

PEOPLE MENTIONED OR ALMOST MENTIONED IN WALDEN:



VIRGIL (PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO)



Virgil was the national poet of Augustan Rome. Under the patronage of the rich and powerful Maecenas he was enabled to live the tranquil and secluded life which so well fitted into his own ideals and temperament. In 37 BCE he finished the *BUCOLICA*, which idealizes the farm life which he knew and loved so well in his youth. His second great work was the *GEORGICA*, a didactic, realistic poem. Both were written to make farm life in the country so attractive that a migration would start from the city. In the later period Virgil wrote his epic, the *AENEID*, to glorify Rome and its rulers. His fame became such that, eventually, he would actually achieve mention in Henry Thoreau's *WALDEN*:



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WALDEN: On gala days the town fires its great guns, which echo like popguns to these woods, and some waifs of martial music occasionally penetrate thus far. To me, away there in my bean-field at the other end of the town, the big guns sounded as if a puff ball had burst; and when there was a military turnout of which I was ignorant, I have sometimes had a vague sense all the day of some sort of itching and disease in the horizon, as if some eruption would break out there soon, either scarlatina or canker-rash, until at length some more favorable puff of wind, making haste over the fields and up the Wayland road, brought me information of the "trainers." It seemed by the distant hum as if somebody's bees had swarmed, and that the neighbors, according to Virgil's advice, by a faint *tintinnabulum* upon the most sonorous of their domestic utensils, were endeavoring to call them down into the hive again. And when the sound died quite away, and the hum had ceased, and the most favorable breezes told no tale, I knew that they had got the last drone of them all safely into the Middlesex hive, and that now their minds were bent on the honey with which it was smeared.

I felt proud to know that the liberties of Massachusetts and of our fatherland were in such safe keeping; and as I turned to my hoeing again I was filled with an inexpressible confidence, and pursued my labor cheerfully with a calm trust in the future.

When there were several bands of musicians, it sounded as if the village was a vast bellows, and all the buildings expanded and collapsed alternately with a din. But sometimes it was a really noble and inspiring strain that reached these woods, and the trumpet that sings of fame, and I felt as if I could spit a Mexican with a good relish, -for why should we always stand for trifles?- and looked round for a woodchuck or a skunk to exercise my chivalry upon. These martial strains seemed as far away as Palestine, and reminded me of a march of crusaders in the horizon, with a slight tantivy and tremulous motion of the elm-tree tops which overhang the village. This was one of the *great* days; though the sky had from my clearing only the same everlastingly great look that it wears daily, and I saw no difference in it.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

VIRGIL

FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS

WAR ON MEXICO



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

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WALDEN: Those who have not learned to read the ancient classics in the language in which they were written must have a very imperfect knowledge of the history of the human race; for it is remarkable that no transcript of them has ever been made into any modern tongue, unless our civilization itself may be regarded as such a transcript. Homer has never yet been printed in English, nor Æschylus, nor Virgil even, works as refined, as solidly done, and as beautiful almost as the morning itself; for later writers, say what we will of their genius, have rarely, if ever, equalled the elaborate beauty and finish and the life-long and heroic literary labors of the ancients.

PEOPLE OF
WALDEN

AESCHYLUS

VIRGIL

WALDEN: There is commonly sufficient space about us. Our horizon is never quite at our elbows. The thick wood is not just at our door, nor the pond, but somewhat is always clearing, familiar and worn by us, appropriated and fenced in some way, and reclaimed from Nature. For what reason have I this vast range and circuit, some square miles of unfrequented forest, for my privacy, abandoned to me by men? My nearest neighbor is a mile distant, and no house is visible from any place but the hill-tops within half a mile of my own. I have my horizon bounded by woods all to myself; a distant view of the railroad where it touches the pond on the one hand, and of the fence which skirts the woodland road on the other. But for the most part it is as solitary where I live as on the prairies. It is as much Asia or Africa as New England. I have, as it were, my own sun and moon and stars, and a little world all to myself. At night there was never a traveller passed my house, or knocked at my door, more than if I were the first or last man; unless it were in the spring, when at long intervals some came from the village to fish for pouts, -they plainly fished much more in the Walden Pond of their own natures, and baited their hooks with darkness,- but they soon retreated, usually with light baskets, and left "the world to darkness and to me," and the black kernel of night was never profaned by any human neighborhood. I believe that men are generally still a little afraid of the dark, though the witches are all hung, and Christianity and candles have been introduced.

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WALDEN

VIRGIL



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WALDEN: By the middle of April, for I made no haste in my work, but rather made the most of it, my house was framed and ready for the raising. I had already bought the shanty of James Collins, an Irishman who worked on the Fitchburg Railroad, for boards. James Collins' shanty was considered an uncommonly fine one. When I called to see it he has not at home. I walked about the outside, at first unobserved from within, the window was so deep and high. It was of small dimensions, with a peaked cottage roof, and not much else to be seen, the dirt being raised five feet all around as if it were a compost heap. The roof was the soundest part, though a good deal warped and made brittle by the sun. Door-sill there was none, but a perennial passage for the hens under the door board. Mrs. C. came to the door and asked me to view it from the inside. The hens were driven in by my approach. It was dark, and had a dirt floor for the most part, dank, clammy, and aguish, only here a board and there a board which would not bear removal. She lighted a lamp to show me the inside of the roof and the walls, and also that the board floor extended under the bed, warning me not to step into the cellar, a sort of dusty hole two feet deep. In her own words, they were "good boards overhead, good boards all around, and a good window," -of two whole squares originally, only the cat had passed out that way lately. There was stove, a bed, and a place to sit, an infant in the house where it was born, a silk parasol, gilt-framed looking-glass, and a patent new coffee mill nailed to an oak sapling, all told. The bargain was soon concluded, for James had in the mean while returned. I to pay four dollars and twenty-five cents to-night, he to vacate at five to-morrow morning, selling to nobody else meanwhile; I to take possession at six. It were well, he said, to be there early, and anticipate certain indistinct but wholly unjust claims on the score of ground rent and fuel. This he assured me was the only encumbrance. At six I passed him and his family on the road. One large bundle held their all, -bed, coffee-mill, looking-glass, hens, - all but the cat, she took to the woods and became a wild cat, and, as I learned afterward, trod in a trap set for woodchucks, and so became a dead cat at last.

I took down this dwelling the same morning, drawing the nails, and removed it to the pond side by small cartloads, spreading the boards on the grass there to bleach and warp back again in the sun. One early thrush gave me a note or two as I drove along the woodland path. I was informed treacherously by a young Patrick that neighbor Seeley, an Irishman, in the intervals of the carting, transferred the still tolerable, straight, and drivable nails, staples, and spikes to his pocket, and then stood when I came back to pass the time of day, and look freshly up, unconcerned, with spring thoughts, at the devastation; there being a dearth of work, as he said. He was there to represent spectatordom, and help make this seemingly insignificant event one with the removal of the gods of Troy.

CAT



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

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2,000 BCE

Before this point in time, Peach (*Prunus persica*) and apricot (*Prunus armeniaca*) had been mentioned in [Chinese](#) literature. It is supposed that *Prunus armeniaca* was transported to Greece by Alexander the Great. We have evidence that the Greeks were eating *Prunus persica* by 332 BCE. Publius Vergilius Maro ([Virgil](#)) would note the *persica* fruit in [Rome](#) circa 50 BCE, and by 1571 the Spanish would have introduced three types of it to Mexico.



70 BCE

October 13: Publius Vergilius Maro ([Virgil](#)) was born (near Mantua, Italy).





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50 BCE

Publius Vergilius Maro, though not a botanist, gave descriptions and information concerning 164 different plants known to the Greeks. Advice included laying fields fallow and allowing a crop of vetch and lupine (legumes) to mature before sowing wheat. [Virgil](#) recommended the scattering of manure as well as ashes.

PLANTS

Vergil had it that Mount Etna was the abode of the giant Enceladus while [Mount Vesuvius](#) was the abode of the giant Alcyoneus.

29 BCE

[Virgil](#)'s *GEORGICA*.

Titus Statilius built Rome's 1st [amphitheater](#).

COLOSSEUM



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19 BCE

September 21: Publius Vergilius Maro ([Virgil](#)) died.

[Virgil](#)'s *AENEID* would be published only posthumously.

This group had been sculpted by Agesander, Athenodorus, and Polydorus of Rhodes in the 2d Century BCE,

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and now stands at the end of a long hall in the Vatican:





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Here is Æneas recounting the story, in Book II of [Virgil's](#) *AENEID* (as here translated by C.H. Sisson):

“But then came something much more terrible,
Poor devils that we were, and startled us.
Laocoon, chosen by lot as Neptune’s priest,
Was sacrificing at the appointed altars
A huge bull, when suddenly, from Tenedos,
Across the tranquil water came a pair
(The memory chills me like the event itself)
Of serpents, their immense coils on the sea
And making for the shore, their heads held high
With blood-red crests standing out of the waves;
The rest of them was twisting on the surface,
This way and that and at enormous length;
You could hear them thrashing up the salt spray.
Soon they were on dry land, their eyes blazed,
Suffused with blood and fire, their hissing mouths
Licked by their darting tongues. We were white-faced
And scattered. They, in military formation,
Went for Laocoon; and they first surrounded
The little bodies of his sons, one each,
Embracing them with bites and feeding on them;
Then it was his turn, as he ran to save them
With weapons in his hand; they seized upon him
And tied him in their coils:
Now twice round the middle, twice round the neck
With their scaly length, and looking down on him
With heads and necks held far above his height.
He with his hands tried to wrench loose the knots,
His headband black with poison and with gore
And threw up terrifying shouts to heaven,
Sounding like a bull running away from the altar
Not properly felled and shaking the axe from his neck.
But the two serpents, dragons you might say,
Glided away up to the sanctuary
And disappeared under the goddess’s feet.”



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1505

July 2, Sunday: The not always reliable *TISCHREDEDEN* (TABLE TALK) has it that at the age of 22, [Martin Luder](#) was returning to Erfurt after a visit to his parents when overtaken by a thunderstorm near the village of Stotternheim. Supposedly he exclaimed “Help, St. Anne,¹ and I’ll become a monk.” (In 1521, in *DE VOTIS MONASTICIS*, Luther would write “not freely or desirously did I become a monk, but walled around with the terror and agony of sudden death, I vowed a constrained and necessary vow.”)



Whether or not this incident in a thunderstorm is factual, it has certainly made for a dramatic scene in the various filmic adaptations of the life of this religious Founding Figure!)

July 17, Monday: Having sold most of his books except for [Virgil](#) and [Plautus](#) (presumably selling off even that copy of *CORPUS IURIS* which his father Hans Luder had presented to him upon his graduation), [Martin Luder](#) entered the house of [Augustinian Hermits](#) in Erfurt, called “Black Monastery” on account of the color of the monks’ robes. His friends walked him to the door. Hans was going to be furious.

1594

November: [Richard Barnfield](#)’s THE AFFECTIONATE SHEPHERD, an expansion or paraphrase of [Virgil](#)’s 2d eclogue *FORMOSUM PASTOR CORYDON ARDEBAT ALEXIM*, was published anonymously.

1. Martin had grown up around miners and St. Anne was the [Catholic](#) patron saint of miners.



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1662

October 15: [John Evelyn](#) delivered his lecture on *SYLVA; OR, A DISCOURSE OF FOREST-TREES, AND THE PROPAGATION OF TIMBER IN HIS MAJESTIES DOMINIONS / BY J.E. ESQ. AS IT WAS DELIVER'D IN THE ROYAL SOCIETY THE XVTH OF OCTOBER, MDCLXII, UPON OCCASION OF CERTAIN...*:

John Evelyn's Diary

I this day delivered my Discourse concerning Forest-trees to our Society upon occasion of certain Queries sent us by the Commissioners of his Majesties Navy: being the first Booke that was Printed by Order of the Society, & their Printer, since it was a Corporation:

In this year, while Evelyn was concerned primarily with London street improvement, the Royal Navy had been asking the Royal Society to look into how England's depleted woodlands might be restored. Although Evelyn would take full credit for the product of the inquiry, *SYLVA, OR A DISCOURSE OF FOREST-TREES, AND THE PROPAGATION OF TIMBER*, as it was to be published in 1664, this actually would be a Royal Society production and at least three other members should be credited: Jonathan Goddard, Christopher Merret, and John Winthrop. For the benefit of those of "meaner Capacities," later editions would need to have English translations substituted for Latin passages and a glossary included, for the work to be at all comprehensible to people who might actually have a use for it. The treatise as originally prepared depended largely upon the *NATURAL HISTORY* of Pliny Secundus or [Pliny](#) the Elder and the *GEORGICS* of [Virgil](#). In this extrapolation the stories of Pliny have the same evidentiary weight as the authors' experiences and of experiences recounted by contemporary correspondents. Where Pliny is credited, references are often incorrect, and some sections which purport to be Evelyn's actually are Pliny, nearly verbatim. Although there are references to [Marcus Tullius Cicero](#), Lucius Junius Moderatus [Columella](#), and Ovid, since an Ovid quote is attributed to Juvenal, these gents had likely obtained cosmetic quotes from secondary sources. Evelyn would later comment that since the book had been prepared for the "Benefit and Diversion of Gentlemen" rather than for the education of "ordinary Rusticks," he would have preferred to have included more of such "Historical passages." These tales, however, tend to obscure a great deal of useful information about trees and forestry techniques which had traditionally been handed down by word of mouth rather than in fine calf editions for the perusal of notables.

Evelyn *et al* recommended to those concerned over the insatiability of the maws of the pudding furnaces of England, that "Twere better to purchase all our iron out of America than thus to exhaust our woods at home." Trees were a source of timber vital to the navy, and defense industry should be kept at home. Therefore, let the American colonists trash America while reserving our English woods for timber.

BOG IRON

This would in a couple of years be published as a book and [Henry Thoreau](#) would check this book relevant to his interests and relevant to [Concord](#) history out of the Boston Society of Natural History on April 6, 1852:

[see following screen]

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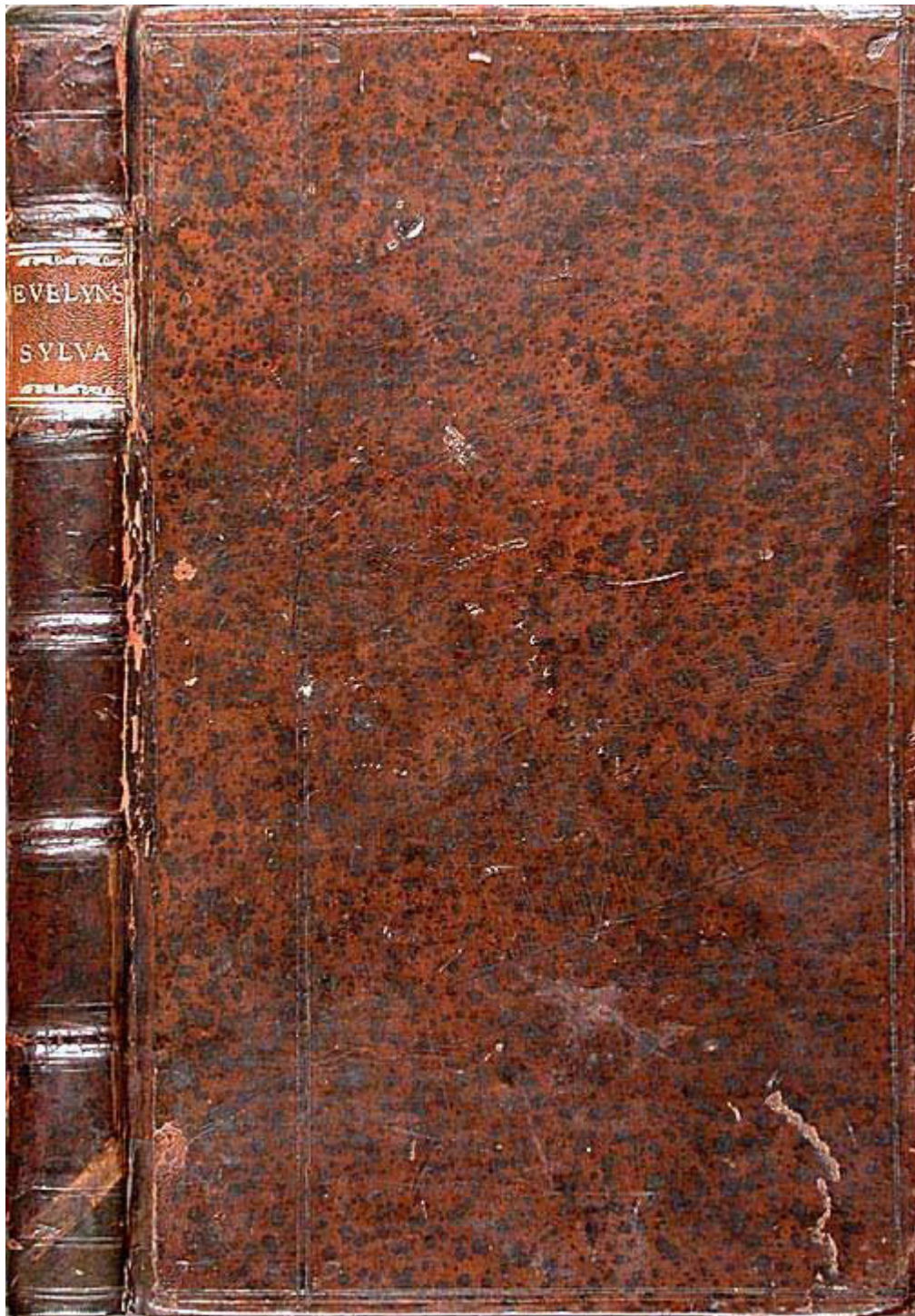
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April 6, Tuesday: When [Henry Thoreau](#) appeared to lecture as scheduled at Cochituate Hall in downtown Boston, a heavy snow was falling. He had come from the Boston Society of Natural History where he had checked out [John Evelyn](#)'s *SYLVA, OR A DISCOURSE OF FOREST-TREES, AND THE PROPAGATION OF TIMBER...* TO WHICH IS ANNEXED *POMONA...* ALSO *KALENDARIVM HORTENSE...*

JOHN EVELYN'S SYLVA

(see the following screen)

This lecture date had been set up by the Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson.



Due to the snowstorm only 5 or 6 persons showed up, among whom was [Doctor Walter Channing](#), the father of [Ellery Channing](#) of Concord. [Bronson Alcott](#) got the meeting moved to the Mechanics Apprentices Library next door, in hopes that some of the young men reading there could be persuaded to join the audience, but these young men proved to be hard to interest in a lecture on "Reality."

WALDEN: According to Evelyn, "the wise Solomon prescribed ordinances for the very distances of trees; and the Roman praetors have decided how often you may go into your neighbor's land to gather the acorns which fall on it without trespass, and what share belongs to that neighbor."

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JOHN EVELYN
SOLON OF ATHENS

(This was a mistake. [Thoreau](#) should not have indicated the by-tradition-wise [King Solomon](#) of Judaea, for Evelyn had been referring in *SYLVA, OR A DISCOURSE OF FOREST-TREES*, to this by-tradition-wise originator of Athenian democracy.)

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WALDEN: Though I gave them no manure, and did not hoe them all once, I hoed them unusually well as far as I went, and was paid for it in the end, "there being in truth," as Evelyn says, "no compost or lätation whatsoever comparable to this continual motion, repastination, and turning of the mould with the spade." "The earth," he adds elsewhere, "especially if fresh, has a certain magnetism in it, by which it attracts the salt, power, or virtue (call it either) which gives it life, and is the logic of all the labor and stir we keep about it, to sustain us; all dungings and other sordid temperings being but the vicars succedaneous to this improvement." Moreover, this being one of those "worn-out and exhausted lay fields which enjoy their sabbath," had perchance, as Sir Kenelm Digby thinks likely, attracted "vital spirits" from the air. I harvested twelve bushels of beans.

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SIR KENELM DIGBY

JOHN EVELYN

TIMELINE OF WALDEN



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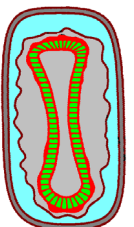
One of my most amusing impressions of Thoreau relates to a time when, in the Quixotism of youthful admiration, I had persuaded him to give a lecture in Boston, at my risk. He wrote (April 3, 1852) in a tone of timidity which may surprise those who did not know him, "I certainly do not feel prepared to offer myself as a lecturer to the Boston public, and hardly know whether more to dread a small audience or a large one. Nevertheless I will repress this squeamishness, and propose no alteration in your arrangements." The scene of the lecture was to be a small hall in a court, now vanished, opening from Tremont street, opposite King's Chapel, the hall itself being leased by an association of young mechanics, who had a reading-room opening out of it. The appointed day ushered in a furious snow-storm before which the janitor of the building retreated in despair, leaving the court almost blockaded. When Thoreau and I ploughed through, we found a few young mechanics reading newspapers; and when the appointed hour came, there were assembled only Mr. Alcott, Dr. Walter Channing and at most three or four ticket-holders. No one wished to postpone the affair and Mr. Alcott suggested that the thing to be done was to adjourn to the reading-room, where, he doubted not, the young men would be grateful for the new gospel offered; for which he himself undertook to prepare their minds. I can see him now, going from one to another, or collecting them in little groups and expounding to them, with his lofty Socratic mien, the privileges they were to share. "This is his life; this is his book; he is to print it presently; I think we shall all be glad, shall we not, either to read his book or to hear it?" Some laid down their newspapers, more retained them; the lecture proved to be one of the most introspective chapters from "Walden." A few went to sleep, the rest rustled their papers; and the most vivid impression which I retain from the whole enterprise is the profound gratitude I felt to one auditor ([Doctor Walter Channing](#)), who forced upon me a five-dollar bill towards the expenses of the disastrous entertainment.²



April 6, Tuesday: Last night a snow storm & this morning we find the ground covered again 6 or 8 inches deep-& drifted pretty badly beside. The conductor in the cars which have been detained more than an hour-says it is a dry snow up country- Here it is very damp.

1685

March 7-14: The [small pox](#) struck, in the family of [John Evelyn](#):



2. The Reverend Thomas Wentworth Higginson's "Glimpses of Authors" ([Brains I](#), December 1, 1891, page 105)



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March 7: *Newes coming to me that my Daughter Mary was falln ill of the Small Pox, I hastned home full of apprehensions, & indeede found her very ill, still coming-forth in abundance, a wonderfull affliction to me, not only for her beauty, which was very lovely, but for the danger of loosing one of extraordinary parts & virtue. &c: Gods holy will be don.*

March 8: *... My Deare Child continuing ill, by reason of the Diseases fixing in the Lungs, it was not in the power of physick without more plentiful expectoration to recover her, insomuch as [9] Dr. Short (the most famous approved & famous Physition of all his Majesties Doctors) gave us his opinion, that she could not escape, upon the Tuesday; so as on Wednesday she desired to have the B[lessed] Sacrament given her (of which she had yet participated the Weeke before) after which disposing her selfe to suffer what God should determine to inflict, she bore the remainder of her sicknesse with extraordinary patience, and piety & with more than ordinary resignation, and marks of a sanctified & blessed frame of mind, rendred [up] her soule to the Lord Jesus on Saturday the 14 of March, exactly at halfe-an houre after Eleaven in the fore noone, to our unspeakable sorrow & Affliction, and this not to ours (her parents) onely, but all who knew her, who were many of the best quality, greatest and most vertuous persons: How unexpressable losse I and my Wife sustain'd, the Virtues & perfections she was endow'd with best would shew; of which the justness of her stature, person, comelinsesse of her Countenance and gracefullnesse of motion, naturall, & unaffected (though more than ordinaryly beautiful), was one of the least, compar'd with the Ornaments of her mind, which was truly extraordinary, especialy the better part: Of early piety, & singularly Religious, so as spending a considerable part of every day in private devotion, Reading and other vertuous exercises, she had collected, & written out abundance of the most usefull and judicious periods of the Books she read, in a kind of Common place; as out of Dr. Hammonds N. Test: and most of the best practical Treatises extant in our tonge:*

She had read & digested a considerable deale of History, & of Places, the french Tongue being as familiar to her as English, she understood Italian, and was able to render a laudable Account of what she read & observed, to which assisted a most faithfull memory, & discernement, & she did make very prudent & discrete reflections upon what she had observe'd of the Conversations among which she had at any time ben (which being continually of persons of the best quality), she improved: She had to all this an incomparable sweete Voice, to which she play'd a through-base on the Harpsichord, in both which she ariv'd to that perfection, that of all the Schollars of those Two famous Masters, Signor Pietro and Bartolomeo: she was esteem'd the best; [for] the sweetnesse of her voice, manegement of it, adding such an agreablenesse to her Countenance, without any constraint and concerne, that when she sung, it was as charming to the Eye, as to the Eare; this I rather note, because it was a universal remarke, & for which so many noble & judicious persons in Musique, desir'd to hear her; the last, being at my Lord Arundels of Wardours, where was a solemn Meeting of about twenty persons of quality, some of them greate judges & Masters of Musique; where she sung with the famous Mr. Pordage, Signor Joh[n] Battist touching the Harpsichord &c: with exceeding applause: What shall I say, or rather not say, of the cherefullnesse & agreablenesse of her humor, that she condescending to the meanest servant in the family, or others, she kept still her respect without the least pride: These she would reade to, examine, instruct and often pray with, if they were sick; so as she was extreemely beloved of every body: Piety was so prevalent an ingredient in her constitution (as I may say) that even amongst superiors, as equals, she no sooner became intimately acquainted; but she would endeavour to improve them by insinuating something of Religious, & that tended to bring them to a love of Devotion; and



