are soon gone over on swift horses; but, notwithstanding this, when we reached the borders of the lake, covered with sweat and quite exhausted, our hearts failed us. The heat of the smoke was insufferable, and sheets of blazing fire flew over us in a manner beyond belief. We reached the shores, however, coasted the lake for a while, and got round to the lee side. There we gave up our horses, which we never saw again. Down among the rushes we plunged by the edge of the water, and laid ourselves flat, to wait the chance of escaping from being burnt or devoured. The water refreshed us, and we enjoyed the coolness.

"On went the fire, rushing and crashing through the woods. Such a sight may we never see! The heavens themselves, I thought, were frightened, for all above us was a red glare, mixed with clouds of smoke, rolling and sweeping away. Our bodies were cool enough, but our heads were scorching, and the child, who now seemed to understand the matter, cried so as nearly to break our hearts.

"The day passed on, and we became hungry. Many wild beasts came plunging into the water beside us, and others swam across to our side and stood still. Although faint and weary, I managed to shoot a porcupine, and we all tasted its flesh. The night passed I cannot tell you how. Smouldering fires covered the ground, and the trees stood like pillars of fire, or fell across each other. The stifling and sickening smoke still rushed over us, and the burnt cinders and ashes fell thick about us. How we got through that night I really cannot tell, or about some of it I remember nothing." Here the hunter paused, and took breath. The recital of his adventure seemed to have exhausted him. His wife proposed that we should have a bowl of milk, and the daughter having handed it to us, we each took a draught.

"Now," said he, "I will proceed. Towards morning, although the heat did not abate, the smoke became less, and

blasts of fresh air sometimes made their way to us. When morning came, all was calm, but a dismal smoke still filled the air, and the smell seemed worse than ever. We were now cooled enough, and shivered as if in an ague fit; so we removed from the water, and went up to a burning log, where we warmed ourselves. What was to become of us I did not know. My wife hugged the child to her breast, and wept bitterly; but God had preserved us through the worst of the danger, and the flames had gone past, so I thought it would be both ungrateful to Him, and unmanly to despair now. Hunger once more pressed upon us, but this was easily remedied. Several deer were still standing in the water, up to the head, and I shot one of them. Some of its flesh was roasted, and, after eating it, we felt wonderfully strengthened.

"By this time the blaze of the fire was beyond our sight, although the ground was still burning in many places, and it was dangerous to go among the burnt trees. After resting a while, and trimming ourselves, we prepared to commence our march. Taking up the child, I led the way over the hot grounds and rocks; and, after two weary days and nights, during which we shifted in the best manner we could, we at last reached the 'hard woods,' which had been free of the fire. Soon after we came to a house, where we were kindly treated for a while. Since then, sir, I have worked hard and constantly as a lumberer; but, thanks be to God, here we are, safe, sound, and happy!"

BEARGRASS CREEK, KENTUCKY. Fourth of July Barbecue.

Columbia's sons and daughters seemed to have grown younger that morning. For a whole week or more, many servants and some masters had been busily engaged in clearing an area. The undergrowth had been carefully cut down, the low boughs lopped off, and the grass alone, verdant and gay, remained to carpet the sylvan pavilion. Now the waggons were seen slowly moving along under their load of provisions, which had been prepared for the common benefit. Each denizen had freely given his ox, his ham, his venison, his turkeys, and other fowls. Here were to be seen flagons of every beverage used in the country; "La belle Riviere" had opened her finny stores; the melons of all sorts, peaches, plums and pears, would have sufficed to stock a market. In a word, Kentucky, the land of abundance, had supplied a feast for her children.

A purling stream gave its water freely, while the grateful breezes cooled the air. Columns of smoke from the newly kindled fires rose above the trees; fifty cooks or more moved to and fro as they plied their trade; waiters of all qualities were disposing the dishes, the glasses, and the punch-bowls, amid vases filled with rich wines. "Old Monongahela" filled many a barrel for the crowd. And now, the roasted viands perfume the air, and all appearances conspire to predict the speedy commencement of a banquet such as may suit the vigorous appetite of American woodsmen. Every steward is at his post, ready to receive the joyous groups that at this moment begin to emerge from the dark recesses of the woods.

Each comely fair one, clad in pure white, is seen advancing under the protection of her sturdy lover, the neighing of their prancing steeds proclaiming how proud they are of their burdens. The youthful riders leap from their seats, and the horses are speedily secured by twisting their bridles round a branch. As the youth of Kentucky lightly and gaily advanced towards the Barbecue, they resembled a procession of nymphs and disguised divinities. Fathers and mothers smiled upon them, as they followed the brilliant cortege.

In a short time the ground was alive with merriment. A great wooden cannon, bound with iron hoops, was now crammed with home-made powder; fire was conveyed to it by means of a train, and as the explosion burst forth, thousands of hearty huzzas mingled with its echoes. From the most learned a good oration fell in proud and gladdening words on every ear, and although it probably did not equal the eloquence of a Clay, an Everett, a Webster, or a Preston, it served to remind every Kentuckian present of the glorious name, the patriotism, the courage, and the virtue, of our immortal Washington. Fifes and drums sounded the march which had ever led him to glory; and as they changed to our celebrated "Yankee Doodle," the air again rang with acclamations.

Now the stewards invited the assembled throng to the feast. The fair led the van, and were first placed around the tables, which groaned under the profusion of the best productions of the country that had been heaped upon them. On each lovely nymph attended her gay beau, who in her chance or sidelong glances ever watched an opportunity of reading his happiness. How the viands diminished under the action of so many agents of destruction I need not say, nor is it necessary that you should listen to the long recital. Many a national toast was offered and accepted, many speeches were delivered, and many essayed in amicable reply. The ladies then retired to booths that had been erected at a little distance, to which they were conducted by their partners, who returned to the table, and having thus cleared for action, recommenced a series of hearty rounds. However, as Kentuckians are neither slow nor long at their meals, all were in a few minutes replenished, and after a few more draughts from the bowl, they rejoined the ladies, and prepared for the dance.

Double lines of a hundred fair ones extended along the ground in the most shady part of the woods, while here and there smaller groups awaited the merry trills of reels and cotillions. A burst of music from violins,

clarionets, and bugles, gave the welcome notice, and presently the whole assemblage seemed to be gracefully moving through the air. The “hunting-shirts” now joined in the dance, their fringed skirts keeping time with the gowns of the ladies, and the married people of either sex stepped in and mixed with their children. Every countenance beamed with joy, every heart leaped with gladness; no pride, no pomp, no affectation, were there; their spirits brightened as they continued their exhilarating exercise, and care and sorrow were flung to the winds. During each interval of rest, refreshments of all sorts were handed round, and while the fair one cooled her lips with the grateful juice of the melon, the hunter of Kentucky quenched his thirst with ample draughts of well-tempered punch.

I know, reader, that had you been with me on that day, you would have richly enjoyed the sight of this national fete champetre. You would have listened with pleasure to the ingenious tale of the lover, the wise talk of the elder on the affairs of the state, the accounts of improvement in stock and utensils, and the hopes of continued prosperity to the country at large, and to Kentucky in particular. You would have been pleased to see those who did not join the dance, shooting at distant marks with their heavy rifles, or watched how they shewed off the superior speed of their high bred “old Virginia” horses, while others recounted their hunting-exploits, and at intervals made the woods ring with their bursts of laughter. With me the time sped like an arrow in its flight, and although more than twenty years have elapsed since I joined a Kentucky Barbecue, my spirit is refreshed every 4th of July by the recollection of that day’s merriment.

1809

June 12, Monday: Birth of the first child of John James Audubon and Lucy Bakewell Audubon, Victor Gifford Audubon, in Louisville.

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

> *2nd day // Meeting began as usual at 9 OClock. It was open'd with a short but livly & impressive testimony by our friend James Mendenhall from Virginia & after the buisness had been persued a little while another impressive testimony from our friend Micajah Collins - buisness went on pretty well but much of the weight, & I believe all was lost that might have spread over the meeting, by the very low voices of some friends.*
> *Cousin Alice Almy dined with us, but the situation of my dear H is such that we cannot entertain much company at any time & less at Dinner than at any other time*
>
> ---
>
> *Afternoon// The State of Society as represented by the Answers to the Queries was enterd into by which many deficiencies appeard, & drew forth many excellent & feeling remarks, particularly by our friend James Mendenhall Wm Rotch Junr & many others - We had several at tea*
>
> ---

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1810

The John James Audubons settled for the year in Henderson, Kentucky (although at the end of the year Audubon and Ferdinand Rozier would head south again in search of commercial success).

March: A meeting with the noted ornithological illustrator Alexander Wilson convinced John James Audubon that he should continue with his bird drawings (in his judgment Wilson's work contains none of the spontaneity and naturalism for which he had been striving for in his own work).

1811

Within a year limited success and personal differences led to the dissolution of the new partnership between John James Audubon and Ferdinand Rozier, with Audubon returning to his family in Kentucky.

December 16, Monday: As the great comet Flaugergues (C/1811 F1) had been receding, its tail had been lengthening, from 24 degrees to 70 degrees.

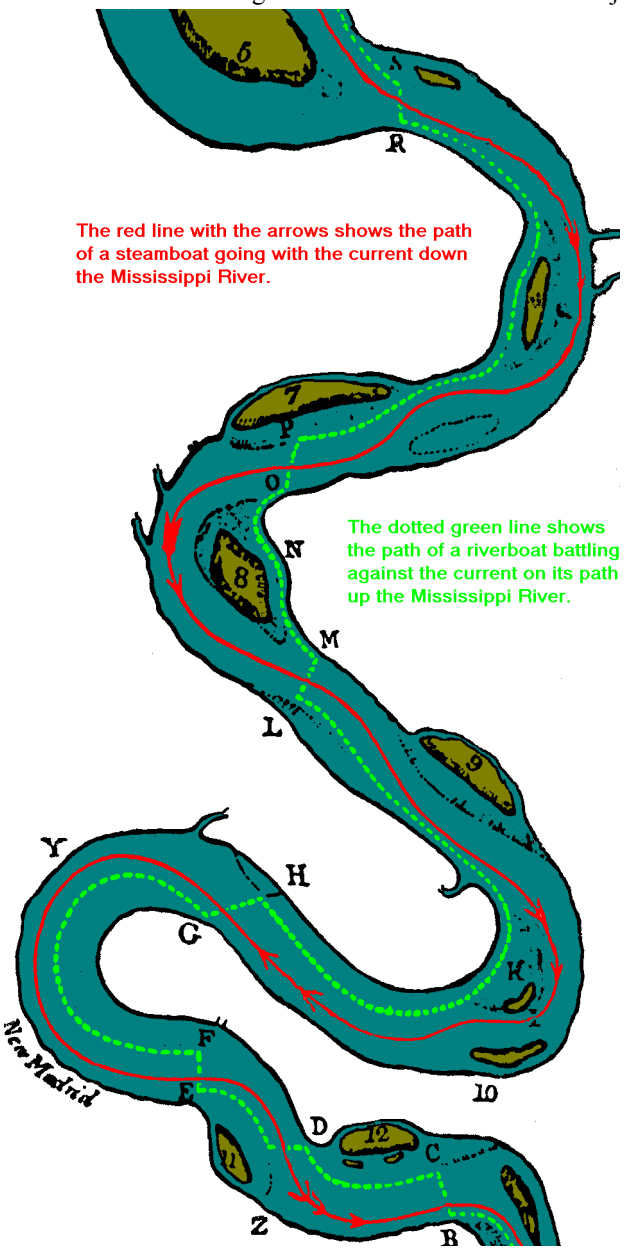
SKY EVENT

Centered in northwestern Arkansas, there were two enormous (~7.2-8.1 Richter) earthquake shocks, the 1st at 2:15AM and the 2d at 8:15AM. They said the Mississippi River flowed backwards (which would be to indicate that a seismic "seiche" propagated upriver). It would be alleged that this had been forecast months before by Tecumseh.

John James Audubon, in Kentucky, hearing the roar of the New Madrid, Missouri earthquake[2] and noticing the effects of the enormous earthquake (still inadequately understood) in strange brightenings and darkenings of the sky, presumed that a tornado might be approaching and sought shelter from it.[3] Just as the steamboat *New Orleans* came out into the smooth waters of the Mississippi, heading downriver after the rapids known as the Falls of the Ohio, without warning the quake struck and the normally very smooth waters of the Mississippi River became agitated into the same sort of turbulent maelstrom from which this steamboat had

2. Am I sure that this is not a reference to the earthquake that would occur on February 7, 1812 at 4:45AM?
3. Notice that it had not yet been clearly established, that comets were extra-atmospheric, astronomical in nature. Some natural philosophers were still holding to a theory that actually a comet was a type of long-lasting atmospheric disturbance, and therefore quite close to the surface of the earth and able to exert a direct influence upon us.

just emerged. Church bells were heard to ding in Boston as the first of four major temblors ripped along the



New Madrid faultline which runs from Arkansas to Illinois. In this initial temblor, presently estimated at 8.1 on the Richter scale, treetrunks snapped — but because of low white population density, only a few dozen people were reported as having been killed. Soil liquefaction along the Mississippi River was, according to our Federal Emergency Management Agency, similar to that experienced during the great Kobe quake of January 1995, and as a result the great river ran backward for three days. Were a temblor of Kobe's 7.0 magnitude to strike along the New Madrid faultline at 9:30AM on some day under our current conditions –and it is estimated that there is a significant probability that some such temblor will occur– the Arkansas State Office of Emergency Services estimates that 14,000 people will die and there will be 240,000 homeless. Since

there are presently five major oil and natural gas pipelines running across this faultline, conveying heating fuel to the Eastern seaboard states, if this inevitable disaster should strike during a winter a significant portion of our nation will be subjected to a chilling brush with reality.[4]
There would be follow-on major earthquakes on January 23, 1812 and on February 7, 1812. After this series of major quakes, there would be a new lake in Tennessee, Reelfoot Lake, that had not existed in 1810.

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

> *2nd day 16th of 12 M // My H not being Smart I set most of the evening at home & entertained her & myself in reading Sillimans Journal*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

4. According to our National Research Council, writing as of 1994, it is simply not yet known "whether the relocation of materials on the surface of the earth is dominated by the slower but continuous fluxes operating all of the time or by the spectacular large fluxes that operate during short-lived cataclysmic events."

1812

Mounting commercial disappointments caused the family of John James Audubon to return to Pennsylvania.

July 3, Friday: John James Audubon was granted US citizenship.

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

> *6th day 7 M 3rd 1812 / As to the Outward this has been one of the finest days we have had, the air warm but not warmer than was agreeable - had it not have been for the painful sensations excited for the young lad mentioned Yesterday I dont know of any thing that has occurd to interrupt tranquility — My Mother & Sister Ruth set the eveng with us*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

November 30, Monday: Birth of the second child of John James Audubon and Lucy Bakewell Audubon, John Woodhouse Audubon.

Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

> *2nd day 30 of 11 M 1812 / Cousin Lewis & Sam'l Clarke return'd home this forenoon —*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.

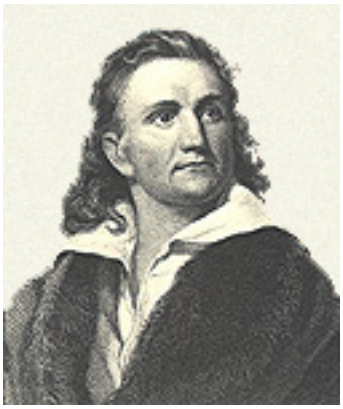
JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1813

John James Audubon observed an overflight of American Passenger Pigeons *Ectopistes migratorius* that required three days to pass overhead:

> *The air was literally filled with pigeons. The light of the noonday was obscured as by an eclipse.*



Audubon, observing the bird, would note the swiftness with which it could soar, even approaching 100 kilometers per hour.

> [W]hen an individual is seen gliding through the woods and close to the observer, it passes like a thought, and on trying to see it again, the eye searchs in vain; the bird is gone.

During this year the Audubon family moved back to Henderson.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1815

Birth of the third child of John James Audubon and Lucy Bakewell Audubon, Lucy Audubon.

1816

His sawmill business in partnership with Lucy's brother failing, John James Audubon was becoming increasingly despondent about financial affairs, but he was continuing to draw, while venturing deeper and deeper into the Kentucky forests.

