



R.W.E.

Volume 15, Number 1

Spring 2004

EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Getting to the Root of *Bush*: Nickname, Metaphor, and the Biblical "George Bush"

RICHARD HIGGINS
Concord, Massachusetts

Reading and researching Emerson in preparation for the recent bicentennial filled many gaps, corrected mistakes, and clarified at least some of the haze in my knowledge of this great American. But one puzzle that remained unsolved was how *Bush*, the Emerson House, got its name.

The consensus of the scholars and Emerson family members I asked was that it was either picked up from the Coolidges, which built the place, or that it was a sort of eccentric family nickname, somewhat like Emerson referring to Lydia as "Queenie," the origins of which (*Bush*, not *Queenie*, that is) were shrouded in mystery.

I did not find a definitive answer, but I can make a suggestion that I think is sound and probable. Emerson was writing *Nature* when, in July 1835, he bought the square, white, high-ceilinged Coolidge house on Cambridge Turnpike. In effect, Emerson named the place (although not right away) after the main idea in his manifesto in gestation: "*Bush*" refers to the burning bush through which God appears to man in Exodus 3.

This occurred to me on 25 May 2003, during the Emerson family birthday party and celebration of Emerson's legacy at *Bush* itself. I mentioned my interest in this dimly burning question to the folklorist, arts center director, and singer Dillon Bustin, who that day was performing his music set to Emerson's words. He pointed out the end of Emerson's poem "Good-bye," which Bustin had put to music. Emerson wrote it in 1824, then rewrote it in the 1830s, around the time of his Divinity School Address, and published it in 1839 in *The Western Messenger* (Rusk, 273, 495). It appears in *Poems* (1847).

*O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;
And when I am stretched beneath the pines
Where the evening star so holy shines,
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools, and the learned clan;
For what are they in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God may meet?*

Besides being a lovely condensation of Emerson's faith in intuition, the poem contains a strong hint of where and why *Bush* got its name. The last stanza is about a "sylvan home" (around which Emerson planted pines), and where he certainly took jibes at the learned clan. Emerson loved books, but he also loved the aeolian harp in the window of his study, through which the wind played the music of the ages.

The "bush" where God and man may meet in "Good-bye" is, of course, the burning bush that Moses saw, and so, I believe, is the *Bush* at 28 Cambridge Turnpike. Exodus 3 dramatizes a key Emersonian motif—how people apprehend the divine. Moses ascends Mount Horab, where he has a vision of a flaming bush and hears a voice. Moses perceives that the voice in the bush is not simply a local god or spirit, but the one eternal God. The bush, a humble, vegetative, and pervasive part of the physical world, discloses God.

Emerson bought the house he was to name *Bush* three years after leaving his ministerial vocation and while he was in the throes of writing *Nature*, the premise of which is that the physical world is the body of God's soul. *Nature* is, in Emerson's thought, God precipitated into form. (Hawthorne and many others since have said that Emerson composed *Nature* while living at the Old Manse, where he likely began it, but I am persuaded by John McAleer that much of the writing occurred between September 1835, when Emerson moved into *Bush*, and September 1836, when it was published.)

Emerson paid John T. Coolidge \$3,500 (even then a bargain price) for the house and two-acre lot, where he would live with Lydia for 47 years. The plain, white wooden home was called Coolidge House, and it is almost invariably described as solid but unpretentious. Emerson famously complained to his brother William (*Letters*, 2:447) that it was "a mean place" without the trees and gardens he would soon plant around it, and he vowed to cram it with books and friends, as he did.

Robert Richardson wrote that the new owners "deromanticized" the house by renaming it *Bush*, but they did not do so at first. There is no mention of the nickname *Bush* in Emerson's letters before the Civil War. Initially, the Emerson family more often called the place Coolidge Castle, apparently to poke fun at social pretension (either their own or that of the Coolidges). Only in Emerson's "later years" was *Bush* "a name used in the family for the Concord home," according to Rusk (*L*, 6:196). McAleer also wrote in his biography: "After some years, the Emersons, among themselves, referred to their house as *Bush*" (*McAleer*, 210).

I was then somewhat crestfallen, but also relieved, to learn that McAleer had discovered the burning bush connection before me. In *Days of Encounter*, he quoted the same stanza of "Good-bye," and concluded that the Emerson house indeed "became that sylvan home where he confronted the life of the spirit, truly meriting the name of *Bush*" (*ibid.*, 210).

(Continued on page 7)

2003 EMERSON SOCIETY PATRONS

Emerson Society members continue generously to join at various "patron" levels of membership. All donations above the \$10 annual regular membership go to support special programs of the Society. 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 Robert D. Habich, Secretary/Treasurer, Dept. of English, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306-0460.

Life Members

Barry Andrews
José C. Ballón
Ronald A. Bosco
Paul S. Christensen
Phyllis Cole
Roger L. Cole
Sterling F. Delano
Ellen Emerson
Mary H. Emerson
John Ford
Richard Lee Francis
Len Gougeon
Robert L. Hamilton
Don Henley
J. Parker Huber
Wesley T. Mott
Joel Myerson
Izumi Ogura
Barbara L. Packer
Wendell F. Refior
Robert D. Richardson, Jr.

Robert Nelson Riddick
Nancy Craig Simmons
Mary C. Wider
Douglas Emory Wilson

Sustaining Members

Margaret Emerson Bancroft
Alton L. Becker
Teresa Carson
Michael F. Crim
Rev. F. Jay Deacon
Sallee A. Engstrom
Ryoichi Fuji
Shoji Goto
Roger L. Gregg
Richard Grossman
Robert Habich
Robert N. Hudspeth
Richard A. Koster
Samuel K. Parish
David M. Robinson
Mark Stirling
Edward L. Tucker

Joe Waters
Sarah Ann Wider
Richard Wolf
Thomas Wortham

Contributing Members

Allen Hamilton Bates
Mark W. Bauerlein
Susan Belasco
August B. Black
Martha Casey
Anthony J. Castro
Kathleen M. Comer
Martha Coutant
Rev. Duane H. Cox
James Cummings
Meta Cushing
Bradley P. Dean
Helen R. Deese
Robert F. Donahue
Shirley Bradham Faile
Robert Flagg
Robert Galvin

T. Gregory Garvey
Richard G. Geldard
Robert A. Gross
Suzanne Hardin
Douglas Hill
Rosemary G. Hunter
Linck C. Johnson
John W. Kasius
Hideo Kawasumi
Harlan Ketterling
Quentin Kirk
David J. Lyttle
Ronald R. Michael
Jean Mudge
Michael Muir
Edith Murphy
Ralph Orth
Ashish Patel
Marilyn Peterson
Barbara Powell
Todd Richardson
Susan Roberson

John G. Rudy
Kenneth Sacks
Frank Shuffelton
Gayle L. Smith
Yoshio Takanashi
Joseph M. Thomas, Jr.
Roger Thompson
John Townsend
William Valentine
Gustaaf Van Cromphout
Paul Violante
A. E. P. (Ed) Wall
Laura Dassow Walls
Barbara Wojtusik

Other Donors

Margaret Emerson Bancroft
Alan Hodder
Jon D. Inners
Dieter Schulz

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: Jennifer Gurley
Editorial Assistants: Nik Waggener,
Sharon Chou, Binyam Tsegaye
Design and Production: Peggy Isaacson

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 Robert D. Habich, Dept. of English, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306-0460.

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 type-written 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 Jennifer Gurley, 31 Hamilton St., Hamilton, NY 13346.

EMERSON SOCIETY OFFICERS

President: Phyllis Cole (2005)
Penn State University-Delaware County
President-Elect: Sarah Ann Wider (2005)
Colgate University
Secretary/Treasurer: Robert D. Habich (2005)
Ball State University

ADVISORY BOARD

Elizabeth Addison (2004)
Western Carolina University
Susan Belasco (2006)
University of Nebraska
Roger L. Gregg
Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association
Linck C. Johnson (2006)
Colgate University
Wesley T. Mott (2005)
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Susan L. Roberson (2005)
Texas A&M University-Kingsville
Joseph M. Thomas, Jr. (2004)
Caldwell College
Roger Thompson (2005)
Virginia Military Institute
Douglas Emory Wilson (2005)
The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson

PROGRAM CHAIR

Elizabeth Addison (2005)
Western Carolina University

PROSPECTS.



American Literature Association

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society will present two panels on Thursday, 27 May, in San Francisco, Calif., at the fifteenth annual conference of the American Literature Association. Exact times are not yet available.

SESSION I

Emerson's Poetry: A Bicentennial View

CHAIR: Joseph M. Thomas (*Caldwell College*)

"Thinking about Emerson's Poetry," Paul Kane (*Vassar College*)

"The Hymn[s] the Brahmin Sings," Sandra Morris (*Bucknell University*)

"Reading Emerson's *Poems*: The Harvard Edition," Tom Wortham (*UCLA*)

SESSION II

Openings from Emerson

CHAIR: Elizabeth Addison (*Western Carolina University*)

"Emerson, Vocation, and the Problem of the Female Intellectual," Tiffany Wayne (*Stanford University*)

"Poetry without Fetters: Emerson in Other Forms," Sarah Ann Wider (*Colgate University*)

"Was the Concord Sage a Suffragist? Emerson, the Woman's Journal, and Reputation Formation in the Gilded Age," Todd H. Richardson (*University of Texas of the Permian Basin*)

The ALA conference will be held 27-30 May at the Hyatt Regency, 5 Embarcadero Center, San Francisco, CA 94111. The conference fee covers the costs of the conference including the opening and closing receptions; it does not include any food this year. Pre-registration (before 15 April) is \$75 (\$25 for graduate students, independent scholars, and retired faculty); after that date the cost increases by \$10 for each category.

The Hyatt Regency San Francisco will offer a conference rate of \$149 for a single or double room (triples are \$174). For reservations, call 1-800-233-1234 before 15 April and request the American Literature conference rate.

The official ALA travel agent is still TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS, which will attempt to negotiate discounted fares and which charges a small service fee. Their toll-free number is 888-293-9441.

For more information about the conference, check the ALA Web site (www.americanliterature.org).

