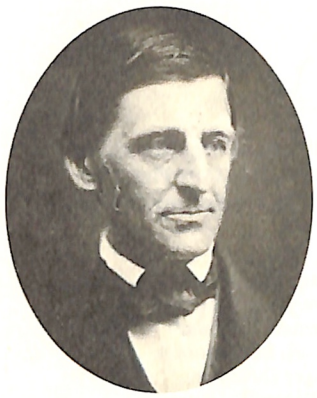


Volume 17, Number 1 Spring 2006

EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

# Emerson Land Gifted to West Wisconsin Land Trust

JACK AND COLLEEN HOLMBECK
*Rockford, Illinois*

Land previously owned by Ralph Waldo Emerson on the shore of Bass Lake in northwestern Wisconsin was given to the West Wisconsin Land Trust of Menomonie by Colleen and Jack Holmbeck of Rockford, Illinois, on 26 November 2005.

The Holmbecks had purchased Government Lot 5 in 1996 in order to prevent the planned development of over 1,400 front feet of shore on the small lake that Jack had fished for more than sixty years. This 43-acre lake still has only two permanent residences and no summer cottages. The Emerson land will now be protected in perpetuity by a conservation easement prohibiting any development even if the land is subsequently sold by the land trust.

On 31 May 1856, Emerson purchased a total of 129.12 acres of U.S. Government land near the town of Trade Lake, Burnett County, Wisconsin. For full payment he used Bounty Land Warrant 58140 issued under an act of Congress approved 3 March 1855. He had previously acquired this warrant from Elias Plimpton, who was granted the warrant for his service in the War of 1812. Although the price paid by Emerson is not known, it is likely that $500 cash paid "for investment" to Emerson's friend and attorney Horatio Woodman on 9 May 1856 was ultimately used to pay for the warrant. Both the warrant and the land purchase were recorded 10 September 1859. (On approximately the same dates, Woodman purchased an adjacent 160 acres also using a Bounty Land Warrant from the act of 1855. Woodman was a founder of both the Saturday Club and the Adirondac Club, whose members included Emerson, James Russell Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and other prominent business, government, and literary figures.)

Emerson continued to own this property until 9 March 1882, when he sold Lot 5 to Olof Johnson Ortendahl for $100. After Emerson's death on 27 April 1882, the heirs named in his will sold Lots 3 and 4 to Gustaf Hultquist on 8 November 1883 for $254.36. The remaining southwest quarter of the northeast quarter was also sold to Hultquist on 8 May 1892 for $100.

Why did Emerson invest in Wisconsin? Perhaps the most likely reason is the reason for most investments—the hope of making a profit.[1] Throughout the early 1800s "western land" was pretty much considered to be anything west of the Appalachian Mountains, and speculation was rampant. For example, it was estimated that "29,000,000 acres" in Wisconsin were "taken by speculators out of a total 38,000,000 sold from the entire public domain during the boom years 1835-37."[2]

A further indication of land frenzy was the interest in Bounty Land Warrants that were used by Emerson, Woodman, and others to pay for their land purchases. The Land Warrants (or land gifts) were originally issued to veterans of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and other conflicts as partial compensation for service since the government lacked funds to adequately pay its military personnel.[3] The acreage granted varied with the rank and length of service (minimum fourteen days) of the individual. Warrant holders could choose specific acreage from the vast eligible U.S. holdings and pay for it with the warrants, or they could sell the warrants to someone else who could do likewise. During the first half of the nineteenth century, these negotiable warrants were traded rather fiercely, and some were traded fraudulently.

Wisconsin had been a state for only eight years at the time of Emerson's purchase, and it was sparsely settled, particularly in the north. There were few or no roads in that area, and travel was mainly by boat, canoe, or horse. The railroads and logging companies were on their way, however, buying land and looking toward the riches to be had from the great Wisconsin pine forests.[4] It was in this atmosphere that Horatio Woodman encouraged Emerson to "invest in the west." Horatio's brother Cyrus was also in the thick of the action in Wisconsin representing canal, railroad, logging, mining, and banking interests. Cyrus and his law partner C. C. Washburn had personally accumulated more than 130,000 acres to become among the largest landholders in Wisconsin.[5]

*(Continued on page 11)*

## 2005 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
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

**Sustaining Members**

Margaret Emerson Bancroft
Teresa Carson
Rev. F. Jay Deacon
Sallee A. Engstrom
Ryoichi Fuji
Richard G. Geldard
Richard Grossman
Robert D. Habich
Robert N. Hudspeth
Linck Johnson
Kathleen Lawrence
Saundra Morris
Samuel K. Parish
David M. Robinson
Gayle L. Smith
Mark Stirling
Paula Trushin
Joe Waters
Sarah Ann Wider

**Contributing Members**

Allen Hamilton Bates
Susan Belasco
John W. Bergstrom
Clarence Burley
James Caramanna
Bonnie Carr
Martha Casey
Cynthia Cavanaugh
Kathleen M. Comer
Martha Coutant
Rev. Duane H. Cox
Meta Cushing
Bradley P. Dean
Helen R. Deese
Robert F. Donahue
Susan Field
Robert Flagg
Yoshiko Fujita
Cynthia Gero-Moore
Shoji Goto
Robert A. Gross
Ted Hollingsworth
John Holmbeck
Rosemary G. Hunter
Hideo Kawasumi
Harlan Ketterling
Waldo Lyon
David J. Lyttle
Merrill F. McLane
Sean R. Meehan
Jean McClure Mudge
Ralph H. Orth
Audrey Raden
Todd Richardson
Susan Roberson
John G. Rudy
Frank Shuffelton
Rev. Frank Schulman
Kazuaki Tanimura
Joseph M. Thomas Jr.
Roger Thompson
Catherine T. Thompson
William Valentine
Gustaaf Van Cromphout
A. E. P. (Ed) Wall
Laura Dassow Walls
Tiffany K. Wayne
Leslie Wilson
Richard Wolf
Neil B. Yetwin

**Other Donors**

Ryoichi Fuji
Eileen Hunter
Merrill F. McLane


EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

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

www.emersonsociety.org

Editor: Wesley T. Mott
Book Review Editor: Jennifer Gurley
Editorial Assistants:
Sharon Chou, Binyam Tsegaye, Larry Nelson Jr.
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, Department of English, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306-0460.

*ESP* welcomes notes and short articles (up to about 8 double-spaced, typed pages) on Emerson-related topics. Manuscripts are blind refereed. On matters of style, consult previous issues. We also 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 of Emersonian scholars. Send manuscripts to the editor, Wesley T. Mott, Department of Humanities & Arts, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609-2280, or email wmott@wpi.edu.

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.






ISSN 1050-4362



# PROSPECTS.

## American Literature Assocation Conference

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society will present two panels in San Francisco, Calif., during the seventeenth annual conference of the American Literature Association, which will be held 25-28 May 2006. Both sessions will be on Friday, 26 May, and our annual business meeting will follow the same day at 3:30 p.m..

**SESSION I** (8 a.m.)

**Emerson and Philosophy: A Roundtable Discussion**

CHAIR: Todd Richardson *(University of Texas-Permian Basin)*

"Emerson, Words, and Things: Personal Language and Impersonal Faith," Elizabeth Addison *(Western Carolina University)*

"Shall We Fancy Emerson a Philosopher?," Jim Bell *(Oberlin College)*

"Emerson and the Evolution of American Philosophy," Jennifer Bernstein *(The Citadel)*

"'A Sublime but Modest Empiricist,'" Kristin Boudreau *(University of Georgia)*

"The Availability of Philosophy in Emerson, Cavell, and Feminism," Susan L. Dunston *(New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology)*

"Radical Self-Reliance and the Limits of Democratic Faith," John S. Holzwarth *(Lewis & Clark College)*

**SESSION II** (2 p.m.)

**Emerson and Later 19th-Century Writers**

CHAIR: Joseph M. Thomas (Caldwell College)

"Nodding Over Emerson: Kate Chopin and the Relevance of Emersonian Trascendentalism in a Post-Romantic Age," William Moss *(Wake Forest University)*

"Emerson and the Gilded Age Utopia," Sophia Forster *(SUNY-Buffalo)*

"Emerson Iconography and the *Free Religious Index,*" Todd Richardson *(University of Texas-Permian Basin)*

"Emerson and Recovery: Post-Civil War Intellectual Culture," Jean Darcy *(Queensborough Community College)*

The ALA conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency San Francisco, In Embarcadero Center. The conference fee for those who pre-register 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. For more information about the conference, check the ALA Web site: www.americanliterature.org.

## Should Emerson Have Been Executed?

In an article about the Haymarket affair of 1886 entitled "The Terror Last Time" (*The New Yorker,* 13 March 2006), Caleb Crain notes that a lawyer defending the eight accused anarchists "argued that if the anarchists deserved to hang for their violent words, then abolitionists like Emerson and Thoreau should have been executed in the eighteen-fifties." —*Joel Brattin*

## Sophia Forster Wins Graduate Student Award

The Emerson Society is pleased to announce that this year's graduate student paper award goes to Sophia Forster, a graduate student in English at SUNY-Buffalo, for her essay on Emerson and late-nineteenth-century utopian thought.

## Concord 2006: "Emerson and Wildness"

The Emerson Society will present a panel on "Emerson and Wildness" at the Thoreau Society Annual Gathering, reports our program chair, Joe Thomas. Speakers include Dan Malachuk ("Wildness and the Ecology of Transcendentalism"), Gayle L. Smith ("Emerson and Wildness: in Nature, in Mind, and in Writing"), and Robert Burkholder ("R.M.S. Jackson and Emersonian Wildness"). The panel is in keeping with the conference theme, "Mountains, Seashores, and Moonlight: Thoreau's Exploration of Wildness." The Gathering will be held 6-9 July.

## Emerson Concordance on CFPL Web Site

Eugene Irey's useful concordance to Emerson's essays is now available on the Web site of the Concord Free Public Library. Leslie Perrin Wilson, Curator of Special Collections at the CFPL, writes, "To get to the concordance, go to www.concordnet.org/library, then click to the Special Collections homepage, then to the concordance. For a limited time, you can actually also click directly from the library front page." Ms. Wilson credits Professor Irey's widow and the late Brad Dean for making this happen.

## Emerson Sightings/Citings

Clarence Burley has netted several items in the popular media: The 2006 "Mariner's Calendar" has two Emerson quotations. In the December 2005 *Atlantic,* Siemens' ad announcing the year's winners of the Service to America medals quotes Emerson: "The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well."

The Worcester (Mass.) *Sunday Telegram* for 13 March 2005 has a section from the Boston *Globe* with an article by Ellen Albanese, "A place with transcendent spirit (Emerson's) and a sea view" (M14), about the Emerson Inn by the Sea in Rockport.

And Emerson inspires another celebrity: On 12 March 2005, American skier Bode Miller "clinched the overall World Cup title," wrote Nathaniel Vinton in the *New York Times* (13 March, Sec. 8:1). It was the first American win in 22 years. "'Like it was with the Red Sox, it was becoming embarrassing,' said Miller, who spent the week reading Emerson's essay 'Self-Reliance.' 'It was a different thing than a sports record. It became some kind of a curse.'"

Joel Brattin and Clarence Burley both send a column by Albert B. Southwick, "Thoreau's seduction of Mrs. Emerson is a fantasy" (Worcester [Mass.] *Sunday Telegram,* 10 July 2005), which takes issue with the highly imaginative novel *Mr. Emerson's Wife,* by Amy Belding Brown.

And Joel Brattin also writes: "In Adam Gopnik's review essay 'John Brown's Body,' in the 25 April 2005 issue of *The New Yorker* (90-95), he notes that after the Pottawatomie massacre, John Brown found himself a hero, 'not with the members of [William Lloyd] Garrison's abolitionist "establishment,"' but with 'the high Transcendentalists, Thoreau and Emerson and Alcott first among them'" (93).

Barbara Packer sends the Nature Conservancy's *California Update* for Spring/Summer 2003, whose front-page epigraph is by Emerson: "In every landscape, the point of astonishment is the meeting of the sky and the Earth.

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Prospects

*(Continued from page 3)*

### C. S. Lewis and Emerson

C. S. Lewis (1898-1963) is well-known both as a literary scholar and as the creator of some of the most popular works of fantasy in the modern period, the *Tales of Narnia.* One of the latter, of course, has recently been made into a popular film that is entertaining audiences throughout this country and elsewhere. It is interesting to note that this magnificently creative writer and thinker found an early source of inspiration in another magnificently creative writer and thinker, Ralph Waldo Emerson. In the recently published *Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis* (3 vols., ed. Walter Hooper. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004-2005), one finds that in a letter to a friend, Arthur Greeves, written when he was just twenty years old, the young Englishman speaks of his delight in reading this thought-provoking essayist/oracle. His only disappointment is that, alas, the bard is "an American." Fortunately, through an act of English magnanimity, Lewis was willing to overlook this grievous defect. His comment reads as follows:

> I am glad to see that you are more cheerful in your last letter. I don't think I shall follow your advice to try George Meredith again. There is so much good stuff to read that it is wasteful to spend time on affectations. You are quite right about Emerson. I often pick him up here for an odd quarter of an hour, and go away full of new ideas. Every sentence is weighty: he puts into paragraphs what others, seeking charm, expand into whole essays or chapters. At the same time his tense concentration makes him painful reading, he gives you no rest. I don't know why you object to his style—it seems to me admirable. Quel dommage that such a man should be an American. (2:397-398)

*— Len Gougeon*

### Community Project Winner Update

Our 2005 Community Project Award Winner, Steve Wilson, reports that the Emerson Society grant has provided for some exciting initiatives in San Marcos, Texas. The funds from the grant have been used to help a group of students create a handbook for children that introduces them to the flora and fauna of a local green space. The handbook includes an introduction that reflects Emerson's philosophies and brief narratives about various plants and animals. In addition, the Society's grant will aid the local library in creating an exhibition to accompany the handbook. More information can be found at www.txstate.edu /liberalarts. Thanks to Roger Thompson for the update.

### Fruitlands Collection Digitized

Fruitlands Museum, a National Register Historic District, includes the site of the 1843 Fruitlands experiment led by Bronson Alcott, the first Shaker Museum in the world, a Native American museum, a fine art gallery of Hudson River landscapes, 19th-century portraits, changing exhibits, and trails through woodlands and meadows.

Beginning in 1998, Fruitlands began digitizing its collections. Digitization projects help support a variety of institutional goals ranging from publicity, collections management, exhibit and Web development, and conservation surveys, to increasing access to the collections for scholars, staff, and actual or virtual visitors. The digital archive is accessible via http://www.fruitlands.org/collections.php

In 2003 we began creating web and exhibit technology to increase access to our large collection of Harvard and Shirley Shaker manuscripts. This includes a manuscript database (transcribed), population demographics, and a music kiosk and CD. The demographic research and online database was called "ground breaking" by Larry Yerdon, director of the Hancock Shaker Village and president of the New England Museum Association. Hancock adopted the same technology for their village population records. The demographic database builds on the works by Prisclla Brewer, Steve Paterwic, and the Harvard Shaker cemetery project by the Boston Area Shaker Study group. It includes data on the population of the Harvard Shaker village compiled from every extant source, including materials from Fruitlands, the Shaker Library at Old Chatham, the American Antiquarian Society, the US Census Bureau, and Winterthur. As of this writing there are about 20 complete Shaker manuscript transcripts now available online in the digital archive; they can be used by students and researchers from around the world. Besides providing increased access to our archive for the scholarly community, we hope to attract local schools to use this resource to teach students how to use primary sources to learn about history, a Massachusetts curriculum requirement for grade school students.

—Michael Volmar
*Curator, Fruitlands Museum*

### Lost Emersonians

Can you help us locate two life members of the Emerson Society? Recent mailings have been returned as "not deliverable" for Roger L. Cole, most recently of Springfield, Missouri, and for Robert Nelson Riddick, most recently of Highland Park, New Jersey. We'd like to know the where-abouts of these longtime friends of the society.



# An Emerson Bibliography, 2004

DAVID M. ROBINSON
*Oregon State University*

*New scholarly works on Emerson and Transcendentalism from 2004, including items missed in the 2003 bibliography (*ESP *15, ii [2004]:6-7). Readers should also consult the periodic Thoreau bibliographies in the* Thoreau Society Bulletin*, and the chapter "Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller and Transcendentalism" in the annual* American Literary Scholarship *(Duke University Press).*

Abrams, Robert E. *Landscape and Ideology in American Literature: Topographies of Skepticism.* Cambridge. [Discussions of Fuller, Thoreau, and landscape]

Accardo, Annalucia. "Poets with 'Fine Ears,' or the 'Responsibility' of the Artist: R. W. Emerson, E. Dickinson, and G. Paley." Mariani, pp. 161-70. [Compares authors]

Amoruso, Vito. "The Work of Madrepores: Emerson and American Modernity." Mariani, pp. 53-59. [Audience in Emerson's Journals]

Bellot, Marc. "'This Old Chronology of Selfishness and Pride': La Conception Émersonienne de L'Histoire." Jaworski, pp. 131-44. [Emerson's changing philosophy of history]

Bickman, Martin. "Seeing What I Say: Emerson, Berthoff, and the Dialectical Notebook." *Reader* 51:22-31. [Emerson and educational theorist Ann Berthoff]

Birkle, Carmen. "Travelogues of Independence: Margaret Fuller and Henry David Thoreau." *Amerikastudien* 48 [2003]:497-512. [Fuller and Thoreau as travel writers]

Blinder, Caroline. "'The Transparent Eyeball': On Emerson and Walker Evans." *Mosaic* 37, iv:149-63. [Emersonian aesthetics in photography]

Bloom, Harold. *Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?* Riverhead. [Emerson and wisdom literature]

Boggs, Colleen Glenny. "Margaret Fuller's American Translation." *AL* 76:31-58. [Fuller's relation to Goethe and Emerson]

Bosco, Ronald A. "'The Tendencies and Duties of Men of Thought' and 'The Transcendency of Physics': Ethics and Science in the Later Emerson." Mariani, pp. 325-35. [Moral theory in the later lectures]

Bosco, Ronald A., and Joel Myerson. "'In the Palm of Nature's Hand': Ralph Waldo Emerson's Address at the Consecration of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery." *Markers* 21:148-73. [History of the cemetery and Emerson's dedicatory speech]

Bresky, M. Luke. "'Latitudes and Longitudes of our Condition': The Nationality of Emerson's Representatives." ESQ 48 [2002]:211-45. [Transnationalism and *Representative Men*]

Brodhead, Richard H. "Prophets in America ca. 1830: Emerson, Nat Turner, Joseph Smith." *JMormonHist* 29 [2003]:42-65. [Emerson with two other American prophets]

Brøgger, Fredrik Chr. "The Conception of Nature in the American Romantic Age is Anthropomorphic? Anthropocentric? Other? Excursions into Emerson, Thoreau, and Melville." Pp. 94-113 in Hans Bak and Walter W. Hölbling, eds., *Nature's Nation Revisited: American Concepts of Nature from Wonder to Ecological Crisis.* Amsterdam: Vu Univ. Press [2003]. [Contrasts Emerson with Thoreau and Melville]

Brunet, François. "Méthode(s) dans 'The Method of Nature.'" Jaworski, pp. 24-41. [Perception and nature's flux]

Bryant, John. "'Self-Reliance' and 'The Poet': Teaching Transcendentalism Transcendentally, and Critically." Mariani, pp. 221-38. [Teaching Emerson]

Carlson, Larry. "The Inner Life of Fruitlands." Pp. 93-113 in Robert D. Habich, ed., *Lives Out of Letters: Essays on American Literary Biography and Documentation, in Honor of Robert N. Hudspeth.* Fairleigh Dickinson. [History of the Fruitlands commune]

Castillo, Susan. "'The Best of Nations'? Race and Imperial Destinies in Emerson's *English Traits.*" *YES* 34:100-11. [Race and *English Traits*]

Colapietro, Vincent. "The Question of Voice and the Limits of Pragmatism: Emerson, Dewey, Cavell." Pp. 174-96 in Richard Shusterman, ed., *The Range of Pragmatism and the Limits of Philosophy.* Blackwell. [Emerson and Dewey]

Colatrella, Carol. "Emerson's Politics of the Novel." Mariani, pp. 265-77. [Emersonian ideas in three novelists]

Cole, Phyllis. "'Conversation that Makes the Soul': Writing the Biography of Mary Moody Emerson." Pp. 205-24 in Robert D. Habich, ed., *Lives Out of Letters: Essays on American Literary Biography and Documentation, in Honor of Robert N. Hudspeth.* Fairleigh Dickinson. [Background of Cole's biography of Mary Moody Emerson]

Corona, Mario. "The [American] Time of Ecstasy: Emerson, Ginsberg, Kerouac." Mariani, pp. 195-208. [Emerson and the Beats]

Cramer, Jeffrey S. Walden: *A Fully Annotated Edition.* Yale. [New edition with extensive annotation]

Dean, Bradley P. *Letters to a Spiritual Seeker.* Norton. [Thoreau's letters to H. G. O. Blake with introduction]

De Biasio, Anna. "If Emerson's Nature Becomes a 'Dolce Madre': A Nineteenth-Century Italian (mis)Translation." Mariani, pp. 105-12. [On an early Italian translation of *Nature*]

Derail-Imbert, Agnès. "'Circles', ou Circonscriptions." Jaworski, pp. 65-91. ["Circles," creative expression, and language]

Delano, Sterling F. *Brook Farm: The Dark Side of Utopia.* Harvard. [Comprehensive history of Brook Farm]

DeVoll, Mathhew W. "Emerson and Dreams: Toward a Natural History of Intellect." *ATQ* 18:69-87. [Emerson, dreams, and the subconscious]

Di Loreto, Sonia. "'I Turned It All into English': R. W. Emerson as Translator of Dante's *La Vita Nuova.*" Mariani, pp. 79-93. [Emerson and Dante]

Dunphy, Mark. "New England Transcendental Gumbo: Edna Pontellier's Awakening to Emersonian Self-Reliance in *The Awakening.*" Mariani, pp. 153-60. [Kate Chopin and Emerson]

Faraone, Mario. "'The Light from Asia': Oriental Cultural and Religious Influence in Ralph Waldo Emerson and Transcendentalist Thought." Mariani, pp. 297-312. [Emerson and Asian thought]

Fromm, Harold. "Overcoming the Oversoul: Emerson's Evolutionary Existentialism." *HudR* 57:71-95. [Emerson, Kierkegaard, and existentialism]

Gatta, John. *Making Nature Sacred: Literature, Religion, and Environment in America from the Puritans to the Present.* Oxford. [Emerson, Thoreau and the religion of nature]

Gilmore, Paul. "Mechanical Means: Emersonian Aesthetic Transcendence and Antebellum Technology." *MLQ* 65:245-68. [Aesthetics and social progress]

Giordano, Paolo. "Man's Self-Reliance, