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SPECIAL ISSUE:

President Clinton Helps Open Thoreau Institute, pp. 6–7

Volume 9, Number 2

Fall 1998

EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Gannett's Address at Emerson's Ordination

Guy Litton

Texas Woman's University

W ith the publication of the *Complete Sermons* and a number of scholarly works which treat Emerson's earlier life, a good deal more is known about his career as a minister than in years past. But an interesting document that seems to have been overlooked throughout much of this renewed interest in Emerson's ministerial career is Ezra Stiles Gannett's address at Emerson's 11 March 1829 ordination. In fact, aside from a fragment of Samuel Ripley's sermon from that occasion, reprinted in George Willis Cooke's 1882 biography, Gannett's address is the only extant document from the day's proceedings. Though Rusk briefly mentions the address, its importance as the only remaining text from the service merits its full publication if for no other reason than that it offers our imaginations a glimpse of what that important occasion offered to the auditor.

But the address is not merely a curious artifact. Since its author eventually became one of Transcendentalism's most ardent Unitarian critics, the work stands as an ironic foreshadowing of the difficult issues that Emerson would encounter during and after his years in the pulpit. Gannett, who served for many years as pastor of the Federal Street Church in Boston, had preceded Emerson at the Divinity School by one year and had helped him and others find vacant pulpits. Less than a decade later, however, he would become one of the most vocal proponents of a faculty veto to insure that radicals like Emerson could be prevented from speaking at the school. The faculty "could hardly be expected to allow the wolf to carry off the lambs in their very presence." 4 While some of the text was reused in later ordination services (at Kingston, R.I. and Concord, N.H.), it is clear that much in the piece is specific to the circumstances Emerson faced in filling Henry Ware, Jr.'s position at Boston's Second Church. Though he agreed to accept the position of "colleague pastor," everyone understood that Emerson's ordination meant a transfer of leadership.

Gannett's references to the congregation's "pain" and the bitterness of their "disappointment" at the loss of Ware were no doubt accurate. Emerson's own ambivalence in accepting the post may have been based as much on his discomfort at following such a popular minister as upon concerns about his choice

of occupation, and this text addresses his dilemma in a surprisingly open manner.

Even those remarks, however, which were intended for more than one audience seem quite prescient, and one wonders whether the more general advice that would again be offered to later audiences was not crafted with at least some knowledge of its first subject's own particular circumstances. Gannett's injunction, for example, that the congregation should speak to Emerson "frankly" should they find his doctrine or manner unendurable, could hardly have been more apropos had he been able to foresee the coming crisis Emerson was to have over the ordinances. Did Gannett have some reason to wonder about Emerson's views? One wonders, also, just how closely Emerson took to heart Gannett's warning that, if the minister "speaks what he conceives to be the truth...he incurs rebuke, his friends are offended, & he is styled impudent." Though the two rarely agreed on much throughout their careers, surely Emerson after his experience as minister at the Second Church would have agreed with Gannett that slavery in Algiers is better than of the "servitude of a clergyman, who dares not speak lest he shd. startle or prejudice."

Address to the <chh. &> Socy. at ordination of Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson over Second Chh. in Boston as colleague pastor with Rev. H Ware jr.

March 11. 1829⁵

Christian Friends

Permit me to address to you, who are members of this chh. & Socy a few words of sympathy & counsel.

The man, whom you have chosen to be yr. relgs. teacher has been charged & encouraged to perform his duties. The relation is reciprocal, & you will not deem it impertinant in me to remind you that as you share the pleasures, so do you also the responsibilities of the day. In the name of those whose presence you have invited, I wd speak to you on these topics. On an occasion more than usually similar, my brother suggested to the people with whom it has been my privilege to be connected, their duties as members of Xtn. Socy. Far was I then from anticipating the sad necessity wh. by removing him fr. this place, has bro't me hither to discharge the like office of friendship to his people. If it were

1998 ANNUAL MEETING

President David Robinson presided over the 1998 annual meeting of the Emerson Society in San Diego, Calif., on 30 May. Robin Sandra Grey and Robert N. Hudspeth were elected to the Advisory Board; Douglas Emory Wilson was reelected editor of ESP; and Phyllis Cole was elected Program Chair for 1999-2001. Ron Bosco and Joel Myerson gave an update on plans for the 2003 Emerson Bicentennial. Doug Wilson reported on progress with The Collected Works and also presented Wes Mott's Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports: At the end of 1997, the Society's savings account had a balance of \$9,820.21, including \$3,750 earmarked for the Bicentennial; a CD opened in 1996, with an anonymous \$5,000 gift toward the Bicentennial, had a balance of \$5,539.95. Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports for 1997 may be obtained by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Professor Mott, Dept. of Humanities & Arts, WPI, Worcester, MA 01609-2280.

EMERSON SOCIETY PATRONS

Emerson Society members have responded generously to the appeal by Past President Ronald A. Bosco to join at new levels of membership. All donations above the \$10 annual regular membership go to support the "Emerson in 2003" Bicentennial celebration now being organized. Dues categories are Life (\$500), Sustaining (\$50), Contributing (\$25), and Regular (\$10). Please send check payable to The Emerson Society (U.S. dollars only) to Wesley T. Mott, Secretary/Treasurer, Dept. of Humanities & Arts, WPI, Worcester, MA 01609-2280.

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

The newsletter of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society
Published at Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Editor: Douglas Emory Wilson
Managing Editor: Wesley T. Mott
Book Review Editor: Sarah Ann Wider
Editorial Assistants: Jill A. Johnson, Brianne Keith
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Emerson Society Papers is published twice a year. Subscriptions, which include membership in the Society, are \$10 a year (students \$5). Send checks for membership (calendar year) and back issues (\$5 each) to Wesley T. Mott, Department of Humanities & Arts, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, MA 01609-2280.

For future issues of *Emerson Society Papers* we solicit information about editions, publications, and research in progress on Emerson and his circle; queries and requests for information in aid of research in these fields; and significant news (promotions, transfers, retirements, deaths, etc.) of Emersonian scholars. We will also consider notes and short articles (about 4 to 5 double-spaced typewritten pages, or less) on subjects of interest to our membership. MLA stylesheet is preferred. Send manuscripts to the editor, Douglas Emory Wilson, 1404 Christine Ave., Anniston, AL 36207-3924.

Review copies of books on Emerson should be sent to book review editor Sarah Ann Wider, Department of English, Colgate University, Hamilton, NY 13346.

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PROSPECTS.

Call for Papers

Anyone interested in presenting a paper on any aspect of Emerson's life, thought, career, etc. at the American Literature Association annual conference in Baltimore, Md. (27-30 May, 1999), or the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering in Concord, Mass. (second week of July 1999), should forward the paper or detailed proposal to Prof. Len Gougeon, Department of English, University of Scranton, Scranton, PA 18510. The deadline for submission for both venues is 15 December 1998.

Emerson as Wisconsin Land-Owner: Search for a Letter

Emerson Society member John E. Holmbeck seeks help in locating a letter from Ralph Waldo Emerson to his attorney and friend Horatio Woodman concerning Emerson's woodlot near Trade Lake, Burnett County, Wisconsin. The letter is not published in the Rusk/Tilton *Letters*, but the text is printed in a

Grolier Society catalog: "I should be better pleased with your kind care of my lot in Trade Lake, Wisconsin, if you would add to the tax the proper fee of the attorney who is kindly attending to it. With this view, I add \$2.00. with my thanks. R. W. Emerson."

The catalog description reads, "Autograph Letter Signed. 1p. 8vo, Concord. 19 February, 1876. To Horatio Woodman. Accompanied by portrait. Together, 2 pieces, neatly matted." The letter was apparently sold at auction by New York Book & Auction Company on 22 March 1938. If you know the current owner or whereabouts of this letter, please write Jack Holmbeck at 3004 Imperial Oaks Drive, Rockford, IL 61114, or call 815-877-4356.

Kane Receives Fellowships

Paul Kane has received fellowships from the NEH and the Guggenheim Foundation for a study of Emerson's poetry.

Thanks and Good Luck...

ESP has enjoyed years of dedicated service from two editorial assistants, each a May 1998 college graduate who has moved on to a new venture. Sarah Mott, who has been with ESP since spring 1992, graduated from Boston University and is now employed at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. Jeffrey Rosse, with us since fall 1993, graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute and works for General Electric in Schenectady, New York. We wish Sarah and Jeff every success and happiness with their new Prospects!

Two Summers in Concord

The Emerson Society has become a fixture at the Annual Gathering of the Thoreau Society each July in Concord, Mass. Our panels and special presentations regularly attract audiences of 50-75. Owing to lack of space, the Fall 1997 issue of *ESP* did not print our annual photo of Emersonian presenters in Concord. That omission is compensated for below:



1997—Transcendental Women and Biography On 11 July Daniel Shealy (far left) chaired this discussion of three great women—and the art of biography—by their outstanding biographers: from left, Phyllis Cole (on Mary Moody Emerson), Cynthia Barton (on Abigail Alcott), and Bruce Ronda (on Elizabeth Palmer Peabody).



1998—Emerson: Influences and Resonances This wide-ranging panel on 10 July, chaired by Len Gougeon, featured, from left, Phyllis Cole ("Emersonian Individualism as a Two-Person Project"), Joan Goodwin ("Sarah Ripley's Effect on Emerson"), and Sallee Engstrom ("Emerson and Charles Finney").

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Abstracts of San Diego ALA Papers

The following panels were presented by The Emerson Society at the ninth annual conference of the American Literature Association on 29 and 30 May in San Diego, California.

SESSION I: Teaching the Anthologized Emerson.
Chair, Daniel Shealy, Univ. of North Carolina–Charlotte
Panelists Laura Dassow Walls (Lafayette Coll.), Ronald A.

Panelists Laura Dassow Walls (Larayette Coll.), Rohald A. Bosco (Univ. at Albany—SUNY), and Robert N. Hudspeth (Univ. of Redlands) presented brief talks, followed by a lively open discussion with the audience.

SESSION II: Emerson and the Question of Reform. Chair, Sarah Ann Wider, Colgate Univ.

"Be Yourselves Declarations": Emerson's Defense of John Brown

HAROLD K. BUSH, JR. Saint Louis University

According to Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, public moves in which "the speaker incarnates the argument" constitute a distinct rhetorical form called "enactment." That is, writers and rhetors enhance the rhetorical power of their arguments when they are willing not only to voice them, but to enact them, to "incarnate" them, an argument that I have detailed elsewhere. What Carla Peterson has recently shown to be the burden of numerous African American women can be expanded to include much of middle-class American culture of the antebellum period: the overpowering desire to become not just hearers, but also "doers of the word." And as Peterson argues, "for these and other activists... speaking and writing constituted a form of doing."

The call to "do the word" was aimed not merely at the religious but generally at all "true American citizens," meaning that what had begun as a Christian principle of sanctification had become subtly transformed into a patriotic national initiative by which the Union might become a better place for all. Preachers regularly began calling for the closure of what one theologian has called the "sanctification gap": that is, the disturbing trend among multitudes of American citizens who had asserted their Christian faith and yet had not committed themselves to the lifelong quest toward holiness and Christian perfection in the Wesleyan tradition. The widespread Christian call to live in fuller holiness, made throughout much of the American church, was duplicated by a similar yet more secular call to close the sanctification gap inherent among the believers in what we might term here an authentic American "Repentance." The religious critics disdained the "easy conversion" that had manifested among Christian believers; similarly, other cultural critics castigated the "easy conversion" by which so-called "Americans" claimed to have "repented" and become truly American, but in fact had continued living the sorts of lives that indicated a betrayal of fundamental American creeds and values. As a result of this perceived sanctification gap among both Christians and

American citizens, a heightened sense of repentance was sounded forth by various spokespersons, including members of marginalized populations such as slaves and ex-slaves, many of whom drew on revolutionary and biblical models to enact endless new manifestations of an authentically American Repentance. Thus, through countless reenactments of the "Declaration of Independence," the namesake document began taking on a new life of its own as central American fundament.

For many observers, the quintessential declaratory enactment was surely that undertaken by John Brown and his fatalistic followers at Harpers Ferry, Virginia in October of 1859. Countless northern rhetors attempted to represent Brown and the symbolic effect of his doomed raid as thoroughly American and Christian. These rhetors included the most prominent abolitionists of the day, including Frederick Douglass, Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, as well as many famous literary figures like Bronson Alcott, Henry Thoreau, Lydia Maria Child, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and William Ellery Channing.

This paper considers the rhetorical apologia as created by one of Brown's most fervent admirers, Ralph Waldo Emerson, the admirer, by the way, whose own artistic achievement would in the end have the most profound and certainly the most far-reaching impact. On the level of public policy, of course, Emerson's endorsement of Brown was tantamount to a confession of personal abolitionist views; but this view had come forth long before 1859. Emerson's endorsement, and indeed his mythologization, of Brown's raid must be understood as transcending the mere public policy issue of slavery in the United States. Additionally, Emerson's championing of Brown, whose bravery and defiance emphasized the acts of the individual will and the powerful rhetorical effects those acts were capable of having. both responded and contributed to the emerging mythic American ideology, one that championed the Declaration of Independence as redemptive entrance into a purely American Repentance. Indeed, we might even go so far as claiming that Emerson willingly romanticized Brown to the level of a prophetic embodiment of a truly American civil "religion." This role was one that Brown actively fostered through his words and deeds while jailed. Emerson's powerful evocation of Brown as representative "true" American foregrounded simultaneously the "romantic" will to power, God's violent judgment upon the sinful South (and in fact the complicit North), Brown's rhetorical connections with the Revolutionary fathers, and finally the need for a national Martyr through whom there might come a national Repentance. These themes were not peculiar to Emerson, but in fact were widespread. Tellingly, in 1875 Emerson called Brown retrospectively "one of the two best examples of eloquence" in American history (ranking him with the other martyred hero, Abraham Lincoln), an opinion that can only make sense if we take into account not so much Brown's writings or speeches, but his powerful rhetorical enactment of American ideals. Such was the truest kind of eloquence, claimed Emerson; and it was proven through the subsequent cultural response of Brown's many "hearers."

Emerson's Political Spirit and the Problem of Language

T. Gregory Garvey SUNY College at Brockport

"Emerson's Political Spirit and the Problem of Language" explores the relationship between the organic theory of language that Emerson develops in his 1835 essay "English Literature" and Nature, and the timing of his emergence as an active abolitionist in the period immediately following his completion of Essays, Second Series. The paper hinges on Emerson's apparent recognition in "Experience" that language is more of a social institution than it is a natural phenomenon. Having reached the conclusion that: "It is very unhappy, but too late to be helped, the discovery we have made that we exist. The discovery is called the fall of man. Ever after we suspect our instruments" (CW 3: 43), it was more difficult for Emerson to believe that language, as a suspect instrument, could serve as a source of universal reform that would transcend partisan differences.

Though there is no doubt that Emerson intermittently remarks on the ways that language obstructs his ideal of organic transparence during the 1830s, there also seems to be a significant change in the way he thinks about the great man in the years following 1844. Unlike the abstract poet-prophets of "The American Scholar," The Divinity School Address, and "The Poet," the figures he studies in *Representative Men* are historically grounded and less like platonic ideals. The Representatives are poet-prophets accommodated to the problem of language.

The turning point in this process coincides with Emerson's emergence as an abolitionist. Though recent scholarship has emphasized the importance of external events—such as his invitation to commemorate the end of slavery in the British West Indies—in the development of Emerson's abolitionism, this paper begins to explore ways in which his reform activism also grows out of logics that are internal to his intellectual life. In a way, the progression I describe in this paper marks another "fall" or skeptical turn in Emerson's thought. But it also has the advantage of resolving an important ethical dilemma. As long as Emerson could hold out the prospect of consensus emerging from the words of an inspired poet, for him to pick a side on divisive political issues rather than speaking for universal reform would have necessarily felt like an ethical compromise. But once Emerson explicitly recognizes the limitations of language, the question of ethics becomes one of speaking for the good rather than for the whole. In this respect, Emerson's failed effort to imagine a mode of reform that transcends partiality and can provoke consensus, also marks a kind of liberation.

Emerson, Slavery, and the Evolution of the Principle of Self-Reliance

MICHAEL STRYSICK

Davidson College

Best known for his principle of self-reliance, over time Emerson would realize that the reception of this principle was endangered by the "exceptional" institution of slavery. Some twenty years before his pivotal "Self-Reliance," however, we can document Emerson's attention to slavery, particularly in his 1821 Bowdoin Prize Dissertation essay at Harvard, titled "The Present State of Ethical Philosophy," and in his Wide World 8 journal from late 1822. As all great ideas are tested by time and experience, hopefully strengthened through the crucible of specific forces, this issue helped transform—indeed, extend—the practical application of the doctrine of self-reliance for Emerson.

As is known, the Concord sage refused to speak out on the issue of slavery for many years, in large part because of his trust in the principle of "moral suasion" imparted by Channing. A man sensitive to imprisonment philosophically, Emerson came to realize that the principle of self-reliance is meaningless if society maintains a constitutional and legal interpretation of inferiority regarding the status of some of its citizens. His own personal and philosophical evolution occurred specifically when Emerson appreciated the difference between types of prisons, and is documented most clearly in the recently available "Lecture on Slavery" (1855) in *Emerson's Antislavery Writings*, edited by Len Gougeon and Joel Myerson (Yale, 1995).

Emerson believed that we were each confirmed in far deeper, metaphorical prisons which in turn informed the conspiring structures within society. However, slavery presented Emerson with a visible form of *literal* enslavement. In short, when he appreciated the difference between internal and external prisons, between those of the soul and mind and those of the body, Emerson better understood his duty to address the prisons in which others were held, not just those in which he felt compelled to do time. His greatness was to realize and then promote the inextricable connection between self-reliance and duty as companion and guiding principles on the path to finding oneself—and helping others find themselves, too.



The Thoreau Institute: Emersonian Horizons

New Home for Emerson Society Archives: Thoreau Institute Dedicated

Spectacular late-spring weather marked the 5 June 1998 Grand Opening of the Thoreau Institute in Lincoln, Mass. Featured speakers at the gala event included President Bill Clinton, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, U. S. Senators Edward M. Kennedy and John F. Kerry, Institute executive director Kathi Anderson, founder Don Henley, and other leaders in education, civil rights, science, literary scholarship, and the arts.

The Thoreau Institute is the culmination of an eight-year campaign led by Grammy Award-winning musician Henley and the Walden Woods Project (WWP) to save tracts of historic land threatened with commercial development. A joint endeavor of WWP and the Thoreau Society, the Institute is a comprehensive educational center for the study of Thoreau and other Concord writers, with special focus on ecology, human rights, and other issues of importance to Thoreau. The Institute comprises a research library boasting the world's leading collection of materials by and about Thoreau; an electronically accessible media center; and programs for students of all ages, teachers, scholars, and the public.

The Institute now also houses the Collection of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, which includes monographs, offprints, maps, and Society business records, as well as handbooks, notes, and other items used by scholars in preparing various editions of writings by Emerson. This collection, started with gifts of books by renowned Emerson scholars Ralph H. Orth and Merton M. Sealts, Jr., has recently been augmented with 115 more books from Professor Sealts.

Emersonians present at the opening festivities included Margaret Emerson Bancroft and Roger L. Gregg of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association; Dave Ganoe, a volunteer for the opening; and scholars Larry Buell and John McAleer, as well as Ron Bosco, Bob Galvin, Wes Mott, and Joel Myerson, who are also members of the Thoreau Society Board of Directors.

—WESLEY T. MOTT
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Emerson Concordance Now Online

The Web site at the new Thoreau Institute in Lincoln, Massachusetts, now offers (searchable) HTML files of Eugene Irey's 9.2 million-word concordance of Emerson's Collected Essays (Edward Emerson's edition [see following article]). The address is www.walden.org/emerson/Concordance. Electronic searches of this concordance can be performed from www.walden.org/site_navigation/SSSearch. The Thoreau Institute had downloaded the material from www.colorado.edu /ArtsSciences/CCRH/Emerson/emerson.html, which features twenty-eight Adobe PostScript files containing 5,513 singlespaced, double-columned pages of text. Another 15,000 or so pages of concordance prepared by Irey of Emerson's Early Lectures and Emerson's Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks are said to be available in paper form, and the Thoreau Institute is interested in readying that additional material for Web presentation.

—Bradley P. Dean Director, Thoreau Institute Media Center



The platform party for the Grand Opening, from left, Kathi Anderson, Senator Kerry, Don Henley, President Clinton, Hillary Rodham Clinton, and Senator Kennedy.



President Clinton greets guests following ceremony

Gene Irey and His Concordance

Eugene Floyd Irey (6 August 1912–26 December 1985) was a serious reader of Emerson's works. "Gene," as everyone called him, received his B.A., M.Educ., and M.A. from the University of Colorado and his Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of Minnesota in 1951. His dissertation is entitled "A Social History of Leadville, Colorado, During the Boom Days, 1877-1881." After his service at the Spartan School of Aeronautics in Tulsa, Oklahoma, during World War II, Gene became a faculty member in the English department at the University of Colorado.

In 1962, shortly after the publication of the first two volumes of The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Gene decided that a concordance to Emerson's Works would be invaluable to anyone seriously interested in understanding Emerson's thinking. Although concordances are often understood as "word books," Gene understood them as bringing together the contexts in which words appear, and for him the contexts in which words were used were of greater importance than the words themselves. And so Gene bought stacks of slips of paper and set about experimenting with the first sentences of Wide World I to see what would be involved in making the kind of concordance he envisioned. This trial-and-error approach to concordance-making resulted at first in much repeated effort, but Gene soon settled upon what he thought would be the best kind of concordance for Emerson's Works. It took him three years to type all the slips for a concordance to that first volume and to sort them into alphabetical order. Years later he told me that typing the slips for a volume would take one year and that sorting would take another year. When I came to know Gene, he had huge filedrawers filled with his typed slips of paper.

When Gene was first introduced to what computers could generate—he was several years into his project—he was dissatisfied. Computer concordances typically include a fixed amount of text around each word, or the sentence or line in which the word appears, not always sufficient to identify clearly how the word is used or, more important to Gene, what idea is expressed in its context. Gene also wanted to assign the part of speech to every word, a difficult task for a computer.

The Center for Computer Research in the Humanities (CCRH) at the University of Colorado—CCRH was abolished in 1990—developed software to help Gene make the concordance but leave him in editorial control. This software interactively displayed each word in the text, with a substantial amount of context. Gene edited the context and assigned the part of speech to each word. The computer then sorted and formatted the concordance. Gene articulated his editorial practices in his "preface" to A Concordance to Five Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Nature," "The American Scholar," "The Divinity School Address," "Self-Reliance, "Fate" (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1981).

In working with Emerson's essays, Gene discovered that, when he edited one context of a word early in the essays and then, years later, edited another context of another occurrence of the same word near the end of the essays, he had not always been consistent. At the end of his life he was making corrections in his editing. He was also proofreading for typographical errors, etc. All of Gene's work must therefore be considered work-in-progress. His concordance to Emerson's essays, formatted for printing on paper, may be found at http://www.colorado.edu/ArtsSciences/CCRH/. This is virtually unsearchable by computer because it is "typeset."

The size of the concordance to Emerson's essays is daunting. Even formatted in two columns, the concordance occupies 5,372 pages. A list of the words in the concordance, with their frequencies, formatted in three columns, occupies another 139 pages. The concordance is broken down into letter sections; each letter begins a new page. The letter sections are stored as PostScript files, with the larger letter sections stored in two or three files. The files are compressed and each file sized to fit on a high-density (1.4MB) floppy disk.

In keeping with Gene's attitude toward academic research, I encourage anyone so inclined to build upon his work—to correct it, to add to it, to change it in ways that will further the systematic study of the Works of Emerson.

I would like to thank Margaret Bancroft and the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association for support in 1989-1990 towards the completion of this version of this concordance which we had intended to see into print. An earlier gift from Joseph Campbell, the mythologist, helped defray the cost of the transition from mainframe computing to a personal computer environment.

—MICHAEL J. PRESTON

University of Colorado at Boulder

Emerson Society Papers

Fall 1998

Gannett's Address

(Continued from page 1)

proper for me to repeat his wrds. you should hear none else fr. me this day. But it may not be.

Accept brethren our congratulations. We offer them in sincerity; and indeed we shd be less than this, less than men, if we did not sympathize in yr joy. The circumstances wh. have resulted in these solemnities, are remarkable. It is seldom permitted us to see more distinctly the hand of Providence in guiding the course of events. This you will gratefully acknowledge. You were not alone in the season of yr grief. It was painful to us to hear that our brother might no longer pursue that path of usefulness in wh. we had delighted to mark his steps. How bitter was yr disappointm. we needed not that yr wrds shd tell us. It was theref. with peculiar pleasure that we learnt concerning you, that you wd not be as sheep without a shepherd, but had found one whose duty & privilege it wd be to guide the wandering & bear the feeble into the fold of christ. May the favour wh. has been shown you not be withdrawn, but may it continue to direct you & him who in the virtue of his office shall go before you, to the gates of hvn, as unerringly as the visible sign of Jehovah conducted his chosen people of old & their leader to the land of promise; and whether it seem as a cloud or as a pillar of fire, may you always behold in it the glory of God-

Hear now this frds, the wrd of exhortation wh. is not offerd fr any consciousns of superiority in character or station, but in obedience to the apostolic example, we will not be negligent to put x x x you in remembrance of these thgs. tho ye know them, & be established in the present truth. In one wrd we exhort you to be faithful—faithful to our friend who is set over you in the ministry, faithful to yourselves, faithful to the cause of Christ.

To yr minister yield respect, confidence & love. These you owe him, for by soliciting him to sustain this relation, you have created in his mind the hope of recg. them. He will have many trials, more & heavier than you imagine, and he deserves, if he be faithful, all the satisfactions of wh. it is possible for you to make him the possessor. 'Despise not his youth' neither task his immature strength too much. Be not unreasonable, brethren. A minister is but a man & subject to like infirmities with other men. Do not be exorbitant in vr demands upon him at first. He cannot do everything at once. This not unusual for a people to be cruel even to <their> ↑a↓ minister in the early part of his labours. They are anxious to hear & to see him & as if they forgot that he, like other beings cd only accomplish a certain amt of duty in a certain time they require of him what no mortal can perform—They complain if he do not visit them, & they complain that he does not write such sermons as no man can write, unless he is allowd to have time for study. I wd not palliate the guilt of indolence in a clergyman. I shd as soon think of excusing hypocrisy. But thro' the indulgence of a selfish affection, the members of a parish are sometimes ungenerous, and then are always eventually sufferers; for they either destroy the health of their minister, or force upon him a habit of hasty & crude composition. He must have time to read & to think, or both his sermons & his conversation will /want/lack/ substance. Do not deceive yrselves in regard to the effects wh. he will produce. These may not seem very great. I shd hope the appearance wd always fall below the reality. There are two classes of effects produced by the ministry, the one strike the senses, the other are reveald thro' improvet of character, the one are generally sudden & transient, the other gradual & permanent. I need not ask wh. are the most valuable.

Do not imagine that yr minister will relieve you of yr responsiblen, that he can work out yr salvation. He can do nothing for you unless you cooperate with him. He may pray with Elijah's fervour, & preach with the eloquence of Paul, 'spend & be spent' for you, & all in vain, if yr souls will not participate in his purpose. Listen to him with a sense of personal interest. Come to chh. & come to be benefitted. If you remain at home on Sunday, the preacher may as well repeat his multiplication table as the wrds of eternal life; or if when here, you divide yr time between sleep & wrldly calculation & captious criticism he had better for yr sakes address you in Arabic, for you cd. then plead in extenuation of yr conduct that he spoke in an unknown tongue.

Our friend shd be allowd to exercise an independent ministry.8 There is a tendency among us, I fear, to a disregard of this rule. The people are disposed to teach their ministers how he shall teach them, and if he speaks what he conceives to be the truth, without fear or favour, he incurs rebuke, his friends are offended, & he is styled impudent. A preacher may mistake vanity for independ. & pride for conscience; but he may also become timid, inconsistent & wretched thro' a desire to retain the esteem of his auditory. Let yr pastor use great plainness of speech & directness by his honesty. While you possess, & God forbid that you (shd) (ever) resign the right to judge how far they are correct he may claim the privilege of uttering his convictions. If he is too orthodox for yr taste you ought to respect the conscientious motives wh impel him to declare it; if he is too heterodox, you shd approve the courage wh he manifests in acknowledging it. If you cannot endure his doctrine or his manner, tell him so frankly, & let him find sympathy elsewhere. But while he is yr pastor, hinder him not in his duty. If I must choose between the condition or a slave in Algiers, & the servitude of a clergyman, who dares not speak lest he shd. startle or prejudice, give me the former. The mahometan taskmaster is less unjust than the Xtn parish.

Finally brethren 'esteem' yr pastor 'very highly in love for his work's sake'. Let him feel that he has in each of you a true friend. /Receive/ Welcome/ him /into/ to/ yr families, open to him yr hearts, permit him to share yr joys, invite him to assuage yr griefs. You can secure to him that best of earthly rewards, the conviction that he is honord for his fidelity in the most responsible departm. of social life, that his people love him bec. they know that he deserves their affections that they respect him, bec. he does his duty.

<Ag> ↑Again this, be faithful to yrselves. Remember that ve are called after a holy name. You have enjoyed & you will still enjoy great privileges. Let yr progress in <relig> \taghardrel{\text{holiness}} be commensurate; <of> ↑those to↓ whom much is committed, much will be required: Receive not the goodn of God in vain. Watch over yr characters as over a sacred trust. Be not weary in well-doing. By prayer, by self<discipl> ↑denial ↓, by effort & by perseverance, <&> save yr souls. Thro' the labour of faith & the patience of hope <pass> go on unto perfection, forgetting the thgs that are behind, & pressing after those wh. are before. <Be adorned with every grace of the Xtn character.> I < repeat> ↑extend↓ the remark wh. I made concerning yr participation in the services of this house. <Feel> Cultivate a sense of personal interest in relign. It is not eno. it is little, in our city, to <support> countenance or support <Xtn> rels. institutions, fr. wrldly policy wd teach <a man> ↑one↓ to do this. It is little to be a moral man. One must be this if he wd be respected in society.

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We must be sanctified in the heart, be spiritual in <code>\frac{1}{0}our^\rightharpoonup motives, pure & charitable in our feelings as well as <black labeless <code>\frac{1}{0} without reproach in our conduct. <Blameles It is not eno. to be blameless even in the eyes of men. The eye of omniscience <penetratess <code>\frac{1}{0} pierces all coverings, & penetrates to the inmost soul. Feel, oh feel the scrutiny of that eye & sin not agt God. Appropriate to yr own use the instructions of C. "The life wh. you now live in the flesh live by the faith of" <the Lor> him whose disciples ye are. Call no man master, and treat not yr master as if he were a man. 'Trust not a <code>general</code> truth wh. may be vain</code></code></code>

Barton's ¹⁰ New Year's Eve

To <thee> you—but rather for <thy> yr Saviours <& for yr own> sake. <Some evidence> ↑And for <thy> yr own,↓ some evidence attain

For you indeed he died, for you hath risen again'. Grieve not the holy spirit wh. is given you. Listen to the voice of Providence. Obey the <distant> feeblest whisper of conscience. 'Use all the means of <spiri> improvet that lie within yr reach, & defer not to an uncertain future what you know is present duty.' Rest not <till> fr. yr toil till you have obtained <a daily>, an <had> habitual experience of reln. Rest not till you have <heard> entered the gates of immortality. Be faithful in yr <relati> <domestic> \particle{private} relations. <Let home be hallowd then s> Let not the associations of the <dom> domestic hearth be divorced fr those of the Xtn altar. Avoid that sad mistake of making home the least sacred place on earth. There, if anywhere shd piety breathe its <h ha> influence over evry tone & look, there, if anywhere in the universe shd love be hallowd by devotion.

<Brethren> Finally, brethren be faithful to the cause of Christ. Be steady, consistent & practical advocates of what you deem to be the faith once delivd to the saints. You may hold doctrines wh. others condemn. Be not afraid of a name. 11 If it indicate yr faith, adopt it, if it does not, choose some one that does. If you are Unitarians let not the powers of the wrld deter you fr upholding Unit. Xty. You may do our universe good by indirect & incidental efforts, by living down falsehood, & living over prejudice. Upon vr conduct will depend in a great measure the judgt of others respecting yr opinions. If indeed the first be good, but—if the first be bad, they will not delay a moment to (/pronounce / draw / the inference that) the tree \(^{\text{is}}\) unsound. Let me remind you that it is of the utmost importance that you give a true \initiaty exhibition of Unitarianism in yr characters & lives. Show men that it is spiritual, lifting the soul above low pleasures, & the habits of sense. Let them see that it is practical, sanctifying by its presence all the relations of life. Let them witness its power in converting the sinner, and in guiding the penitent in the path of obedience. Let them behold its ability to satisfy the wants of man in life & in death. Let it be forced upon the notice of every one that religion with us is earnest & zealous. It has been asserted & repeated with apparent satisfaction that Unitm. has no fitter emblem than a palace of ice, wh. dissolves as soon as heat is introduced within its walls. The remark as Justin once said of an infidel objection to Xty. "has some malice, little wit, & no truth." You must establish its falsehood before the eyes of its propagators. Show them that the palace is made of materials that can endure alike the storms of passion fr without, & the glow of heaven's fire within, and that in simplicity of its architecture it at once affords a beautiful contrast to the edifices wh men have constructed with a worse than Gothic taste, & betrays the hand of a divine Builder.

Christn friends, forgive my prolixity. I have *omitted* many topics (the mention of wh) wd have been appropriate to the occasion. But to say more would be to task the patience of this audi-

ence too much. Brethren, the blessing of God be with you—with him who now devotes his strength to yr good—and with him whose strength has been exhausted in yr service. God grant that all the hopes of this day be fulfilled, and that the union & the joy wh. commence on earth be perfected thro' eternity.

End.

Int. Prayer–Dr. Pierce of Brookline Sermon–Mr. Ripley of Waltham Ords Prayer–Mr. Parkman of Boston Charge–Dr. Ripley of Concord Rt Hand–Mr. Frothingham of Boston Concluding Prayer–Mr. Upham of Salem¹²

Notes

- 1. The Complete Sermons of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. Albert J. von Frank et al., 4 vols. (Columbia: U of Missouri Press 1989-92). See especially David Robinson's "Historical Introduction" (pp. 13-15) to volume one of that collection and his Apostle of Culture (Philadelphia: U of Penn. Press, 1982) for the most complete accounts of the ordination.
- 2. Ralph Waldo Emerson: His Life, Writings, and Philosophy (Boston: Osgood, 1882), p. 26. Cooke notes that Ripley's sermon "appealed to the memories of the young man's distinguished ancestors." He quotes approximately twelve lines from the sermon. The work appears never to have been published, and my own search through the fourteen boxes of manuscript material at the Houghton Library (bMS AM 1835 and 1835.1) and the Samuel Ripley, Ezra Ripley, Pierce, Parkman, Frothingham, and Upham materials (all participants in the service) at various libraries (Andover-Harvard Theological, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston Public Library, and others) has yielded neither Ripley's sermon nor any other text of the day's proceedings except this address.
- 3. The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson (NY: Columbia, 1949), p. 137. Rusk quotes a line and notes that Gannett's caution to the congregation not to judge Emerson too harshly should he appear too heterodox seems "prophetic."
- 4. Boller, Paul F., Jr. American Transcendentalism. 1830-1860 (NY: Putnam, 1974), p. 22. See William Gannett, Ezra Stiles Gannett: Unitarian Minister in Boston (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1875). For a detailed discussion of Gannett's conflict with Theodore Parker, see Alfred G. Litton's "Speaking the Truth In Love": A History of the Christian Examiner and Its Relationship to Transcendentalism" (diss. U of South Carolina, 1993).
- 5. The manuscript is located in the Gannett Papers of the Houghton Library (bMS AM 1888.5 [16]).
- 6. Gannett's marginal note: "At Kingston & at Concord." He apparently reused portions of the work later.
- 7. Gannett's heading across top of page: "This whole page at Kingston & at Concord N. H."
- 8. Marginal note: "At Kingston."
- 9. Marginal note: "At Kingston & at Concord."
- 10. Gannett seems, with these words "Barton's" and "New Year's Eve," to be indicating either the source of this quotation or that he had delivered these lines at another occasion. The former seems more likely, but I have found no publication with "Barton's New Year's Eve" in the title.
- 11. Marginal note: "At Concord N.H."
- 12. Other speakers during the ceremony also included Josiah Pierce of Brookline, Samuel Ripley of Waltham, Francis Parkman of Boston, Ezra Ripley of Concord, N.L. Frothingham of Boston, and Charles Upham of Salem. Gannett's address would have been delivered just prior to the concluding prayer. Second Church Records (see Appendix A in *Complete Sermons*, Volume 4 [pp. 287–89]) list more than forty other ministers who attended the service.

I would like to thank the Houghton Library at Harvard University for permission to publish this manuscript.

An Emerson Bibliography, 1997

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New editions and critical studies from 1997, including items missed in the 1996 bibliography (ESP 8, ii [1997]:5-6). Readers should also consult the periodic Thoreau bibliographies by Thomas S. Harris in the Thoreau Society Bulletin.

Adams, Kimberly VanEsveld. "Feminine Godhead, Feminist Symbol: The Madonna in George Eliot, Ludwig Feuerbach, Anna Jameson, and Margaret Fuller." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 12 [1996]:41-70. [Fuller's use of the Madonna image.]

Addison, Elizabeth. "Obedience and Algebra: From Listening to Language in Emerson's Response to Mary Rotch." *ESQ* 42:153-94. [The influence of Mary Rotch's Quaker doctrines on Emerson.]

Albrecht, James M. "The Sun Were Insipid, If the Universe Were Not Opaque": The Ethics of Action, Power, and Belief in Emerson, Nietzsche, and James." *ESQ* 43:113-58. [Nietzsche and William James as important intellectual heirs of Emerson.]

Avallone, Charlene. "The Red Roots of White Feminism in Margaret Fuller's Writings." *Doing Feminism: Teaching and Research in the Academy*. Ed. Mary Anderson, Lisa Fine, Kathleen Geissler and Joyce R. Ladenson. Michigan State University Women's Studies Program. Pp. 135-64. [The influence of Native American culture on Fuller's feminism.]

Avallone, Charlene. "What American Renaissance? The Gendered Genealogy of a Critical Discourse." *PMLA* 112:1102-1120. [Critique of the concept of a "renaissance" in nineteenth-century American literature.]

Baker, Dorothy Z. "Excising the Text, Exorcising the Author: Margaret Fuller's Summer on the Lakes, in 1843." In Her Own Voice: Nineteenth-Century American Women Essayists. Ed. Sherry Lee Linkon. Garland. Pp. 97-112. [Arthur B. Fuller's abridged edition of Summer on the Lakes and Fuller's reputation in the nineteenth-century.]

Bauer, Ralph. "Against the European Grain: The Emerson-Nietzsche Connection in Europe, 1920-1990." *ESQ* 43:69-93. [The history of scholarly work in Europe that uncovered Nietzsche's reading of Emerson.]

Bean, Judith Mattson. "Conversation as Rhetoric in Margaret Fuller's Woman in the Nineteenth Century." In Her Own Voice: Nineteenth-Century American Women Essayists. Ed. Sherry Lee Linkon. Garland. Pp. 27-40. [The development and implications of Fuller's conversational style.]

Bosco, Ronald A. "His Lectures Were Poetry, His Teaching the Music of the Spheres: Annie Adams Fields and Francis Greenwood Peabody on Emerson's 'Natural History of the Intellect' University Lectures at Harvard in 1870." *HLB* n.s. 8:1-79. [Reception of Emerson's late lectures.]

Bosco, Ronald A. "The 'Somewhat Spheral and Infinite' in Every Man: Emerson's Theory of Biography." *Emersonian Circles: Essays in Honor of Joel Myerson*. Ed. Wesley T. Mott and Robert E. Burkholder. Rochester. Pp. 67-103. [The development of Emerson's biographical theory and method, with particular attention to his later work.]

Bosco, Ronald A. "Twelve Ungathered Poems by Franklin B. Sanborn (1831-1917)." *CS* 5:113-31. [Poems by this early historian of Transcendentalism, with an assessment of their place in his career.]

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Branch, Michael P. "'Angel guiding gently': The Yosemite Meeting of Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Muir, 1871." *WAL* 32:127-49. [Emerson's relationship with Muir as reflected in their 1871 meeting and ensuing letters.]

Brown, Lee Rust. *The Emerson Museum*. Harvard. [The epistemological and social implications of Emerson's development of a form of thinking through classification, initiated in his visit to the Paris *Jardin des Plantes*.]

Buckley, J. F. Desire, The Self, The Social Critic: The Rise of Queer Performance within the Demise of Transcendentalism. Susquehanna. [Includes a chapter on Fuller's refiguration of transcendentalism as cultural criticism.]

Buell, Lawrence. "Emerson's Fate." *Emersonian Circles: Essays in Honor of Joel Myerson*. Ed. Wesley T. Mott and Robert E. Burkholder. Rochester. Pp.11-28. [The growing significance of "Fate" in the Emerson canon.]

Cadava, Eduardo. *Emerson and the Climates of History*. Stanford. [Emerson's rhetoric of nature and climate in his engagement with the politics of antislavery.]

Carlson, Larry A. "Emerson, Friendship, and the Problem of Alcott's 'Psyche." *Emersonian Circles: Essays in Honor of Joel Myerson.* Ed. Wesley T. Mott and Robert E. Burkholder. Rochester. Pp. 115-25. [Emerson's editing of Alcott's "Psyche" and their complicated friendship.]

Chevigny, Bell Gale. "Cheat Me [on] by No Illusion: Margaret Fuller's Cultural Critique and Its Legacies." *Intellectual History Newsletter* 19:59-68. [Fuller as a cultural reformer.]

Colacurcio, Michael J. Doctrine and Difference: Essays in the Literature of New England. Routledge. [Includes chapters on Emerson and George Herbert and on the Divinity School Address.]

Cole, Phyllis. "'Men and Women Conversing': The Emersons in 1837." *Emersonian Circles: Essays in Honor of Joel Myerson*. Ed. Wesley T. Mott and Robert E. Burkholder. Rochester. Pp. 127-59. [The conversation and dialogue in the Emerson household, centering on Lidian Emerson, Mary Moody Emerson, and Elizabeth Hoar.]

Collison, Gary. "Toward Democratic Vistas: Theodore Parker, Friendship, and Transcendentalism." *Emersonian Circles: Essays in Honor of Joel Myerson.* Ed. Wesley T. Mott and Robert E. Burkholder. Rochester. Pp. 161-80. [Parker's feeling of abandonment by Unitarian friends in the 1840s, and his decision to turn to the public lecture.]

Conant, James. "Emerson as Educator." *ESQ* 43:181-206. [The problem of the perfected self in Emerson and Nietzsche.]

Deese, Helen R. "A Liberal Education': Caroline Healey Dall and Emerson." *Emersonian Circles: Essays in Honor of Joel Myerson.* Ed. Wesley T. Mott and Robert E. Burkholder. Rochester. Pp. 237-60. [Dall's friendship with Emerson and her influence on his view of women's rights.]

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Field, Susan L. *The Romance of Desire: Emerson's Commitment to Incompletion*. Fairleigh Dickinson. [Emerson as a philosopher of process or incompletion, and its implications for cultural movements such as feminism.]

Friedl, Herwig. "Fate, Power, and History in Emerson and Nietzsche." *ESQ* 43:267-93. [Emerson and Nietzsche as initiators of a new era in Western philosophy, emphasizing Emerson's profound impact on Nietzsche.]

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Gatta, John. American Madonna: Images of the Divine Woman in Literary Culture. Oxford. [Includes a discussion of Fuller's use of mythical figures in self-fashioning.]

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Gordis, Lisa M. "Consecrating a Rebellion: Emerson's Divinity School *Address*, David Friedrich Strauss, and the Historical Jesus." *JUUH* 24:1-16. [Strauss's influence on Emerson's Christology.]

Gougeon, Len. "Emerson, Adin Ballou, and Reform." *ESP* 8,i:1-3. [Emerson's impression of a lecture by social reformer Adin Ballou.]

Gougeon, Len. "Emerson's Circle and the Crisis of the Civil War." *Emersonian Circles: Essays in Honor of Joel Myerson.* Ed. Wesley T. Mott and Robert E. Burkholder. Rochester. Pp. 29-51. [The reaction of Emerson and other New Englanders to the indifference of British intellectuals on the slavery issue.]

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Hurth, Elisabeth. "When 'Man Makes God': Feuerbachian Atheism in New England." *ESQ* 42 [1996]:255-89. [Feuerbach's impact on the sensitive question of atheism in New England liberal theology.]

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New England Reputation, 1834-36." *PAAS* 106, part 1 [1996]:165-89. [The growth of Carlyle's reputation through the circle of Emerson's friends and associates.]

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[Emerson's critical reception, focusing on his influence on four twentieth-century thinkers: William James, John Dewey, W. E. B. DuBois, and William Carlos Williams.]

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Packer, Barbara. "Turning to Emerson," Common Knowledge 5 [1996]:51-60. [Stanley Cavell's engagement with Emerson, and the importance of Emerson's "Fate."]

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