Emerson Society in Concord

The sesquicentennial of the publication of *Walden* will be the focus of the 2004 Thoreau Society Annual Gathering in Concord, Mass. On Friday, 9 July, the Emerson Society—as its annual contribution to this great event—will present "Walking with Emerson at Walden," a lecture, with slides, by W. Barksdale Maynard, author of *Walden Pond: A History* (Oxford, 2004). For details on the Gathering, visit www.thoreausociety.org, or call the Thoreau Society at 978-369-5310.

MLA Program

The Thoreau Society is planning an Emerson-related session for the Modern Language Association convention in Philadelphia in December 2004. "The Emersons' Parlor and Mrs. Thoreau's Dinner Table" will explore Transcendentalists and transcendental contexts as represented by those who broke bread with the Emersons and/or the Thoreaus. For details, e-mail Professor Laura Dassow Walls at wallsl@lafayette.edu.

Emerson Sightings/Citings

John Hurley finds Emerson cited as the moving spirit behind the 1960s, in "Let's Rock," by Joshua Glenn (*Boston Globe*, 30 March 2003). Glenn's article begins: "In the latest issue of the Boston University-based classics journal *Arion*, the iconoclastic culture critic Camille Paglia says we have Ralph Waldo Emerson to thank for the great 'spiritual awakening' of the 1960s. In her essay 'Cults and Cosmic Consciousness,' Paglia writes that, like so many members of her own generation, the sage of Concord rejected the authority of his elders, grooved on the sacred texts of the East, and embraced 'a pagan pantheism.' But Emerson was too uptight to break on through to the other side. It was the American 1960s, claims Paglia, that 'completed' Emerson's Transcendentalism with its sex-, drugs-, and rock'n'roll-fueled quest for a 'new religious vision.'" Paglia, however, laments the failure of the 1960s to pass along a solid legacy. Glenn writes, "New Age thinking 'has smoothly adjusted to the stubborn persistence of the social structures that the sixties failed to budge.' What's worse, its 'soothing promises and feel-good therapies' induce 'a benevolent relaxation that may be disabling in a world of terrorism.' As George W. Bush should have said, 'Americans, let's rock.'"

Len Gougeon sends a lengthy "NYTimes.com" article—"After 25 Years, a Road Map for Diversity on Campus," by Jacques Steinberg (24 June 2003)—that concludes: "for supporters of affirmative action like Mr. [James O.] Freedman, the former Dartmouth president, yesterday was a day to celebrate the court's acknowledgement that students learn much from living and studying with a broad cross-section of classmates. Mr. Freedman said he traced the idea not only to Justice Powell but as far back as the 19th century, to a favorite quotation from Emerson. ¶ 'I pay the schoolmaster,' Emerson wrote, 'but 'tis the schoolboys that educate my son.'"

Joel Brattin notes a 10 November 2003 *New Yorker* ad for a 4 x 4-foot photograph of the World Trade Center towers—"Reflection WTC"—that employs this epigraph: "...the miracle of our being begins with reflection, ...the exercise of reason turns all our evil to good..." American Philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson."

Joel Myerson reports that on 16 December 2003 the Web site "GoogleDuel!" [www.sfu.ca/~gpeters/cgi-bin/pear/] yielded up the astonishing statistic that "there are 118,000 web references for Ralph Waldo Emerson but only 73,600 for Henry Thoreau." [By 31 January 2004, both authors' totals had slipped but the Sage of Concord had widened his lead over the Hermit of Walden, 114,000–66,800. As of 19 February 2004, Waldo still held a solid edge over Henry, 103,000–60,200.]

A Bibliography of "Emerson in 2003" in the Popular Media

Compiled by

MARGARET EMERSON BANCROFT, *Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association*

WESLEY T. MOTT, *Worcester Polytechnic Institute*

DAVID M. ROBINSON, *Oregon State University*

Ralph Waldo Emerson is a national icon, and the bicentennial of his birth was observed not only in scholarly conferences and in formal public events but throughout the popular print and electronic media as well. What follows is an initial listing of magazine, newspaper, TV, radio, and Internet items, as well as exhibit catalogs and musical premieres, submitted by friends and members of the Emerson Society. (All items are from 2003.) This feature will continue to appear in *ESP* as long as more pieces are identified.

An invitation: Please send any items we have missed to Wes Mott, *Emerson Society Papers*, Dept. of Humanities & Arts, WPI, Worcester, MA 01609-2280; wmott@wpi.edu. Be on the lookout also for different versions of entries already listed below—newspapers print syndicated articles under different titles, often with unique photos and local commentary. All contributors will be acknowledged. Please supply dates and section/page numbers if they are not visible. Bibliographical citations will appear in future issues of *ESP*, and originals and photocopies will be deposited in the Emerson Society Collections at the Thoreau Institute in Lincoln, Mass. Researchers during the tricentennial will be grateful for our efforts!

Almanac. *Scranton (Pa.) Sunday Times*, 25 May, p. A2: "In 1803, American essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson was born in Boston."

Anderson, Leslie. "Concord: Town throwing yearlong party for Emerson's 200th." *Boston Globe* (West edition) 19 January.

[Andrews, Barry M., et al.] *The Living Legacy of Ralph Waldo Emerson: An exhibit commissioned by the Emerson Bicentennial Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Association*. Catalog. Boston: UUA.