Samuel Constantine Rafinesque[5] predicted, not entirely accurately, the situation which Henry Thoreau would encounter in regard to scientific texts dealing with American species. He pointed out that the first works then being published on the natural sciences in the United States were unfortunately following "the model of the splendid European publications intended for the wealthy." His conclusion was that "The popular knowledge of the natural sciences has been prevented in the United States." Well, this wasn't completely accurate as a prediction. For instance, when in 1855 Thoreau would need to consult John James Audubon's octavo BIRDS OF AMERICA, costing the enormous sum of $100, in order to identify a species — he would be able to consult a copy of this in the new Concord Public Library.

5. RAFINESQUE: AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND LIVES with an introduction by Keir B. Sterling (NY: Arno Press, 1978); RAFINESQUE: A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE WITH BIBLIOGRAPHY by T.J. Fitzpatrick, revised by Charles Boewe (Weston MA: M & S Press, 1982); A SPECIES OF ETERNITY by Joseph Kastner (Knopf, 1977)

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1817

Death, in about her 2d year of life, of Lucy Audubon, daughter of John James Audubon and Lucy Bakewell Audubon.

1819

In the US, an economic panic in this year caused a depression. But that's not all: one theory attributes the much more devastating financial panic which would be arriving in the year 1837 to the failure of an insurance scheme used during the process known as the "clearing" of temporary financial chits (now known as "checks"), which process was beginning to be introduced during this year at the Suffolk Bank in Boston, and which would be spreading to become a national industry convention. (The most recent published work on this event is Murray Rothbard's THE PANIC OF 1819: REACTIONS AND POLICIES — and it was published in 1962. However, there has been a Ph.D. dissertation in 2002, Sarah Alice Kidd's THE SEARCH FOR MORAL ORDER: THE PANIC OF 1819 AND THE CULTURE OF THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC.) With chaos erupting in the American financial system, John James Audubon found that his commercial ventures were collapsing. Eventually this would lead to his arrest on debt charges. He would be imprisoned and declared a bankrupt. With the death of an infant daughter, Rose, this was a really low point in his life. For the time being he existed by doing charcoal portraits on commission.

"Chaos was the law of nature; Order was the dream of man."

— Henry Adams,
THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS

1820

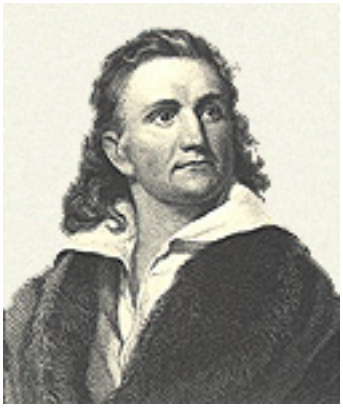
August: John James Audubon had moved his family to Cincinnati and taken a job as a taxidermist. In this month he sketched Captain John Cleves Symmes:

He decided he would actively pursue his dream of painting all the American birds. Taking along a student, Joseph Mason, during this period he was traveling the Ohio River, the Arkansas River, and the Mississippi in search of new specimens. The hunting pair shot any number of **Ivory-billed Woodpeckers** ***Campephilus principalis***. It was sometimes difficult to retrieve the carcasses: "They sometimes cling to the bark with their claws so firmly, as to remain cramped to the spot for several hours after death."

1821

January 1, Monday: Midshipman George Back was promoted to Lieutenant.

John James Audubon made himself a new-year's promise that he was gonna paint all of 99 birds in not more than 99 days. He hired some market hunters to bring him dead specimens of various interesting species, stiffing them back up into more or less imaginary naturalistic poses by inserting strong wires inside their flesh. The backgrounds for such naturalistic paintings his student Joseph Mason would add for him, or he would hire others to create for him in bulk.



During this year he and Joseph Mason would go to New Orleans in order to raise funds to continue to travel, and in order to send money back home to his wife Lucy, he would paint on commission and would teach students.

Portuguese troops in Belem, Brazil rebelled and set up a liberal government.

In Newport, Rhode Island, Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

> *2nd day 1st of 1st M 1821 / News in Town This morning of the Death of James Burrell Senator in Congress from this State —— This may be justly considered a great public loss, few so good men go to Congress, he had in this & former Sessions distinguished himself as a friend to the cause of the Abolition*

of Slavery, & is worthy of double Honor. -[6]

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

1821. The Court of Common Pleas was then in session at Providence, and on Monday morning, the 1st of January, Gen. Bridgham, in behalf of the Bar, and as President of the General Bar meeting, rose and addressed the Court in the most feeling and impressive manner, on this melancholy event [the death, late in the previous year, of James Burrill, Jr. U.S. Senator from this State]. To which Chief Justice Martin responded in a brief and appropriate notice of the deceased, and in respect to his memory the Court then adjourned. At a General Bar Meeting assembled on the 3d, Resolutions expressive of grief and the highest respect to the memory of the deceased were passed, and Hon. Tristam Burges was appointed to deliver an eulogy on the 15th January - on which day, the members of the bar, and a great portion of the citizens, formed a procession, and marched to the First Congregational Church, where a most impressive and eloquent eulogy was pronounced by Mr. Burges, and solemn dirges and funeral ceremonies were performed. The auditory was bathed in tears, and the speaker himself was so strongly affected, that utterance was sometimes difficult. The newspapers at Washington, and letter writers there to papers in other places, laid their partisan feelings to rest, and spoke in the most respectful terms of his character as a man, a lawyer and a statesman.
Mr. Burrill was born in this town in the year 1772; graduated at the University here in 1788; at the age of 19, was admitted to the bar, and at 25 elected Attorney General, which office held sixteen years, and resigned in 1814. In October of that year he was elected a member of the General Assembly, and was soon after chosen Speaker of that body, and continued as such while he held a seat in the House, but from which he was soon after transferred to the bench of the Supreme Judicial Court,

6. Stephen Wanton Gould Diary, 1815-1823: The Gould family papers are stored under control number 2033 at the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections of Cornell University Library, Box 7 Folder 12 for August 24, 1815-September 25, 1823; also on microfilm, see Series 7

as Chief Justice. In February, 1817, he was elected Senator to Congress, and before the expiration of half his constitutional term, was carried to the silent grave. He was a fine belles lettres scholar, and eminent lawyer, and able statesman. He was remarkably domestic in his habits, home was the cynosure of his delights, and there he was beloved and honored.

Toward the middle of the month John James Audubon would take part, in a field near New Orleans, in a general slaughter of migrating Golden Plover, amounting by his own estimate to a body count of some 48,000. (Hey, what's gunpowder for, anyway? –It's for having fun, right?)

"NARRATIVE HISTORY" AMOUNTS TO FABULATION, THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1822

Accompanied by his sons and by Joseph Mason, John James Audubon traveled to Natchez. He was at this point drawing full time, often well into the night.

1824

Charles-Lucien Jules Laurent Bonaparte recommended the then unknown John James Audubon for membership in this Academy of Natural Sciences — only to run into intransigent opposition from George Ord, who had been the special sidekick of the deceased ornithologist Alexander Wilson (and would eventually be buried at his side in the cemetery of Gloria Dei Church in Philadelphia.)

Having assembled a large body of work, John James Audubon traveled to Philadelphia to secure publication but was unsuccessful. He published two papers in the Annals of Lyceum of Natural History. Reuniting with his family in Louisiana, he prepared to travel to England to arrange for the publication of his work — he had been advised while in Philadelphia that this was the only chance he had for an undertaking of such enormity.

June 8, Sunday: In F.A. Michaux i.e. the younger Michaux's Voyage A l'ouest des Monts Alléghanys –1802 printed at Paris 1808 ... Ginseng was then the only "territorial" production of Kentucky which would pay the expense of transportation by land to Philadelphia. They collected it from spring to the first frosts.

Even hunters carried for this purpose, beside their guns, a bag & a little “pioche” From 25 to 30 “milliers pesant” were then transported annually & this commerce was on the increase. Some transported it themselves from Kentucky to China i.e. without selling it the merchants of the seaboard– Traders in Kentucky gave 20 to 24 “sous” the pound for it.

1826

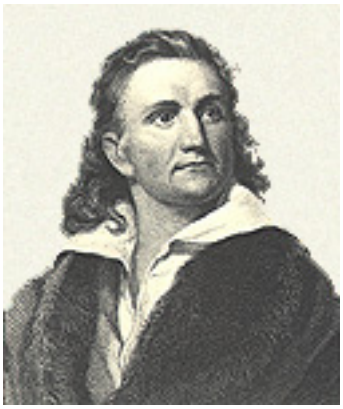
At the age of 41, John James Audubon left New Orleans bound for Liverpool, England. During the next year he would be exhibiting his watercolors in an effort to raise interest in his grand project. By the winter he would have secured an agreement with William Lizars in Edinburgh for the engraving and printing of his work.

Toward the end of this year Charles-Lucien Jules Laurent Bonaparte and his family returned to Europe[7] where he visited Philipp Jakob Cretzschmar in Germany, renewed in England his acquaintance with John James Audubon, and met John Edward Gray at the British Museum.

7. Although Waldo Emerson shared quarters with a "nephew of Napoleon" in Florida in 1827 and came to much admire this man, and Charles was indeed a nephew of Napoleon, Charles could not have been the nephew that Emerson admired in St. Augustine. Charles wasn't even in the New World in 1827, having in 1826 returned to Europe. The nephew whom Emerson came to admire in St. Augustine was an aristocratic supporter of human slavery, and an atheist, and that would have been Prince Achille Murat.

1827

Over the next eleven years, volume after volume of John James Audubon's THE BIRDS OF AMERICA would be appearing at the booksellers. There is a cost reason why the this "Elephant Folio" of Audubon's BIRDS OF AMERICA, the one containing 435 life-size bird paintings, had little text. English copyright law required that free copies of any publication containing substantial text be deposited in four national copyright libraries, and in the case of a publication such as this, satisfying that requirement would be prohibitively expensive. As a result, Audubon and William MacGillivray put the text that was to accompany the bird paintings in a separate 5-volume companion edition, the so-called ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY. A revised version of this text would be incorporated into the smaller, octavo edition of the BIRDS OF AMERICA published from 1840 to 1844. Thoreau would consult the first three volumes of the ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY in 1837, the reason being that those were the only volumes as yet published.[8]



Audubon would return to the United States three times over these eleven years in search of new species to add to the collection. He would be stashing his wife and son in Henderson, Kentucky while traveling through Pennsylvania, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, Ohio, New York, Virginia, Maine, Newfoundland, Georgia, and South Carolina. Most of the 60 articles published in these volumes would provide detailed ornithological information to supplement his drawings, but he would also include notes on American life and character. He was able in his bird paintings to create the illusion that he was "drawing actually from nature," that is to say, from life, because he had devised technique for running stiff wires thorough the bodies of his fresh specimens. They would be held in lifelike positions against his gridded board: "One morning I leapt out of bed ... went to the river, took a bath and returning to town inquired for wire of different sizes, bought some and was soon again at Mill Grove. I shot the first kingfisher I met, pierced the body with wire, fixed it to the board, another wire held the head, smaller ones fixed the feet ... there stood before me the real kingfisher. I outlined the bird, colored it. This was my first drawing actually from nature." –When we look at an Audubon painting, this is the sort of thing we should be imagining. Before the turn of the 20th Century, and the sort of natural aestheticism we have now, there were actually gun clubs bearing his name. (At the turn of the century, faced with this alteration in sensitivities, that bearded guru of a nature writer, John Burroughs, was needing to urge his reluctant acolytes: "Don't ogle it through a glass, shoot it.")

After only ten bird plates had been finished, William Lizars resigned. Audubon went to London, employed the firm of R.Havell and Son, and production of his THE BIRDS OF AMERICA continued in earnest. Publication in four volumes would require until 1838.

8. Volume I – 1831, Volume II – 1835, Volume III – 1835, Volume IV – 1838, Volume V – 1839).

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1829

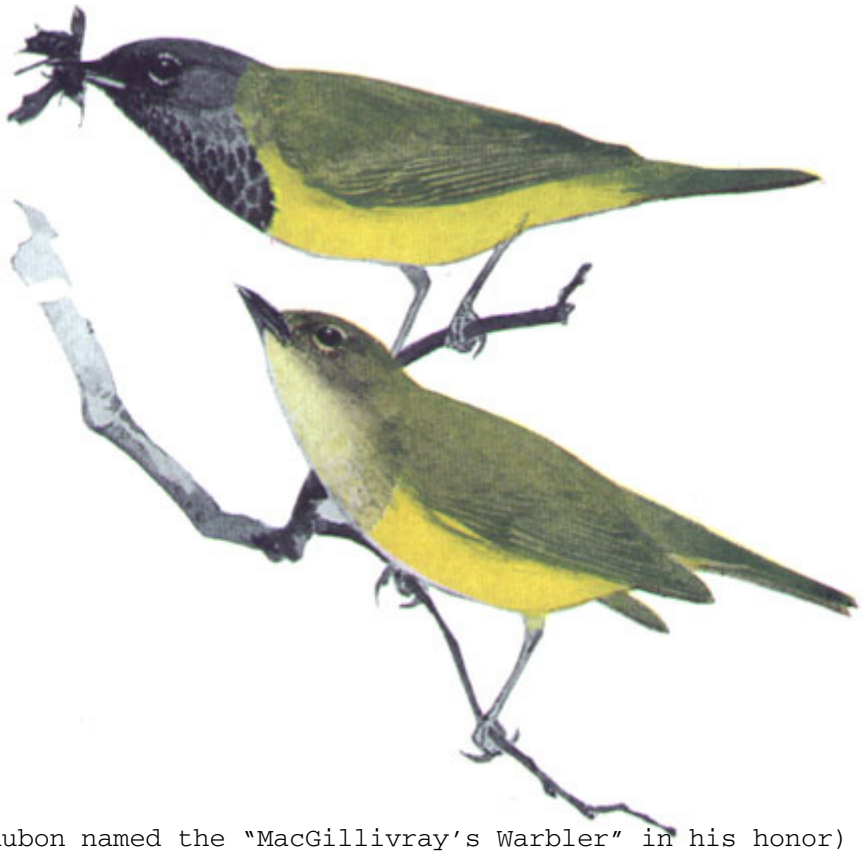
John James Audubon returned to the United States after three years in England, reunited with his family, and continued his search for new species with which to augment THE BIRDS OF AMERICA.

1830

While visiting Washington DC, John James Audubon was received by President Andrew Jackson. The House of Representatives became an early subscriber to the THE BIRDS OF AMERICA. Audubon, accompanied by Lucy, went to England to monitor the progress being made in the production of his volumes.

William MacGillivray's revision of W.H. Withering's A SYSTEMATIC ARRANGEMENT OF BRITISH PLANTS. A friend of John James Audubon, from this year to 1839 would be writing extensively for the projected ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY, OR AN ACCOUNT OF THE HABITS OF THE BIRDS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; ACCOMPANIED BY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OBJECTS REPRESENTED IN THE WORK ENTITLED THE BIRDS OF AMERICA, AND INTERSPERSED WITH DELINEATIONS OF AMERICAN SCENERY AND MANNERS. BY JOHN JAMES AUDUBON....

> I feel pleasure in here acknowledging the assistance ... received from ... Mr. William Macgillivray ... in completing the scientific details ... of my ornithological biographies.
> — Author's "Introductory address," pages xviii-xix



(Audubon named the "MacGillivray's Warbler" in his honor)

During the 1830s MacGillivray would be serving as the editor of the Edinburgh Journal of Natural History and Physical Science, would be serving as the conservator of the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons and compiling for them a new catalogue, and would contribute the section on web-footed birds to the 7th edition of ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA.

1831

After returning to the United States, John James Audubon journeyed south and while in Charleston, South Carolina, developed a fine relationship with the Reverend John Bachman. Bachman and Audubon became soulmates in their love for the natural world. Bachman would play the scholar to Audubon's artist. Bachman's sister-in-law, Maria Martin, became Audubon's assistant.

October 16, Sunday: John James Audubon arrived in Charleston, South Carolina to work on his BIRDS OF AMERICA.