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she had one or two Confidants, with whom she used to passe whole dayes, in fasting, reading and prayers, especially before the monethly communions, & other solemn occasions: She could not indure that which they call courtship, among the Gallants, abhorred flattery, & tho she had abundance of witt, the raillery was so innocent and ingenuous, as was most agreeable; She sometimes would see a play, but since the stage grew licentious, tooke greate scandal at them, & express'd her being weary of them, & that the time spent at the Theater was an unaccountable vanity, nor did she at any time play at Cards, without extreame importunity & for Company; but this was so very seldome, that I cannot number it among any thing she could name a fault:

No body living read prose, or Verse better & with more judgement, & as she read, so she writ not onely most correct orthography, but with that maturitie of judgement, and exactnesse of the periods, choice expressions, & familiarity of style, as that some letters of hers have astonish'd me, and others to whom she has occasionally written: Among other agreablenesses she had a talent of rehersing any Comical part or poeme, as was to them she might decently be free with, more pleasing than the Theater; She daunc'd with the most grace that in my whole life I had ever seene, & so would her Master say, who was Monsieur Isaac; but she very seldome shew'd that perfection, save in the gracefullnesse of her Carriage, which was with an aire of spritfull modestie, not easily to be described; Nothing of haughty, nothing affected, but natural and easy, as well in her deportment, as her discourse, which was allways material, not trifling, and to which the extraordinary sweetnesse of her tone, even in familiar speaking, was very charming: Nothing was so pretty, as her descending to play with little Children, whom she would cresse, & humor with greate delight:

But she most of all affected to be [with] grave, and sober men, of whom she might learne something and improve herself: I have my selfe ben assisted by her, both reading & praying by me; and was comprehensive of uncommon notions, curious of knowing every thing to some excesse, had I not indeavor'd to repress it sometimes; Nothing was therefore so delightfull to her, as the permission I ever gave her to go into my Study, where she would have willingly spent whole days; for as I sayd, she had read abundance of History, & all the best poets, even to Terence, Plautus, Homer, Vergil [Virgil], Horace, Ovide, all the best Romances, & modern Poemes, and could compose very happily, & put in her pretty Symbol, as in that of the MUNDUS MULIEBRIS,³ wherein is an enumeration of the immense variety of the Modes and ornaments belonging to the Sex:

But all these are vaine trifles to those interior vertues which adorn'd her Soule, For she was sincerely Religious, most dutifull to her parents, whom she lov'd with an affection temper'd with greate esteeme, so as we were easy & free, & never were so well pleased, as when she was with us, nor needed we other Conversation: She was kind to her Sisters, and was still improving them, by her constant Course of Piety:

Ô deare, sweete and desireable Child, how shall I part with all this goodnesse, all this Vertue, without the bitterness of sorrow, and reluctancy of a tender Parent! Thy affection, duty & love to me was that of a friend, as well as of a Child: passing even the love of Women, the Affection of a Child: nor lesse dearer to thy Mother, whose example & tender care of Thee was unparalleled; nor was Thy returnes to her lesse conspicuous: Ô how she mourns thy losse! ô how desolate has Thou left us, Sweete, obliging, happy Creature! To the grave shall we both carry thy memory __ God alone (in whose boosome thou art at rest & happy) give us to resigne

3. John Evelyn's daughter Maria Evelyn is credited as the pseudonymous author of the volume *MUNDUS MULIEBRIS: OR, THE LADIES DRESSING ROOM UNLOCK'D AND HER TOILETTE SPREAD. IN BURLESQUE. TOGETHER WITH THE FOP-DICTIONARY, COMPILED FOR THE USE OF THE FAIR SEX*, a satirical guide in verse to Francophile fashion and terminology. However, the volume must have been edited for the press by the father, as by the point of publication in 1690 this daughter would have been dead for five years.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

VIRGIL (PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO)

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

Thee, & all our Contentments (for thou indeede wert all in this world) to his blessed pleasure: ô let him be glorified by our submission, & give us Grace to blesse him for the Graces he implanted in thee, thy vertuous life, pious & holy death, which is indeede the onely remaining Comfort of our soules, hastning through the infinite love and mercy of the Lord Jesus, to be shortly with Thee deare Child, & with Thee (and those blessed Saints like thee,) glorifie the Redemer of the World to all Eternity. Amen:

It was in the nineteenth yeare of her Age, that this sicknesse happn'd to her, at which period Dr. Harvy somewhere writes, all young people should be let blood; and to this we advised her; whilst to all who beheld her she looked so well, as her extraordinary beauty was taken notice of, the last time she appeared at Church: but she had so greate an aversion to breathing a veine, as we did not so much insist upon it as we should: being in this exceeding height of health, she was the more propence to change, & had ever ben subject to feavors; but there was yet another accident that contributed to the fixing it in this dissease; The apprehension she had of it in particular, & which struck her but two days before she came home, by an imprudent Gentlewomans telling my Lady Faulkland (with whom my daughter went to give a Visite) after she had entertained them a good while in the house, that she had a servant sick of the small pox above, who died the next day; This my poore Child ackknowledged made an impression on her spirits, it being with all [of] a mortal & spreading kind at this time about the towne:

There were now no lesse than foure Gent[lemen] of Quality offering to treat with me about Marriage; & I freely gave her her owne Choice, knowing she was discrete: One (against which I had no exceptions) and who most passionately lov'd her, but was for a certaine natural blemish that rendered him very disagreeable, she would in compliance to me have married, if I did injoyne her; but telling me she should never be happy with him (observing it seemes a neerenesse in his nature, and a little under-breeding) I would not impose it; for which she often expressed her satisfaction, & thanks to me in the most obliging & respectfull manner: The other was one Weston a Stafford shire Gent[leman] of the same family, & I thinke heire (within one) to the Earles of Portland: This was but now just beginning:

But the person who first made love to her, was Mr. Wilbraham a Chesshire Gent[leman] of a noble Family, whose extreamely rich & sordid Fathers demands of a Portion, I could by no meanes reach, without injury to the rest of my daughters, which this pious, & good natured Creature, would never have suffered, and so that match stood in suspense; I say in suspense, for the young Gent[leman] still pursu'd, & would have married her in private, if either my Daughter; or We had don so disingenuously: She & we had principles that would by no meanes suffer us to harken it: At last he's sent for home, continues his Affection, hop[e]s to bring his father to reasonable termes: My Child is taken with his Constancy, his Vertuous breeding, and good nature, & discretion, having beene a fortnight together in my house: This, made us not forward to embrace any other offers, together with the extraordinary indifferency she ever shewed of Marrying at all; for truly says shee to her Mother, (the other day), were I assur'd of your lives & my deare Fathers, never would I part from you, I love you, & this home, where we serve God, above all things in the world, nor ever shall I be so happy: I know, & consider the vicissitudes and changes of the world, I have some experience of its vanities, & but for decency, more than inclination, & that You judge it expedient for me, I would not change my Condition, but rather add the fortune you designe me to my Sisters, & keepe up the reputation of our family: This was so discreetely & sincerely utter'd as, could not proceede but from an extraordinary Child, & one who loved her parents without example: ...

... there was a designe of my Lady Rochester & Clarendon to make her Mayd of[honour] to the Queene, so soone as there was a place empty: but this she did not in the least set her heart upon,



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

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nor indeede upon any thing so much as the service of God, [as] a quiet regular life, & how she might improve herselfe in the most necessary accomplishments, & to which she was arived in so greate a measure, as I acknowledge (all partiality of relation layed aside) I never saw, or knew her equal, considering how universal they were; save in one onely Creature of her Sex, Mrs. Godolphin, (late the wife of my Lord Godolphin, whose life for the singular piety, Vertue & discretion, (& that she was to me a Friend, in all the peculiar transcendencys of that relation) I have written at large,⁴ and consign'd to my Lady Sylvius (whom she loved above all her Sex) & who requested it of me: And this I mention here, because the Example of that most religious Lady: made I am assured deepe impressions in my deare Child; and that I was told, she caused it to be read to her, at the very beginning of her sicknesse, when She had taken that bed, out of which she never risse, to my insupportable grieffe & sorrow; though never two made more blessed ends: But all this sorrow is selfe-love, whilst to wish them here againe, were to render them miserable who are now in happinesse, and above:

This is the little History, & Imperfect Character of my deare Child, whose Piety, Virtue, & incomparable Endowments, deserve a Monument more durable than brasse & Marble: Precious is the Memorial of the Just - Much I could enlarge on every period of this hasty Account, but thus I ease & discharge my overcoming passion for the present, so many things worthy an excellent Christian & dutifull Child, crowding upon me: Never can I say enough, ô deare, my deare Child whose memory is so precious to me.

This deare child was born at Wotton in Surry, in the same house and roome where I likewise first drew breath, (my wife being retir'd to my bro[ther] there, the greate sicknesse yeare) upon the first of that moneth, & neere the very houre, that I was borne, upon the last: viz: October:

March 16 (Old Style): Was my deare Daughter interr'd in the south east end of the church at Deptford neere her Grand mother & severall of my Younger Children and Relations: my desires were she should have ben carried & layed among my owne Parents & Relations at Wotton, where our Family have a Vault, where she was born, & where I have desire to be interred my selfe, when God shall call me out of this uncertaine transitory life; but some Circumstances did not permit it; & so she was buried here.⁵ Our Viccar Dr. Holden preaching her Funerall Sermon on: 1. Phil: 21. For to me to live is Christ, & to die is gaine, upon which he made an apposit discourse (as those who heard it assure me, for grieffe suffer'd me not to be present) concluding with a modest recital of her many vertues, and especialy her signal piety, so as drew both teares, & admiration from the hearers, so universally was she beloved, & known to deserve all the good that could be sayd of her: & I was not altogether unwilling something of this should be spoken of her, for the edification & encouragement of other young people: There were divers noble persons who honor'd her Obsequies, & funerall, some in person, others in sending their Coaches, of which there were 6 or 7. of six horses viz. Countesse of Sunderland, Earle of Clarendon, Lord Godolphin, Sir St. Fox; Sir William Godolphin, Vis[c]ount Falkland &c [following the hearse of 6 horses &c] there were (besides other decenc[i]es distributed among her friends about 60 rings: Thus lived, died, & was buried the joy of my life & ornament both of her sex & my poore family: God Almighty of his infin[i]te mercy grant me the grace thankfully to resigne my selfe & all I have, or had, to his divine pleasure, & in his good time, restoring health & Comfort to my Family, teach me so to number my days, as I may apply my heart to Wisdome, & be prepared for my dissolution, & that into the hands of my blessed Saviour I may recommend my Spirit. Amen:

Having some days after opened her Trunks, & looked into her Closset, amazed & even

4. THE LIFE OF MRS GODOLPHIN, first published in 1847.

5. Still at St. Nicholas, Deptford.



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PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

astonished we were to find that incredible number of papers and Collections she had made of severall material Authors, both Historians, Poets, Travells &c: but above all the Devotions, Contemplations, & resolutions upon those Contemplations, which we found under her hand in a booke most methodicaly disposed, & much exceeding the talent & usage of [so] young & beautifull women, who consume so much of their time in vaine things: with severall prayers, Meditations, & devotions on divers occasions; with a world of pretty letters to her confidants & others savoring of a greate witt, & breathing of piety & honor: There is one letter to some divine (who is not named) to whom she writes that he would be her Ghostly Father & guide, & that he would not despise her for the many errors & imperfections of her Youth, but beg of God, to give her courage, to acquaint him with all her faults, imploring his assistance, & spiritual direction: & well I remember, that she often desired me to recommend her to such a person, but (though I intended it) I did not think fit to do as it yet, seeing her apt to be scrupulous, & knowing the great innocency & integrity of her life; but this (it seemes) she did of her selfe: ... But as she was a little miracle whilst she lived, so she died with out Example:

March 26 (Old Style): *I was invited to Cap[tain] Gunmans Funerall, that excellent Pilot, & sea-man, who had behav'd himselfe so valiantly in the Dut[c]h-Warr: taken away by the gangreene which happn'd in his cure, upon his unhappy fall from the peere of Calais: This was the Cap[tain] of the yacht, whom they accused for not giving timely warning, on the Dukes (now the King) going into Scotland, when his ship split upon the Sands, when so many perished: But of which I am most confident, the Cap[tain] was no ways guilty, either through negligence, or designe; as he made appeare not onely at the Examination of the matter of fact; but in the Vindication he shewed me some time since, which must needes give any-man of reason satisfaction: ... He was a sober, frugal, cherefull & temperat man; we have few such sea-men left:*

There [came] to Condole the death of my deare Daughter this Weeke moneday, & friday: The Countesse of Bristol, Sunderland, La[dy] Sylvius, Mrs. Penelope Godolphin: Sir Stephen Fox & his Lady &c:

March 29 (Old Style): *... A servant mayd of my Wifes fell sick of the very same disease, of the same sort of S:pox, & in all appearance in as greate danger, though she never came neere my daughter: we removed her into the Towne with care:*

April 5 (Old Style): *... Drowsinesse much surpriz'd me: The Lord be gracious to me:*

The mayd, by Gods greate mercy, but with extraordinary difficulty, recovered: Blessed be God:

April 7 (Old Style): *Being now somewhat compos'd after my greate affliction, I went to Lond[on] to heare Dr. Tenison (it being [8] a Wednesday in Lent) at Whitehall: who preached on 3. Gen: 3: I returned in the Evening: I observ'd that though the King was not in his seate above in the Chapell, the Doctor made notwithstanding his three congèes, which they were not us'd to do, when the [late] King was absent, making then one bowing onely: I asked the reason; it was sayd, he had special order so to do: The Princesse of Denmarke yet was in the Kings Closset, but sat on the left hand of the Chaire, the clearke of the Closset standing by his Majesties Chaire as if he had ben present: [I met Q[ueen]Dowager going now first from W.hall to dwell at Somerset house.] ...*



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

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PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1694

[Joseph Addison](#)'s 1st major work, a book about the lives of English poets, and a translation of [Virgil](#)'s GEORGICS.

1757

In 1750, John Baskerville had selected, as his life's avocation, the printing of fine "...books of consequence and elegant dress and to purchase at such a price as will pay the extraordinary care and expense that must necessarily be bestowed upon them." After seven years of preparation he presented to his discriminating public, in this year, his first effort, THE POEMS OF [VIRGIL](#). The type of the day was modernized, the press



improved, the paper "woven" instead of "laid" (a radical departure), and the freshly printed sheets were pressed between the hot plates to "glaze," thus giving such "perfect polish that we would suppose the paper made of silk rather than linen." According to Macaulay, it "went forth to astonish all the librarians of Europe."

[on following screen]

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

P. VIRGILII AENEIDOS LIB. III. 160

Nec longo distant curfu: modo Juppiter adfit,
Tertia lux claffem Cretæis fiftet in oris.

- Sic fatus, meritos aris macltavit honores,
Taurum Neptuno, taurum tibi, pulcher Apollo;
120 Nigram Hiemi pecudem, Zephyris felicibus albam.
Fama volat, pulfum regnis celfiffe paternis
Idomenea ducem, defertaque litora Cretæ;
Hofte vacare domos, fedesque aflare relictas.
Linquimus Ortygiæ portus, pelagoque volamus:
125 Bacchatamque jugis Naxon, viridemque Donyfam,
Olearon, niveamque Paron, fparsasque per æquor
Cycladas, et crebris legimus freta confita terris.
Nauticus exoritur vario certamine clamor:
Hortantur focii, Cretam, proavosque petamus.
130 Profequitur furgens a puppi ventus euntes;
Et tandem antiquis Curetum allabimur oris.
Ergo avidus muros optatæ molior urbis;
Pergameamque voco: et lætam cognomine gentem
Hortor amare focos, arcemque attollere tectis.
135 Jamque fere ficco fubductæ litore puppes:
Connubiis, arvisque novis operata juventus:
Jura domosque dabam: fubito quum tabida membris,
Corrupto cœli tractu, miferandaque venit
Arboribusque fatifque lues, et lethifer annus.
140 Linquebant dulces animas, aut ægra trahebant
Corpora: tum fteriles exurere Sirius agros,
Arebant herbæ, et victum feget ægra negabat.
Rurfus ad oraclum Ortygiæ, Phœbumque, remenfo
Hortatur pater ire mari, veniamque precari:
145 Quem feffis finem rebus ferat: unde laborum
Tentare auxilium jubeat: quo vertere curfus.

THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

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PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1828

➡ Fall: This was the end of [David Henry Thoreau](#)'s period of instruction in [Concord](#)'s [Town School](#) in the center district under schoolmaster [Edward Jarvis](#). Apparently at some point during this school term [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) and his 11-year-old brother David Henry were transferred by their parents from the public system to the [Concord Academy](#) at which the fees were \$5.⁰⁰ per student per quarter, to study not only [Virgil](#), [Caesar](#), Sallust, [Marcus Tullius Cicero](#), and Horace, but also botany. According to this new arrangement, the preceptor there, a recent [Harvard College](#) graduate named [Phineas Allen](#), was to board at the Thoreau boardinghouse — presumably in lieu of cash tuition. David Henry would be attending this academy until 1833.





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Since Thoreau's own copy of [Virgil](#), now in the Special Collections department of the Minneapolis Public Library, is signed "D.H. Thoreau, Hollis 20, Sept. 4th," the copy of Virgil from which he studied at this point would likely have been not this volume but instead a school copy.

1829

→ Fall: A deal was cut whereby Preceptor [Phineas Allen](#) was to board at the boarding house of the Thoreaus in [Concord](#) and [John Thoreau, Jr.](#) and [David Henry Thoreau](#) were to attend his [Concord Academy](#), a private college-preparatory alternative to the public school system, to study [Virgil](#), Sallust, Caesar, [Euripides](#), [Homer](#), Xenophon, Voltaire, Molière, and Racine in the original languages.

1831

→ October 1, Saturday: [Hector Berlioz](#) and two colleagues arrived in [Naples](#) where he immediately visited the tomb of [Virgil](#).

Alexis de Tocqueville had an interview with John Quincy Adams. He made a journal entry about the criminal justice system and other issues.

Clara Wieck played for [Goethe](#) at his Weimar home (the piano bench too low, she sat on a cushion to render two works by Henri Herz, La Violetta and Bravura Variations op.20). He invited her back.

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

P. VIRGILII AENEIDOS LIB. III. 160

Nec longo distant cursu: modo Juppiter adfit,
Tertia lux classem Cretæis fistet in oris.

- Sic fatus, meritos aris maclavit honores,
Taurum Neptuno, taurum tibi, pulcher Apollo;
120 Nigram Hiemi pecudem, Zephyris felicibus albam.
Fama volat, pulsum regnis cessisse paternis
Idomenea ducem, desertaque litora Cretæ;
Hoste vacare domos, sedesque astare relictas.
Linquimus Ortygiæ portus, pelagoque volamus:
125 Bacchatamque jugis Naxon, viridemque Donyfam,
Olearon, niveamque Paron, sparsasque per æquor
Cycladas, et crebris legimus freta confita terris.
Nauticus exoritur vario certamine clamor:
Hortantur focii, Cretam, proavosque petamus.
130 Prosequitur surgens a puppi ventus euntes;
Et tandem antiquis Curetum allabimur oris.
Ergo avidus muros optatæ molior urbis;
Pergameamque voco: et lætam cognomine gentem
Hortor amare focos, arcemque attollere tectis.
135 Jamque fere ficco subductæ litore puppes:
Connubiis, arvisque novis operata juvenus:
Jura domosque dabam: subito quum tabida membris,
Corrupto cœli tractu, miserandaque venit
Arboribusque fatisque lues, et lethifer annus.
140 Linquebant dulces animas, aut ægra trahebant
Corpora: tum steriles exurere Sirius agros,
Arebant herbæ, et victum seges ægra negabat.
Rurfus ad oraclum Ortygiæ, Phœbumque, remenso
Hortatur pater ire mari, veniamque precari:
145 Quem fessis finem rebus ferat: unde laborum
Tentare auxilium jubeat: quo vertere cursus.




THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

VIRGIL (PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO)

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1833

 September 4, Wednesday: Barney Flaherty, a 10-year-old, was hired as the 1st paper boy (the 1st, that is, still known to history by a name).

Publication of the Fantasia op. 123 for piano and the Fantasia on Themes from Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro op. 124 for piano by [Johann Nepomuk Hummel](#) was announced in the *Wiener Zeitung*.

[Waldo Emerson](#) sailed on the *New York* from Liverpool to New-York.

At [Harvard College](#), [David Henry Thoreau](#) purchased his own copy of [Virgil](#), now in the Special Collections department of the Minneapolis Public Library, and inscribed it "D.H. Thoreau, Hollis 20, Sept. 4th."



PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

P. VIRGILII AENEIDOS LIB. III. 160

Nec longo distant curfu: modo Juppiter adfit,
Tertia lux claffem Cretæis fiftet in oris.

- Sic fatus, meritos aris maclavit honores,
Taurum Neptuno, taurum tibi, pulcher Apollo;
120 Nigram Hiemi pecudem, Zephyris felicibus albam.
Fama volat, pulfum regnis cefliffe paternis
Idomenea ducem, defertaque litora Cretæ;
Hofte vacare domos, fedesque aflare relictas.
Linquimus Ortygiæ portus, pelagoque volamus:
125 Bacchatamque jugis Naxon, viridemque Donyfam,
Olearon, niveamque Paron, fparfasque per æquor
Cycladas, et crebris legimus freta confita terris.
Nauticus exoritur vario certamine clamor:
Hortantur focii, Cretam, proavosque petamus.
130 Profequitur furgens a puppi ventus euntes;
Et tandem antiquis Curetum allabimur oris.
Ergo avidus muros optatæ molior urbis;
Pergameamque voco: et lætam cognomine gentem
Hortor amare focos, arcemque attollere tectis.
135 Jamque fere ficco fubductæ litore puppes:
Connubiis, arvisque novis operata juvenus:
Jura domosque dabam: fubito quum tabida membris,
Corrupto cœli tractu, miferandaque venit
Arboribusque fatifque lues, et lethifer annus.
140 Linquebant dulces animas, aut ægra trahebant
Corpora: tum fteriles exurere Sirius agros,
Arebant herbæ, et victum feget ægra negabat.
Rurfus ad oraclum Ortygiæ, Phœbumque, remenfo
Hortatur pater ire mari, veniamque precari:
145 Quem feffis finem rebus ferat: unde laborum
Tentare auxilium jubeat: quo vertere curfus.




THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

VIRGIL (PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO)

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1837

 December 27, Wednesday: Miss [Elizabeth Palmer Peabody](#) heard [Jones Very](#) speak at the Salem Lyceum, on the epic poetry of the antique [Homer](#), [Virgil](#), [Dante](#), and [Milton](#) — and on the epic poetry of one who was almost their contemporary, [Coleridge](#).





THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

VIRGIL (PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO)

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

At the end, she invited him to come home with her and her father. Shortly after Very had left their home that night, she took up her pen and wrote to [Waldo Emerson](#), saying that he should send for [Very](#) “at once” to make his acquaintance and to hear him lecture.



[Henry Thoreau](#) wrote in his journal in such manner as to indicate that [Emerson](#) was sharing with him a book of self-congratulatory racist “herstory” that he had recently checked out from the library of the Athenaeum, [Sharon Turner](#)’s HISTORY OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS:

REVOLUTIONS



Dec. 27. Revolutions are never sudden. Not one man, nor many men, in a few years or generations, suffice to regulate events and dispose mankind for the revolutionary movement. The hero is but the crowning stone of the pyramid, — the keystone of the arch. Who was Romulus or Remus, Hengist or Horsa, that we should attribute to them Rome or England? They are famous or infamous because the progress of events has chosen to make them its stepping-stones. But we would know where the avalanche commenced, or the hollow in the rock whence springs the Amazon. The most important is apt to be some silent and unobtrusive fact in history. In 449 three Saxon cyules arrived on the British coast, — “Three scipen gode comen mid than flode, three hundred enihten.”⁶ The pirate of the British coast was no more the founder of a state than the scourge of the German shore.

HEROES

6. Cf. the essay “Reform and the Reformers”: “In the year 449 three Saxon cyules arrived on the British coast. ‘Three scipen gode comen mid than flode.’”



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

VIRGIL (PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO)

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

The real heroes of minstrelsy have been ideal, even when the names of actual heroes have been perpetuated. The real Arthur, who “not only excelled the experienced past, but also the possible future,” of whom it was affirmed for many centuries that he was not dead, but “had withdrawn from the world into some magical region; from which at a future crisis he was to reappear, and lead the Cymri in triumph through the island,” whose character and actions were the theme of the bards of Bretagne and the foundation of their interminable romances, was only an ideal impersonation.

Men claim for the ideal an actual existence also, but do not often expand the actual into the ideal. “If you do not believe me, go into Bretagne, and mention in the streets or villages, that Arthur is really dead like other men; you will not escape with impunity; you will be either hooted with the curses of your hearers, or stoned to death.”

HOMESICKNESS

The most remarkable instance of homesickness is that of the colony of Franks transplanted by the Romans from the German Ocean to the Euxine, who at length resolving to a man to abandon the country, seized the vessels which carried them out, and reached at last their native shores, after innumerable difficulties and dangers upon the Mediterranean and Atlantic.

THE INTERESTING FACTS IN HISTORY

How cheering is it, after toiling through the darker pages of history, — the heartless and fluctuating crust of human rest and unrest, — to alight on the solid earth where the sun shines, or rest in the checkered shade. The fact that Edwin of Northumbria “caused stakes to be fixed in the highways where he had seen a clear spring,” and that “brazen dishes were chained to them, to refresh the weary sojourner, whose fatigues Edwin had himself experienced,” is worth all Arthur’s twelve battles. The sun again shines along the highway, the landscape presents us sunny glades and occasional cultivated patches as well as dark primeval forests, and it is *merry* England after all.

A WEEK: Ancient history has an air of antiquity. It should be more modern. It is written as if the spectator should be thinking of the backside of the picture on the wall, or as if the author expected that the dead would be his readers, and wished to detail to them their own experience. Men seem anxious to accomplish an orderly retreat through the centuries, earnestly rebuilding the works behind, as they are battered down by the encroachments of time; but while they loiter, they and their works both fall a prey to the arch enemy. History has neither the venerableness of antiquity, nor the freshness of the modern. It does as if it would go to the beginning of things, which natural history might with reason assume to do; but consider the Universal History, and then tell us, — when did burdock and plantain sprout first? It has been so written for the most part, that the times it describes are with remarkable propriety called **dark ages**. They are dark, as one has observed, because we are so in the dark about them. The sun rarely shines in history, what with the dust and confusion; and when we meet with any cheering fact which implies the presence of this luminary, we excerpt and modernize it. As when we read in the history of the Saxons that Edwin of Northumbria “caused stakes to be fixed in the highways where he had seen a clear spring,” and “brazen dishes were chained to them to refresh the weary sojourner, whose fatigues Edwin had himself experienced.” This is worth all Arthur’s twelve battles.



THE PEOPLE OF WALDEN:

VIRGIL (PUBLIUS VERGILIUS MARO)

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

1839

August 1: [Waldo Emerson](#) reported that “Last night came to me a beautiful poem from [Henry Thoreau](#), ‘Sympathy.’ The purest strain & the loftiest, I think, that has yet pealed from this unpoetic American forest.”

COMMENTARY:

[I am going to include several pages of commentary here, because the above was the poem that would become the controversial “To a Gentle Boy.”]

There’ve been Gay Pride parades in which posters of [Henry Thoreau](#) have been proudly carried. The evidence that he was gay was that he wrote a poem to one of his students, the little brother of the girl to whom he proposed marriage, and from the circumstance that after she turned him down he never did marry. Let us go into this in order to see that it is a simpleminded and as wrong as the idea of long standing, that Thoreau had no sense of humor. This is going to be a bit complicated, so pay attention. [William Sewell](#) [[Willem Séwel Amsterdammer](#)] published THE HISTORY OF THE RISE, INCREASE AND PROGRESS OF THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE CALLED QUAKERS in English as a corrective to Gerard Croese’s HISTORY OF QUAKERISM.⁷ The records of the Salem library show that [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) used their edition of this book for a week in 1828 and a month in 1829. The book recounted the activities of some of his ancestors, such as his great-great-great-grandfather William Hathorne (1607-1681) who sailed on the *Arbella* in 1630, settling in Dorchester in New England and then moving to Salem, who served at the rank of major in wars against the Americans, who became a magistrate and judge of the Puritans, and who had one Anne Coleman whipped out of the town of Salem for

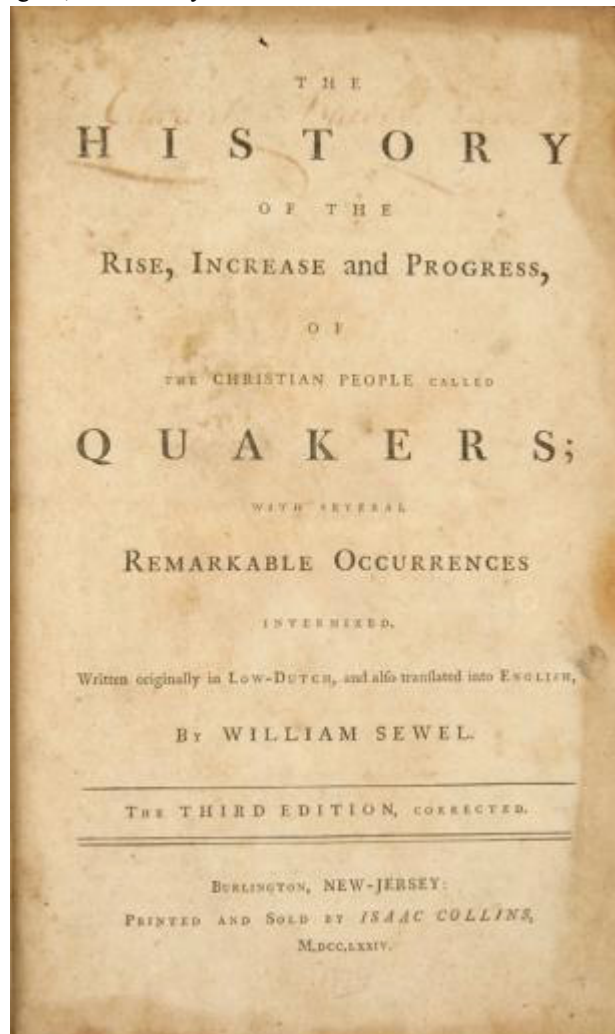


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7. [William Sewell](#). THE HISTORY OF THE RISE, INCREASE AND PROGRESS, OF THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE CALLED [QUAKERS](#); WITH SEVERAL REMARKABLE OCCURRENCES INTERMIXED, WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN LOW-DUTCH, AND ALSO TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH, BY WILLIAM SEWEL. THE THIRD EDITION, CORRECTED. The title varies slightly from edition to edition (1722, 1725, 1728, 1774, 1776, 1811, 1844), for instance ...WITH SEVERAL REMARKABLE OCCURRENCES INTERMIXED, TO WHICH IS PREFIXED A BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR, COMPILED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES, and WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN LOW DUTCH, AND TRANSLATED BY HIMSELF INTO ENGLISH, Baker & Crane, No. 158 Pearl-Street, New-York. The author's name was, according to [Alexander Chalmers](#)'s GENERAL BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY of 1812-1817, Volume 27, page 361, a recognized variant of "Sewell": there was a Henry Sewall who spelled his name also as Sewell and Seawell, and there was a loyalist "Sewall" who changed the family name to "Sewell" in London in order to confuse the American authorities and better protect his children in America –and his American properties– after being proscribed. Among recorded immigrants, the "United States Index to Records of Aliens' Declarations" show a proportion of 1 Sewel, 11 Sewalls, and 30 Sewells. Henry Thoreau first encountered this book in this 1774 third edition prepared and sold by Isaac Collins of Burlington, New-Jersey:



[HISTORY OF THE ... PEOPLE CALLED QUAKERS](#)



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being a [Quaker](#):

...naked from the waist upward, and bound to the tail of a cart, is dragged through the Main-street at the pace of a brisk walk, while the constable follows with a whip of knotted cords. A strong-armed fellow is that constable; and each time that he flourishes his lash in the air, you see a frown wrinkling and twisting his brow, and, at the same instant, a smile upon his lips. He loves his business, faithful officer that he is, and puts his soul into every stroke, zealous to fulfill the injunction of Major Hawthorne's warrant, in the spirit and to the letter. There came down a stroke that has drawn blood! Ten such stripes are to be given in Salem, ten in Boston, and ten in Dedham; and, with those thirty stripes of blood upon her, she is to be driven into the forest.... Heaven grant that, as the rain of so many years has wept upon it, time after time, and washed it all away, so there may have been a dew of mercy, to cleanse this cruel blood-stain out of the record of the persecutor's life!



And such as William's son John Hathorne (1641-1717), a chip off the old block, a colonel in the Massachusetts militia and a deputy to the General Court in Boston who was a magistrate during the Salem witch episode which featured one person being tortured to death and nineteen [hanged](#). [Hawthorne](#) was much stimulated by the blood curse that Sarah Good had placed on her executioners, "God will give you Blood to drink." His tale "The Gentle Boy" of 1831 made reference to this history.



Let us thank God for having given us such ancestors; and let each successive generation thank him, not less fervently, for being one step further from them in the march of the ages.

This was [Hawthorne](#) in 1840, according to a portrait painter, Samuel Stillman Osgood:



"The Gentle Boy" was published anonymously in a gift annual of [The Token](#) magazine in 1831, and then



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republished under Hawthorne's name as a part of TWICE-TOLD TALES in 1832 and 1837 after deletion of the detail that, in being attacked by a gang of vicious Puritan children, the gentle [Quaker](#) boy had been struck in "a tender part." The book THE GENTLE BOY: A TWICE-TOLD TALE, when published in 1839, was dedicated to [Sophia Amelia Peabody](#) (to become [Sophia Peabody Hawthorne](#)), some of whose ancestors are also in Sewel's history, and included a drawing by her. Printing was interrupted briefly to make the boy's countenance more gentle in the engraved version of the drawing.

In 1842 [Nathaniel](#) and Sophia Peabody got married and moved to Concord, where [Thoreau](#) had just prepared for them a large garden. Although Hawthorne was vague on the spelling of Thoreau's name, and his bride thought Thoreau repulsively ugly, Thoreau visited them several times in the Old Manse where [Waldo Emerson](#) had penned "Nature," and for \$7.⁰⁰ sold them the boat he and his brother had used on their famous trip – so that they could row out and pluck pond lilies. Although Thoreau read little fiction, he could not have been unaware of their newly republished "Gentle Boy" story, at least by its title.

With this background, we can now consider the gay speculation about the poem Thoreau wrote to his pupil Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr., "Once there was a gentle boy." Is this poem's emphasis on the nonmasculine characteristics of a young boy to be interpreted as evidence of a homoerotic longing on Thoreau's part, or, since the age of eleven is not the age of sexual maturity, interpreted as evidence of an incipient pederasty? No, because the poem's use of "gentle boy" might well have been a deliberate tie-in to the Hawthorne story. We must ask, what might have been the motivation for calling this particular story to Edmund's attention? There are several reasons having nothing to do with sexuality or with [Thoreau](#)'s personal needs. The nonviolent [Quaker](#) boy in the story is treated with utter viciousness by a gang of local Puritan children, and in particular by one boy whom he had nursed with kindness and attention during an illness. Was Edmund, a visitor in Concord, having trouble being accepted by some of the local children in Thoreau's school? This historian [William Sewell](#) referred to by [Hawthorne](#), was he one of Edmund's ancestors? Were some of the people described in that history Sewall ancestors, as some were Ha(w)thorne ancestors and some Peabody ancestors? If so, the Thoreau family would surely have been aware of it, since they had known intimately at least three generations of the Sewall family starting with Mrs. Joseph Ward, Cynthia Thoreau's star boarder, the widow of a colonel in the American revolutionary army, the mother of Caroline Ward who in turn was the mother of Ellen Devereux Sewall and Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr.

Hawthorne's story is of a boy in an adoptive family, a "little quiet, lovely boy" who is heartsick for his parents. In the tale, in the face of the most extreme religious persecution of Friends by Puritans, the boy's birth mother had violated her "duties of the present life" by "fixing her attention wholly on" her future life: she left her child with this Puritan family to venture on a "mistaken errand" of "unbridled fanaticism." That is, after being whipped out of town by the Puritans, she followed a spirit leading to become a traveling Friend. At the end, the boy's mother returns to him.

8. According to Patrick Hanks and Flavia Hodges's 1988 A DICTIONARY OF SURNAMES (Oxford UP), "Sewall" is a variant of "Sewell," which can be from the Old English "Sigeweald," meaning government by right of conquest, or "Sœweald" [œ with over it], meaning rule over the sea – an appropriate name for a family that included some wealthy shipbuilders in Maine! The same dictionary of surnames denies Thoreau's derivation of his name from Thor, the god of lightning, giving "Thoreau," "Thoret," "Thoré," and "Thorez" as variants of "Thorel," a nickname for a strong or violent individual (like Uncle "J.C." [Charles Jones Dunbar](#)!), from the Old French "t(h)or(el)" meaning bull. However, this dictionary allows that the name may also have originated in a diminutive of an aphetic short form of the given name "Maturin," or that it may be from a medieval given name which was an aphetic short form of various names such as "Victor" and "Salvador" ("Salvador" is equivalent to the Hebrew "Yehoshua"), or that it may be related to an Italian/Spanish nickname for a lusty person, or metonymic occupational name for a tender of bulls: "Toro!" (Now going to a bullfight in Spain and rooting for the bull, something I had the opportunity to do when I was a teenager, couldn't be the same for me.)



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[Hawthorne](#)'s tale involves the hanging of an innocent person. Would this have been of interest to Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr.? Yes, for a Sewall was involved in the hanging of the nineteen witches in Salem on September 22, 1692. This Samuel Sewall was a lifelong bigot (he once refused to sell a plot of land because the bidders wanted to build a church, and they were Protestants but not of his own denomination) but he was worse than a bigot: not only did he hang women for being in league with the devil, he helped condemn and hang one of his Harvard peers, the Reverend George Burrough –whom he had once heard preach on the Sermon on the Mount– for being in league with the devil. It was an interesting period, a period in which one could lose control of oneself and cry out during the Puritan service, and be suspected of having acquired a taint of [Quakerism](#), and be placed in great personal danger. And that was an interesting day, August 16, 1692: an arresting officer for the court, one John Willard, was “cried out upon” for doubting the guilt of the accused, and was hanged beside the Reverend Burrough. We find this in Sewall’s diary:



Mr. Burrough by his Speech, Prayer, protestation of his Innocence, did much move unthinking persons, which occasions their speaking hardly concerning his being executed.

A few years later, after some bad events in his family, Samuel suffered pangs of conscience: a public fast was declared for January 14, 1697 and he stood in Old South Church in Boston while the minister read a statement that the Sewall family had been cursed of God because of the trials, and that he took “the Blame and shame” upon himself. The twelve jurors were in attendance to acknowledge that they had “unwittingly and unwillingly” brought “upon ourselves and this people of the Lord the guilt of innocent blood.”

This Puritan’s son, the Reverend Joseph Sewall, was the father of Samuel Sewall, who was the father of Samuel Sewall, Jr., who was the father of the Reverend Edmund Quincy Sewall, Sr., who was of course Master Edmund Quincy Sewall, Jr.’s father. It is an interesting question, how a teacher can help a young man like this venture into his manhood, after the decency of manliness has been utterly destroyed as an option for him in such a manner, by the indecency of a male ancestor. I would suggest that teacher [Thoreau](#)’s tactic – to emphasize to this lad Edmund the nominally feminine virtue of gentleness by providing him with a poem into which to grow – constitutes a legitimate and even profound maneuver on extremely difficult terrain. I would suggest, in addition, that those who seek to appropriate Thoreau by interpreting this “Once there was a gentle boy” poem as evidence of an unconscious erotic impulse are, in effect, debasing him. Debasing him not by accusing him of homosexuality – for it is not base to be gay – but by interpreting a complex and difficult situation in a manner that is merely simpleminded and doctrinaire. I want to emphasize the open-endedness of the questions involved: was Edmund, the new boy in town, having the sort of trouble with his peers that would have caused him to be in the situation of the gentle boy in the [Hawthorne](#) tale – ganged up against, beaten as a sissy? The American Antiquarian Society in Worcester has preserved pages of Edmund’s Concord journal that may contain an answer. And what exactly was the perception of a blood guilt and an inherited shame among the Sewells and Sewells and Seawells and Sewalls? We should be led by this story, not into considerations of eroticism among 19th-Century virgins (which would be a mere shallow –not demeaning, surely, but surely both appropriative and dismissive– sidetrack) but into a full consideration of how a compassionate and concerned teacher like Henry Thoreau can help a young male pupil grow to maturity even in a situation in which the option “manhood” has for this pupil been virtually eliminated – by the foul deed and



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foul mind of a Samuel Sewall, his blood ancestor.



We need to begin to take into account various of the cultural influences upon Thoreau which we have not previously been considering due to the fact that few people read the dead languages anymore. There's quite a body of ancient evidence to indicate that the poet [Virgil](#) may well have been by inclination a pederast, and the scholar S. Lilja confirms that Virgil's apparent sexual persona does inform a great deal of his poetry, including of course his AENEID. If one refers to John F. Makowski's "Nisus and Euryalus: a Platonic Relationship," in



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Classical Journal (1985) 1-15, and also to J. Griffin's LATIN POETS AND ROMAN LIFE, one finds that:

- In Virgil's autobiographical poetry of the *Catalepton*, poems 5 and 7, in which he sings of Sextus his *cura curarum* and of the boy aptly named Pothos, poems for the authenticity of which Buechler and Richmond indicate that there is now strong consensus, Thoreau could have read of a sexuality seems to have been grounded in life experience rather than merely to have been following in the literary convention we now term "posing as sodomites."
- In Donatus's life of Virgil, Thoreau could have read: "*(sc. Vergilius) libidinis in pueros pronioris, quorum maxime dilexit Cebetem et Alexandrum, quem secunda bucolicorum ecloga Alexim appellat, donatum sibi ab Asinio Pollione, utrumque non ineruditum, Cebetem vero et poetam.*" Donatus goes on to say that Virgil, invited by a friend to partake of a heterosexual liaison, "*verum pertinacissime recusasse.*"
- Apuleius *Apologia* 10 pretty much agrees with the picture presented to Thoreau by Donatus.
- By the time of Martial a joking tradition was in place that the Muse behind Virgil's prodigious poetic output was his Alexis, his love slave, given to him (note the divergence from Servius) by Maecenas rather than by Pollio. See epigrams 5.6, 6.68, 7.29, 8.56, 8.73 in which he attributes the sad state of contemporary poetry to the failure of patrons to provide poets with beautiful boys *a la* Maecenas and Virgil. This material was available to Thoreau.
- [Juvenal](#) echoes this tradition in *Satire* 7.69.
- In Philargyrius, Thoreau could have read: "*Alexim dicunt Alexandrum, qui fuit servus Asinii Pollionis, quem Vergilius, rogatus ad prandium cum vidisset in ministerio omnium pulcherrimum, dilexit eumque dono accepit. Caesarem quidam acceperunt, formosum in operibus et gloria. alii puerum Caesaris, quem si laudasset, gratem rem Caesari fecisset. nam Vergilius dicitur in pueros habuisse amorem: nec enim turpiter eum diligebat. alii Corydona, Asinii Pollionis puerum adamatum a Vergilio ferunt, eumque a domino datum. . .*"
- What did Servius mean to say to Thoreau, and to us, when he offered that Virgil had not loved boys *turpiter* (disgracefully)? Possibly Servius meant that Virgil had been able to do so without loss of personal dignity (the courting of the beloved, whether woman or boy, could involve erotic service that was seen as beneath the dignity of a free man), the other that he did so without ever achieving, or perhaps even pursuing, physical consummation (which would have taken the form of sodomizing the lad if he was willing to submit, but Dover's GREEK HOMOSEXUALITY --which seems to be in large part valid for Roman society as well-- shows that nice boys were supposed to say **no** in thunder and that men who insisted upon using their penises might have to settle for intercrural satisfaction). We should probably take into account as well the poetry of a man who died in the same year as Virgil, [Albius Tibullus](#), from whom Thoreau would quote (or would suppose he was quoting) in WALDEN. What is conventionally known as "Book 1" of Tibullus contains poems on his beloved Delia but also several on a beloved boy named Marathus (4, 8, 9); these can offer some insight into the process of courting a boy. Another possibility, of course, is simply that Virgil's love had nothing cruel or abusive about it, but perhaps the most plausible explanation for judging a liaison as *turpis* is the man's loss of dignity in becoming enslaved to the object of his desire, his loss of face. Two examples that come to mind from Virgil's own time are Anthony's passion for [Cleopatra](#) and Maecenas's scandalous affair with the ballet-dancer Bathyllus.



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Horsfall’s COMPANION TO THE STUDY OF VIRGIL summarizes the “evidence” such as it is. Although he demonstrates that there is not one detail in the ancient LIVES OF VIRGIL that can be taken at face value, the persistent availability of such materials about the life of Virgil has been such as to make this a moot point. Whether true or false it has obviously had an influence, and may well have had an influence of some sort on [Thoreau](#). Those scholars could all be found to have been mistaken, and yet we will still need to deal with the manner in which Virgil was being received during the first half of the 19th Century, and I am not certain that we have done that, and of course it is important, in dealing with a situation such as Thoreau’s temporary involvement with the gentle young Sewall boy, that we most carefully do that. In none of these texts, nor in Servius, would Thoreau have been able to find any suggestion of a condemnation of what Virgil was projecting as being his proclivities.

September 4, Wednesday: According to the journal of [Friend Thomas B. Hazard](#) or Hafsard or Hasard of [Kingstown, Rhode Island](#), also known as “Nailer Tom,”⁹ there had been “strange [Northern lights](#) last night.”



AURORA BOREALIS



Sept 4th [Wednesday of WEEK] As we shoved away from this rocky coast, before sunrise, the smaller bittern, the genius of the shore, was moping along its edge, or stood probing the mud for its food, with ever an eye on us, though so demurely at work, or else he ran along over the wet stones like a wrecker in his storm-coat, looking out for wrecks of snails and cockles. Now away he goes, with a limping flight, uncertain where he will alight, until a rod of clear sand amid the alders invites his feet; and now our steady approach compels him to seek a new retreat. It is a bird of the oldest [Thalesian](#) school, and no doubt believes in the priority of water to the other elements; the relic of a twilight antediluvian age which yet inhabits these bright American rivers with us Yankees. There is something venerable in this melancholy and contemplative race of birds, which may have trodden the earth while it was yet in a slimy and imperfect state. Perchance their tracks, too, are still visible on

9. He was called “Nailer Tom” because his trade was the cutting of nails from scrap iron, and in order to distinguish him from a relative known as “College Tom,” from another relative known as “Shepherd Tom,” and from his own son who –because he had fits– was known as “Pistol-Head Tom.”



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the stones. It still lingers into our glaring summers, bravely supporting its fate without sympathy from man, as if it looked forward to some second advent of which he has no assurance. One wonders if, by its patient study by rocks and sandy capes, it has wrested the whole of her secret from Nature yet. What a rich experience it must have gained, standing on one leg and looking out from its dull eye so long on sunshine and rain, moon and stars! What could it tell of stagnant pools and reeds and dank night fogs! It would be worth the while to look closely into the eye which has been open and seeing at such hours, and in such solitudes its dull, yellowish, greenish eye. Methinks my own soul must be a bright invisible green. I have seen these birds stand by the half dozen together in the shallower water along the shore, with their bills thrust into the mud at the bottom, probing for food, the whole head being concealed, while the neck and body formed an arch above the water.

Thoreau's smaller bittern, the Green Heron, like all members of the heron family, catches its food with quick stabs of its bill. It does not probe the mud as do many species of shorebird. Since Green Herons often feed in still, shallow water, reflections may have caused Thoreau to think their bills were thrust into the mud. It must be remembered that Thoreau had no optical equipment at this time to aid his observations. -Cruickshank, Helen Gere. THOREAU ON BIRDS (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964)



Sept 4th Wednesday. Hooksett east bank 2 or 3 miles below the village, opposite mr. Mitchels.

On Thursday, Thoreau and his brother halted at a point east of Uncannunc Mountain near Manchester, New Hampshire. They hung their tent and buffalo robes in a farmer's barn to dry and then continued on foot up the Merrimack until it became the Pemigewasset and then the Wild Amonoosuck to its very fountainhead. This part of the adventure is not included in the book. However, Thursday morning as the brothers lay in their tent listening to the rain, they found such enjoyment in birds as those who never venture into a wet world can never know. -Cruickshank, Helen Gere. THOREAU ON BIRDS (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964)



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A WEEK: The small houses which were scattered along the river at intervals of a mile or more were commonly out of sight to us, but sometimes, when we rowed near the shore, we heard the peevish note of a hen, or some slight domestic sound, which betrayed them. The lock-men's houses were particularly well placed, retired, and high, always at falls or rapids, and commanding the pleasantest reaches of the river, -for it is generally wider and more lake-like just above a fall,- and there they wait for boats. These humble dwellings, homely and sincere, in which a hearth was still the essential part, were more pleasing to our eyes than palaces or castles would have been. In the noon of these days, as we have said, we occasionally climbed the banks and approached these houses, to get a glass of water and make acquaintance with their inhabitants. High in the leafy bank, surrounded commonly by a small patch of corn and beans, squashes and melons, with sometimes a graceful hop-yard on one side, and some running vine over the windows, they appeared like beehives set to gather honey for a summer. I have not read of any Arcadian life which surpasses the actual luxury and serenity of these New England dwellings. For the outward gilding, at least, the age is golden enough. As you approach the sunny doorway, awakening the echoes by your steps, still no sound from these barracks of repose, and you fear that the gentlest knock may seem rude to the Oriental dreamers. The door is opened, perchance, by some Yankee-Hindoo woman, whose small-voiced but sincere hospitality, out of the bottomless depths of a quiet nature, has travelled quite round to the opposite side, and fears only to obtrude its kindness. You step over the white-scoured floor to the bright "dresser" lightly, as if afraid to disturb the devotions of the household, -for Oriental dynasties appear to have passed away since the dinner-table was last spread here,- and thence to the frequented curb, where you see your long-forgotten, unshaven face at the bottom, in juxtaposition with new-made butter and the trout in the well. "Perhaps you would like some molasses and ginger," suggests the faint noon voice. Sometimes there sits the brother who follows the sea, their representative man; who knows only how far it is to the nearest port, no more distances, all the rest is sea and distant capes, - patting the dog, or dandling the kitten in arms that were stretched by the cable and the oar, pulling against Boreas or the trade-winds. He looks up at the stranger, half pleased, half astonished, with a mariner's eye, as if he were a dolphin within cast. If men will believe it, *sua si bona norint*, there are no more quiet Tempes, nor more poetic and Arcadian lives, than may be lived in these New England dwellings. We thought that the employment of their inhabitants by day would be to tend the flowers and herds, and at night, like the shepherds of old, to cluster and give names to the stars from the river banks.

CAT



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[The full Latin expression that goes with “*sua si bona norint*” is “*O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint*,” which means “0 more than happy, if they only knew their advantages,” and was used by [Virgil](#) to describe those who led the rustic bucolic agricultural life. We can say, therefore, that Virgil is a presence not only in Thoreau’s WALDEN, but also in A WEEK.]