[Bancroft, Margaret Emerson.] *Ralph Waldo Emerson Bicentennial*. Illustrated commemorative booklet. Boston: Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association.

Beam, Alex. "Where's Waldo?" *Boston Globe*, 8 May, pp. D1, 8. [Snide commentary on the "transcendental electricity in the air."]

Bloom, Harold. "The Sage of Concord." *The Guardian* (UK), 24 May, pp. 4-6. [Cover illustration by Ian Tovey. Online at <http://ads.guardian.co.uk>]

Bolcom, William. Debut of *May-Day*, performed by the Emerson Choir under the direction of Beth Norton. Opening celebration of the Unitarian Universalist Association Emerson Bicentennial. Boston: First and Second Church, 7 March. Online at Web site listed under UUA below.

Bosco, Ronald A., and Joel Myerson. *Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Bicentennial Exhibition at Houghton Library of the Harvard College Library* [26 March - 7 June]. Catalog. Cambridge: Houghton Library.

Buell, Lawrence. "American sphinx: why Emerson's bicentennial is worth celebrating." *Boston Globe*, 25 May, pp. D1, 5.

_____. "The Infinitude of the Private Man: A bicentennial appreciation of Ralph Waldo Emerson." *Harvard Magazine* (May-June).

_____. Interviewed by Dick Gordon on topic "Self-Reliance" on "The Connection." WBUR (Boston National Public Radio), 26 May, 11-12 a.m. (rebroadcast 10-11 p.m.). [Syndicated on NPR]

Church, Forrest. "Emerson's Shadow." *UU World* 17 (March/April): 29-31.

CNN Headline News. "Ralph Waldo Emerson Essayist born in Boston on this date two hundred yrs ago" Kyron televised throughout 25 May.

Cohen, Adam. "It's Emerson's Anniversary and He's Got 21st Century America Nailed." *New York Times*, 4 May, Section 4, p. 12.

Collison, Gary. "Our Shakespeare and Our Luther: Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1803-1882." Unitarian Universalist Congregation of York, Pa., 6 July.

Friedel, Megan, and Rachel Wise. *Ralph Waldo Emerson and his Family* [Exhibit accompanying "'Spires of Form': The Emerson Bicentennial Conference," 25-26 April]. Brochure. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society.

Galvin, Rachel. "Ralph Waldo Emerson Turns 200—The Sage and the Self-Promoter." *Humanities* (National Endowment for the Humanities) 24 (May/June): 24-25. [The Emerson-Whitman "literary controversy"]

Gewertz, Ken. "Emerson: An abiding presence." *Harvard University Gazette*, 3 April.

Gorski, Elizabeth C. "In So Many Words": Crossword Puzzle. *New York Times Magazine*, 8 June, p. 112. [RWE is the "hidden subject."]

Gougeon, Len. Interviewed by Erika Funke on "Art Scene." WVIA (Scranton, Pa., NPR), 22 May, 11-12 a.m. (rebroadcast 25 May, 11-12 a.m., and on 26 and 29 June).

Grant, Steve. "Emerson Revisited: 200 Years After His Birth, Sage Of Concord Is Being Rediscovered." *Hartford Courant*, 8 July, pp. D1, 5. [Online at www.ctnow.com and syndicated as follows:]

- "In the footsteps of Emerson, the people's philosopher." *Seattle Times*, 30 July, p. F4. [Online at www.seattletimes.com]
- "At age 200: Concord is awash in Emerson." *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, 3 August, p. E-5.
- "Emerson going strong 200 years later: Fanfare continues to grow as writer's bicentennial nears." *Rock Hill [S.C.] Herald*, 3 August.
- "Emerson's work: still going strong." *Salem (Ore.) Statesman Journal*, 3 August.
- "At 200th birthday, Emerson boomlet is happening." *Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch*, 3 August.
- "Emerson going strong 200 years after his birth." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 4 August.
- "200 years after his birth, Emerson is still being celebrated." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, 5 August, p. E3.

- "Philosopher retains essence, relevance 200 years after birth." *Columbus [Ohio] Dispatch*, 17 August.
- "Literature lovers converge on Emerson's birthplace." *Corning [N.Y.] Leader*, 17 August.
- "200 years after his birth, Emerson continues to inspire readers." [Hillsboro, Ohio, paper].
- "At 200, Emerson continues to spark independent thought." *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 25 September.

Higgins, Richard J. "Emersoniana." *Smithsonian Magazine Online* (May). www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian/issues03/may03/emersoniana/html.

_____. "Emerson's Mirror." *UU World*, 17 (March/April): 22-28. [Cover and article illustrations by John T. Quinn III. Online at www.uuworld.org]

_____. "The great 'ennobler.'" *Boston Globe*, 23 May, p. A15.

Holtzman, Allan. *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Lectures in Baltimore* [Bicentennial exhibit, 5 June-30 September]. Brochure. Milton S. Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University.

