



R.W.E.

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Emerson in Albany, New York

NEIL B. YETWIN
Schenectady, New York

On 10 December 1833, a group of distinguished citizens of Albany, New York, organized the "Young Men's Association," based upon the Young Men's Christian Association begun just four years earlier in England. The stated mission of the Association was to establish and maintain a library and reading room, sponsor lectures in the arts and sciences, host debates, and encourage "other means of promoting moral and intellectual development." Within a short time its leadership was able to claim the "support of the best men and women of Albany," with early membership exceeding 750 persons.¹ At first the Association drew its presenters from a pool of local academics and clergymen, but as its membership and reputation grew so did its ability to attract better known speakers, among them Ralph Waldo Emerson. Between 1849 and 1869 sizeable audiences gathered to experience "the phenomenon of Ralph Waldo Emerson—outstanding lecturer of his age," at each of his eight known appearances in Albany.²

Plans for Emerson's first public appearance in Albany were drawn up in a 28 September 1848 letter from Emerson to M. W. Lamoureaux, Chairman of the Young Men's Association. That first lecture took place on Friday evening, 11 January 1849, at the North Pearl Street Methodist Church. The Albany *Evening Journal* hailed Emerson's reading of "Instinct and Inspiration" as a resounding success, "if large audiences and unanimous applause are any proof of the fact." The reviewer described the lecture as "cool, penetrating, sagacious and witty. We all form preconceptions of a writer with whose works alone we are familiar, and these conceptions are always more or less incorrect. Many may have been disappointed, but we are sure that none were disappointed unpleasantly."³

Two weeks later Emerson spoke at Albany's First Presbyterian Church. The building's new facade was still under construction, but the Young Men's Association was confident that this would not deter people from attending.

"The reputation of the Lecturer, as well as the subject he has chosen," announced the Association in the *Evening Journal*, "will undoubtedly secure a full house." Emerson delivered "The Spirit of the Times" on the evening of 26 January, remained in Albany for two more days, and arrived back in Boston by the 29th.⁴

Nearly one year later, on 2 January 1850, Emerson informed his brother that he was "expecting to go to Albany next week...." J.N. Cutler, Recording Secretary for the Young Men's Association, anticipated an overflow crowd for Emerson's return and felt it necessary to announce in the *Evening Journal* that his organization had hired for this event "a competent person to attend the door...with directions to admit no person who has not a regular ticket. Members of the Association having its interest at heart, will at once see the propriety of co-operating with the committee in the enforcement of this salutary rule."⁵ The paper announced on 10 January 1850 that "Emmerson [sic] the embodiment of American transcendentalism, delivers the lecture to-night." The address, given at the North Methodist Church, was supposed to have been "The Spirit of the Times" but was changed instead to "Instinct and Inspiration" from his series *Natural History of Intellect*. Emerson had worked on the series since April 1848 and drew lecture material from it during 1849-1850. He remained in Albany for several days before continuing his lecture tour through Buffalo, Sandusky, Cincinnati, and on to St. Louis.⁶

Emerson had likely left the city when a sharply critical review of his 10 January lecture appeared in the 15 January *Evening Journal*. The reviewer, identifying himself only as "X," called Emerson's remarks "carelessly made" and wrote that the lecturer "flatters himself, if he supposes that it is the novelty of his views which gives offence: it is their untruth." "X" called Emerson's admirers "those unsettled and perturbed spirits, who are ready to embrace the first

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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.

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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

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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 interim editor, Wesley T. Mott, Department of Humanities & Arts, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609-2280.

Review copies of books on Emerson should be sent to book review editor Jennifer Gurley, Department of English, Le Moyne College, 1419 Salt Springs Road, Syracuse, NY 13214-1399.

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PROSPECTS.



American Literature Association

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society will present two panels in Boston, Mass., during the sixteenth annual conference of the American Literature Association, which will be held 26-29 May. Both panels are on Friday, the 27th, at 8 and 11, with our annual business meeting to follow at 12:30.

SESSION I

Reconsidering *The Conduct of Life*

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

"‘There is Always a Best Way of Doing Everything’: Power, Wealth, and Force in *The Conduct of Life*," John Buley, Jr., (*Managing Director, J.P. Morgan Chase*)

"Considerations by the Way," Richard Geldard (*Independent Scholar*)

"Silence, Truth-Telling, and Realism in Emerson's 'Worship,'" Elizabeth Addison (*Western Carolina University*)

"Instinct, Will, and the Genesis of *The Conduct of Life*," David M. Robinson (*Oregon State University*)

SESSION II

Emersonian Dilemmas: Individual and Community

CHAIR: Elizabeth Addison (*Western Carolina University*)

"From Emerson to Dewey: Rethinking Individualism and Community," James Albrecht (*Pacific Lutheran University*)

"‘Spontaneous in Every Human Being’: Elizabeth Peabody's 'Social Principle' in a Context of Emersonian Individualism," Megan Marshall (*Biographer*)

"Emerson's Politics of Reluctance," Jennifer Gurley (*LeMoyne College*)

Graduate Student Award: "Emerson: The Private Man as Democratic Citizen," Leslie Eckel (*Yale University*)

The ALA conference will be held at the Westin Copley Place Hotel in Boston's Back Bay. The conference fee covers the costs of the conference including the opening and closing receptions; it does not include any food. Pre-registration (before 15 April) is \$75 (\$25 for graduate students, independent scholars, high school teachers, and retired faculty); after that date the cost increases by \$10 for each category.

The Westin Copley Place will offer a conference rate of \$149 for a single or double room (triples are \$174). Call Westin Central Reservations (1-800-WESTIN-1) or the Westin Copley Place Boston Reservations Department (617-262-9600) before 15 April and request the American Literature conference rate.

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

Concord 2005 Call for Papers:

Emerson, Thoreau, and *Leaves of Grass*

The Emerson Society celebrates the 150th anniversary of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* as we consider the reactions of Emerson and Thoreau to Whitman and his to them. In relation to the 2005 Annual Gathering theme, "Thoreau: Nature, Science, and Higher Laws," proposals might look at attitudes toward technology, biographical connections, aesthetic parallels, transcendental experiences of nature, contradictory views of the human body, or intuitions of unity. In a letter to H.G.O. Blake after reading the 1856 edition, Thoreau frets about the sensuality in some of the poems. Late in life, Whitman said he agreed with Thoreau in his estimate of "an abstraction about man" but not of "the concrete man." Does Emerson engender, mediate, or illuminate these differences? We welcome any approach to issues these suggest. Send proposals of 200-300 words to Elizabeth Addison (addison@email.wcu.edu) or Joseph Thomas (jthomas@caldwell.edu).

Emerson and the Super Bowl

Bill Belichick, coach of the 2005 Super Bowl Champion New England Patriots, can attribute his success to traits he shares with Ralph Waldo Emerson. So argues Hugh Carter Donahue in an article published four days before Emerson's home team won their third title in four years ("They didn't even play football," *Boston Globe*, 2 February 2005). According to Donahue, Belichick and his Super Bowl opponent, Philadelphia Eagles coach Andy Reid, embody qualities of cultural icons from the places represented by their respective teams. Reid, the case goes, arrived in Philadelphia a seasoned and well-traveled coach—much as Benjamin Franklin arrived in the same city a "journeyman printer"—and exemplifies empiricism and "dogged devotion to work." Belichick exhibits Emersonian "resourcefulness and self-reliance...through his constant, creative adaptation." "Avoiding a 'foolish consistency,'" he employs a flexible strategy that keeps his opponents off guard, and he fosters self-reliance in his staff and players by delegating authority. High fives to Emerson for inspiring another gridiron triumph! (Is it any wonder that the legendary Woody Hayes preached Emersonian virtues to his Ohio State teams?) Thanks to Juliet Trofi for sending the article.

RWE.org

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Institute is pleased to announce the launch of a totally revised RWE.org. It is an updated, membership-based home for *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Based on XML encoding technology, the new site features new navigation, new searches, and new offerings. RWE.org seeks to provide students, teachers, scholars and general readers access to all the material published in the Centenary Edition of *The Complete Works*. In addition to texts of all the published work, including the poems, the site also provides complete searches of all content, through Google technology, plus the Irey Concordance to aid in accurate research.

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Institute is incorporated not-for-profit in the State of New York. Its mission is to promote to a global audience a greater understanding of and appreciation for the life and work of Ralph Waldo Emerson. The primary means of reaching this goal is through its Web site (www.rwe.org) and through the online and offline activities of the Institute. The Institute's affiliations with the Ralph Waldo Emerson Society and the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association help to further this mission. We are pleased to report that in the last nine months of 2004, RWE.org recorded over 130,000 unique visitors to its site from 82 different countries. These visitors logged into 2,300,000 pages of material. The new site hopes to exceed these statistics in 2005.

Emerson in the Concord Free Public Library (Continued)

LESLIE PERRIN WILSON

Curator of Special Collections, CFPL

The bicentennial of Ralph Waldo Emerson's birth in 2003 provided a natural opportunity for organizations and institutions within Concord and beyond to collaborate in celebrating the life and work of Concord's best-known resident. The planning and coordination of events invigorated all involved. "Emerson in Concord"—an exhibition drawing upon the holdings of the Concord Free Public Library Special Collections to suggest the various ways in which Emerson influenced the community of Concord and in which Concord in turn embraced him as its leading citizen—formed the Library's major contribution to the festivities. I was privileged to plan and execute this display—a responsibility that provided enormous professional and personal satisfaction. Ron Bosco and Joel Myerson spoke movingly at the official opening of "Emerson in Concord" on 21 March 2003.

Anniversary celebrations of important events are always exhilarating. But just as surely as they approach, so they inevitably also pass. At the end of May 2003, I dismantled the array of manuscripts, printed books, photographs, and ephemera in the exhibition and moved on to other projects and activities, the most pressing of them the packing and moving of the Special Collections to temporary headquarters in the Fowler Branch Library in West Concord to permit renovation and expansion of the Main Library building. Although the bicentennial is now behind us, however, promoting Emerson research and scholarship remains a priority for the Special Collections. We continue to devote significant thought, energy, and institutional resources to advancing Emerson scholarship through collection development, increase of access to holdings, interpretive outreach, and improvement of facilities.

Several years ago, I wrote an article titled "Emerson in the Concord Free Public Library," which appeared in the Spring 2001 issue of *ESP*. That piece provided an overview of the types of Emerson and Emerson-related materials the Library offers and how they fit together. This article, essentially a continuation of that, outlines the ways in which we are working to enhance the relevance and usefulness of the Special Collections to Emersonians.

Research collections must grow to sustain the long-term interest of scholars exploring multiple facets of a complex subject. Over the past few years, important manuscript, printed, and photographic materials of potential value for Emerson research and scholarship have been added to Library collections through both gift and purchase.

Some of you will remember that in 1999 Virginia Hoar Frecha—a great-granddaughter of Emerson's good friend Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar—presented the Concord Free Public Library with an outstanding collection of Hoar family papers, including unpublished letters from Emerson to E.R. Hoar and letters from Emerson's brothers Edward and Charles

to Samuel Hoar. In 2003, Mary Sherman Parsons—another great-granddaughter of E.R. Hoar—donated a second collection of Hoar papers, in which I was delighted to find a manuscript plan of property on Ampersand Pond in the Adirondacks purchased by E.R. Hoar for Adirondack Club use in 1859 (the year after the club's famous excursion to Follansbee Pond, Emerson's one and only Adirondack trip), as well as materials (including letters and a sketch by architect Hammatt Billings) relating to Concord's Soldiers' Monument, at the 1867 dedication of which Emerson spoke. In 1999, the New York Society Library deaccessioned and gave to the Concord Free Public Library a collection of 19th-century materials, among them "Memories of Concord," a manuscript lecture by Sarah Hosmer Lunt (a daughter of Concord farmer and Emerson friend Edmund Hosmer) containing anecdotal reminiscences about Emerson and other Concord worthies. Also, in 2001 Concord resident Anne Wanzer presented a letter written in 1918 by photographer Herbert Wendell Gleason to Edward Waldo Emerson.

Although the richest manuscript additions to the Special Collections have traditionally come to the Library as gifts, we purchase significant items as they become available and as funds permit. In 2001, I bought three Emerson letters regarding lecture engagements, in 2002 a cluster of letters by several members of Emerson's family (including daughter Ellen and son Edward), and in 2004 a letter written in 1792 by Emerson's father, William, in acceptance of his invitation to the ministry in Harvard, Massachusetts. Moreover, I systematically purchase new Emerson books—editions of RWE's writings and books about him—for the Concord Authors Collection as they are published (and of course gratefully accept them when offered as gifts by their editors or authors).

We have also focused attention on the development of the Emerson section of the Concord Pamphlet Collection, regularly gathering in articles, reprints, exhibition catalogs, pamphlets, and ephemera. Thinking ahead to the Emerson tricentennial in 2103, for instance, during planning for the bicentennial we saved items (invitations, programs, schedules of events, publicity fliers, and articles among them) for addition to our extensive pamphlet holdings.

Photographs form a major strength of the Special Collections. These days, Emerson and Emerson-related images not already represented among our holdings come along infrequently. Nevertheless, we lately added a fine "new" 19th-century cabinet card image of the Emerson House (a gift from artist Loring Coleman) to our photofile.

Important though the continuing acquisition of material is, even the most spectacular research collections are not fully useful for scholarship until they have been effectively organized, arranged, and described. Consequently, during the past

several years we have devoted many staff, intern, and volunteer hours to processing both new and long-held but previously unprocessed collections and also to revising finding aids for existing collections to incorporate recently acquired material when appropriate. Moreover, in response to the ever-greater reliance on the Internet by students and scholars, we have created electronic files for a number of existing finding aids and mounted them on the Web in HTML (HyperText Markup Language), edited finding aids already on the Web to reflect the addition of items to collections, and prepared new finding aids with Web presentation specifically in mind. This work will continue indefinitely. (To access our online finding aids, go to www.concordnet.org/library, then click to Special Collections, then to Finding Aids, then to the specific finding aid you wish to see.)

Sometimes surprising discoveries turn up during the processing of collections that have been in an archive for some time but have remained unprocessed. In 1990, through generous donations by a number of Concord residents, the Concord Free Public Library purchased from the Harvard (Massachusetts) Historical Society an extensive collection of Concord-related materials assembled by Winnifred L. Sturdy and bequeathed by Sturdy to the Society. Although inventoried, the collection was not completely processed until the fall of 2003, when I tackled the job. Many gems surfaced, including the manuscript list of subscribers for Lemuel Shattuck's 1835 *A History of the Town of Concord*. (As many of you know, Emerson relied heavily on the proof sheets for Shattuck's book in preparing his discourse for the September 1835 celebration of the bicentennial of Concord's incorporation, the manuscript of which is held by the Concord Free Public Library.) The subscription list shows that Emerson, who committed himself for ten copies, was the heaviest supporter of Shattuck's book—a fact that did not escape the notice of historian Robert A. Gross, who soon after the finding aid was completed consulted the Sturdy collection for information for his forthcoming book *The Transcendentalists and Their World*.

Over the past year, I updated the online finding aid for our Ralph Waldo Emerson papers, integrating into the collection the letters I recently purchased and two Emerson manuscript fragments from a 1995 gift by Concord resident and local historian Mary R. Fenn. I also processed and prepared a finding aid for our Edward Waldo Emerson papers, supervised a Simmons College intern in creating and describing a collection of Emerson family papers formed by combining new acquisitions and items long part of the old CFPL letter file, and guided another intern in processing and preparing a finding aid for the Parsons gift of Hoar papers.

In the months leading up to the Emerson bicentennial, Staff Assistant Joyce Woodman reworked the Emerson sequence of our extensive photofile, which includes images of Emerson, his family, and his home, and photographs of related manuscript and printed items and works of art among the Library's holdings. Her efforts form part of the ongoing

process of creating item-level descriptive access to the thousands of images in this heavily-used collection. Although the fruits of Joyce's work will not be available until the revamping of the entire file has been completed, this project will ultimately permit Emersonians more easily to identify images for research and publication.

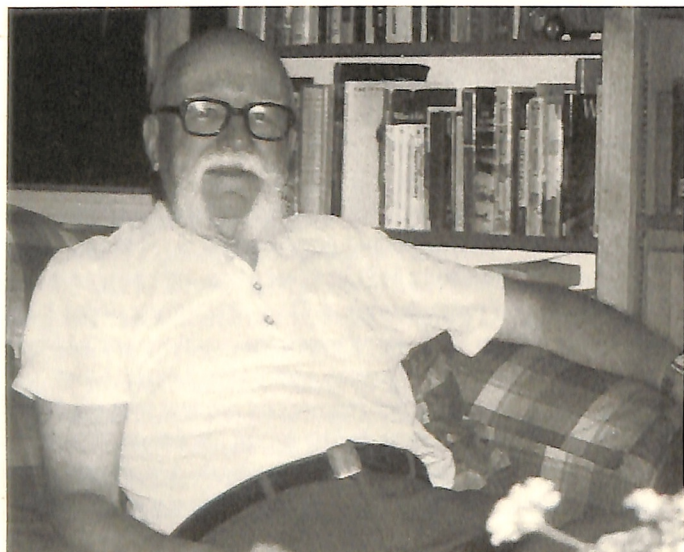
Since I became Curator in 1996, outreach has taken a progressively more important place among my duties. I confess that I hold a strong bias in favor of on-site interpretation—hands-on presentations, gallery exhibitions, formal and informal talks on the Library premises—as the most powerful means of engaging people with archival materials. I love doing "show-and-tells" for classes and organizations—there is usually at least one person in any group for whom exposure to primary documentation is a new experience and whose excitement is palpable. I greatly enjoyed presenting a selection of 19th-century materials—Emerson holdings among them—to one of Kenneth Sacks's Brown University literature classes in September of 2003, for example, and always look forward to the annual January visit by students from Calvin College. Nothing conveys a sense of the process of authorship in the 19th century like direct contact with manuscript treasures.

Nevertheless, I recognize that the Internet is now the most effective tool for introducing research collections to multiple audiences and for providing the interpretive context necessary to understand why an archive is important. For this reason, once the exhibition "Emerson in Concord" was installed in the Library art gallery in March of 2003, I collaborated with Concord Free Public Library Technical Services Associate and Webmaster Robert Hall to create a permanent online version of the display. The feedback from viewers has been gratifying. I am particularly pleased to know that some of you who teach direct your students to it. I encourage those who haven't already done so to explore it for its teaching applications. (The display is accessible at www.concordnet.org/library, then click to Special Collections, then to Exhibits, then to Emerson Exhibit.)

I believe that the best adaptation of the Internet to archival purposes lies not in the wholesale scanning of documents but rather in the intelligent integration of human and technical capabilities. With that in mind, I expect that within the next few years we will design and mount additional Emerson-related interpretive presentations on the Library's Web pages.

Finally, in 2003 and 2004 the Library Corporation undertook major construction to enlarge and upgrade the 129 Main Street building. This project—largely privately funded—has enhanced the research experience of all Library users, Emersonians included. The expanded and improved Special Collections space—now named the William Munroe Special Collections in memory of the Library's founding benefactor—is far more pleasant and efficient than our old cramped quarters. The new reading room is nearly three times larger than the old, well lit, and equipped with spacious reading tables,

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Doug Wilson in 1994

Douglas Wilson was certainly the most august member of the group of Emersonians who spent August in Cambridge reading in the Houghton, dining together in local restaurants, and then reading together in the living room so quietly that the Snow House mice came out to inspect our shoes. I soon learned that the scrupulousness that made him a fierce textual editor never relaxed, for when I mailed him a copy of my *Emerson's Fall* in autumn 1982, he sent back by return mail a friendly thank-you letter accompanied by a list of fourteen misprints.

After the Snow House years ended, I saw Doug chiefly at meetings of the American Literature Association, but work on *The Conduct of Life* kept us in frequent touch by telephone. Though our conversations usually began with some reference to the edition, they soon wandered off into more general topics: his life in Anniston, where he wrote the newsletter for the Retired Officer's Club and served as treasurer when the local library held a book sale. He liked libraries of all kinds; one of the last letters he sent in July 2004 enclosed a photo of him presenting a copy of *The Conduct of Life* to the Jacksonville State University library in Alabama. He also listened eagerly to the Texaco Opera broadcasts, and woe to the caller who interrupted one of the operas—or worse, one of the Texaco Opera Quizzes held between acts. In the late summer he took a trip by car to visit friends and colleagues in the Northern states—a daunting loop of a thousand miles. When the ALA held its meetings on the West Coast he stopped off afterwards in Los Angeles to visit us, and I have one prized picture of him taken on our patio, smiling, holding his coffee cup and framed by scarlet bougainvillea.

He was always reading—books that were favorably reviewed in *The New Yorker*; books he remembered from the 1940s and happened to pick up again, classics of English or European literature that he'd read long ago and wanted to revisit. Last spring I asked him what he was reading and got the answer "Proust." When he'd finished with Proust he went

on to Stendahl, but *The Red and the Black* seemed trivial to him, and he had much more respect for *The Sleepwalkers*, by Hermann Broch (author of *The Death of Virgil*), which his son, Peter, had recommended to him. This devotion to literature made him an easy houseguest to entertain. No sooner had he stowed his suitcase in our guest room than he began inspecting our bookcases; several hours later he could be found in the living room still intently reading some book or magazine that had caught his eye.