1842

July 19-22 On July 19th, [Henry Thoreau](#) and [Margaret Fuller](#)’s brother [Richard F. Fuller](#) began a hike from Concord to Mount Wachusett “who like me / standest alone without society,” between Worcester and Fitchburg, via Princeton, studying [Virgil](#)’s *GEORGICS* along the way so Richard would be ready for his matriculation exams that fall at [Harvard College](#), and while on his way back home on July 22d, after parting from his walking companion, he passed the sites on the Nashua and the North Nashua streams of Lancaster (now part of Leominster State Forest) at which the ransom of [Mistress Mary Rowlandson](#) by [John Hoar](#) of [Concord](#) had occurred on May 3, 1676.

CAPTIVITY AND RESTAURATION

Later he would write about this, as “A WALK TO WACHUSETT”.



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A WALK TO WACHUSETT:

The needles of the pine, All to the west incline.

Summer and winter our eyes had rested on the dim outline of the mountains in our horizon, to which distance and indistinctness lent a grandeur not their own, so that they served equally to interpret all the allusions of poets and travelers; whether with Homer, on a spring morning, we sat down on the many-peaked Olympus, or with Virgil and his compeers roamed the Etrurian and Thessalian hills, or with Humboldt measured the more modern Andes and Teneriffe. Thus we spoke our mind to them, standing on the Concord cliffs:-

*With frontier strength ye stand your ground,
With grand content ye circle round,
Tumultuous silence for all sound,
Ye distant nursery of rills,
Monadnock, and the Peterboro' hills;
...
Upholding heaven, holding down earth,
Thy pastime from thy birth,
Not steadied by the one, nor leaning on the other;
May I approve myself thy worthy brother!*

At length, like Rasselas, and other inhabitants of happy valleys, we resolved to scale the blue wall which bounded the western horizon, though not without misgivings that thereafter no visible fairyland would exist for us. But we will not leap at once to our journey's end, though near, but imitate Homer, who conducts his reader over the plain, and along the resounding sea, though it be but to the tent of Achilles. In the spaces of thought are the reaches of land and water, where men go and come. The landscape lies far and fair within, and the deepest thinker is the farthest traveled.

ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT



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For a detailed description of that walking trip, consult William Howarth's commentary, which is merely excerpted here.

On July 19, 1842, Thoreau left Concord with Richard Fuller, a Harvard undergraduate and the brother of Margaret Fuller, Thoreau's editor at The Dial. The hikers had knapsacks, some provisions, and a tent. The tent was heavy, so they took turns carrying it. Starting before dawn, they marched over twenty-five miles to a village (now West Sterling) on the Stillwater River. In the morning, they ascended Wachusett and camped there overnight, enjoying a fine sunrise view on July 21. Then they descended and walked to Harvard, where they spent the night. On July 22 they parted company, Fuller going home to Groton and Thoreau back to Concord...

Howarth has reconstructed the jaunt for those who do not understand that this is history and are therefore condemned to repeat it: the two young men left Concord on Lexington Road, which is now MA2A, and went down Main Street, which is now MA62, to the Concord Turnpike, which is now MA2, to Acton (MA111) to Willow Street, took West Acton Road to Stow, walked via MA117 to Bolton, via MA62 through Sterling, via MA140 to West Sterling, via MA140 to Wachusett Mountain State Reservation, on the Bolton Pond Trail to Old Indian Trail, and to the summit. Thence they walked via MA140 to Sterling, via MA62 to Still River, via MA110 to Harvard, and Thoreau continued via MA2 to Concord while Fuller went home to Groton. But as the TV stunt person says, don't you try this without expert assistance:

For instance, Helen Gere Cruickshank has commented:

Though the climb to the summit of Wachusett Mountain is popular today, few would care to walk from Concord to the base of the mountain as Thoreau did. The unpaved road which made a pleasant footpath a century ago is now paved and congested with roaring cars. But once on the mountain trails, Red-eyed Vireos, Phoebes, Robins, and Cuckoos can be heard in spring and summer. From the summit, the surrounding country looks like a relief map and the climber sees many of the landmarks which birds must note as they travel above them.

PEOPLE MENTIONED IN WALDEN

P. VIRGILII AENEIDOS LIB. III. 160

Nec longo distant curfu: modo Juppiter adfit,
Tertia lux classem Cretæis fistet in oris.

- Sic fatus, meritos aris maectavit honores,
Taurum Neptuno, taurum tibi, pulcher Apollo;
120 Nigram Hiemi pecudem, Zephyris felicibus albam.
Fama volat, pulsum regnis cessisse paternis
Idomenea ducem, defertaque litora Cretæ;
Hoste vacare domos, sedesque astare relictas.
Linquimus Ortygiæ portus, pelagoque volamus:
125 Bacchatamque jugis Naxon, viridemque Donyfam,
Olearon, niveamque Paron, sparsasque per æquor
Cycladas, et crebris legimus freta confita terris.
Nauticus exoritur vario certamine clamor:
Hortantur focii, Cretam, proavosque petamus.
130 Prosequitur surgens a puppi ventus euntes;
Et tandem antiquis Curetum allabimur oris.
Ergo avidus muros optatæ molior urbis;
Pergameamque voco: et lætam cognomine gentem
Hortor amare focos, arcemque attollere tectis.
135 Jamque fere sicco subductæ litore puppes:
Connubiis, arvisque novis operata juvenus:
Jura domosque dabam: subito quum tabida membris,
Corrupto cœli tractu, miserandaque venit
Arboribusque satisque lues, et lethifer annus.
140 Linquebant dulces animas, aut ægra trahebant
Corpora: tum steriles exurere Sirius agros,
Arebant herbæ, et victum seges ægra negabat.
Rurfus ad oraclum Ortygiæ, Phœbumque, remenso
Hortatur pater ire mari, veniamque precari:
145 Quem fessis finem rebus ferat: unde laborum
Tentare auxilium jubeat: quo vertere cursus.



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The hour of departure on July 19 was early; Fuller said they were underway "about quarter to five." The small stream where they rested ... is Great Brook, which crosses MA 117 just east of Meadow Road. Fuller said they cut the walking staves in a woods "between Concord and Stowe." Their hilltop view of Wachusett ... was possibly from Wataquadock Hill (600')....

Wachusett Reservation is a year-round state park, replete with Visitor Center (maps and displays) and auto road. Carriage roads first appeared here in the 1850s; today's paved surface is a two-mile, one-way loop. The road is free, easy to "climb," and just two hours' driving time from greater Boston. Hence, Wachusett is one of the busiest mountains in North America. A quarter of a million visitors ascend each year; ten thousand a day come during the fall foliage season. Not all of them leave behind "the gross products of plains and valleys." Near the lower gate a sign reads: NO SKATEBOARDING ON ROAD.

Walking time via Thoreau's route, the Bolton Pond and Old Indian trails, is about forty-five minutes. Changes in mountain vegetation since his visit reflect the species succession that occurs on undisturbed land. The sugar maples he saw have given way to hemlocks, part of the climax forest. Fallen hemlock needles, rich in tannin, create an acidic "duff" or humus for evergreen shrubs like mountain laurel and rhododendron. This soil is thick and damp, but easily eroded by rain and hikers. Along the path, most tree roots are exposed, making dark gnarled shapes against the gray-green lichens on rock shelves and ledges.



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The trail is steep and wet, but at intervals it crosses flat shoulders open to the sky. These "benches" are forested or farmed patches where trees were cleared early in the twentieth century. Recovery is slow at this elevation: the new growth is small and wind-stunted. At 1,200 feet, the trail enters a large artificial clearing, the West and Long John ski trails. Both trails form long slashes of meadow, attracting flowers and birds, but also human traffic. New trails and chair lifts are planned, enough to accommodate 1,900 skiers an hour.

The exact elevations of Wachusett (2,006') and Princeton (1,175') differ from Thoreau's figures. Wachusett is not above the normal tree line, yet its summit is bare. Three hundred years of erosion, partially induced by fires and storms, have removed the thin topsoil and exposed sandstone, shale, and gray-banded gneiss. On the same observatory foundation that Thoreau climbed, Harvard University built a weather station in the 1850s. A long succession of summit houses (offering meals and beds) ensued; last in this line was a refreshment stand, now [1982] boarded up. A fire tower and microwave antenna are the main structures today. Monadnock (3,165') is twenty-eight miles northwest....

Camping is no longer permitted on Wachusett, but the auto road is open at sunrise and sunset, when low-angled light provides the best views. Thoreau's cold, windy night in July was no exaggeration. Evening temperatures can drop to 50 degrees, and gusts of 20 m.p.h. will produce a wind-chill equivalent of 32 degrees.

The "immense landscape" Thoreau saw after sunrise ... was about forty-five miles in diameter. Maximum visibility attained has been 120 miles, but today's hazy, polluted air usually reduces the view to twenty or thirty miles. To the east is Boston, with its prominent Hancock tower; north and west are Monadnock and Hoosac, where Thoreau was to travel in 1844. He was mistaken to think of these mountains as parts of a common ... "range," but accurate in describing their similar configurations....

If America's subsequent history has not confirmed this optimism, Wachusett still poses the alternatives Thoreau saw. East of the mountain are Fitchburg and Lowell, once thriving industrial centers but now fallen into decay. West and southwest are many acres of forest and wildlife sanctuary, a protected land where "progress" may never come.



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1845

Mid-April: [Henry Thoreau](#) framed his shanty at the pond. Here is an illustration of a young feller, a “today” young feller, preparing a member for the frame of Thoreau’s shanty in the authentic manner, using a hewing ax which has a short handle and a head that is rather flat on one side, to flatten one side of a timber:



Thoreau’s mention of the fall of Troy reminds one of [Virgil](#)’s *AENEID* and the flight of Æneas from the burning city clutching the *lares* and *penates*, protective statuettes of the household gods.

Some have faulted Thoreau for spelling the name of the thieving William Seeley as “Seeley” rather than “Seley” but it seems this was a legitimate Scotch/Irish spelling (since there had been a “Captain Seeley” involved in the “Great Swamp Fight.”)



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WALDEN: By the middle of April, for I made no haste in my work, but rather made the most of it, my house was framed and ready for the raising. I had already bought the shanty of James Collins, an Irishman who worked on the Fitchburg Railroad, for boards. James Collins' shanty was considered an uncommonly fine one. When I called to see it he has not at home. I walked about the outside, at first unobserved from within, the window was so deep and high. It was of small dimensions, with a peaked cottage roof, and not much else to be seen, the dirt being raised five feet all around as if it were a compost heap. The roof was the soundest part, though a good deal warped and made brittle by the sun. Door-sill there was none, but a perennial passage for the hens under the door board. Mrs. C. came to the door and asked me to view it from the inside. The hens were driven in by my approach. It was dark, and had a dirt floor for the most part, dank, clammy, and aguish, only here a board and there a board which would not bear removal. She lighted a lamp to show me the inside of the roof and the walls, and also that the board floor extended under the bed, warning me not to step into the cellar, a sort of dusty hole two feet deep. In her own words, they were "good boards overhead, good boards all around, and a good window," -of two whole squares originally, only the cat had passed out that way lately. There was stove, a bed, and a place to sit, an infant in the house where it was born, a silk parasol, gilt-framed looking-glass, and a patent new coffee mill nailed to an oak sapling, all told. The bargain was soon concluded, for James had in the mean while returned. I to pay four dollars and twenty-five cents to-night, he to vacate at five to-morrow morning, selling to nobody else meanwhile; I to take possession at six. It were well, he said, to be there early, and anticipate certain indistinct but wholly unjust claims on the score of ground rent and fuel. This he assured me was the only encumbrance. At six I passed him and his family on the road. One large bundle held their all, -bed, coffee-mill, looking-glass, hens,- all but the cat, she took to the woods and became a wild cat, and, as I learned afterward, trod in a trap set for woodchucks, and so became a dead cat at last.

I took down this dwelling the same morning, drawing the nails, and removed it to the pond side by small cartloads, spreading the boards on the grass there to bleach and warp back again in the sun. One early thrush gave me a note or two as I drove along the woodland path. I was informed treacherously by a young Patrick that neighbor Seeley, an Irishman, in the intervals of the carting, transferred the still tolerable, straight, and drivable nails, staples, and spikes to his pocket, and then stood when I came back to pass the time of day, and look freshly up, unconcerned, with spring thoughts, at the devastation; there being a dearth of work, as he said. He was there to represent spectatordom, and help make this seemingly insignificant event one with the removal of the gods of Troy.

CAT

HDT

WHAT?

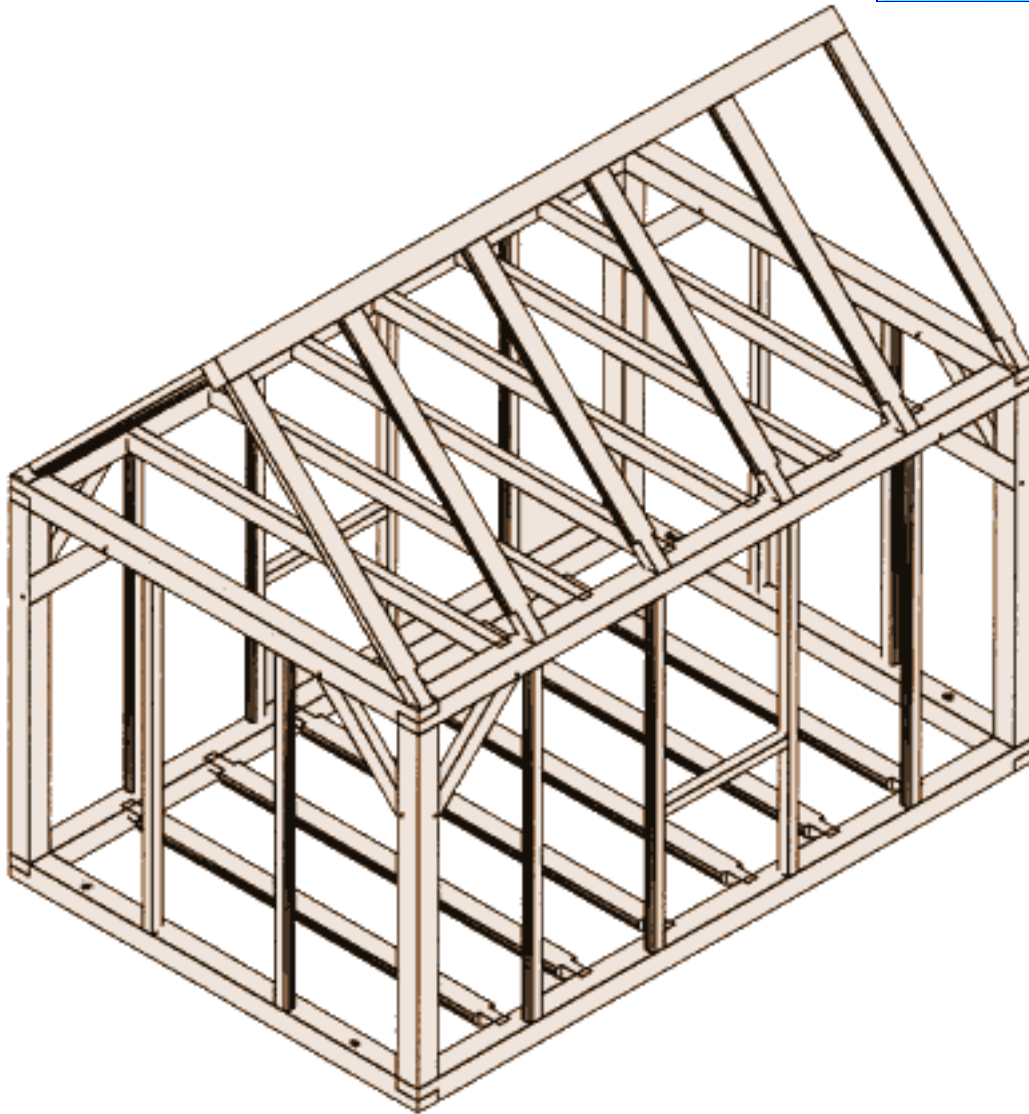
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1852

March 2, Tuesday: [Henry Thoreau](#) made a journal entry that he would copy into “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT” as:

[Paragraph 8] The history of one farm from a state of nature to the highest state of cultivation — in other words, the history of such a life as we imagine to have been lived on it, comes nearer to being the true subject for a modern epic, than the siege of Jerusalem, or any such paltry resource as some have thought the poet reduced to at present.¹ (As if the poet were ever a man in reduced circumstances.) The Works and Days of [Hesiod](#), the Eclogues and Georgics of [Virgil](#), are but leaves out of that epic.

[Paragraph 9] The turning of a swamp into a garden, though I do not always think it an improvement, is at any rate an enterprise interesting to all men. The farmer increases the extent of the habitable earth. He makes soil² — and to a certain extent, is grading the way for civilization.

1. In SPECIMENS OF THE TABLE-TALK OF THE LATE [SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE](#) (New York: Harpers, 1835), entry of 28 April 1832, Coleridge asserts that the “destruction of Jerusalem is the only subject now remaining for an epic poem.”

2. A scatological pun.

RALPH WINTERTON'S POETÆ



March 2, Tuesday, 1852: If the sciences are protected from being carried by assault by the mob by a palisade or chevaux de frise of technical terms – so also the learned man may sometimes ensconce himself & conceal his little true knowledge behind hard names– Perhaps the value of any statement may be measured by its susceptibility to be expressed in popular language. The greatest discoveries can be reported in the newspapers.– I thought it was a great advantage both to speakers & hearers when at the meetings of scientific gentlemen at the Marlboro chapel – the representatives of all departments of science were required to speak intelligibly to those of other departments – therefore dispensing with the most peculiarly technical terms– A man may be permitted to state a very meager truth to a fellow student using technical terms – but when he stands up before the mass of men he must have some distinct & important truth to communicate – and the most important it will always be the most easy to communicate to the vulgar.

If anybody thinks a thought how sure we are to hear of it – though it be only a half thought or half a delusion it gets into the newspapers and all the country rings with it–

But how much clearing of land & plowing and planting & building of stone wall is done every summer – without being reported in the newspapers or in literature.¹⁰ Agricultural literature is not as extensive as the fields–& the farmer’s almanac is never a big book. And yet I think that the History (or poetry) of one farm from a state of nature to the highest state of cultivation comes nearer to being the true subject of a modern epic than the seige of Jerusalem or any such paltry & ridiculous resource to which some have thought men reduced. Was it Coleridge? the works & Days of Hesiod – The Eclogues & Georgics of Virgil– are but leaves out of that epic. The turning a swamp into a garden – though the poet may not think it an improvement – is at any rate an enterprise interesting to all men.

A wealthy farmer who has money to let was here yesterday, who said that 14 years ago a man came to him to

HESIOD

VIRGIL



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hire 200 dollars for 30 days— He told him that he should have it if he would give proper security — but the other thinking it exorbitant to require security for so short a term — went away— But he soon returned & gave the security.— & said the farmer — he has punctually paid me twelve dollars a year ever since— I have never said a word to him about the principal.

It will soon be forgotten, in these days of stoves, that we used to roast potatoes in the ashes — after the Indian fashion of cooking.

The farmer increases the extent of the habitable earth. He makes soil. That is an honorable occupation.



April 16, Friday, 1852: ... The water on the meadows is now quite high—on account of the melting snow & the rain. It makes a lively prospect when the wind blows— Where our summer meads spread—a tumultuous sea—a myriad waves breaking with white caps, like gambolling sheep—for want of other comparison in the country. Far & wide a sea of motion—schools of porpoises—lines of Virgil realized— One would think it a novel sight for inland meadows—where the cranberry—& andromeada & swamp white oak & maple grow—here is a mimic sea—with its gulls. At the bottom of the sea cranberries....

VIRGIL

10. [Thoreau](#) would later combine this with an entry made on January 28, 1853 (JOURNAL ■4:483) to form the following paragraph for his early lecture “WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT”:

[Paragraph 23] If any body thinks a thought, how sure we are to hear of it! Though it be only a half thought, or half a delusion it gets into the newspapers, and all the country rings with it at last. But how much clearing of land, and plowing and planting and building of stone wall is done every summer without being heard of out of the district! A man may do a great deal of bogging without becoming illustrious — when if he had done comparatively little work in some intellectual or spiritual bog — we should not have willingly let it die. Agricultural literature is not as extensive as the fields, and the farmer’s almanac is never a big book. The exploits of the farmer are not often reported even in the agricultural papers, nor are they handed down by tradition from father to son, praiseworthy and memorable as so many of them are. But if he ran away from hard work once in his youth and chanced to be present at one short battle, he will, even in his old age, love to dwell on this, “shoulder his crutch, and” — with cruel satire — “show how fields are won.”¹

1. [Oliver Goldsmith](#)’s “[The Deserted Village](#),” line 158.

**BRAD DEAN’S
COMMENTARY**



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1988

As I recollect, it was in about this year –after having successfully pioneered the copying of an old typesetting tape of the King James Bible into straight ASCII text and burned it onto a CD-ROM, and after having belatedly realized that technological advances of this sort were immaterial unless someone could somehow be induced to access the electronic results– that I began to muse on the prospect that, as [Dante](#) had used [Virgil](#) as his guide through *INFERNO*, *PURGATORIO*, and *PARADISO*, we might with benefit use [Henry Thoreau](#) as our guide through the known and unknown universe of our own divine comedy:

ASSLEY

WE NEED A TRAVELING COMPANION



We live in an educated age - at least people generally read and write. We live in a religious age - at least people attend various worship services and seek "a religious experience." But we no longer study our Scriptures as we should. This is a problem in all religious traditions, but in particular, to my own mortification, Quakers don't study the Bible. We find ourselves encouraged to peruse a whole lot of quasi-religious stuff such as what my monthly meeting's "reading club" is currently sitting around reading to each other on a series of Thursday nights, M. Scott Peck's *THE DIFFERENT DRUM*, but after our childhood indoctrination or immunization we no longer pay much attention to our traditional stuff.

The result is that we are shallow. For instance, we are quite unable to read *WALDEN* as it was written: not only do the greater number of Thoreau's allusions to the Hindu spiritual tradition escape us, but also even his allusions to the dominant spiritual traditions of New England. I offer that at least part of the problem of our unfamiliarity with our heritage is that in this era we no longer have an adequate "persona" to guide us in our religious wanderings. We need a *READER'S GUIDE TO PROFOUND LITERATURE*. When a tired traveler takes a Gideon BIBLE out of a dresser drawer in a Duluth motel, and flips through it, scripture is encountered directly, as a "writing" severed from all context, or worse, this tired traveler has an image of the member of the



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Gideon Society who placed that Gideon in that drawer. The image we tend to have (which may be false!) is that of a spiritual molester - it is the image of some self-righteous businessman who is trying to salve his tired soul by saving others' souls. Consequently, resistance to the sacred words puts the tired traveler to sleep. Our Bibles have become pillow books, pillows, pills.

But as the image of [Virgil](#) once guided [Dante](#) over the supernatural terrain of the *INFERNO*, might not the image of [Thoreau](#) be a suitable guide for us through the texts of the sacred scriptures?

We may any day take a walk as strange as [Dante Alighieri's](#) imaginary one to *L'INFERNO* or *PARADISO* (MLJ 29: 242-43; MS only).

As [Dante Alighieri](#) once allowed the image of [Virgil](#) to guide him over the supernatural terrain of the *INFERNO*, let us allow the image of Thoreau to guide us beyond the strangeness of, beyond

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our estrangement from, our sacred texts.



My teacher sage
Aware, thrusting him back: "Away! down there
To the other dogs!"

Canto VIII., lines 39-41.

It is a matter of what is significant to us. Auto repair



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instructions are currently being put on CD-ROM for a number of reasons centering around the concept of accessibility. We might be as willing to do this for our scriptures as for our repair manuals, for they are no less significant to us. Now that the technology is available, putting the scriptures of the world on CD-ROM -at least one English translation of the books of the BIBLE, and the *BHAGAVAD GITA*, and the FOUR BOOKS of China, and the *QUR'AN*, etc.- would be no stunt. It would not be in the same league with using a microscope to inscribe the Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin as was popular in my youth. It is a vital project.

Just as this is more than just a technological project, to demonstrate that it is possible to use modern technology to create a new kind of scholarly journal that is cumulative from issue to issue, it can be more than just a literary or historical project in academia. Yes, I am well aware that no-one who is presently unwilling to muse on Scripture out of a bound book will be **eager** to scroll through the same words on a green screen! There is much more to this than technology or literature or history: we can use [Thoreau](#) as a persona to guide us in our religious readings, in such a manner as to make ourselves eager to scroll through them on the computer screen. The linkage is utterly simple: Thoreau loved all these old books with the most sincere passion, and we all love Thoreau. Although our disk of religious writings will serve the purposes of a study of an interesting and almost contemporary life, Thoreau's life, it can in fact have other uses, devotional uses. For our Thoreau was not merely a poet or nature watcher, or merely an Emerson clone. When Thoreau cries "Blake! Blake! are you awake?" he is of course attempting to speak like a man in a waking moment to a man in his waking moment and he is of course summoning his definition "Morning is when I am awake and there is dawn in me" which he derived from his reading of the *VISHNU PURANA* in early 1850: "All intelligences awake with the morning." He is suggesting to Blake that his two observations of maternal behavior at the depôt are something that we will need to stand on tiptoe to understand and something that we will need to devote our most alert and wakeful hours to. What I am adding to Thoreau's insistence on alertness is my own insistence that, for these intricate studies into our best thoughts, we **must** utilize the most advanced and capable computer hardware, operating systems, applications software, and multimedia hypertext contextures. -We need all the help we can get, so our task will not be **quite** beyond our abilities.

HDT

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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: August 10, 2013



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ARRGH AUTOMATED RESearch REPORT

GENERATION HOTLINE



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



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Commonly, the first output of the program has obvious deficiencies and so we need to go back into the data modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and do a recompile of the chronology - but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary "writerly" process which 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 your requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>.
Arrgh.