Italie, Hillel. "Emerson Bicentennial: Ralph Waldo Emerson, the 'Sage of Concord' and leading American thinker, was born 200 years ago this spring." *Salem [Mass.] News*, 15 May. [Associated Press feature article appearing also as follows:]

- "The Sage of Concord: New England town remembers Ralph Waldo Emerson 200 years after birth." *Tulsa World*, 17 May, p. D4.
- "Remembering 'the Sage of Concord,' Ralph Waldo Emerson." *Worcester [Mass.] Sunday Telegram*, 18 May, p. L4.
- "Celebrating the birth of an 'endless seeker.'" *Baltimore Sun*, 25 May, p. 9F.
- "A way with words: In town that spawned many great writers, Ralph Waldo Emerson stands out." *Altoona [Pa.] Mirror*, 27 May, pp. D1, 3.
- Also in *Washington Post*, 25 May.

Johnstone, Ian. "A sage for all ages." *Sydney [Australia] Daily Telegraph*, 23 May, p. 101.

Lydon, Christopher. Web interviews:

- Harold Bloom
[<http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/lydon/2003/09/03#a293>]
- Cornel West
[<http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/lydon/2003/09/25#a339>]
- Audio version of salute to Emerson
[<http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/lydon/2003/07/01#a163>]

McClay, Wilfred M. "Emerson and Us: The American scholar as American preacher." *The Weekly Standard*, 8 (1 September). [Online at www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/003/038yubeb.asp]

McGroarty, Cynthia J. "Honoring Emerson's timelessness." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 4 May, Neighbors section, p. 3. [With photo of Phyllis Cole]

Mott, Wesley T., with Sharon Chou and Binyam Tsegaye. "Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Bicentennial Celebration / rwemerson@wpi." Gordon Library, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, October 2003-January 2004. An exhibit of "Emerson in 2003" artifacts and display about the publication of *Emerson Society Papers* at WPI.

"Museum celebrates Ralph Waldo Emerson's life, study." *Concord [Mass.] Journal* ("Concord-Carlisle Arts Scene"), 6 February.

Myerson, Joel. "Emerson's Philosophy and the Art of Music." Plenary paper, Cambridge Music Conference: Music and the Word ["Honouring the bicentenary of Ralph Waldo Emerson..."]. Cambridge, U.K., 8 August.

_____. *Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882): a bicentenary exhibition from the Joel Myerson Collection of Nineteenth-Century American Literature*. Catalog. Thomas Cooper Library, University of South Carolina.

O'Connell, Maureen. "Celebrate Emerson's birth." *Concord [Mass.] Journal*, 22 May, pp. 1, 34.

Philosophy Foundation (Waltham, Mass.). "Emerson and the Examined Life." Faneuil Hall, Boston, 28 June. Includes reading by Robert Pinsky and addresses by Richard Geldard and David M. Robinson. [Filmed by C-Span 2 and shown on www.BookTV.org, as well as www.wgbh.org/forum. See also www.faneuilhallforum.org/eatlife.html]

Porter, David H. [The Mail:] "Emerson's Music." *The New Yorker*, 18 and 25 May.

Robinson, David M. Interviewed by online magazine/Web page *Beliefnet*. [www.beliefnet.com/story/127/story_12742.html]

Rosenblum, Lauren. "Emerson's legacy in Baltimore." *Baltimore Sun*, 25 May, p. 9F.

"Sage of Concord turns 200." *Boston Globe* (editorial), 11 May.

Searle, Ryan. "Emerson's ideals are the past." *Boston Globe*, 1 June, p. D10. [Letter to the editor grateful for bicentennial coverage but lamenting the loss of self-reliance in our time]

Skempton, Howard. World premiere of *Music* by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Cambridge Music Conference: Music and the Word. Cambridge, U.K., 8 August.

_____. World premiere of *Song-cycle of Emerson's Poems: Music, Brahma, Pan & Xenophanes*. Cambridge Music Conference: Music and the Word. Cambridge, U.K., 7 August.

Slack, Donovan. "Meditating on a Transcendentalist." *Boston Globe*, 26 May.

Southwick, Albert B. "200 years later, Emerson still has much to offer us." *Worcester [Mass.] Sunday Telegram*, 25 May, p. C3.

Turner, Frederick. "Still Ahead of His Time." *Smithsonian* 34 (May): 107-111.

Unitarian Universalist Association. "Emerson Bicentennial: An Observance of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Birth of Ralph Waldo Emerson." Boston, 7 March. Includes remarks by the Rev. Stephen Kendrick, addresses by Wesley T. Mott, and David M. Robinson, and debut of *May-Day*, by William Bolcom (above). [Online at www.uua.org/aboutuu/emerson200/opening.html]

Updike, John. "Big Dead White Male: Ralph Waldo Emerson Turns Two Hundred." *The New Yorker* (4 August): 77-81.

Wilson, Leslie Perrin. *Emerson in Concord: An Exhibition in Celebration of the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Ralph Waldo Emerson* [5 March - 31 May]. Pamphlet. Concord, Mass.: Concord Free Public Library.

_____. Column "Historic Concord" (adapted from Concord Free Public Library exhibition text "Emerson in Concord"). *Concord [Mass.] Journal*, 6 March.

The following individuals contributed to this bibliography: Sarah Mott Alwardt, Barry Andrews, Joel Brattin, Clarence Burley, Phyllis Cole, Gary Collison, John Ford, Len Gougeon, Steve Grant, Edmund Hayes, Richard Higgins, Allan Holtzman, Robert Hudspeth, Ian Johnstone, Kent Ljungquist, Laura Menides, Nathaniel Mott, Joel Myerson, Barbara Packer, Sandy Petrulionis, Phyllis Porche, Patricia Samson, Lance Schachterle, Gayle Smith, Byrdie Thompson, Roger Thompson, Juliet Trofi.

Review

The Emerson Dilemma: Essays on Emerson and Social Reform.

T. GREGORY GARVEY, Editor. Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2001. xxxviii + 264 pages.

This collection of eleven essays provides an excellent survey of a recent major development in Emersonian scholarship and criticism: the conflict between Emerson the serene transcendentalist, preaching reform of the individual soul, and Emerson the social activist, working with others for the abolition of slavery, equal rights for women, and other worthy causes. Some of the contributors were already well known for their scholarly work in these areas; but all of them give us interesting and insightful studies of various aspects of Emerson's progress as a reformer.

The essays are arranged in four sections: "Emerson's Other Inner Life" (three essays), "Emerson and Women's Rights" (three), "Transitions in Antislavery" (three), and "Emerson's Thought and the Public Sphere" (two). To summarize each essay and criticize it as a whole would require more space than is available to me here; I shall address only one or two points in each that have sparked my interest.

Susan Roberson's "Reform and the Interior Landscape: Mapping Emerson's Political Sermons" makes a quite convincing case for the idea that Emerson's discussions of black slavery and the oppression of the Indians in his sermons of 1830-1831 were indirect reflections of his distress over his wife Ellen's rapidly failing health and approaching death. But whether he was aware of this relationship between his thought and his feelings, or the sermons were an unconscious sublimation of his inner conflict, is not determined with any certainty. Even though there may well have been such a relationship, I doubt whether its real nature can ever be decided.

T. Gregory Garvey, in "Emerson's Political Spirit and the Problem of Language," relates the shift in Emerson's approach to the problems of social reform to a shift in his theory of language: from the organic concept of language developed in *Nature* and the early essays to a more pragmatic view, found especially in *Representative Men*. Even the poet is not a universal man but a representative one; and his partiality symbolizes "the type of social relation that had kept Emerson out of reform activism and that he sought to overcome through his theory of the political spirit" (p. 28).

In "Emerson, Thoreau's Arrest, and the Trials of American Manhood," Linck C. Johnson shows that Emerson and Thoreau, in their March 1844 addresses at Amory Hall, agreed that reform was a matter for each individual, not for groups or "associations" each keyed to a single reformist cause. At that time, Thoreau was more strongly opposed to slavery than Emerson, refusing to pay his poll tax as a protest against it, and going to jail in 1846 as a result. But after that, Thoreau became increasingly individualistic and critical of reform movements, whereas Emerson moved in the opposite direction, supporting reformist groups that promoted anti-slavery and women's rights.

Phyllis Cole's "Pain and Protest in the Emerson Family" points out that the women of the family, especially Emerson's Aunt Mary Moody Emerson and his wife Lidian—as well as his brother Charles—were much more positive in their antislavery position than Emerson himself and had much to do in bringing him around to a stronger and more open advocacy for abolition. They also made some progress in converting him to women's rights, but never fully enough to satisfy them.

"'Pierced by the Thorns of Reform': Emerson on Womanhood" by Armida Gilbert shows that some modern scholars and critics of Emerson have misunderstood the extent of his support of the

women's rights movement. Like Margaret Fuller, Emerson believed in an essential difference between men and women, and at first he thought that most women—and all the best women—didn't really want the right to vote. However, he realized that it was for the women, not the men, to decide what they really wanted. And in time he came around to thinking that they *should* have the suffrage, whether or not they all exercised it. Most of the leaders of the movement recognized that he was basically on their side, and honored him as one of their heroes. But later this was often overlooked, and sometimes even misrepresented.

Jeffrey A. Steele's "The Limits of Political Sympathy: Emerson, Margaret Fuller, and Women's Rights" demonstrates that the shift in Emerson's position on women's suffrage between his early writings and his speech at the Boston Women's Rights Convention in 1855 was largely due to the influence of Margaret Fuller, though she had died in 1850. But though he now fully supported almost everything she had demanded (including "the exercise of the professions"), there was one profession to which he never agreed that they should be admitted—namely, the ministry, or the right to preach and interpret the Scriptures. He even, in the part of her *Memoir* that he wrote, downplayed her views on this subject, attributed them to her "occasional enthusiasm," and even dismissed them as "pagan" (p. 119).

In "Emerson, Slavery, and the Evolution of the Principle of Self-Reliance," Michael Stryck points out numerous expressions of Emerson's hatred of slavery in his earliest journals, the "Wide World" series (*JMN* 1 and 2). Thus, "it becomes clear that Emerson's inevitable [later] antislavery activity did not mark the beginnings of his evolution as an abolitionist, but was instead the evolution of the principle of self-reliance" (p. 141), in which self-reliance was merged with a sense of duty to help his fellow human beings.

Len Gougeon, in "Emerson's Abolition Conversion," suggests that the principal turning point in Emerson's decision to become more active in social reform, and especially in the abolition of slavery, was the research he did for his 1844 address "On the Emancipation of the Negroes in the West Indies." He had long hated the *idea* of slavery, but the *facts* of it had never come close to his personal experience; and he had thought that the way to eliminate it was for every individual to reform himself. Now, however, the intense course of reading he undertook in order to compose the address showed him what slavery was really like, and its bad effects not only on the slave but also on the slaveholder.

"Emerson, John Brown, and 'Doing the Word': The Enactment of Political Religion at Harpers Ferry, 1859" by Harold K. Bush contrasts Emerson's disapproval of Thoreau's arrest in 1846 with his strong support of John Brown's armed attack on civil authority thirteen years later. He glorified Brown as a Christian martyr, a champion of the Declaration of Independence and the Golden Rule; and he even saw him as "a new messiah who 'eclipses' all other incarnations of the American political religion" (p. 210).

David M. Robinson, in "Emerson's 'American Civilization': Emancipation and the National Destiny," analyzes the article (originally a speech) that Emerson published in *The Atlantic Monthly* for April 1862. The first half of this he included as "Civilization" in *Society and Solitude* (1870); it was an attempt to define what civilization is and should be. The second half showed why the conditions of life in the southern states (now, in 1862, the Confederate States of America) did not meet his definition and could not be considered "civilization" at all. This part was not reprinted in *Society and Solitude*, or again in Emerson's lifetime, perhaps because Emerson felt that the problem had been solved and that there was no need to open up old sores. (I will remark here that this second part will be included as an appendix in the forthcoming edition of *Society and Solitude* [CW7], so that readers who wish to study the two parts together may do so.) Robinson's analysis shows the importance of

the original essay in expressing Emerson's political philosophy and its relation to his views on slavery.

Finally, Stephen L. Esquith, in "Power, Poise, and Place: Toward an Emersonian Theory of Democratic Citizenship," shows how the Emersonian concept of democracy depends upon attention to power, poise, and place. I will not try to summarize what that concept of democracy is, and how it differs from other theories; Esquith's exposition is convincing and logical, but rather abstract. The part of his essay that I find most interesting is the section on poise, which I do not remember having seen discussed before. Poise, which Emerson recommends that we use in our political actions, "enables democratic citizens to engage ... in the pervasive power struggles that run through democratic politics without losing their balance" (p. 242). It is "a way of getting closer to the effects of power in order to see the potential for using it constructively as well as to understand its debilitating statist tendencies" (pp. 243-244). And it should "work as a form of resistance against the beguiling images of powerful experts and leaders" (p. 244). Truly, a virtue to be desired and pursued!

Getting to the Root of *Bush*

(Continued from page 1)

If this interpretation is correct, I would wager that Emerson's choice of nickname expressed a similar thought voiced by Henry David Thoreau. On 2 July 1840, Thoreau wrote that the burning bush is here and now (*Journal*, 1:3). "I am not taken up, like Moses, upon a mountain to learn the law, but lifted up in my seat here, in the warm sunshine and genial light," he wrote. (I cannot resist noting that within a year, Thoreau would board at Bush.)

My research was proceeding apace when I chanced upon an unusual coincidence, that of another Bush who was, at least occasionally, on Emerson's mind in those days. I refer to George Bush, the subject of Clarence Hotson's scholarly article of some 70 years ago, "George Bush: Teacher and Critic of Emerson." This Bush was a Swedenborgian minister and scripture professor who met Emerson at the 1838 Dartmouth College commencement. (Bush gave the Phi Beta Kappa Society oration, and Emerson a discourse before the Social Friends and United Fraternity.)

Now, they were very different, George Bush being more orthodox than Emerson, but they exchanged letters for a time, which are included in Rusk's collection of Emerson's letters. At one point Bush asked Emerson if he had really meant what he said in his Divinity School Address. Emerson was cordial in his reply (*L*, 2:156), seeming to wish to accent his Christian credentials by saying of the professor's work in producing a pamphlet on the Bible: "I love ... the grand old Book ... so dearly as to appreciate and revere all labor that goes to its elucidation."

But in a letter to Lydia from Hanover on 25 July 1838, right after the event (*L*, 2:146), Emerson was perhaps more frank. In a clairvoyant and truth-charged line that has received all too little

The whole collection strikes me as a first-rate exposition of the "dilemma" in Emerson's social thinking and the ways in which he tried to solve it. The volume does contain some factual errors and contradictions, however. For example, on pages 20 and 23 "The American Scholar" is placed a year after the Divinity School Address, instead of a year before it; on pages 144 and 167 (n. 7) "The Philosophy of History" lectures of 1836-1837 are incorrectly identified as Emerson's first series of public lectures, instead of the fourth. There are also a considerable number of typographical errors, some of which result in garbled titles or incorrect volume and page references. I shall mention only one: the last two sentences of note 46 on page 194 do not belong to that note; they refer to lines 2-4 on page 185, and should have formed a separate note between notes 58 and 59. But even with these minor flaws, the volume is one worth careful reading for all Emersonians.

—DOUGLAS EMORY WILSON
Anniston, Alabama

attention from scholars, Emerson complained: "Professor Bush was a little too biblical for me." It may not merit a scholarly monograph, but certainly today the line earns an exclamation point.

The professor was the only other bush (or Bush) of which I found mention in Emerson's writing. Given these choices, it is safe to assume that the house was named after what happened to Moses rather than after the Swedenborgian minister.

I realize that I am not making an airtight case. But, without other evidence, I am persuaded that Emerson believed that his house and its grounds in the rural town of Concord would be his Mount Horab on the Mill Brook. And this, in turn, has helped me to solve another mystery, which is why my grandmother always used to say, "a nickname in hand is worth two in the bush."

Books and Articles Cited

John McAleer, *Ralph Waldo Emerson, Days of Encounter* (Boston: Little Brown, 1984)

Robert Richardson Jr., *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1995)

Ralph L. Rusk, *The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: Scribner, 1949)

Ralph L. Rusk, ed., *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1939)

Clarence Hotson, "George Bush: Teacher and Critic of Emerson," *Philological Quarterly*, 10 (1932): 369-383

"Good-bye" from *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904) 9:3

Thoreau, *Journal*, ed. John Broderick (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1981)

IN MEMORIAM
John J. McAleer
 1923–2003

Our colleague and friend Professor John McAleer died at his Lexington home on 19 November 2003, after a long illness. A distinguished Emersonian and Thoreauvian and a scholar/teacher of American Transcendentalism, he had taught at Boston College for nearly fifty years. As my friend, colleague, and neighbor, his learning and his commitment to generations of students, to his beloved academic community, and to his parish church was always a shining example. And his valued involvement with Emerson Society events and affairs was a great gift to his associates.

John's major Emersonian work was, of course, his Pulitzer Prize-nominated *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Days of Encounter* as well as his essays on Emerson and Thoreau. But his rare biographical skills and the amazing range and variety of his interests are also evident in his notable books *Rex Stout: A Biography* and *Theodore Dreiser: An Introduction and Interpretation*.

He was also well recognized as a novelist for his *Unit Pride*, a Korean War story, and *Coign of Vantage: The Boston Athenaeum Murders*, a thriller that showed off his considerable gifts as a student and practitioner of the mystery genre. At the time of his death he was nearing completion of what was surely to be a major biographical study of Jane Austen.

At Boston College John taught a remarkable variety of courses—from surveys of American Literature, to offerings in “American Transcendentalism,” “Literary Boston,” and “Novels of the Sea.” He was continually designing new courses to enrich our curriculum.

As my professional associate from Harvard Graduate School days, where we received the Ph.D. in English, to our Boston College careers into a new century, John was the complete professional. As my Lexington friend and neighbor, he was a model husband, father, and grandfather. I have rich memories of his kindness and generosity.

—John L. Mahoney



COURTESY BOSTON COLLEGE

Emerson Exploited

The following letter, dated 16 February 2004, was received by Joel Myerson.

Dear Emerson Lovers—

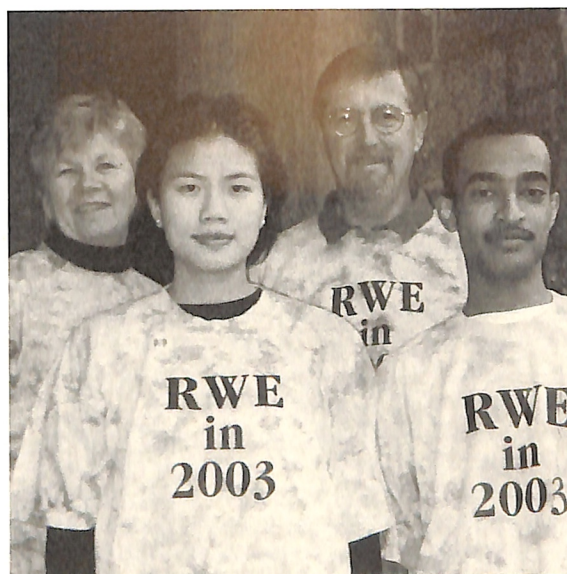
Please be informed that a hotel has been built in the Catskill Mountains of New York State by Dean Gitter of Crossroads Ventures. It is named “The Emerson” and capitalizes grossly on the reputation of R.W. Emerson in advertising brochures. Mr. Gitter is regarded widely as a greedy, ruthless developer. His new project, the proposed “Belleayre Resort at Catskill Park,” would clear-cut over 500 pristine wilderness acres of mountaintop in the center of protected watershed lands of New York. There is enormous opposition to this plan regionally, and it is suspected to be a front for casino gambling.

Mr. Gitter is in the process of renaming his unsuccessful “Catskill Corners” (a shopping mall adjacent to “The Emerson” hotel) to “Emerson Place,” a crass distortion of everything R.W. Emerson stood for. (This spot once sported a billboard-sized image of sacred Buddhist eyes, until the nearby Zen Monastery sued him and had it removed.)

While I do not suggest you sue for the good name of Emerson, perhaps you could spread the word about Mr. Gitter's shameless exploitation of Emerson's reputation, and ask your members to support our efforts to stop the Belleayre Resort from being built.

Please visit www.friendsofcatkillpark.org for more information.

Sincerely,
 Dave Channon



Greetings from the staff of ESP—
 front, editorial assistants Sharon Chou and Binyam Tsegaye
 (missing from photo, Nik Waggener); back, production
 designer Peggy Isaacson and managing editor Wes Mott.