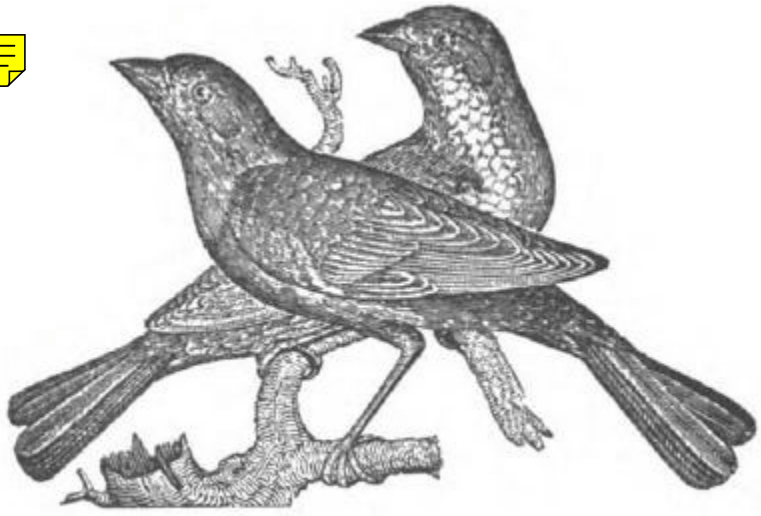
Alexis de Tocqueville interviewed Philadelphia Mayor Richards. He made a journal entry about the courts.

1832

Professor Thomas Nuttall reported in the initial volume, on land birds, of his A MANUAL OF THE ORNITHOLOGY OF THE UNITED STATES AND OF CANADA (Cambridge: Hilliard and Brown; Boston: Hilliard, Gray), that according to Governor Winthrop, the "Pinnated Grous" [Heath Hen *Tympanuchus cupido cupido*] had been "so common on the ancient brushy site of Boston, that laboring people or servants stipulated with their employers not to have the *Heath-Hen* brought to table oftener than a few times in the week!"

NUTTALL'S LAND BIRDS

John James Audubon traveled to Florida. Meanwhile, in Edinburgh, the firm of A. Black was issuing the initial



COW TROOPIAL, OR COW BLACK-BIRD.

(*Icterus pecoris*, TEMM. AUDUBON, pl. 99. *Emberiza pecoris*, WILSON, 2. p. 145. pl. 18. fig. 1. [male]. fig. 2. [female]. fig. 3. [the young]. Philad. Museum, No. 6378, 6379.)

SP. CHARACT. — Glossy black; head and neck blackish-brown. — *Female* wholly sooty-brown, beneath pale. — *Young* similar to the female, with the breast spotted.

THE Cow-pen Bird, perpetually gregarious and flitting, is observed to enter the Middle and Northern States in the latter end of March or the beginning of April. They make their migration now chiefly under cover of the night, or early dawn; and as the season becomes milder they pass on to Canada, and perhaps follow the Warblers and other small birds into the farthest regions of the north, for they are seen no more after the middle of June,

volume of the 5-volume ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY, OR AN ACCOUNT OF THE HABITS OF THE BIRDS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; ACCOMPANIED BY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OBJECTS REPRESENTED IN THE WORK ENTITLED THE BIRDS OF AMERICA, AND INTERSPERSED WITH DELINEATIONS OF AMERICAN SCENERY AND MANNERS. BY JOHN JAMES AUDUBON....

> I feel pleasure in here acknowledging the assistance ... received from ... Mr. William Macgillivray ... in completing the scientific details ... of my ornithological biographies.
> — Author's "Introductory address," pages xviii-xix[9]

Here is a review of this initial volume, which appeared during May:

REVIEW OF THE BOOK

And here is this initial Audubon volume, in its entirety:

ORNITHO. BIOG. VOL. I

Volumes 2 through 5 would be published in Edinburgh by A. & C. Black, Volume 2 in 1834, Volume 3 in 1835, Volume 4 in 1838 (the title of this 4th volume would be ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY, OR AN ACCOUNT OF THE HABITS OF THE BIRDS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ACCOMPANIED BY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OBJECTS REPRESENTED IN THE WORK ENTITLED BIRDS OF AMERICA, TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE DIGESTIVE ORGANS OF MANY OF THE SPECIES, ILLUSTRATED BY ENGRAVINGS ON WOOD....), and Volume 5 in 1839.

The initial folio edition of THE BIRDS OF AMERICA was being published meanwhile, made up of the images only without text. This initial volume of ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY describing plates I-C, Volume 2 describing plates CI-CC, Volume 3 describing plates CCI-CCC, Volume 4 describing plates CCCI-CCCLXXXVII, and Volume 5 describing plates CCCLXXXVIII-CCCCXXXV and in addition containing, on pages 305-336, "Descriptions of species found in North America, but not figured in the BIRDS OF AMERICA," and, on pages 337-646, "Appendix: comprising additional observations on the habits, geographical distribution, and anatomical structure of the birds described in this work; together with corrections of errors relative to the species."

(Later, in followup editions entitled THE BIRDS OF AMERICA, FROM DRAWINGS MADE IN THE UNITED STATES AND THEIR TERRITORIES, Audubon would marry text with images.)

9. Later on, better situated ornithologists would be able to charge that this upstart was plagiarizing from Audubon's famous ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY when the passages in question had in fact originated as his own writing (so goes the world).

In the month of April, the Ruffed Grous begins to be recognised by his peculiar *drumming*, heard soon after dawn, and towards the close of evening. At length, as the season of pairing approaches, it is heard louder and more frequent till a later hour of the day, and commences again towards the close of the afternoon. This sonorous crepitating sound, strongly resembling a low peal of distant thunder, is produced by the male, who, as a preliminary to the operation, stands upright on a prostrate log, parading with erected tail and ruff, and with drooping wings in the manner of the Turkey. After swelling out his feathers, and strutting forth for a few moments, at a sudden impulse, like the motions of a crowing Cock, he draws down his elevated plumes, and stretching himself forward, loudly beats his sides with his wings, with such an accelerating motion, after the first few strokes, as to cause the tremor described, which may be heard reverberating, in a still morning, to the distance of from a quarter to that of half a mile. This curious signal is repeated at intervals of about 6 or 8 minutes. The same sound is also heard in autumn as well as spring, and given by the caged bird as well as the free, being, at times, merely an instinctive expression of hilarity and vigor. To this parading ground, regularly resorted to by the male, for the season, if undisturbed, the female flies with alacrity; but, as with other species of the genus, no lasting individual attachment is formed, and they live in a state of limited concubinage. The drumming parade of the male is likewise often the signal for a quarrel; and when they happen to meet each other in the vicinity of their usual and stated walks, obstinate battles, like those of our domestic fowls for the sovereignty of the dung-hill, but too commonly succeed. When this sound, indeed, (according to Audubon,) is imitated by striking carefully upon an inflated bladder with a stick, the jealous male, full of anger, rushes forth from his concealment, aud falls an easy prey to the wily sportsman.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1833

John James Audubon and his family returned to New-York, where he would search out new subscribers and plan a trip to Labrador.

1834

In his search for new subscribers, John James Audubon and family again went to England. Audubon reviewed the work being produced by Havell and was pleased with the progress that was being made.

February: Doctor George Parkman was managing the Boston subscription list for Audubon's bird volumes, when he helped John James Audubon and Audubon's son in their attempt to suffocate a golden eagle. Their goal was to kill the bird so that by the insertion and bending of wires inside the carcass it might be placed in a frozen posture — and without any of its feathers being disarranged. First they tried charcoal fumes, then they tried sulphur fumes, but throughout this the bird just sat on its perch and stared fiercely at them (finally the father and the son seized this reluctant specimen and held it firmly while stabbing it to the heart).

1835

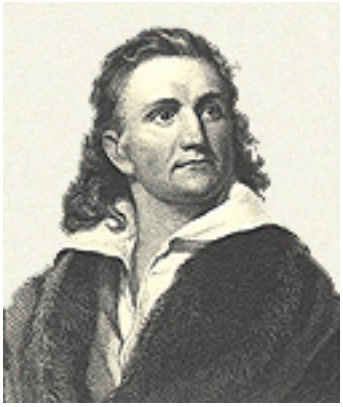
A fire in New-York destroyed the equipment John James Audubon needed for his further travels, and so he began to push for the completion of his THE BIRDS OF AMERICA. Subscriptions weren't coming in fast enough and Havell, as his firm proceeded, was always needing payment for work accomplished. To save money and time Audubon began to place multiple species on a page, in his effort to complete the project even on occasion pasting together separate images.

1837

In Texas, John James Audubon shot a number of Ivory-billed Woodpeckers *Campephilus principalis* ~~Lord God Bird~~: "I found [ivory-bills] very abundant along the finely wooded margins of that singular stream called 'Buffalo Bayou' in … Texas, where we procured several specimens."

He then went back to Florida to kill off some more truly magnificent specimens. John Woodouse got married with Bachman's daughter Maria.

February 20, Monday: David Henry Thoreau checked out, from Harvard Library, three of the five volumes of John James Audubon's ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY, OR AN ACCOUNT OF THE HABITS OF THE BIRDS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ACCOMPANIED BY DESCRIPTIONS OF THE OBJECTS REPRESENTED IN THE WORK ENTITLED THE BIRDS OF AMERICA, AND INTERSPERSED WITH DELINEATIONS OF AMERICAN SCENERY AND MANNERS. (Edinburgh: Adam Black). Why did Thoreau check out only three volumes? –Because as of 1837 the final two volumes had not yet been put through the press![10]



Friend Stephen Wanton Gould wrote in his journal:

> *2nd day 20 of 2 M / Aunt Catherine Hammett Died on the 17th inst*
> *Aged nearly 90 Years. She was Mother to my brother Isaacs Wife*
> *& a very good old woman*
> *This Afternoon her remains were interd in the common burying*
> *ground by the Side of her husband Nathan Hammett. —*
> *This Morning recd a ltter from my friend Joshua Lynch of Ohio. —*

10. Volume I – 1832, Volume II – 1835, Volume III – 1835, Volume IV – 1838, Volume V – 1839. Of these five volumes, Google Books has so far scanned only the initial volume as issued in 1832:

ORNITHO. BIOG. VOL. I

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

"NARRATIVE HISTORY" IS FABULATION, HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY

1838

John James Audubon sent the last of the drawings to his son Victor, who was overseeing the final days of the production of THE BIRDS OF AMERICA in London LONDON. The family agreed that they would reunite in New-York at the end of the year.

1839

John James Audubon returned to America, and the family settled in New-York. At the age of 59 he had achieved a most extraordinary feat. In his grand work there were 435 plates, each one printed on double elephant folio paper. Each bird was depicted life-size in its natural environment.

In Edinburgh during this year, the firm of Adam and Charles Black was putting through its press Audubon's A SYNOPSIS OF THE BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA, which Thoreau would consult in 1853. I do not have an electronic version of this actual 1839 volume that Thoreau looked at to show you, but perhaps that is inconsequential since, when Audubon's THE BIRDS OF AMERICA would be issued in 1840-1845, those seven volumes would in fact be arranged according to this SYNOPSIS rather than according to the previous ORNITHOLOGICAL BIOGRAPHY.

BIRDS OF AMERICA

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1840

John James Audubon began two new projects. The first was in collaboration with the Reverend Bachman, to depict the mammals of North America, and the other was to serve a lucrative market by reproducing his THE BIRDS OF AMERICA in a very much smaller and more readily accessible format. The later project he entrusted to J. Bowen, a Philadelphia lithographer, working under his guidance and under the guidance of his son John.

June 4, Thursday: While awaiting instructions of the king, the Governor of Genoa prohibited the entry of the mortal remains of Nicolò Paganini.

At the age of 17, Spencer Fullerton Baird wrote from Carlisle, Pennsylvania to John James Audubon, FRS at 86 White Street in New-York, providing a meticulous description of specimens of *Tyrannula* fly catcher he had shot in low swampy thickets.

> *Dear Sir,*
>
> *I herewith send you the description of a species of Tyrannula an account of which I have been able to find, neither in your Ornithological Biography and Synopsis, nor in Nuttall's Ornithology. I have obtained three specimens, all in low, swampy thickets. Two of them I have stuffed, the third (obtained last Saturday) I have in spirits and would gladly send it to you, had I the opportunity. Their habits were very similar to those of the Little Tyrant Flycatcher. (Musicapa Pusilla). Male.*
>
> *...*
>
> *You see, Sir, that I have taken (after much hesitation) the liberty of writing to you. I am but a boy [he was seventeen], and very inexperienced, as you no doubt will observe from my description of the Flycatcher. My brother last year commenced a study of our Birds, and after some months I joined him. He has gone elsewhere to settle and I am left alone.... I have already trespassed too much on your patience, and will conclude by saying, that if I can be of the slightest assistance to you in any way, be assured that although others may tender it more ably, yet none can more cheerfully.*
>
> *I am, Sir, etc.*

The 1st steam packet service between Boston and Liverpool.

BOSTON AND BUNKER HILL, FROM THE EAST

BOSTON, FROM THE DORCHESTER HEIGHTS

Sometime in June: John James Audubon responded to Spencer Fullerton Baird:

> *On my return from Charleston, S.C. yesterday, I found your kind favor of the 4th inst. in which you have the goodness to inform me that you have discovered a new species of flycatcher, and which, if the bird corresponds to your description, is, indeed, likely to prove itself hitherto undescribed, although you speak of yourself as being a youth, your style and the descriptions you have sent me prove to me that an old head may from time to time be found on young shoulders.*

1841

December 31, Friday: In Leipzig, at the Stadttheater, Casanova, a komische Oper by Albert Lortzing to his own words after Varin and Desvergers (tr.Lebrun), was performed for the initial time.

The State of the Isthmus (which is to say, “Panama”) was reincorporated into New Granada (which is to say, “Colombia”).

AUDUBON

December 31: Books of natural history make the most cheerful winter reading. I read in Audubon with a thrill of delight, when the snow covers the ground, of the magnolia, and the Florida keys, and their warm sea breezes; of the fence-rail, and the cotton-tree, and the migrations of the rice-bird; or of the breaking up of winter in Labrador. I seem to hear the melting of the snow on the forks of the Missouri as I read. I imbibe some portion of health from these reminiscences of luxuriant nature.

There is a singular health for me in those words Labrador and East Main which no desponding creed recognizes. How much more than federal are these States? If there were no other vicissitudes but the seasons, with their attendant and consequent changes, our interest would never flag. Much more is a-doing than Congress wots of in the winter season. What journal do the persimmon and buckeye keep, or the sharpshinned hawk? What is transpiring from summer to winter in the Carolinas, and the Great Pine Forest, and the Valley of the Mohawk? The merely political aspect of the land is never very cheering. Men are degraded when considered as the members of a political organization. As a nation the people never utter one great and healthy word. From this side all nations present only the symptoms of disease. I see but Bunker’s Hill and Sing Sing, the District of Columbia and Sullivan’s Island, with a few avenues connecting them. But paltry are all these beside one blast of the east or south wind which blows over them all. In society you will not find health, but in nature.

You must converse much with the field and woods, if you would imbibe such health into your mind and spirit as you covet for your body. Society is always diseased, and the best is the sickest. There is no scent in it so wholesome as that of the pines, nor any fragrance so penetrating and restorative as that of everlasting in high pastures. Without that our feet at least stood in the midst of nature, all our faces would be pale and livid.

I should like to keep some book of natural history always by me as a sort of elixir, the reading of which would restore the tone of my system and secure me true and cheerful views of life. For to the sick, nature is sick, but to the well, a fountain of health. To the soul that contemplates some trait of natural beauty no harm nor disappointment can come. The doctrines of despair, of spiritual or political servitude, no priestcraft nor tyranny, was ever [*sic*] taught by such as drank in the harmony of nature.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1842

John James Audubon moved to an estate in upper Manhattan that he called Minnie's Land. He was actively seeking subscribers for the mammal series now called THE VIVIPAROUS QUADRUPEDS OF NORTH AMERICA. Henry Thoreau would have a copy of this in his personal library.

VIVIPAROUS QUADRUPEDS

1843

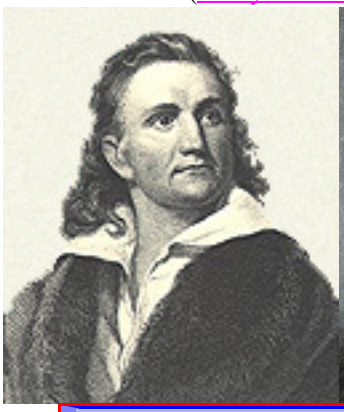
Isaac Sprague, inspired by Thomas Nuttall's A MANUAL OF THE ORNITHOLOGY OF THE UNITED STATES AND OF CANADA (Cambridge: Hilliard and Brown; Boston: Hilliard, Gray, four volumes 1832-1834), had been drawing the birds of eastern Massachusetts,

and his work had come to the attention of John James Audubon. Isaac was invited to be one of Audubon's assistants on an expedition up the Upper Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers through the Dakotas, taking measurements and making preparatory sketches for the mammal series now called THE VIVIPAROUS

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

QUADRUPEDS OF NORTH AMERICA. (Henry Thoreau would have a copy of this in his personal library.)



VIVIPAROUS QUADRUPEDS

Summer: During his final expedition, on the upper Missouri River seeking new mammals for his books on American quadrupeds, John James Audubon saw a blackbird species with which he was not familiar. His drawing of it would be included in the 1844 Octavo, or miniature, edition of THE BIRDS OF AMERICA.

BIRDS OF AMERICA

Audubon thought he was the 1st to recognize this species, and named it in honor of his young friend Thomas Mayo Brewer, the Brewer's Blackbird (although in fact the species had been known since 1829, the common name Audubon assigned has stuck with this bird). Henry Thoreau probably never saw Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus* because it is not present in our eastern states — however, since they do breed in Minnesota among other places during the summer, there would be the possibility that he sighted it while he was visiting Minnesota during the summer of 1861.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1844

The Octavo, or miniature, edition of John James Audubon's THE BIRDS OF AMERICA was published, with both critical and commercial success.

BIRDS OF AMERICA

1845

John James Audubon completed the first folio of the mammal series now entitled THE VIVIPAROUS QUADRUPEDS OF NORTH AMERICA. Henry Thoreau would have a copy of this initial volume of the American edition of this (1851, New-York) in his personal library.

VIVIPAROUS QUADRUPEDS

April 21, Monday: John Muir turned 7 years of age and entered the Dunbar Grammar School, where he would be instructed in Latin, French, English, mathematics, and geography. In his school reader he would appreciate stories about natural history, and he would become especially fascinated by America's fauna as described by John James Audubon and Alexander Wilson.

VIVIPAROUS QUADRUPEDS

BIRDS OF AMERICA

1846

At the age of 60, John James Audubon's eyesight was beginning seriously to deteriorate. He retreated to his estate "Minnie's Land," where he was kept informed by his two sons of the progress of his endeavors. During this year he painted his last picture.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1847

Although John Woodhouse continued to collect specimens for the successive volumes of THE VIVIPAROUS QUADRUPEDS OF NORTH AMERICA edition, the increasing senility of John James Audubon was rendering him unable to contribute in any way. During this year he survived a severe stroke.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1848

THE VIVIPAROUS QUADRUPEDS OF NORTH AMERICA was completed in three folio volumes.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

QUADRUPEDS, VOLUME I

QUADRUPEDS, VOLUME II

QUADRUPEDS, VOLUME III

1849

AUDUBON

Monday Dec 10 Jacob Farmer shot an American Goshawk –Falco atricapillus –which had killed many of his hens –& brought it to me.– a bird which Audubon has lately confounded with the European Goshawk–[Samuel?] Cabot has dissected & stuffed it.

1850

After April 19, Friday:

After April 19: I do not feel permanently related to any one.
There is one hill in the west part of Sudbury which I call Rock Seat from a singularly square stone on the top of it well adapted for a seat amid the walnut trees –where many a walnut has evidently been cracked if one may judge from the shells lying around.
Audubon says that the partridge **[Ruffed Grouse *Bonasa umbellus* (~~Partridge~~)]** "is often snowed up and covered over; or sometimes plunges from on wing into the soft snow, where it remains concealed for a day or two."

After April 19: there be no access on that side to citizens. I have thought how vain are all your labors citizens there you have labored these hundred years and I would rather have my house front on a natural swamp –for front yards are not made to walk in –but at most *through* –I would have so fertile a spot under my windows

After April 19: used to turn logs on. In a pleasant rocky part of the Shawshine.
Ind corn hills many places are pointed out where the Ind cultivated corn –??
I found today lying close together as in the hand about a dozen chips of arrow heads & among them one imperfect arrow head about a foot below the surface where an Ind. had sat to make them once –the perfect ones of course were carried off. It was close to the burnt stone's & ashes of an Ind. Lodge. I think that the Ind. cultivated only the very light & sandy soil It frequently happens that where there is at present a desert & the farmers go for sand you will the traces of their wigwams & chip of arrowhead stone & arrowheads–
The oldest monuments of the white settlers hereabouts are probably some dilapited & now undistinguished stone walls –laid long before Philip's war–not houses certainly perhaps not cellars –but old unhonored stone walls & ditches– But it is difficult to find one well authenticated. I respect a stone wall therefore.
The catkins of the aspens –dismal Dantean funereal trees, look like mulberries large & red. or like caterpillars In April –excepting the Epigaea catkins are the flowers willows aspens birches hazles &c

After April 19: made as much for the passer by as the dweller in.
vegetation begins first at any rate it is now most forward at the bottom of shallow water in the ponds & ditches, the pads and other water plants are already nearly a foot high when the buds in the air above have not expanded –Spring comes earliest to the bottoms of stagnant pools –there no cool winds blow –no hoar frosts penetrate – but they grow protected as under a glass– There are fewer disturbing influences to rob them of the full advantage of the sun's increased altitude.
The speckled & painted tortoises come out like the plants push out like the buds of the lilies Plants there are as much more forward as things in a hot bed are in advance of those in the open air natural hot beds –the skunk cabbage is not so far advanced as the lily pads–
It is dryest next to the brook. (in meadows) I have noticed that in most of our pastures and on the hills the rocks show the marks of fire being burned white & bare of lichens & some times cracked on their sides.– the lichens being left only on their tops. So extensively is fire applied as an agent to decompose the rocks. So is the earth cheapened & whitened & the spirit burned out of it by the white man.– when we shall we get new rocks again? Rocks which have not felt the clearer's fires? A poor singed pealed bleached parboiled earth!
I visited today an old mill on the shawshine in Bedford said by Shattuck to have been built before Philip's war & to have been owned by Michael Bacon then –& garrisoned by two soldiers at his request –now owned by a Fitch. Fitch the miller son of owner said the original mill had been burnt a great may years ago –but showed us a wall which he thought was as old as the first & many old oak timbers much decayed. His Grandmother there had been a mill there 200 years– I was most struck by some stairs made of sollid oak timber sawed diagonally the hypothenuse resting on a straight backed oak horse– The miller thought them a hundred years old at least–

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

They commanded my respect. old times had stout men. There was an old oak block shaped somewhat like a chair & used as such –its use not now known.– Also something like a solid wheel barrow wheel of oak, use not known, now

LEMUEL SHATTUCK

READ THE FULL TEXT

January 27, Monday: At age 66, with his family fortunes diminishing around him, despite stroke and senility and diminished eyesight, John James Audubon ventured out to shoot at sitting ducks on a pond of his Minnie's Land estate near the Hudson River. It proved to be too much for him:

Famous Last Words:

"What school is more profitably instructive than the death-bed of the righteous, impressing the understanding with a convincing evidence, that they have not followed cunningly devised fables, but solid substantial truth."

— A COLLECTION OF MEMORIALS CONCERNING DIVERS DECEASED MINISTERS, Philadelphia, 1787

"The death bed scenes & observations even of the best & wisest afford but a sorry picture of our humanity. Some men endeavor to live a constrained life — to subject their whole lives to their will as he who said he might give a sign if he were conscious after his head was cut off — but he gave no sign Dwell as near as possible to the channel in which your life flows."

—Thoreau's JOURNAL, March 12, 1853

1851	John James Audubon	shooting at sitting ducks on his estate, at age 66 despite stroke and senility	*"You go down that side of Long Pond and I'll go down this side and we'll get the ducks!"*
1852	Daniel Webster	his attendant was tardy in administering some brandy	*"I still live!"*
1857	Auguste Comte	he had been making himself the pope of a religion of science, "Positivism"	*"What an irreparable loss!"*
1859	John Brown	request	*"I am ready at any time — do not keep me waiting."*
1862	Henry David Thoreau	he was editing manuscript	*"moose ... Indian"*
1865	Abraham Lincoln	on stage, an actor ad-libbed a reference to the presence of the President	laughter
... other famous last words ...			

1852

February 13:

 February 13, Friday: Talking with Rice this afternoon about the bees which I discovered the other day–he told me something about his bee-hunting. He and Pratt go out together once or twice a year. He takes a little tin box with a little pure refined sugar and water about the consistency of honey–or some honey in the comb, which comes up so high only in the box as to let the lid clear a bee's back–also some little bottles of paint–red, blue, white &c and a compass properly prepared to line the bees with–the sights perhaps a foot apart. Then they ride off (this is in the fall) to some extensive wood–perhaps the west side of Sudbury– They go to some buck-wheat field–or a particular species of late Golden rod which especially the bees frequent at that season. and they are sure to find honey bees enough– They catch one by putting the box under the blossoms–& then covering him with the lid at the same time cutting off the stalk of the flower– They then set down the box and after a while raise the lid slightly to see if the bee is feeding, if so they take off the lid,–knowing that he will not fly away till he gets ready–and catch another, and so on till they get a sufficient number– Then they thrust sticks into their little paint bottles–& with these, watching their opportunity they give the bees each a spot of a particular color on his body–they spot him distinctly–and then lying about a rod off not to scare them–& watching them carefully all the while they wait till one has filled his sac, and prepares to depart to his hive. They are careful to note whether he has a red or a blue jacket or what color. He rises up about 10 feet and then begins to circle rapidly round & round with a hum sometimes a circle 20 feet in diameter before he has decided which way to steer–& then suddenly shoots off in a bee line to his hive. The hunters lie flat on their backs & watch him carefully all the while. If blue jacket steers toward the open land where there are known to be hives–They forthwith leave out of the box all the blue jackets–& move off a little and open the box in a new place to get rid of that family. And so they work till they come to a bee that steers into the wood or swamp or in a direction to suit them. They take the point of compass exactly–and wait perhaps till red jacket comes back–that they may ascertain his course more exactly and also judge by the time it has taken for him to go & return, using their watches how far off the nest is–though sometimes they are disappointed in their calculations for it may take the more or less time to crawl into its nest–depending on its position in the tree. By the third journey he will commonly bring some of his companions. Our hunters then move forward a piece–from time to time letting out a bee to make sure of their course– after the bees have gone & come once, they generally steer straight to their nest at once without circling round first– Sometimes the hunters having observed this course carefully–on the compass go round a quarter of a circle and letting out another bee observe the course from that point, knowing that where these two lines intersect must be the nest. Rice thinks that a bee line does not vary more than 15 or 20 feet from a straight one in going half a mile. They frequently trace the bees thus to their hives more than a mile

He said that the last time he went out–the wind was so strong that the bees made some lee way & he could not get the exact course to their hives–

He has a hive of bees over in Sudbury and he every year sows some buckwheat for them– He has visited this buckwheat when in blossom when there was more than one bee to every six inches square and out of curiosity has caught a number of the bees & letting them out successively–has calculated by the several courses they took whos hives they came from in almost every instance though some had come more than 2 miles–and others belonged to his own hive close by.

He has seen a dozen hogsheads of honey from S. America on the wharf at Boston.

Says they manufacture honey now from maple syrup which you cannot tell from bee honey–taking care to throw some dead bees and bees wings and a little honey comb into it.

He was repaid if he found the nest–even if he did not get any honey. I am glad to know that there are such grown children left.

He says the Mt honeysuckle (columbine) has a good deal of honey at the bottom of the flower–which the bee cannot get at in the usual way–it therefores gnaws a hole in it from the outside.

AUDUBON

The actual bee-hunter–and pigeon-catcher [American Passenger Pigeons *Ectopistes migratorius*]–is familiar with facts in the natural history of bees & pigeons–which Huber & even Audubon are totally ignorant of. I love best the unscientific man's knowledge there is so much more humanity in it. It is connected with true **sports**.

9 A M to Conantum.
The rain has diminished the snow & hardened the crust. And made bare ground in many places. A yellow water a foot or 2 deep covers the ice on the meadows but is not frozen quite hard enough to bear. As the riverr swells the ice cracks along both sides over the edge of its chanel often defined by willows–and that part over the river rises with the water, but that over the meadow is held down apparently by the grass & bushes & (& moreover feels the force of the freshet less) and is accordingly covered with water
I sat by the little brook in Conants meadow where it falls over an oak rail between some boards which partially dam it–8 or 9 inches–the bubbles on the surface making a coarse foam–the surface of which I perceive has frozen in the night forming an irregular shell-like covering–which is now partly worn away at top– These bubbles which so closely push up & crowd one another each making haste to expand & burst–(forming coarse frothy heaps) impinging on each other–remind me of the cells of honey comb–as if they inclined to take the same hexagonal form–4 sided five sided–but the most perfect methinks 6 sided–but it is difficult to count them they are so restless and burst so soon.
In one place this froth had been frozen into the form of little hollow towers larger at top than at bottom–6 inches high & the bubbles were now incessantly rising through & bursting at their top–(over flowing with bubbles). I saw the ruined shells of many similar towers that had been washed down the stream–
Air being carried down by the force of this little fall & mixed with the water–deeper bubbles were formed, which rose up further down & were flattened against the transparent ice–through which they appeared like coins of all sizes from a pin head to a dollar poured out of a misers pot–hesitating at first which way to troop–seeming sometimes to be detained by some inequality in the ice which they so closely hugged– The coin-like bubbles of the brook.
I traced this rill further up to where it comes under the road–and heard its rumbling like a mill privelege from afar–but it was quite bridged over there with snow, but here & there the foam was frothing up through a hole in the snow like a little geyser–& in some places it was frozen in the form of beehives 18 inches high & a foot wide–the most delicate floculent masses which could not be handled–regularly formed layer on layer–sometimes of a downy white–sometimes tinged with a delicate fawn color–in which you could detect a slight trembling, showing that the geyser was still at work in its core– Nature handled the froth more delicately than the spinner's machinery his roping
Color, which is the poets wealth is so expensive, that most take to mere outline or pencil sketches & become men of science.

December 30, Thursday: Having already perused the volumes for the years 1633-1636, Henry Thoreau checked out, from Harvard Library, the JESUIT RELATION volumes for the years 1637 and 1638.[11]

http://www.canadiana.org

11. 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 Lallemant, 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

 Dec. 30. In Audubon's Animals:—
Sigmodon hispidum, Say and Ord.
Marsh-Rat of Lawson's Carolina.
Wood-Rat, Bartram's Travels in Florida.
Arvicola hispidus, Godman.
Arvicola hortensis of Griffith and of Cuvier.
The plate of this *resembles* my mouse of December 13th.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT

1853

March 5, Saturday: The Saint Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company, a predecessor to The Travelers insurance company, was founded in St. Paul, Minnesota, serving local customers who were having a difficult time getting claim payments in a timely manner from insurance companies on the east coast of the United States.

Henry Thoreau mentioned in his journal that he had received a circular letter early in March or shortly before from a scientist he had met, Spencer Fullerton Baird, the secretary of Louis Agassiz's American Association

for the Advancement of Science, advising him and, he suspected, "thousand of others," that he had been proposed for membership in the Association. The letter asked him "to fill in the blank against certain questions, among which the most important one was what branch of science [he] was specially interested in." Thoreau did not respond, apparently assuming the group would take no action.

AUDUBON

March 5, 1853: F. Brown showed me to-day some lesser redpolls which he shot yesterday. They turn out to be my falsely-called chestnut-frontleted bird of the winter. "*Linaria minor*, Ray. Lesser Redpoll Linnet. From Pennsylvania and New Jersey to Maine, in winter; inland to Kentucky. Breeds in Maine, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Labrador, and the Fur Countries." –Audubon's Synopsis. They have a sharp bill, black legs and claws, and a bright-crimson crown or frontlet, in the male reaching to the base of the bill, with, in his case, a delicate rose or carmine on the breast and rump. Though this is described by Nuttall as an occasional visitor in the winter, it bas been the prevailing bird here this winter.

Yesterday I got my grape cuttings. The day before went to the Corner Spring to look at the tufts of green grass. (got some of the very common leptogium (? ?). Is it one of the *Collemaceæ*? Was pleased with the sight of the yellow osiers of the golden willow, and the red of the cornel, now colors are so rare,. Saw the green fine-threaded conferva in a ditch, commonly called frog-spittle. Brought it home in my pocket, and it expanded again in a tumbler. It appeared quite a fresh growth, with what looked like filmy air-bubbles, as big as large shot, in its midst.

The secretary of the Association...The secretary for the Association for the Advancement of Science requests me, as he probably has thousands of others, by a printed circular letter from Washington the other day, to fill the blank against certain questions, among which the most important one was what branch of science I was specially interested in, using the term science in the most comprehensive sense possible. Now, though I could

state to a select few that department of human inquiry which engages me, and should be rejoiced at an opportunity to do so, I felt that it would be to make myself the laughing-stock of the scientific community to describe or attempt to describe to them that branch of science which specially interests me, inasmuch as they do not believe in a science which deals with the higher law. So I was obliged to speak to their condition and describe to them that poor part of me which alone they can understand. The fact is I am a mystic, a transcendentalist, and a natural philosopher to boot. Now I think of it, I should have told them at once that I was a transcendentalist. That would have been the shortest way of telling them that they would not understand my explanations.

How absurd that, though I probably stand as near to nature as any of them, and am by constitution as good an observer as most, yet a true account of my relation to nature should excite their ridicule only! If it had been the secretary of an association of which Plato or Aristotle was the president, I should not have hesitated to describe my studies at once and particularly.

ARISTOTLE

1855

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.

 February 21. Another Arvicola Emmonsii, a male; whole length six inches, tail three inches. This is very little reddish on the sides, but general aspect above dark-brown; though not iron-gray, yet reminding me of that; yet not the less like the hue of beasts in a menagerie. This may be a last year's mouse
Audubon and Bachman 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."

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

P. M.—To Fair Haven Hill via Cut. A clear air, with a northwesterly, March-like wind, as yesterday. What is the peculiarity in the air that both the invalid in the chamber and the traveller on the highway say these are perfect March days? The wind is rapidly drying up earth, and elevated sands already begin to look whitish. How much light there is in the sky and on the surface of the russet earth! It is reflected in a flood from all cleansed surfaces which rain and snow have washed, — from the railroad rails and the mica in the rocks and the silvery latebræ of insects there, — and 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 and pleasant to hear the sound of the dry leaves and twigs, which have so long been damp and silent, more worn and lighter than ever, crackling again under my feet, — though there is still considerable snow about, along wall-sides. etc.,— and to see the holes and galleries recently made by the mice (?) in the 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, and, when I am sheltered from the wind, I feel the warmer sun of the season reflected from the withered grass and twigs on the side of this elevated hollow

A warmth begins to be reflected from the partially dried ground here and there in the sun in sheltered places very cheering to invalids 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, and begin to rustle under such a sun and wind as these, the news is told to how many myriads of grubs that underlie 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 and 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 the snow on the mountains, because on the remote rim of the horizon its whiteness contrasts with the russet and darker hues of our bare fields. I looked at the Peterboro mountains with my glass from Fair Haven Hill. I think that there can be no more arctic scene than these mountains 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 and dark forests, with perhaps a house on some remote, bare ridge seen against them. A silver edging, or ear-like handle, to this basin of the world. They look like great loaves incrusted with pure white sugar; and I think that this must have been the origin of the name "sugar-loaf" sometimes given to mountains, and 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, and think only of frosted cake. The snow on the mountains has, in this case, a singular smooth and crusty appearance, and by contrast you see even single evergreens rising here and there above it and where a promontory casts a shadow along the mountains' side. I saw what looked like a large lake of misty bluish water on the side of the further Peterboro mountain, its edges or shore very distinctly defined. This I concluded was the shadow of another part of the mountain. And 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 in front a dozen dirtcars [from] somewhere up country, laden apparently with some kind of earth (or clay?); and these, with their loads, were thickly and 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 this side, and the twenty 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, and 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, and 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, etc., answers 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, and muddy bottoms and dark waters. There are few or no bluish animals

Can it be true, as is said, that geese have gone over Boston, probably yesterday? It is in the newspapers [Henry Hosmer tells me (Mar. 17th) that he saw several flocks about this time!].

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 gyrinus 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 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."

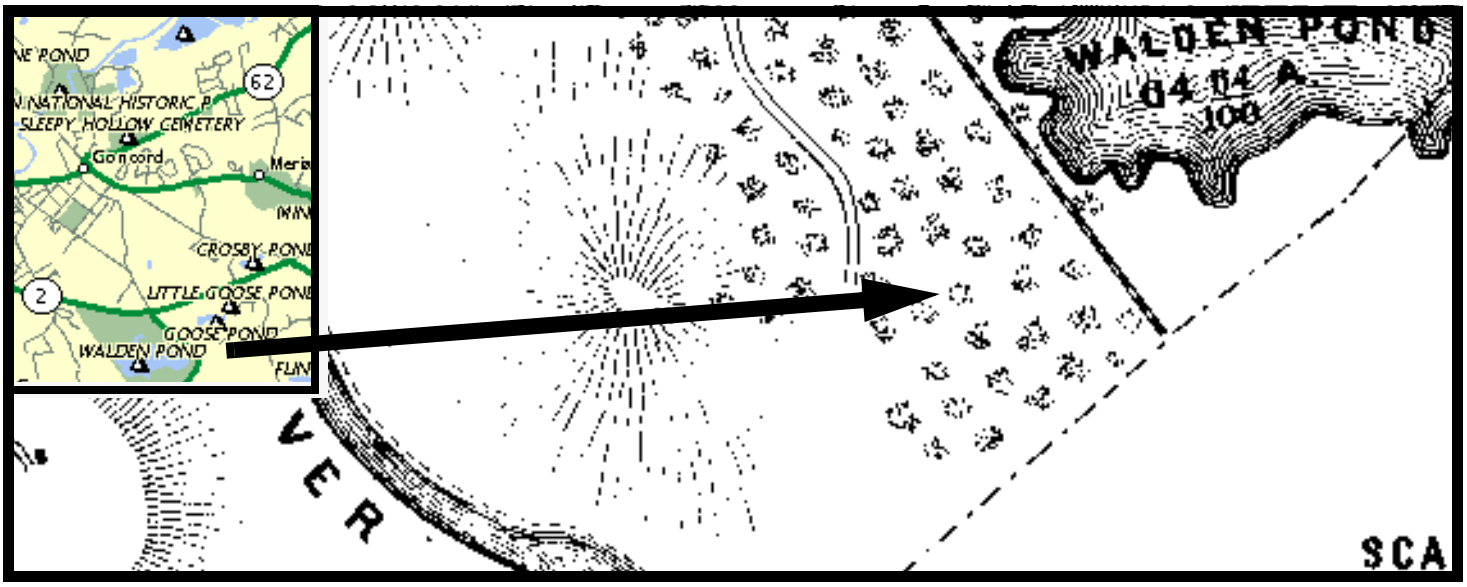
AUDUBON

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.

March 12, Monday: Father Isaac Hecker, CSSR, wrote to Orestes Augustus Brownson.

In the morning Henry Thoreau went to Andromeda or Cassandra Ponds,



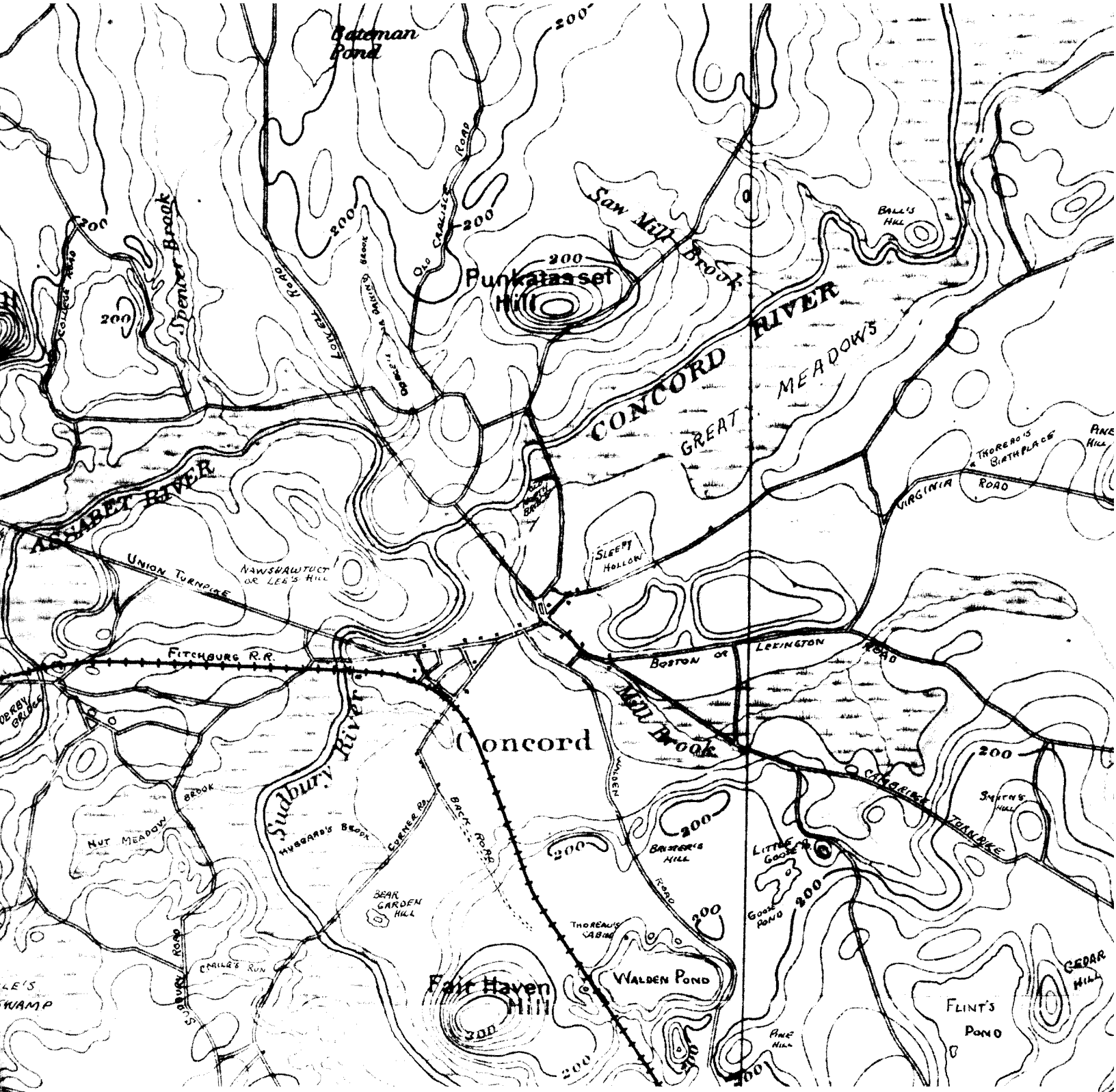
and in the afternoon to Great Meadows (Gleason D8).

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.

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON



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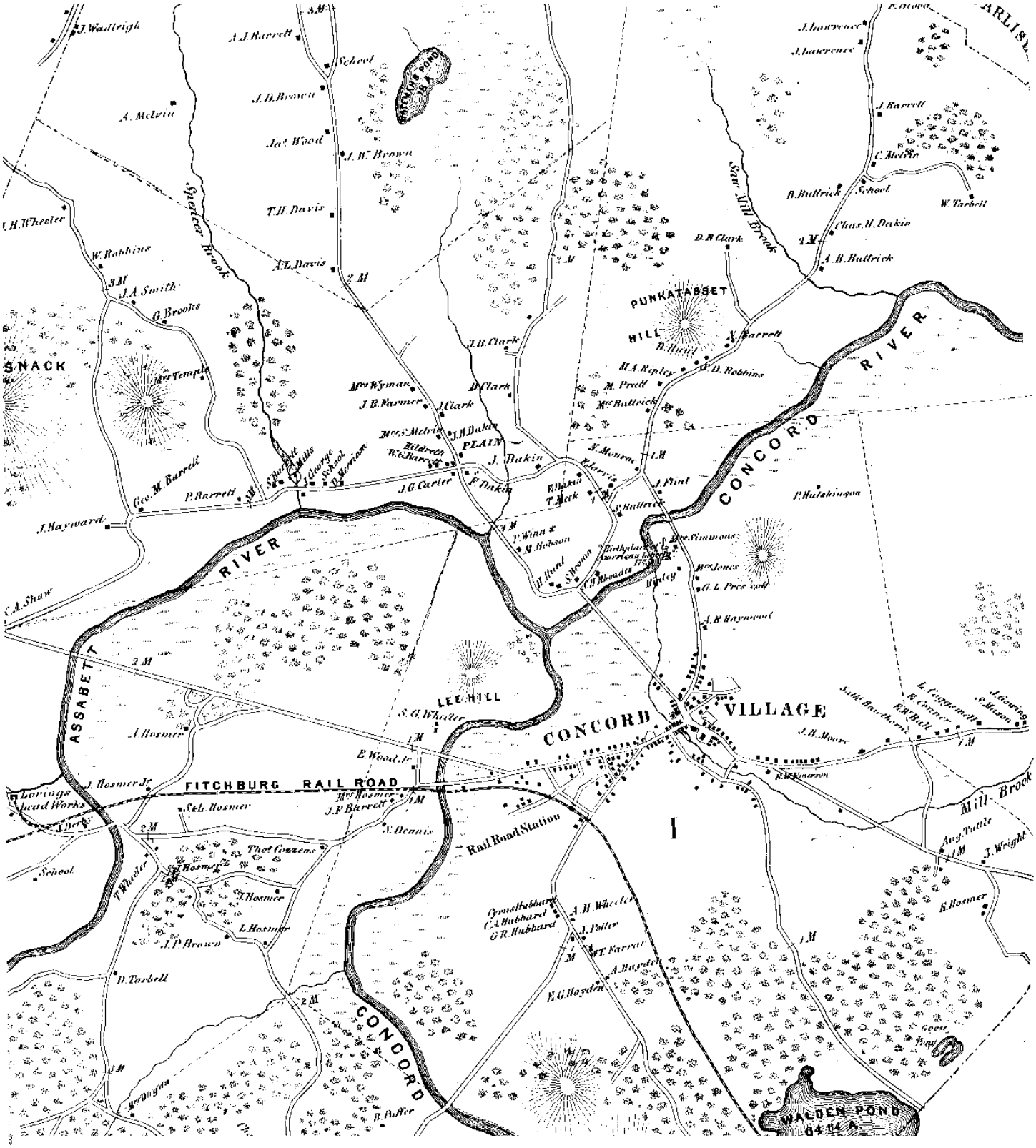

I read with pleasure your pertinent Address before the Merc. Lib. Association, sent me long ago.
Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau
Charles Sumner.

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

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 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 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

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 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. Carried my flying squirrel 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, eying 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.

AUDUBON

DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.

1856

June 25, Wednesday: Friend Daniel Ricketson to his journal, in New Bedford with Henry Thoreau:

> *Cooler, unsettled, and signs of rain, wind S.W. At home and about this forenoon, Thoreau busy collecting marine plants from the river side. Went to town this P.M. with Thoreau. Called at Thomas A. Greene's with T. who wished to confer with him about rare plants and those peculiar to this section — afterwards went to the city library and examined Audubon's Ornithology for a species of the sparrow which we have on our place and which as yet I have been unable to identify with any described in Wilson or Nuttall.*

June 25. An abundance of the handsome corncockle (*Lychnis*), apparently in prime, in midst of a rye-field, together with morning-glories by the Acushnet shore. Black-grass in bloom, partly done. A kind of rush (?) with terete leaves and a long spike of flowers, one to two feet high, *somewhat* like a loose plantain spike. It inclines to grow in circles a foot or more in diameter. Seaside plantain and rosemary, not long out. *Veronica arvensis* one foot high (!) on the shore there. *Spergularia rubra* var. *marina*.

P.M. — Called at Thomas A. Greene's in New Bedford, said to be best acquainted with the botany of this vicinity (also acquainted with shells, and somewhat with geology). In answer to my question what were the rare or peculiar plants thereabouts, he looked over his botany deliberately and named the *Aletris farinosa*, or star-grass; the *Hydrocotyle vulgaris* (probably *interrupta* of Gray), which he thought was now gone; *Proserpinaca pectinacea*, at the shallow pond in Westport where I went last fall with Ricketson; *Panax trifolium*. That chenopodium-like plant on the salt-marsh shore, with hastate leaves, mealy under sides, is *Atriplex patula*, not yet out.

Brewer, in a communication to Audubon (as I read in his hundred(?)-dollar edition), makes two kinds of song sparrows, and says that Audubon has represented one, the most common about houses, with a spot in the centre of the breast, and Wilson the other, more universally spotted on the breast. The latter's nest will be two feet high in a bush and sometimes covered over and with an arched entrance and with six eggs (while the other has not more than five), larger and less pointed than the former's and apparently almost wholly rusty-brown. This builds further from houses. [*Vide* June 23, 1860.]

1859

January 12, Wednesday: Documentation of the international slave trade, per W.E. Burghardt Du Bois: "Message of the President ... relative to the landing of the barque *Wanderer* on the coast of Georgia, etc." –SENATE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 35 Cong. 2 sess. VII. No. 8. See also HOUSE EXECUTIVE DOCUMENT, 35 Cong. 2 sess. IX. No. 89.

Jacob B. Farmer brought Henry Thoreau a hawk which he thought had caught 30 or 40 of his chickens since summer "for he has lost so many, and he has seen a hawk **like** this catch some of them." Thoreau saw this, obviously, as the result of typological thinking, and was unwilling to infer beyond Farmer's evidence.

January 12: Mr. Farmer brings me a hawk which he thinks has caught thirty or forty of his chickens since summer, for he has lost so many, and he has seen a hawk like this catch some of them. Thinks he has seen this same one sitting a long time upright on a tree, high or low, about his premises, and when at length a hen or this year's chicken had strayed far from the rest, it skimmed along and picked her up without pausing, and bore her off, the chicken not having seen him approaching. He found this, caught by one leg and frozen to death, in a trap which he had set for mink by a spring and baited with fish.

This measures nineteen by forty-two inches and is, according to Wilson and Nuttall, a young Falco lineatus, or red-shouldered hawk. It might as well be called red or rusty breasted hawk.[12] Nuttall says it lives on frogs, crayfish, etc., and does not go far north,–not even to Massachusetts, he thought. Its note, kee-oo. He never saw one soar, at least in winter. According to all accounts Wilson's Falco hyemalis is the old of this bird, for there is a remarkable difference between old and young.

Mine agrees with Wilson's F. Iineatus, or the young, except that the greater wing-coverts and secondaries are hardly what I should call "pale olive brown thickly spotted," etc., but rather dusky-brown, somewhat indistinctly barred with whitish (which is pure white on each edge of the feathers) and edged with rusty; that the shafts of the breast-feathers are only dark-brown; that the tail is not quite black, but very dark brown, and is not "broadly tipped" with white, but only with a quarter of an inch of it; vent not "pale ochre," but white; legs and feet hardly fine yellow, but dull greenish-yellow; femorals as bright rusty as the breast. It differs from Wilson's winter falcon, which is considered by Audubon and Brewer the same as the lineatus, in not having what I should call a "tooth in the upper mandible;" head, sides of neck, etc., hardly "streaked with white;" above, all primaries and exterior tailfeathers not "brownish orange," and tail not "barred alternately with dark and pale brown," its inner veins and coverts not "white;" and what is very important, the breast and beneath is not "white."

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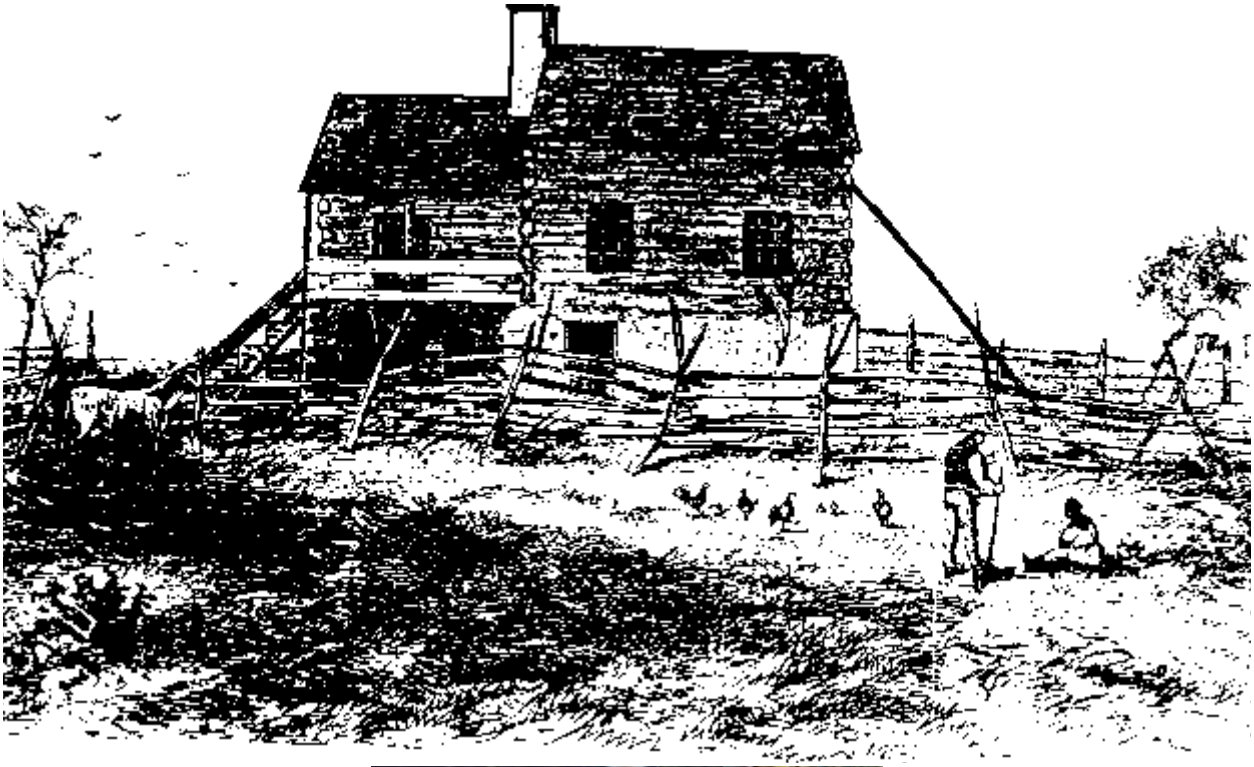
Since Nuttall makes it a southern bird, and it is not likely to come north in the winter, it would seem that it breeds here.

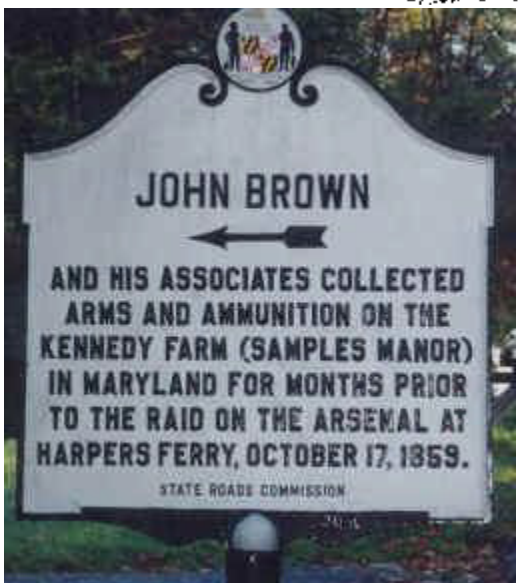
Farmer says that he saw what he calls the common hen-hawk, one soaring high with apparently a chicken in its claws, while a young hawk circled beneath, when former suddenly let drop the chicken, but the young failing to catch, he shot down like lightning and caught and bore off the falling chicken before it reached the earth.

12.According to Birds of Long Island, mine is the old bird (??).

April 18, Monday: John E. Cook got married with a woman of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, Mary V. Kennedy.

Note that the farmhouse on which the conspirators would descend would be the Kennedy one:





Henry Thoreau surveyed, for Stedman Buttrick, a woodlot in the south part of Acton that he was selling to Sumner Blood.

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/137.htm

April 18: 8 A.M.– To the south part of Acton, surveying, with Stedman Buttrick.
When B. came to see me the other evening, and stood before the door in the dark, my mother asked, "Who is it?" to which he replied, quite seriously, "Left-tenant [SIC] Stedman Buttrick."
B. says that he shot some crossbills which were opening pine cones in the neighborhood of the Easterbrook place some years ago, that he saw two dildees [SIC] here as much as a month ago at least, and that they used to breed on that island east of his house, – I think he called it Burr's Island. He sees the two kinds of telltale here. Once shot an eider duck here. Has often shot the pintail (he calls it spindle-tail) duck here. Thinks he has killed four (?!) kinds of teal here. Once shot a sheldrake which had a good-sized sucker in its throat, the tail sticking out its bill, so that, as he thought, it could not have flown away with it. It was a full-plumaged male. Once, in the fall, shot a mackerel gull on what I call Dove Rock. Once shot a whole flock of little ducks not more than two thirds the size of a pigeon, yet full-grown, near the junction of the two rivers. Also got two ducks, the female all white and the male with a long and conspicuous bottle-green crest above the white. Looked through Audubon, but could find no account of them. Sees two kinds of gray ducks, one larger than a black duck. Has seen the summer duck here carrying its young to the water in her bill, as much as thirty rods. Says that teal have bred here.

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His boy found, one February, as much as a peck of chestnuts in different parcels within a short distance of one another, just under the leaves in Hildreth's chestnut wood, placed there, as he says, by the chip-squirrel, which they saw eating them. He has seen the cross fox here.
I am looking for acorns these days, to sow on the Walden lot, but can find very few sound ones. Those which the squirrels have not got are mostly worm-eaten and quite pulverized or decayed. A few which are cracked at the small [END], having started last fall, have yet life in them, perhaps enough to plant. Even these look rather discolored when you cut them open, but Buttrick says they will do for pigeon-bait. So each man looks at things from his own point of view. I found by trial that the last or apparently sound acorns would always sink in water, while the rotten ones would float, and I have accordingly offered five cents a quart for such as will sink. You can thus separate the good from the bad in a moment. I am not sure, however, but the germs of many of the latter [THAT IS, SUCH AS WILL SINK. THE SENTENCE "You can thus separate the good from the bad in a moment" WAS WRITTEN AFTERWARD AND INSERTED OVER A CARET.] have been injured by the frost.
Hear a field sparrow.
Ed. Emerson shows me his aquarium. He has two minnows from the brook, which I think must be the banded minnow; a little more than an inch long with very conspicuous broad black transverse bars. Some Rana sylvatica spawn just begun to flat out. Also several kinds of larvae in the water, – one very like a dragon-fly, with three large feather-like appendages to the tail, small gyrinus, which he says nibbled off the legs of the skater (?), etc., etc., but no dragon-fly grubs.

Two salamanders, one from Ripple Lake and the other from the pool behind my house that was. One some four inches long, with a carinated and waved (crenated) edged tail as well as light-vermilion spots on the back, evidently the Salamandra dorsalis. (This I suspect is what I called S. symmetrica last fall.) (This is pale-brown above.) The other two thirds as large, a very handsome bright orange salmon, also with vermilion spots, which must be the true S. symmetrica. Both thickly sprinkled with black dots. The latter's tail comparatively thick and

straight-edged.
Haynes (Heavy) says that trout spawn twice in a year, – once in October and again in the spring.
Saw snow ice a yard across to-day under the north side of a wood.

1860

July 25, Wednesday: The Mississippian, a gazette of Jackson, Mississippi, characterized for the benefit of its readership the outrageous essence of "Black Republicanism."

Black Republicanism Defined.

We have before us a speech delivered recently in New York City, by the notorious Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, a representative man and accredited mouth piece of the Black Republican party. In this speech he explicitly proclaims the platform and ennunciates the policy and objects of that organization in seeking to obtain control of the federal government. They are briefly summed up in the subjoined extract. We publish it that the people of the South may be forewarned and forearmed:

1. That the compact with the slave States is not binding, as against Christianity and the Bible.
2. That all laws for slave protection, even in the States, are sinful and unconstitutional.
3. That the fugitive slave law is unconstitutional.
4. That though the Court of the United States hold it to be constitutional, their holding is not binding upon the tribunals or the people.
5. That an oath to maintain the Constitution of the United States don't mean support of the Constitution as expounded by the courts, or by the precedents of the government.
6. That every man has a right to construe the Constitution as he understands it, and to carry out the Constitution according to his own understanding.
7. That fifteen States of our Federal Union are barbarious States, in which live barbarians, &c., &c.

July 25, 1860: P.M.–To Mr. Bradshaw's, Wayland, with Ed. Hoar.

I was surprised to see among the birds which Bradshaw has obtained the little auk of Nuttall (*Mergulus alle*, or common sea-dove), which he says that he shot in the fall on the pond of the Assabet at Knight's factory. There were two, and the other was killed with a paddle. It is said in Wilson, though apparently not *by* him, that "with us it is a very rare bird, and when seen it is generally in the vicinity of the sea." One was sent to him from Great Egg Harbor in December, 1811, as a great curiosity, and this is the one described. Rarely visits Great Britain; is found as far north as Spitzbergen at least. "The Greenlanders call it the Ice-bird from the circumstance of its being the harbinger of ice." "It grows fat in the stormy season, from the waves bringing plenty of crabs and small fish within its reach." Nuttall says its appearance here is always solitary; driven here

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by stress of weather; that it has been seen in Fresh Pond, and Audubon found a few breeding in Labrador. Giraud says, "In the United States it is rare." "I am informed [it] [THOREAU'S BRACKETS] is occasionally seen by the fishermen of Egg Harbor." Is that on Long Island? [GREAT EGG HARBOR AND LITTLE EGG HARBOR ARE ON THE NEW JERSEY COAST] Says one was killed at "Raynor South," and it is said to breed on the arctic coast. Ross's party fed on them on the west coast of Greenland. Peabody says: "In hardiness and power of enduring cold, no bird exceeds them.... In Newfoundland they are called the Icebird, from the presumption that, unless extreme cold were approaching, they would not come so far from home. Those that are found in this state are generally exhausted by their long flight; some have quietly submitted to be taken by the hand. They are not regular visitants, but occasional solitary wanderers."

Was also surprised to see the fork-tailed stormy petrel (*Thalassidroma Leachii*) in his collection, which he caught exhausted near his house, and I think that he said his boy found another dead. Brewer says, "Habitat from Massachusetts to Newfoundland." Wilson says that one of the other species (*T. Wilsonii*) was shot on the Schuylkill near Philadelphia, and that they are sometimes found in the interior of Great Britain. Giraud says that the former, like the last, "is of rare occurrence on the shores of Long Island," and, under the *T. Wilsonii*, that "the Petrel is never seen inland except when driven in, as it occasionally happens, by severe storms." Baird wrote to him shortly after the gale in August, 1842. "You have probably seen an account in the papers of the Petrels which had been driven inland by the storm of August. They were nearly all the Fork-tailed Petrel, Thalassidroma Leachii. I saw about half a dozen specimens killed near Washington. They were killed in

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Petersburgh and Bewfort, Va., and many other places." According to Peabody, Audubon makes the fork-tailed to be much more abundant on the coast of Massachusetts than the *T. Wilsonii*, and about vessels to be the most suspicious of the three. P. says, "I have had one brought to me which was taken near Chicopee River in Springfield, 70 miles from the shore."

He had also the *Ardea exilis*, or least bittern, which he obtained on his river meadow. He sees it there occasionally and has set it up before, though it is not so common as the *viridis*. He sees it stand on the pads. It is considerably less than the *viridis* and more tawny or tawny-brown. Wilson says it "is the smallest known species of the whole tribe," and that, like the *viridis*, they skulk by day and feed by night. Peabody says, "They are seldom seen, as they rise only in sudden alarm."

He also has the long-eared owl (*Strix otus*), which he killed in the woods behind his house. Wilson says, "Except in size, this species has more resemblance to the Great Horned Owl than any other of its tribe." Probably the same with the European. Peabody says it "is never common" in Massachusetts. Giraud has seen it in his neighborhood only in the winter.

He has the *Rallus Carolinianus*, and says that he sees another kind as common as this on the river meadows there, – a true rail, but with a much longer bill. He is very confident about it and has killed and set them up. It is undoubtedly the *R. Virginianus*, or lesser clapper rail, which, as he had already said, corresponded to an English rail which he knew. So we have this in Concord, no doubt.

He has the *Sylvia maculosa*, shot near his house. Bluish-ash above, I believe, head or crown the same, yellow throat and beneath, with many blackish spots and marks [?] on sides and breast, and white spots on inner vanes of tail-feathers, the tail being blackish.

Has two specimens of what he called the crow blackbird, shot by his house in the spring. They appeared to me surprisingly large, and he had furnished them with yellow irides, which he says are like the original ones. Nuttall says that the *Quiscalus major* has a yellow iris, the other a silvery iris. Brewer says that the former resembles the latter "to a great degree, differing from it principally in size and in its concave tail." This of Bradshaw's measured about fourteen inches long. He says these two were larger than others with them. The vertical depth of bill at base was that assigned to the *Q. versicolor* by Nuttall. As set up, I think that the tail was not convex.

Passed a field in Wayland occupied by so worthless a crop to *the farmer* as to attract attention, – a very undulating gravelly and stony field filled with johnswort (in its prime), sorrel (still red-seeded), and mulleins, between which, however, you saw the gravel, – yet very pleasant to the naturalist.

September 11, Tuesday: The New York Times would report on this night's demonstration by the "Wide-Awakes" of Albany, New York:

> A grand demonstration of the Wide-Awake clubs of Albany and adjacent cities took place to-night, and was fully equal to the anticipations of its projectors, and the grandest display yet made during the campaign of uniformed political clubs. A large number of persons were congregated in the city to see the torchlight parade, and many buildings on the line of march were illuminated.
>
> The appearance of the Procession was most brilliant. The line was formed at about 8 o'clock, the numbers being so large as to occupy over an hour in forming. Visiting clubs from Kingston, Hudson, Valatie, Ghent, Stuyvesant, Saratoga Ballston Troy, Lansingburgh, Kinderhook, Chatham, Schenectady, Johstown, Waterford, Canajoharie, Mohawk, Gloversville, Rondout, and most towns of Albany County were present, some with large delegations. The whole procession numbered to the neighborhood of 4,000 torches.
>
> In the afternoon a handsome banner was hung across State-street from the Journal office, bearing a handsome device and the names of the candidates. The clubs were accompanied by several bands of music and torches, decorated with flags and bouquets. The Albany clubs were under the command of their President, J. MEREDITH READ, and made a handsome appearance, and the whole affair reflects great credit on the President and his assistants.
>
> Among the procession were several Clubs of Railsplitters, wearing blue shirts and carrying mauls. They were apparently one thousand strong. The procession will not close until a very late hour.
>
> On the line of march several handsome displays of fireworks took place, and visiting clubs were loudly cheered. Persons thronged the streets to witness the parade, winch has been thus far the largest and handsomest parade of the campaign.

September 11: George Melvin came to tell me this forenoon that a strange animal was killed on Sunday, the 9th, near the north line of the town, and it was not known certainly what it was. From his description I judged it to be a Canada lynx. In the afternoon I went to see it. It was killed on Sunday morning by John Quincy Adams, who lives in Carlisle about half a mile (or less) from the Concord line, on the Carlisle road.

CAT

Some weeks ago a little girl named Buttrick, who was huckleberrying near where the lynx was killed, was frightened by a wild animal leaping out of the bushes near her – *over* her, as she said – and bounding off. But no one then regarded her story. Also a Mr. Grimes, who lives in Concord just on the line, tells me that some month ago he heard from his house the loud cry of an animal in the woods northward, and told his wife that if he were in Canada he should say it was a bob-tailed cat. He had lived seven years in Canada and seen a number of this kind of animal. Also a neighbor of his, riding home in the night, had heard a similar cry. Jacob Farmer saw a strange animal at Bateman's Pond a year ago, which he thinks was this.

Adams had lost some of his hens, and had referred it to a fox or the like. He being out, his son told me that on Sunday he went out with his gun to look after the depredator, and some forty or fifty rods from his house northwesterly [*Vide* forward] (on Dr. Jones's lot, which I surveyed) in the woods, this animal suddenly dropped within two feet of him, so near that he could not fire. He had heard a loud hiss, but did not mind it. He accordingly struck it with the butt of his gun, and it then bounded off fifteen feet [Another says he told him thirty feet and that they went and measured it. *Vide* forward.] or more, turned about, and faced him, whereupon he fired directly into its eyes, putting them out. His gun was loaded with small shot, No. 9. The creature then bounded out of sight, and he had a chance to reload, by which time it appeared again, crawling toward him on its belly, fiercely seeking him. He fired again, and, it still facing him, he fired a third time also, and finally finished it with the butt of his gun.

It was now skinned and the skin stuffed with hay, and the skull had been boiled, in order to be put into the head. I measured the stuffed skin carefully. From the forehead (the nose pointing down) to end of tail, 3 feet 4 1/2 [inches]. Tail stout and black at the abrupt end, 5 inches. Extreme length from fore paws to hind paws, 4 feet 8 inches, when stretched out, the skin being *stiff*. (They said it measured 5 feet before it was skinned, which is quite likely.) Forehead to extremity of hind feet, 50 1/2 inches. It stood, as nearly as I could measure, holding it up, 19 to 20 inches high from ground to shoulder. From midway between the legs beneath, the hind legs measured 19 inches, within; the fore legs, 16 inches, within. From skull to end of tuft on ear, 4 1/2 inches; tuft on ear (black and thin), 1 1/2 inches. The width of fore paw gently pressed was 3 1/2 inches; would have made a track perhaps four inches wide in snow. There was a small *bare* brown tubercle of flesh to each toe, and also a larger one for the sole, amid the grayish-white hair. A principal claw was 3/4 inch long measured directly, but it was very curving.

For color: It was, above, brownish-gray, with a dark-brown or black line down the middle of the back. Sides gray, with small dark-brown spots, more or less within the hair. Beneath, lighter, hoary, and long-haired. Legs gray, like the sides, but more reddish-brown behind, especially the hind legs, and these, like the belly and sides, were indistinctly spotted with dark brown, having the effect more of a dark-brown tinge at a little distance than of spots. General aspect brownish-hoary. Tail, above, more reddish than rest of back, much, and conspicuously black at end. Did not notice any white at tip. Throat pretty white. Ears, without, broadly edged with black half an inch or more. wide, the rest being a triangular white. There was but a small muffler, chiefly a triangular whitish and blackish tuft on the sides of the face or neck, not noticeably under the chin.

It weighed, by their account, nineteen pounds. This was a female, and Farmer judged from his examination of the mammæ – two or more of them being enlarged, and the hair worn off around them – that it had suckled young this year. The fur was good for nothing now.

I cannot doubt that this is a Canada lynx; yet I am somewhat puzzled by the descriptions of the two lynxes. Emmons says of the Canada lynx that it has "no naked spots or tubercles [on the soles of its feet] like the other species of the feline race;" and Audubon says, "Soles, hairy;" but of the *Lynx rufus*, "Soles … naked." It is Audubon's *L. rufus* in the naked soles, also in "ears, outer surface, a triangular spot of dull white, … bordered

EMMONS

J.J. AUDUBON

with brownish-black," not described in his *Canadensis*. It is his *L. Canadensis* in size, in color generally, in length of ear-tuft (his *L. rufus* tufts being only half an inch), in "upper surface of the tail, to within an inch of the tip, and exterior portion of the thighs, rufous," in tail being stout, not "slender" like *rufus*. Audubon says that the *L. rufus* is easily distinguished from small specimens of the female *L. Canadensis* by "the larger feet and more tufted ears of the latter, … as well as its grayer color." This is four inches longer than his smaller Canada lynx and exactly as long as his larger one, – both his being males. Emmons's one is also just 37 inches, or the same length. Emmons's largest *L. rufus* is, thus measured, only 29 inches long and Audubon's "fine specimen" only 30 inches.

Grimes, who had lived seven years in Canada, called this a "bob-tailed cat," and said that the Canada lynx was as dark as his dog, which would be called a black dog, though somewhat brownish.

They told me there that a boy had seen another, supposed to be its mate, [Only a stone] this morning, and that they were going out to hunt it toward night. [Vide next page]

The water is cold to-day, and bathing begins to be questionable.

The turtles, painted and sternothærus, are certainly less timid than in the spring. I see a row of half a dozen or more painted turtles on a slanting black willow, so close together that two or three of them actually have their fore feet on the shells of their predecessors, somewhat like a row of bricks that is falling. The scales of some are curled up and just falling.

November 10, Sunday: The legislators of South Carolina voted in favor of a bill by which a "secession convention" would be scheduled to begin on December 17th.

November 10: Cheney gives me a little history of the Inches Woods. He says it was a grant to Jekil (John (?) Jekil) by the crown, and that it amounted to half of Boxboro as well as much of Stow and Acton. That Jekil had a summer house where Squire Hosmer's house stands in Stow, before the Revolution, but at that time withdrew into Boston. It was a great event when he used to come out to Stow in the summer. Boxboro was a part of Stow then. Mr. Hosmer had charge of the lands for Inches, and the kitchen of his house was partly the old summer house of Jekil, and he also remembered an old negro named York, who had been a slave of Jekil, and he, the negro, said that twenty of the thirty acres bought of Inches by Hosmer, behind his house, was once fenced in with a paling or picket fence ten or fifteen feet high, and formed a park in which Jekil kept deer. The neighbors used to come and peep through the paling at the deer. Henderson Inches, hearing of these lands about the time of the Revolution, went to the heirs of Jekil and purchased the whole tract quite cheap, and they had been a fortune to the family since. Many farms have been made of parts of the wood, and thousands of dollars' worth of wood have been sold at a time. Had realized maybe $150,000 from it. Cheney had heard that there were about four hundred acres of the Inches lands left. Henderson Inches died two or three years ago, and now his heirs wished to sell, but would not divide it, but sell in one body. Ruggles, Nourse, and Mason wished to buy, but not the whole. Except what has been sold, or generally, Inches would not have it cut. He was sharp and stood out for his price, and also liked to keep it. Hence it is a primitive oak wood and said to be the most of one in Massachusetts.

Collier tells me that his sunflower-head (now dried) measures just twenty-one and a half inches [IN] diameter, – the solid part.

Most think that Inches Wood was worth more twenty or thirty years ago, – that the oaks are now decayed within. Some have suggested that it would be much for the benefit of Boxboro to have it cut off and made into farms, but Boxboro people answer no, that they get a good deal more in taxes from it now than they would then.

How little there is on an ordinary map! How little, I mean, that concerns the walker and the lover of nature. Between those lines indicating roads is a plain blank space in the form of a square or triangle or polygon or segment of a circle, and there is naught to distinguish this from another area of similar size and form. Yet the one may be covered, in fact, with a primitive oak wood, like that of Boxboro, waving and creaking in the wind, such as may make the reputation of a county, while the other is a stretching plain with scarcely a tree on it. The waving woods, the dells and glades and green banks and smiling fields, the huge boulders, etc., etc., are not on the map, nor to be inferred from the map.

That grand old oak wood is just the most remarkable and memorable thing in Boxboro, and yet if there is a history of this town written anywhere, the history or even mention of this is probably altogether omitted, while

that of the first (and may be last) parish is enlarged on.

What sort of cultivation, or civilization and improvement, is ours to boast of, if it turns out that, as in this instance, unhandselled nature is worth more even by our modes of valuation than our improvements are, – if we leave the land poorer than we found it? Is it good economy, to try it by the lowest standards, to cut down all our forests, if a forest will pay into the town treasury a greater tax than the farms which may supplant it, – if the oaks by steadily growing according to their nature leave our improvements in the rear?

How little we insist on truly grand and beautiful natural features! How many have ever heard of the Boxboro oak woods? How many have ever explored them? I have lived so long in this neighborhood and but just heard of this noble forest, – probably as fine an oak wood as there is in New England, only eight miles west of me.

I noticed young white pines springing up in the more open places and dells. There were considerable tracts of large white pine wood and also pine and oak mixed, especially on the hills. So I see that the character of a primitive wood may gradually change, as from oak to pine, the oaks at last decaying and not being replaced by oaks.

Though a great many of those white oaks of the Inches Wood branch quite as low and are nearly as spreading as pasture oaks, yet generally they rise up in stately columns thirty or forty or fifty feet, diminishing very little. The black and red and scarlet oaks are especially columnar and tall, without branches for a long distance, and these trees are shaped more in their trunks like an elm than a pasture oak. They commonly stand aslant at various angles. When, in the midst of this great oak wood, you look around, you are struck by the great mass of gray-barked wood that fills the air. The leaves of these old oaks are now fairly fallen, and the ground is densely covered with their rustling reddish-brown scales.

A peculiarity of this, as compared with much younger woods, is that there is little or no underwood and you walk freely in every direction, though in the midst of a dense wood. You walk, in fact, under the wood.

The wood not having been cut to any extent, and the adjacent country being very little occupied, I did not notice a single cart-path where a wheel-track was visible, – at most a slight vista, and one footpath. I knew that I was near the southwest edge by the crowing of a cock.

This wood is said to have been a great resort for pigeons. We saw one large pigeon-place on the top of the hill where we first entered it. Now used.

Seeing this, I can realize how this country appeared when it was discovered. Such were the oak woods which the Indian threaded hereabouts.

Such a wood must have a peculiar fauna to some extent. Warblers must at least pass through it in the spring, which we do not see here.

We have but a faint conception of a full-grown oak forest stretching uninterrupted for miles, consisting of sturdy trees from one to three and even four feet in diameter, whose interlacing branches form a complete and uninterrupted canopy. Many trunks old and hollow, in which wild beasts den. Hawks nesting in the dense tops, and deer glancing between the trunks, and occasionally the Indian with a face the color of the faded oak leaf.

Grimes said that he could almost clasp the loins of my lynx as it hung up by the heels before it was skinned; it was so slender there that a man with a large hand could have done it.

Richardson in his “Fauna Boreali-Americana,” which I consulted at Cambridge on the 7th, says that the French-Canadians call the Canada lynx indifferently le Chat or Le Peeshoo, and Charlevoix falsely calls it Carcajou, which is the wolverene, and hence much confusion and error among naturalists. “Seven to nine thousand are annually procured by the Hudson’s Bay Company. It is found on the Mackenzie River as far north as latitude 66°.” Easily killed by a stroke with a small stick on the back! (?) Breeds once a year and has two young. Never attacks man. A poor runner, but a good swimmer. Audubon and Bachman repeat Richardson. According to Pennant, Lawson and Catesby repeat the falsehoods about its dropping from trees on deer, etc.

J.J. AUDUBON

MARK KATESBY

Observed in the dropping of a fox the other day, with fur, some quarter-shaped (or triangular segments) seeds, and roughish, which may have been seeds of rose hips. They were white. So are the sweet-briar hips, but the common wild rose hips are brownish. Were they prinos seeds? If rose hips, then the fox enjoys what Manasseh Cutler in 1785 called “the conserve of hepps of the London dispensatory” without the sugar.

Elijah Wood, senior, tells me that about 1814 (or before 1815, in which year he was married, and while he still lived at his father’s on Carlisle road), as he was riding to town on horseback in the evening alone to singing to prepare for Thanksgiving, he stopped to let his horse drink at the brook beyond Winn’s, when he heard a cry from some wild beast just across the river. It affected him so that he did not stop to let his horse drink much. When he returned later, –now with others, –they all heard it, as if answering to their shouts, somewhat further up the river. It was also heard by some teamsters, and also an animal supposed to be the same was said to have been seen by a woman crossing the road just west of where Wood now lives. It was thought to be a wolverene.

I have now measured in all eight pitch pine stumps at the Tommy Wheeler hollow, sawed off within a foot of the ground.

I measured the longest diameter, and then at right angles with that, and took the average, and then selected that side of the stump on which the radius was of average length and counted the number of rings in each inch, beginning at the centre, thus:–

Of these eight, average growth about one seventeenth of an inch per year.

Calling the smallest number of rings in an inch in each tree 1, the comparative slowness of growth of the inches is thus expressed, viz.:–

From the line x I calculate the average rate of growth in diameter (or radius) each successive ten years thus (in decimals of an inch): [It would have been much easier, as well as more correct if I had counted at first the number of rings to each inch.]–

Of course the error is great in proportion as the number of rings in an inch exceeds ten.

They grew in the first decade more than in any decade after their fiftieth year, and continued to grow with pretty regularly accelerated growth up to about the end of the third decade, or say about the twenty-ninth year, when they were increasing fastest in diameter,–1.92 inches in ten years. They continued to grow at nearly the same rate through the fourth decade, and then their rate of growth very suddenly decreased, –i.e., in fifth decade, or from the fortieth to the fiftieth years, when they grew only about the same as in the first decade. In the sixth and seventh decades the rate of growth steadily decreased as fast as it had increased in the first three decades, and it continued to decrease through the eighth, ninth, and tenth decades, though much more slowly. In the eleventh and twelfth decades, or from one hundred to one hundred and twenty years, the rate was accelerated, or they grew faster than from eighty to one hundred, but after the twelfth decade the rate of growth steadily decreased to the last, when it was less than one third what it was in the third decade. [According to calculation, but actually still less.] When growing fastest, or between the twentieth and thirtieth year, the radius often was not increased one inch in ten years. But after they were one hundred and sixty years old they did not grow four tenths [on an average, 28/100] of an inch in ten years – or one twenty-fifth [and sometimes much less, as has been stated] of an inch in one year. On an average, by accurate observation these eight trees were gaining the most in diameter at about the thirtieth year, and least (with one exception) in the last ten years of their existence.

Many have inferred that it is most profitable to cut pitch pine when about thirty (or forty) years old, but they seem to forget that the most rapid increase in diameter when the tree is only ten or fifteen years old does not indicate so great bulk of wood added to the tree, as a much less increase in diameter when it is fifty or one hundred years old. Indeed these trees, slowly as they appeared to grow at last, increased in bulk far more rapidly in the last twenty years than in the first twenty, – or as thirty-six to ten.

The absolute area of the annual rings (which is in the same proportion as the bulk of wood formed) each ten years is (calculated from the measurement on the third page back):–

According to the above, most wood is made in the fourth decade, though there is but little decrease in amount afterward.

There is a loss of time if you cut at thirty or even forty years, for, supposing that a new pitch pine were at once to take the place of the old one, at the end of forty years more you would only have got (2.6+7.4+ 15.5+22.9=) 48.5 of wood more, instead of (21.7+ 20.8 + 19.5 + 19.2 =) 81.2 more, which you would have had by this time if you had let the tree stand. Or if you had cut it at eighty years, you would only have 129.7 of wood after eighty years more, instead of the 155.9 that might have grown. Or even if you should cut every forty years, you would after one hundred and sixty years have got only 194 of wood to 285.6 that you might have had. From which I infer that the greater bulk of wood made in the third and fourth decade is so little more than that made in any succeeding ten years of the tree's age, and so much more than that made in the previous ten years, that if you want this kind of wood it is best to let the tree stand as long as it is sound and growing.

To be sure, the above calculation supposes the tree to increase in height in proportion to its age – which is hardly the case – and also that the same number of large trees can stand on the same area as of small ones. But even after these deductions, when we consider the proportionally greater value of large timber of this kind, it must be best to let it grow as long as it will.

The same is true until the last forty years makes less wood than the first forty. The first forty makes 48.5; the last, 76.8. However, the time of cutting may depend partly on the number of trees that stand on. a given area and also on whether they are wanted for fuel or for lumber, many small being about as good for the former use as a few large; i. e., these trees made more wood any other forty years than the first. Why, then, employ them then only?

December 26, Wednesday: The South Carolina Secession Convention proposed that a convention meet in Montgomery, Alabama to create a constitution for the new "Southern Confederacy."

Taking full advantage of the fact that the day was a holiday on which everyone was preoccupied, Major Robert Anderson moved all the military forces under his command into Fort Sumter on an island in the mouth of Charleston Harbor. He was figuring that this would be the easiest position from which to protect the federal soldiers in the event of an attack by hotheaded local South Carolinians. Wait this thing out, that was his objective — given enough time cooler heads would prevail!

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December 26: Melvin sent to me yesterday a perfect Strix asio, or red owl of Wilson, – not at all gray. This is now generally made the same with the naevia, but, while some consider the red the old, others consider the red the young. This is, as Wilson says, a bright "nut brown" like a hazelnut or dried hazel bur (not hazel). It is twenty-three inches [IN] alar extent by about eleven long. Feet extend one inch beyond tail. Cabot makes the old bird red; Audubon, the young. How well fitted these and other owls to withstand the winter! a mere core in the midst of such a muff of feathers! Then the feet of this are feathered finely to the claws, looking like the feet of a furry quadruped. Accordingly owls are common here in winter; hawks, scarce.

It is no worse, I allow, than almost every other practice which custom has sanctioned, but that is the worst of it, for it shows how bad the rest are. To such a pass our civilization and division of labor has come that A, a professional huckleberry-picker, has hired B's field and, we will suppose, is now gathering the crop, perhaps with the aid of a patented machine; C, a professed cook, is superintending the cooking of a pudding made of some of the berries; while Professor D, for whom the pudding is intended, sits in his library writing a book, – a work on the Vaccinieae, of course. And now the result of this downward course will be seen in that book, which should be the ultimate fruit of the huckleberry-field and account for the existence of the two professors who come between D and A. It will be worthless. There will be none of the spirit of the huckleberry in it. The reading of it will be a weariness to the flesh. To use a homely illustration, this is to save at the spile but waste at the bung. I believe in a different kind of division of labor, and that Professor D should divide himself between the library and the huckleberry-field.

1861

June 12, Wednesday: Horace Mann, Jr. reported to his mother that their plans were to leave Lake Calhoun on June 15 for St. Anthony and then St. Paul on June 16 “and I think we may go up the St. Peters, or Minnesota, river to the lower Sioux agency where the indians are going to be paid off on the 18th and subsequent days of this month.” That day’s St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat newspaper puffed:

> We would inform strangers who may be amongst us that this excursion will give them a better opportunity of seeing wild, frontier life, and the sports of the red men than they could otherwise have. There will doubtless be a large attendance from this city.

In considering what Henry Thoreau intended to get out of this excursion to witness the payment, we may consider what Margaret Fuller had gotten out of having witnessed a payment at Mackinaw Island. Henry was certainly familiar with what Margaret had written:

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Late at night we reached this island of Mackinaw, so famous for its beauty.... It was the last week in August, at which time a large representation form the Chippewa and Ottawa tribes are here to receive their annual payments from the American government. ...they come hither by thousands and those thousands in families, secure of accommodation on the beach and food from the lake, to make a long holiday out of the occasion. There were near two thousand encamped on the island already, and more arriving every day.

As our boat came in, the captain had some rockets let off. This greatly excited the Indians, and their yells and wild cries resounded along the shore. Except for the momentary flash of the rockets, it was perfectly dark... With the first rosy streak, I was out among my Indian neighbors whose lodges honeycombed the beautiful beach, that curved away in long, fair outline on either side the house. They were already on the alert, the children creeping out from beneath the blanket door of the lodge, the women pounding corn in their rude mortars, the young men playing on their pipes.... The first afternoon I was there, looking down from a near height, I felt that I never wished to see a more fascinating picture. It was an hour of the deepest serenity; bright blue and gold, with rich shadows. Every moment the sunlight fell more mellow. The Indians were grouped and scattered among the lodges; the women preparing food, in the kettle or frying-pan, over the many small fires; the children, half naked, wild as little goblins, were playing both in and out of the water. Here and there lounged a young girl, with a baby at her back, whose bright eyes glanced, as if born into a world of courage and of joy, instead of ignominious servitude and slow decay. Some girls were cutting wood, a little way from me, talking and laughing, in the low musical tone, so charming in the Indian women. Many bark canoes were upturned upon the beach, and, by that light, of almost the same amber as the lodges; others coming in, their square sails set, and with almost arrowy speed, though heavily laden with dusky forms, and all the apparatus of their household. Here and there a sailboat glided by, with a different but scarce less pleasing motion.

We can now compare this St. Paul Pioneer and Democrat newspaper puff with a more truthful account published by a witness to an earlier year's "Payment," a Mr. Phillips of the Shakopee Independent:[13]

> A terrific hail-storm visited this place [the Lower Sioux Agency] a few days before our arrival, which destroyed about two hundred acres of corn, planted by the Sioux; thus cutting off, in a great measure, their means of support. The inhabitants averred that hail fell as large as eggs; and, although several days had elapsed since the storm, we saw indentations in the earth which led us to believe that the report was correct.... The Indian is slowly beginning to realize the fact, that it is far better to turn his attention to the cultivation of the earth than to rely upon the uncertainties of the chase for a subsistence; and, although it is hard for them to overcome their prejudices, and their natural antipathy to imitation of the whites, there is a decided progressive spirit perceptible, which argues well for a better state of things than have heretofore existed among them.... A convocation of the principal chiefs of the bands in attendance was held at the office of the agent.... They represented themselves as being in an extreme destitute condition; but their demands for provisions and pay met with a firm and decided refusal from the agent.... We looked in vain for that proud, haughty bearing that we had been led to suppose existed among them in their councils. Their spirits seem to be crushed, and there is a tame submissiveness manifest, which but ill accords with the wild, untamable spirit with which writers have invested them.... Heartily sick and tired of the misery and degradation that we saw existing among them, we gladly, next morning, took our way homeward....

13. Parker's MINNESOTA HANDBOOK, page 49. Note the bias: after describing the terrible uncertainty of subsistence agriculture in these latitudes, which if anything should lead into a critique of the motives and reliability of the white advisers who were pushing and shoving the native Americans in this direction, this unsympathetic white observer merely reaffirms his condemnation of the hunting and gathering life upon which it was supposed to improve. He wastes not one word of criticism on the men who were hearing and scorning these pleas for understanding, focusing instead on how pitiful it makes us feel to be forced to listen to such pleas. Ronald Reagan should have been there to give these shiftless people a good lecture, and tell again his favorite story of the welfare queen arriving at the payment office in her Cadillac!

J.J. AUDUBON

[June] 12th A.m. around L[ake] Harriet.
Sp[ecimen]. Heuchers hispida [rough heuchera]. My tallest is all hispid or hirsute (& slightly glandular above) & is 2 feet high. The calix is very one-sided, bell-shaped. Parry says [it is] a common plant, characteristic of dry rolling prairies. R[anunculus] flammula [creeping spearwort], which var{iety]? F[ragaria] vesca [strawberry] with fruit raised in high pits on surface. (Symphocarpus racemosus [snowy-berry] (?) just beginning, stamens &c. not now protruded. Is it same with the large plants?) Is the prairie one S[ymphoricarpus] occidentalis [wolf-berry] — saw these, a dense dry raceme.
Chic[k]ade[e], pho[e]be note. P.m. to prairie pond. Nighthawk, 2 eggs far advanced, in prairie. Sturnella neglecta, Audubon's western lark [**Western Meadowlark** [ ] ***Sturnella neglecta***]. Note very peculiar. Heard at the same time with the common meadow lark. Much louder, a toodle-em note.
A shrike (?), young bird with a broad head. Light gray with black wings, tail black with side feathers & tips more or less white. Note unlovely, rasping.
Lathyrus venosus [veiny vetchling], a little late. Blue, purple & white. Asclepias Nuttalliana [milkweed] (?) on prairie about pond. Ground plum (Astragalus) full grow[n] & red on one side, on the gravelly sides of prairie hollows. Parry says it "is frequently used to allay the thirst of the traveller on the great western plains." A great many striped (?) snakes esp[ecially] about ponds [and] pools on the prairie.

Undated Mann letter: "In the afternoon we went over the St. Paul Bridge over the Mississippi[14] and took a walk of several miles and found a few new plants. The bridge is a very long one and descending the whole way from St. Paul to the other bank, for it commences on a bluff of sandstone at St. Paul about 100 ft high and goes down to almost the level of the river on the other side. As I said, the city of St. Paul is built right along on the edge of a steep sandstone bluff, the sandstone being very soft and crumbling, so that the bank swallows dig holes in it and build nests and lay eggs in them. In some parts of the bank the sandstone is all speckled with little holes and I should think that there were hundreds of them, every one or nearly every one inhabited and the young swallows would come to the mouth of the hole to be fed."

[Between St. Anthony (Minneapolis) and St. Paul] The little brake grew in clefts of the sandstone; and there were many bank swallows' nests in and under the pillared and turreted (coped?) sandstone, so hard that you could not make the hole with your hand —or would not.

14.This bridge was opened in 1858, after the suspension bridge at St. Anthony, and joined St. Paul to the abandoned site of the village of *Taoyateduta* "Our Red Nation," which had been named Kaposia "Not Encumbered by Much Baggage," and which had by this point become "South St. Paul."

1881

Houghton, Mifflin was touting its editions of

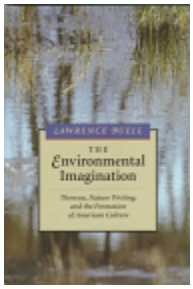
- Charles Dudley Warner's IN THE WILDERNESS which would be found to be "as fresh and fragrant of the woods as anything that Thoreau ever wrote," and
- Frank Bolles's THE LAND OF LINGERING SNOW which revealed "a power of minute observation as remarkable as Thoreau's."

(Meanwhile this corporation was promoting John Burroughs as "the same breed as Gilbert White of Selborne, as John James Audubon, as Thoreau" and John Muir as "the Thoreau of the Far West."

Houghton, Mifflin's Horace Scudder began to anthologize their properties in Henry Thoreau's literary corpus, in AMERICAN PROSE. They included "Sounds" and "Brute Neighbors" from WALDEN; OR, LIFE IN THE WOODS and "The Highland Light" from CAPE COD, pieces of descriptive portraiture characterized by a noncombatative authorial persona. (The comparable materials included from their Waldo Emerson properties were "Behavior" and "Books.") Also, Thoreau's "A Winter Walk" was positioned as one of their "Emerson Little Classics" volumes. Lawrence Buell comments, on page 347 of THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGINATION,

that

> In short, Houghton, Mifflin used its name-droppable authors to market the works of newer authors, who if all went well became name-droppable themselves. The publishers thereby built the image of an emerging canon of literary nature writing with Thoreau at its head.



Burroughs would attempt to distance himself from this advertising, by pointing out that "There is really little or no resemblance between us," by pointing out for instance that "Thoreau's aim is mainly ethical, as much so as Emerson's is," by pointing out that "The aim of White of Selbourne [*sic*] was mainly scientific" whereas his own aim "so far as I have any, is entirely artistic. I care little for the merely scientific aspects of things, and nothing for the ethical. I will not preach one word. I will have a pure result, or nothing. I paint the bird, or the trout, or the scene, for its own sake." "I do not take readers to nature to give them a lesson, but to have a good time." Characterizing Henry Thoreau, whom he had never met, as having been "grim, uncompromising, almost heartless," he proclaimed "I don't owe him any great debt." Why should he owe him any great debt? – "Thoreau was not a great philosopher, he was not a great naturalist, he was not a great poet … His philosophy begins and ends with himself, or is entirely subjective, and is frequently fantastic, and nearly always illogical … There are crudities in his writings that make the conscientious literary craftsman shudder; there are mistakes of observation that make the serious naturalist wonder; and there is often an expression of contempt for his fellow countrymen, and the rest of mankind, and their aims in life, that make the judicious grieve." "To the last, his ornithology was not quite sure, not quite trustworthy." The problem as he saw it was that Thoreau had for some inane or self-absorbed reason been "more intent on the natural history of his own thought than on that of the bird." Under guidance by Walt Whitman, he proclaimed, his agenda was merely to "liberate the birds from the scientists." A man after a publisher's heart!

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

1886

Foundation of the Audubon Society.

1899

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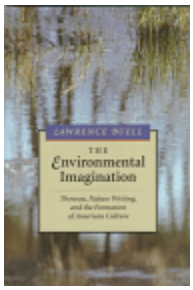

"NARRATIVE HISTORY" AMOUNTS TO FABULATION, THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

"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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JOHN JAMES AUDUBON JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

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.

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.