When he was at our house last June we invited friends to have dinner with him. Some had been graduate students at Harvard, but none could claim—as Doug could—to have studied with Kittredge. Doug told the story of how Harvard's project to bestow some kind of advanced degree on Kittredge by giving him an oral examination collapsed when Kittredge asked: "Who would examine me?" Like his famous teacher, Doug had a curiosity about literature unwearied by a lifetime of exposure to it. —Barbara Packer

Sometime in July the telephone would ring. Doug, still in Alabama, at his son's in New Paltz, in Cambridge, or visiting one or another Emersonian, would ask if it would be convenient to come and see us in Oswego. Of course, it always was. His visits had a pattern that's probably familiar to all of his friends. He arrived with provisions for his breakfasts and laundry. We went booking. We had a glass or two of single-malt. He took us out to dinner. Usually we managed some small adventure, most notably a canoe trip four or five years ago, during the course of which Doug confided that he hadn't been in a canoe for over sixty years. Most of all, we talked about books—not just Emerson or his other abiding interest, Shakespeare. We always learned something important about our shared reading as we sat on the porch with Doug in the

DOUGLAS EMORY WILSON (1910–2005)

Doug Wilson led a remarkably long, varied, and productive life. He was a scholar, a military officer (retiring from the U.S. Army in 1970 as a Lieutenant Colonel), a neighborhood activist, and Textual Editor and General Editor of *The Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Details of his career are provided in Ron Bosco's tribute in *ESP* (8 [Fall 1997]: 1), published after Doug received the 1997 Ralph Waldo Emerson Society Distinguished Achievement Award. Here—in the newsletter Doug edited for its first fifteen years—representative Emersonians fondly remember him as editor, colleague, and friend.

late-summer sunshine. His conversation brought back to life long-ago reading pleasures—Powell's *Dance to the Music of Time* series comes to mind. He read our manuscripts, discussed our teaching and work with us, shared the concerns of our daughter and, most generously, of a series of pets about whom he was slightly dubious (despite their extravagant affection for him). For twenty-six years, Doug's visits brought back the fun and conversation at the Emerson editorial commune in Cambridge, where we first met him. Now we count ourselves fortunate to have been part of the honorary family that Doug created in his annual swings through the Northeast.

—David Hill and Sara Varhus

It was my privilege to work with Doug as his managing editor during the fifteen years he edited *Emerson Society Papers*. Twice a year I would send galleys from Worcester, Massachusetts, to Anniston, Alabama. And until the last issue he reviewed for press, Doug—the proverbial eagle-eyed editor—would catch last-minute errors that had eluded careful proofreading by editorial assistants and me. More than that, he taught me a lot about two editorial essentials: graceful expression and tact.

Like so many others, I got to know Doug socially when I was an Emerson editor at the Houghton Library and during American Literature Association conferences. Our home on Martha's Vineyard soon became a stop on his epic summer treks to the Northeast. Doug was preeminently a man of culture and taste. He was also utterly unpretentious and perfectly at ease in any environment. He was as progressive a thinker on social and political issues as anyone I knew. Yet Doug's Emersonian friends would chuckle at the astonished stares of those who didn't know him when he showed up at literary conferences wearing his politically incorrect polo shirt bearing

the logo of the U.S. Army Chemical Corps. On his first visit to the Vineyard some dozen years ago, it was hot, and we were all wilting indoors reading, dining, and conversing. When he saw us getting ready for the beach, Doug—who had neglected to bring a bathing suit—borrowed an old one of our son's. He joined in the fun, venturing waist-deep into rough seas. My enduring image of that visit is of Doug sitting in a beach chair reading a scholarly foreign-affairs journal, wearing that hot-pink surfer suit. —Wes Mott

Doug Wilson was a member of that band of Emerson stalwarts who used to gather at the Snow house in Cambridge every summer back in the 1970s and 1980s, occasions that one can only talk about with younger Emersonians with the prefatory comment "You don't know what you missed." He was the uncle of us all, the steady presence whose remarkable transformation from career army officer to premier textual scholar made him a welcome anomaly among all of us lifelong academic types. He was the antithesis of the conventional image of the military man, for it was impossible to imagine him barking orders while slapping a riding crop against his thigh à la Patton, but on the other hand there was a reserve, a deliberation, a coolness of judgment that evoked less flamboyant figures—Omar Bradley or George Marshall, say. To have a conversation with him about textual subtleties was to see the fineness of his mind in such matters, and no one ever questioned the judgment he displayed in his work on the volumes of the *Emerson Works* edition. In my files are all the letters Doug ever sent me, and when I heard of his death I read them all over because I wanted to hear his voice one last time. What a wonderfully precise yet elegant handwriting he had, with that one note of extravagance at the end, where the loop of the "g" in Doug swung out like a salute to say goodbye for now. And how clearly he expressed himself, always with an underlying courtesy and touches of wry wit! I'll miss those periodic letters, and the prospect of seeing him at conferences or at my house in those summer visits he used to make. Doug lived a long and useful life, and his place in Emerson studies is secure. As a military man he would surely want an appropriate sendoff to his next tour of duty. Perhaps, as someone who had been trained in the classical languages, he would appreciate my saying for all of us, Doug, Ave atque vale! —Ralph Orth

Note of Thanks

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Reviews

Emerson.

LAWRENCE BUELL. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003. 397 pp. \$29.95 cloth.

Love it or pan it, Lawrence Buell's *Emerson* is an event. No one concerned with Ralph Waldo Emerson and his legacy may be excused for ignoring this masterful, slowly boiled product of 36 years' labor that "reflects an adult lifetime of meditation and teaching" (6), and that happens also to remind us that academic writing, too, can be gorgeous. Buell's project, like most others published in Emerson's bicentennial year, assesses where we now find Emerson as it redirects our vision after two central claims that have needed making: 1. that Emerson was not primarily a nation-maker, but more a "writer-intellectual" (4) caught between expressing an American cultural—via an American literary—identity and maintaining his commitment to world literatures; and, 2. that Emerson's scholar, or, in modern colloquy, the "public intellectual" (an epithet that was born, as Buell claims, in 1987 but that applies in his view nicely to *Emerson* [9, 39–40]), has a duty actually to perform public works, even though Emerson himself never got quite clear on what that service should look like. Each of Buell's two moves is directed by a concept of what I will call cosmopolitanism, a term Buell uses in passing that I think describes this Emerson who in no sense wished to "speak to members only" (40).

We are introduced to *Emerson's* seven chapters by the assertion that we lose sight of "the most striking qualities of Emerson's work... when we yield too quickly to the temptation of casting him as epitomizing the values of nation or regional tribe, instead of conceiving him in tension between such a role and a more cosmopolitan sense of how a writer-intellectual should think and be" (4). In elaborating this fresh view Buell portrays Emerson across different modes, rather than developmental stages (though Chapter One does overview Emerson's career), of his work and life. Tensions rather than chronology organize this narrative, such that we discern the various poles between which Emerson swayed (individualist and communitarian, intellectual and activist, American and European, original and conventional, new and old) but for moments when genius halted and compelled him to utter a "self" differentiated from, because propelled by, such movement. We discover as a result an Emerson who maintained a relentlessly dialogical—neither a self- nor an other-absorbed (see Chapter Two's reading of "Self-Reliance")—bearing toward the world.

One expression of this comportment in *Emerson* is what Buell in effect calls a "global" mentality, a theme we are hearing more of now, especially in American studies, and a term that this book returns to repeatedly. For Emerson, "Americanness was less an object of concern than his participation in an international realm of great ideas, great books, great men" (272). Buell writes a rich reading list as he reviews Emerson's engagement with the well-known American figures, with the "transatlantics," otherwise known as the European romantics, (German) idealists, and sceptics, and with the classical texts of these European traditions. Buell also highlights the usually ignored and under-studied Asian sources of Emerson's thinking, among them Confucius, Vedanta, Sufi mysticism, and Persian, Buddhist, and Hindu scripture. Emerson is one of the first, we are told, to import Asian thought into America, and Buell's fourth chapter on "Religious Radicalisms," which discusses the details of Emerson's work with these texts as well as the subsequent reception of Emerson in Asia, should jump-start further work in these areas.

Buell further examines Emerson's relational thinking as the latter considered the "proper relation of the work of the 'scholar' to the work of the activist or 'reformer'" (269–70). Buell concludes, quoting Eduardo Cadava, that there "is no single form of political

engagement in Emerson" (269), largely, it seems, because "Emersonian Self-Reliance held that action must proceed from independently exercised judgment" (243) and one's private "impulse to speak out" rather than in mechanical response to the demands of some system or "the urgings of friends" (245). Though the bulk of this strain in Buell's argument appears in his book's sixth chapter, "Social Thought and Reform: Emerson and Abolition," it is carried almost throughout, and uniquely draws from Emerson's 1830s writings, and not only from his antislavery lectures of the 1840s and 1850s. Explained is Emerson's transformation in 1844 from antislavery philosopher to active abolitionist (251), and Buell's overall sense that it is the duty of the "intellectual" to, as he puts it, "intervene" in public affairs in a way that he or she sees fit. We are made importantly aware that Emerson believed, without wavering, that the thinker has a civic duty to act, that the self-reliant individual must give to his *polis*. What troubles me some is the continued reliance on the concept of "intervention," in Buell and elsewhere, that suggests an ethical positioning of the intellectual (mainly of those in academia) before the public as of a savior before the fallen: the intellectual's "duty" is to fix the rest of us. Emerson's scholar does have a special talent—namely, he can make "knowledge subserve thought" (8)—but Emerson did not wish to see any one type speaking above all others, insisting that it is the class that knows. Were that true, we'd have a nation supplied again with mere designated intellectuals. But perhaps Buell means more that the intellectual's job is to "jolt" (9) said public, like a Socratic gadfly, into engaging the forms of civic action at which he himself is not so skilled. Which renders the intellectual only one important citizen among others.

Above all, Buell gives us an Emerson who was not insular, but who had what Richard Pells, the American historian, calls "cosmopolitan impulses": "a curiosity about the world beyond both the academy and the United States" and the ability "to communicate with the public about the issues, national and international, that continue to affect us all" (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 20 June 2003, p. B9). Simply put, Emerson was curious about all things because he wanted to learn what makes any one of them possible—what they share and how they build one another. The universalizing (American) drive that has come to be associated with what we call globalism is not what he meant. For Buell's Emerson, self-knowledge is not self-absorption (though the book acknowledges how some might reasonably derive this view from Emerson), but self-awareness: the recognition of one's place in the world, in the cosmos. Know thyself means also know thy place. Self-knowledge, be it personal, regional, or national, is arrived at via interaction with something other than the self.

Buell's book itself is cosmopolitan, and widely appeals. John Updike would disagree, as a quick look at his testy reproof of *Emerson in The New York Times* ("Big Dead White Male," 4 August 2003) avows. Updike's core criticism is that "Buell rarely pitches his voice above classroom level"; from this he follows that academics somehow have packed up good democratic Emerson into an elite box that only professors may open, and who, when they do, use him in "shadowy" (Updike's word), closed-door conversation. Yet Emerson is hardly out of print, and if we so choose we can purchase him for little more than the cost of a candy bar (in Dover Thrift Edition). Whether we are academics or successful novelists or high school teachers or Emerson Society members or representatives from any other category of people who appreciate him, we cannot force our Emerson upon—nor can any one group keep theirs from—others. True democracy does not compel and closet, but inspires and opens. Buell likewise hopes that his book, as he tells us in its introduction, might "persuade" (6) others to read Emerson, who, as exemplary "anti-mentor" (the name he earns in the title of the book's closing chapter), encouraged "serious-minded people" of all kinds to "rise above themselves" as they came also to "desire to see others empowered to do the same" (334). Buell's text, like that of Emerson's,

unapologetically and very readably seeks itself in order to "inspire" (the book's last word) others.

—JENNIFER GURLEY
Le Moyne College

Emerson's Transcendental Etudes.

STANLEY CAVELL. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003. 362 pp. \$21.95 cloth.

Gathered from over thirty years of his academic career, Stanley Cavell's recent collection of essays explores Ralph Waldo Emerson's contribution as a thinker, within the practice of and beyond the tradition of American philosophy. In what sense might Emerson be considered, if at all, as ranking amongst original American philosophers? Perhaps this question begs the obvious for devout readers of Emerson, but it might help the reader who has little or no exposure to American philosophy to know that Cavell speaks to the "anonymous interlocutor," the aversive thinker who wrestles with an academy that privileges an impersonal "voice of reason"—a voice that has, historically, dismissed ironic, idiosyncratic, poetic, exuberant, and mystical expressions of knowledge as either nonsensical or undisciplined.

Indeed, Cavell's reading of Emerson underscores his aim to collapse the boundaries that have existed between philosophy and literature in the Anglo-American tradition. More specifically, he wants to free Anglo-American philosophy from its historic preoccupation with establishing epistemological certainty, namely, with demonstrating the conditions of true knowledge. To this end, Cavell draws upon his academic training in ordinary language philosophy—a tradition that dates back to Ludwig Wittgenstein and J. L. Austin—and suggests that philosophical problems are really problems about the misuse of language, and that the quest for certainty, and for a solution to skeptical doubt, ignores the truth of how people ordinarily speak and make claims about what they know. For Cavell, skeptical doubt is not a problem to be overcome; rather, it is an intrinsic part of our coming to know something, an indispensable ingredient in the discovery of each and every novel insight. And so Cavell takes Emerson as a model of this alternative way of philosophizing, one that keeps at the forefront individualistic and exuberant states of expression that concern ordinary ways of knowing that cannot be codified nor captured by a controlled, justifiable prose that suppresses emotions.

Rather than offer a systematic reading of the content of Emerson's thought, Cavell adopts from Emerson a way of reading texts. Such a style of reading, in Cavell's estimate, allows for philosophical and literary texts to be drawn into conversation. "I imagine such conjunctions express my relation to an Emerson text less as an object of interpretation than as a means of interpretation" (5), writes Cavell. Rather than feeling obligated to read through the entirety of Emerson's sentences before forming an opinion, Cavell prefers to read for "stunning moments," for the promptings of insight contained in each sentence, as if each functioned as a new topic sentence: "My procedure is that it leaves one the possibility that one may plausibly and profitably be stopped for thought at almost any word in Emerson's work" (4). The genius (a la Emerson) of embracing philosophy as a way of seeing and reading texts—rather than as an enterprise concerned with how we make justifiable assertions—is that the writer (and reader) is given greater license to play, indeed, to wander more freely beyond the confines of Emerson's texts, drawing (at whim) his insights into conversation with those of Descartes, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Dewey, Austin, and Wittgenstein, as well as those of literary artists such as Wordsworth, Poe, Henry James, and Shakespeare.

For Cavell, this model of interpreting across literary and philosophical lines finds expression in Emerson's "Self-Reliance." Specifically, it is Emerson's reference to Descartes's famous "cogito ergo sum" that leads Cavell to assert that, by extension, a self does

not exist without thinking. Recall Emerson's quip: "Man is timid and apologetic; he is no longer upright; he dares not say 'I think', 'I am', but quotes some saint or sage" (85). Self-reliance means thinking aversely by challenging any self-satisfied or uncritical understanding. Only in so doing can one attain a self—albeit momentarily—for "to have a self is always to be averse to one's attained self; to conform to the self is to relinquish it." This broaches the notion of Emersonian perfectionism, which calls for growth through aversive thinking and entails an acknowledging of friendship as an opportunity and source of provocation to think. One therefore honors the provocative spirit of the other as a way to become Self-Reliant. Philosophy, then, builds upon the ordinary—what people in fact say and share—such that its function is more akin to a prompting dialogue or, in Emerson's parlance, a provocation to think and return to one's authentic self.

What Cavell takes to be an intersection between ordinary language philosophy and Emerson's contribution to philosophy is a return to the ordinary, but with a renewed sense of the power to inspire and reinterpret what that ordinary means. Here Cavell adopts Freud's notion of "the uncanny," something ordinary and familiar, yet strange, and so in need of reinterpretation: If we succeed as aversive thinkers, we are never the same and so the encounter with the familiar is never precisely the same. This lack of consistency is to be honored, not merely accepted, as part of enacting the therapy of philosophy. Originally, it was Wittgenstein who referred to philosophy as a kind of therapy, as a way of returning to the ordinary by dispelling the obsession of searching for metaphysical absolutes behind our use of language.

Yet, a tension appears in Cavell's desire to bring Emerson's idiosyncratic and self-reliant prose into conformity with the aims of ordinary language philosophy, which argues that all meaning is derivative of the larger community of practitioners. In practicing such philosophy, questions about "who am I?" are subsumed into the larger question of context, or "Where am I?" This shift sheds light on one of Cavell's primary questions: "So the question Emerson's theory of reading and writing is designed to answer is not 'What does a text mean?' but rather 'How is it that a text we care about in a certain way invariably says more than its writer knows, so that writers and readers write and read beyond themselves?'" (95) From an ordinary language point of view, writer and reader write and read beyond themselves because the meaning of the words they use is not peculiar to their individual experiences. Emerson's brilliant aphoristic personal expressions, therefore, do not bear any unique and private meanings. Can one reconcile the emphasis on the unique, antinomian spirit of self-reliance with ordinary language philosophy and its claim that all meaning is determined through agreement among the practitioners of that language game? In other words, the argument against private language raises itself as a possible foil against the independent, anti-conformist voice of the exemplar who aspires to be Self-Reliant. Once again, how does one reconcile a call for aversive thinking when, in fact, descriptively speaking, all meaning is determined by usage within the larger social context?

Additionally, Cavell neglects the metaphysical and religious influences upon Emerson's thinking. These metaphysical influences seem to be at odds with the decidedly non-metaphysical aim of returning to the ordinary. One can point to the Platonic Idea of the Good that transcends the corrupt and mutable world of the senses, or Unitarianism's claim that we bear the likeness of God, and that at our deepest center the soul and God intersect. Likewise, this insight into an essential unity of all sentient beings might have its source in the religious epics (such as the Bhagavad-Gita) and treatises of the South Asian religions. Compare, for example, Emerson's claim "To believe in your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,—that is genius" with the great insight of the holy sages of the Upanishads "tat tvam asi" ("That you are"), namely, that your Atman (true Self) is really Brahman

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(God). Individualistic, personal expressions—if authentic and faithful to one's Self—ultimately reflect the intentions of the Universal Mind. One can just as easily read Emerson in light of more religious authors and the sacred texts of the world. Of course Cavell's method does not preclude the possibility of engaging in such cross-disciplinary readings. So why does he refrain from doing so? Perhaps, in his estimate, the return to the ordinary does not permit a route toward the metaphysical or theological. Yet, in religious texts of the Abrahamic and South Asian traditions, the ordinary is made sacred precisely in the act of turning inward and seeking Self-Reliance.

To reiterate, Cavell's self-reflexive and allusive style places the onus of interpretation upon the reader who must read, wrestle, and re-read in conjunction with his other essays, in order to realize that Cavell's philosophy is less a system or set of assertions and more a way of seeing that allows for the collapse of traditional boundaries between academic disciplines. The desire to emulate Emerson's wide range of human expressions leads the reader to ask what precisely Cavell intends from this or that particular juxtaposed reading of texts or insights. Without explicitly telling readers what he wants them to grasp—for that would be tantamount to conformity—Cavell leaves it to the reader to make up his or her own mind. This freedom, however, tends to opacify rather than illuminate. Cavell himself acknowledges his critics who suggest that his readings are self-indulgent, complicated, and need to be further "figured out" and "made plain." At its most optimistic, Cavell's style empowers us to become self-reliant readers. Yet it's more likely that his reliance on allusion betrays his ambition for returning to the ordinary and speaking in the spirit of Emersonian friendship.

—JOSEPH M. THOMETZ
San Francisco, California

A Year With Emerson.

RICHARD L. GROSSMAN. Boston: Godine Publishers, 2003. xvi + 231 pp. \$26.95 cloth.

In *A Year With Emerson*, Richard Grossman invites his readers to make Emerson a part of their everyday lives. Grossman prepares for his readers excerpts of poetry and prose culled from Emerson's letters, journals, speeches, and essays. The excerpts are organized into a calendar that offers a fragment of Emerson to read each day for a year. To longtime readers of Emerson, the book is an invitation to experience their favorite author in a new way. New readers will benefit from the biographical sketch Grossman provides in his preface, and from some of the contextual glosses that precede the excerpts. Although the book is designed to appeal both to experienced and new readers of Emerson, the ideal audience for Grossman's daybook is more likely the new lay reader, who, not possessing much prior knowledge of Emerson, would find Grossman's selections an easy place to start and thus be more open to Grossman's specific method of reading.

As an invitation to new readers to engage daily with Emerson's thought, it is fitting that the first three entries Grossman selects express some of the most democratic sentiments readers will find in the collection. Grossman has readers start the New Year with an excerpt from Emerson's "Boston Hymn." Presented with lines Emerson delivered celebrating the Emancipation Proclamation, "To-day unbind the captive/So only are ye unbound" (3), readers are asked to consider the meaning of American freedom. Only after freeing its slaves, this poem suggests, can America and its citizens consider themselves to be truly free. The second entry features Emerson's belief that everyone is entitled to, and contains within, an "active soul": "The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul. This every man is entitled to, this every man contains within

him, although in almost all men obstructed and unborn" (3). This belief in everyone's possession of an active soul, though "obstructed and unborn" in most, invites readers to consider another meaning of the freedom mentioned in the first entry—the restoration to the former slaves of their long denied right to an active soul. Moreover, the inclusiveness expressed by Emerson's claim that it is "genius" and not "the privilege of here and there a favorite" (4) that drives the soul's activity encourages lay readers to cultivate their minds, to free their souls from their obstructions. Lay readers are reminded by Emerson's words that they have as much right to nourish their minds as those professionals who are paid for their thoughts. The reading for January 3rd, in which Emerson observes that "there is no knowledge that is not valuable," that "every accomplishment, every natural or acquired talent, every piece of information is some time in request" (4), contributes to the feeling of inclusiveness first developed in the preceding entry. The effect of the third excerpt is to affirm the relevance of the knowledge and experience that each reader brings to his or her engagement with Emerson.

Although the first three pieces appear to be interrelated, Grossman's selection and ordering of the excerpts does not appear to be constrained by a single governing rule. Grossman reveals in his note to the reader two broad guidelines for his selection and ordering of entries. In keeping with the calendar format, Grossman has his audience reading some of the selections on the same date that Emerson wrote or delivered them. And because the book invited readers to engage with Emerson everyday for a year, one might expect Grossman to present nothing but inspiring examples of Emersonian wisdom. Indeed, most of Grossman's commentaries introducing the excerpts are effusive in their praise for the man and his writings. In one, Grossman calls Emerson "the incarnate example of 'Man Thinking'" (100), which is a great compliment to Emerson, who believes that such an embodiment is earned only by men who truly think.

Several selections—Emerson's observations about nature and the seasons in particular—are presented during the months when readers might experience the natural phenomena discussed. These guidelines can be seen as Grossman's attempt to reconcile his project with Emerson's warning, in "The American Scholar," against valuing "books as such," and "not as related to nature and the human constitution." Emerson teaches that the rightful purpose of books is to record the truths that result from a person's contemplation of his experience. He opposes to his ideal Man Thinking the "restorers of readings, the emendators, the bibliomaniacs of all degrees," who derive their truths solely from books rather than from their own lives. In reading Emersonian excerpts on the dates that they were first written, we are reminded that such readings did not originate in a timeless vacuum, but resulted from Emerson's reaction to the people and places around him. Emerson's compositions on the weather and the seasons, read when we are experiencing the same natural phenomena, become palpable records of Emerson's interaction with nature, rather than poetic pieces divorced from their natural subjects.

Grossman also presents those ideas of Emerson which would be popular with contemporary readers, such as Emerson's argument about racial inferiority being a social construction. Emerson writes, "You complain that the Negroes are a base class. Who makes and keeps the Jew or the Negro base, who but you, who exclude them from the rights which others enjoy?" (61). Lest readers believe Emerson to be a god, however, Grossman also scatters throughout his book the more unsavory traces of Emerson's thoughts on others. Of Native Americans, Emerson writes, "The dangers of the Indians are, that they are really savage, have poor small sterile heads—no thoughts" (205). Some of Emerson's writings about women would also not please today's female readers: "Each practical mistake that we add to our sins reacts on us, & spoils our tune & temper, steals away all our edge & manhood, & we are eunuchs & women" (14). The inclusion of Emerson's more unpopular ideas in this collection

is one of the book's strengths, for it demonstrates Grossman's attempt to present an honest picture of Emerson the man, one who cannot fully escape the prejudices of his own time and place. Grossman enables his contemporaries to decide for themselves whether or not to share his admiration for Emerson.

Readers would do well to consider *A Year With Emerson* as one man's record of his forty-year engagement with Emerson's works. Because the excerpts are removed from their original context, our reading is already mediated by Grossman's interpretation of Emerson. Grossman addresses this problem by including a list of additional reading for those who wish to study Emerson further. This list, however, might not comfort seasoned readers of Emerson who know his texts so well, and who perhaps will find distracting any unfamiliar meanings produced when Emerson's words are divorced from their original compositions. But novice readers looking to get a little Emerson into their lives without the commitment demanded by the complete essays could do worse than spend a year with Grossman.

—EMILIE ORTIGA
University of California at Berkeley

Emerson in the Concord Free Public Library

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Windsor chairs for researchers, and comfortable wing chairs for more casual visitors. It includes—for the first time—a staff work area for manuscript processing, exhibition preparation, and other space-consuming tasks. It also offers multiple public computer workstations and accommodates wireless laptops.

Shelving capacity in both the reading room and the vault has been greatly increased. Because we have gained hundreds of linear feet of shelf space, we have been able to bring several especially valuable parts of the Concord Authors Collection—including the fine Emerson collection of William Taylor Newton—downstairs. Secure, climate-controlled, and protected from fire, the facilities are also elegant. A selection of Library artwork and artifacts complement the décor. Moreover, we have permanent showcase space both in and near the Special Collections reading room for small exhibitions throughout the year.

Items from the Library art collection are now better displayed throughout the building. Substantive captions for all major pieces—David Scott's 1848 oil portrait of Emerson, Stillman's Philosophers' Camp, and French's bust from life and seated Emerson among them—provide significant context for curious viewers. Those of you who have been to the Library before will be interested to know that the only Library holding to remain in the building during the period of most invasive construction was the seated Emerson, which weathered the tumult of drilling, hammering, and falling debris within a protective wooden crate, and that steel supports to reinforce the load-bearing capacity of the floor beneath the statue were installed in the course of the project.

The Library, now fully climate-controlled, boasts comfortable conference and meeting areas for small groups—perhaps gatherings of the Emerson Society in Concord come July. But regardless of whether you have an immediate use for the facilities or a specific research purpose, I urge all of you who come to town to drop by for a look around.

The Concord Free Public Library is an old institution with established research collections and a tradition of service to the scholarly community. As we embrace the challenges of the 21st century, I cannot help but wonder what Emerson would have thought about the dramatic growth of the library he helped to dedicate in 1873. Acutely aware of flux as a constant in nature and in human life, he would, I suspect, likely have recognized the persistence of the ideals that informed the Library's establishment in our current efforts to ensure its continuing vitality. We are, after all, simply building on existing strengths.

Emerson in Albany, New York

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Notes

- 1 George R. Howell and Jonathan Tenney, *History of the County of Albany, N.Y., From 1609 to 1886* (New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., Publishers, 1886), 690. Cited hereafter as "Howell and Tenney."
- 2 John McAleer, *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Days of Encounter* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984), 493. Cited hereafter as "McAleer."
- 3 Ralph L. Rusk, ed., *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 4:114–115. Cited hereafter as *Letters*. See *Albany Evening Journal*, 11, 12 January 1849, p.3.
- 4 *Albany Evening Journal*, 26 January 1849, p.3. No review of this lecture is extant. See Howell and Tenney, 768. See *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, edited by William H. Gilman et al. 16 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960–82), 10:454–455. Cited hereafter as *JMN*.
- 5 *Letters* 4:174. See *Albany Evening Journal*, 8 January 1850, p.3.
- 6 *Albany Evening Journal*, 10 January 1850, p.3. See Robert D. Richardson, *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 449. Cited hereafter as "Richardson." Though not advertised by title, an extensive review of the 10 January address appeared in the *Albany Evening Journal*, 15 January 1850, p.3. The review quotes several passages from "Instinct and Inspiration." See *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1903–1904), 12:65–89. See *JMN* 11:204.
- 7 *Albany Evening Journal*, 15 January 1850, p.3.
- 8 McAleer, 494–503. See *Letters* 4:323–324. See *JMN* 11:532–535, 538–539; 13:506; 14:432, 457, 462.
- 9 *Letters* 5:123, 130–132.
- 10 *Albany Evening Journal*, 12, 13 January 1859, p.3. See *JMN* 14:466.
- 11 Carl Bode, ed., *The Portable Emerson* (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1987), xxxviii. See *JMN* 15:251, 270.
- 12 *JMN* 15:26. See *Letters* 5:300. See *Albany Morning Express*, 15 December 1862, p.2. When Thoreau stayed at the Delavan on 13 May 1861 en route to Niagara Falls, he wrote characteristically in his journal that the hotel was "not so good as costly." See *JMN* 10:448. See *The Journal of Henry David Thoreau*, edited by Bradford Torrey and Francis H. Allen (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906), 14:340.
- 13 *Albany Evening Journal*, 12 January 1865, p.3. See *JMN* 15:523–524, 526, 532.
- 14 *Albany Evening Journal*, 28 January 1869. See *JMN* 16:376, 383. This talk later became "Domestic Life," first used as a lecture in 1839 or 1840, but not published before 1860. See McAleer, 547.
- 15 *Albany Evening Journal*, 28 April 1882, p.2.
- 16 This was presumably the "Little Classic" edition, but it consisted of nine volumes in 1882, not seven.

Emerson in Albany, New York

(Continued from page 1)

error that presents itself, be it never so absurd. There are always those...who would be ready to fall down and worship LUCIFER, if he would present one of his plausible lies in a brilliant form." Emerson's glory, "X" predicted, "will be as transitory as his philosophy...—we venture to predict, that, in a few years, he will be remembered only as an erratic man who squandered a brilliant intellect." Like many of Emerson's critics, "X"'s primary objection to the lecturer was his view of organized religion and his questioning "the authority of the Sabbath, of the Priesthood, or of the Church." He was dismayed that Emerson classed Plato, Socrates, Confucius, and Jesus together. "The only deity he worships is PAN, the God of Nature." "X" warned that Emerson's emphasis on "instinct" threatened to undermine all that is good in ethics, metaphysics, and religion, and sought to leave mankind "to fall to the ground, or to float transcendently between Heaven and Earth...." As for the young person who would admire Emerson's philosophy, "Mr. Emerson would have him, like NARCISSUS, the beautiful youth, fall in love with himself." "X" went on to accuse Emerson of having "the supernatural cunning of an insane man.... We hazard it as the opinion of all sensible and intelligent persons who heard his lectures in this city, that it is the falsest, most inconsistent, egotistical and selfish, which the ingenious intellect, or the deceitful heart of man, ever devised."⁷

It may never be determined whether Emerson ever saw the review, or if he had, whether its hostile tone would have prevented his timely return to Albany. Whatever the reason, he did not lecture again in the city for nearly nine years. It is not known whether this was by his design or that of the Young Men's Association. Despite such reviews, however, Emerson's popularity continued to grow. His itinerary reached a new peak during his "Western Lecture Tour" of December–January 1852–53, which took him through Albany and on to Schenectady, Utica, Rochester, Buffalo, Sandusky, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and St. Louis. And he passed through Albany at least four more times during lecture tours from 1855 to 1858.⁸

Emerson's 22 October 1858 note informing William H. Fish that he was "to be at Albany on 13 Jan. [1859]" marked the end of his absence from the city. He confirmed this in a 10 January 1859 letter to Ellen Emerson saying that he would "be at Albany 13 (Care of Mercantile Lib. Assoc.)." After an 11 January lecture in Brooklyn, Emerson returned to Albany on the 13th.⁹

The Young Men's Association advertised Emerson's appearance in the 12 and 13 January editions of the *Evening Journal* informing readers that the lecture, "Town and Country," would likely be well attended. In what may have been a belated attempt to make up for its past harshness to Emerson, the *Evening Journal* described him as "the best type of a clever, crystallized intellect, unclogged by interfering physical conditions of any American author.... Emerson, to use a vulgar western figure of speech, dives deeper, stays down longer, and comes up drier than any other explorer of modern times." This was a far cry from the paper's previous depiction of Emerson as a corrupting influence bent upon the destruction of reason, religion, and innocent youth. The lecture was not reviewed and Emerson left Albany to speak at Auburn, Cortland, and Batavia.¹⁰ He continued to lecture throughout the North from 1862 through 1865, though the Civil War forced him to reduce the frequency of his appearances. He did pass through Albany en route to Chicago on 12 May 1862, just six days after delivering the eulogy at Thoreau's funeral.¹¹

Emerson wrote to Pastor Amory Dwight May of Albany's Unitarian Church on 12 November 1862, agreeing to lecture at its meeting room in Rechabite Hall on State Street. The 15 December

Albany *Evening Express* announced that Emerson would read "Perpetual Forces" before the Independent Lecture Association on that 26 December. On 24 December, Emerson informed Henry Burlingame, Chairman of the Association's Lecture Committee, that upon arrival he would be staying at the city's fashionable Delavan House.¹²

Emerson next returned to Albany on 12 January 1865 to present "Social Aims in America" at Tweddle Hall before continuing on to Dansville and Cleveland. He returned to the Hall later that year on 30 November to read "Resources," the *Evening Journal* assuring its readership that a large crowd would likely throng "to hear a lecturer of the intellectual power and force of Emerson...."¹³ Tweddle Hall was also the scene of Emerson's final appearance in Albany on 28 January 1869. The *Evening Journal* promised that the lecture "should command the attention and attendance of a large audience. The subject is well chosen, and the lecture deserving of our highest consideration." Arriving from Catskill, where he had lectured the night before, Emerson read "Hospitality and How to Make Homes Attractive." Unfortunately, no reviews of these last appearances made their way into the local press.¹⁴

The *Evening Journal* of Friday, 28 April 1882, carried an obituary for Emerson, stating that he "may claim the paramount position in the literary development of the country that is accorded to Washington in its political history." The paper also paid tribute to Emerson's rare intuition and compared his genius to that of Charles Darwin, who had died a few days earlier on 19 April. Emerson, the *Journal* declared, "has been the translator and interpreter to our people of the new power" of human perception and intuition that deals with "the intangible rules of our conduct and thought.... Although the creative genius is stopped, what it has accomplished remains as a source of power and inspiration." Many of Albany's citizens could still recall attending Emerson's lectures, and the *Journal* offered its readers this reminiscence.

Emerson's personal appearance was striking. His tall and slender form, with the slightly drooping shoulders of a student, bore a head, well formed and of great character. His nose was aquiline and large, chin prominent and eyes keen but generally preoccupied. The meagerness of his features and form were an outward evidence of the keenness and subtlety of his intellect. One was impressed by his appearance rather with his perfectly loyal nature than with the unusual brilliancy or tremendous intellectual power that were his.

And, in what may have been one final effort to compensate for its unflattering treatment of Emerson a generation earlier, the *Journal* pointed out that "for years Emerson was the subject of great differences of opinion in this country, many holding him to be a mere charlatan and word-juggler, and it is within the last ten years that his works have been even admitted to the libraries of many of the smaller orthodox colleges.... He succeeded in overcoming early prejudices against him" and "has exercised the strongest influence, extending generally beyond the world of opinion into the world of action."¹⁵ The paper concluded by recommending to readers the seven-volume edition of Emerson published by Osgood & Co., calling it "the best and most accessible."¹⁶ All in all, it was a fitting tribute to the memory of Ralph Waldo Emerson, once vilified but more commonly praised by those fortunate enough to have encountered him in Albany, New York.

(See Notes, page 11)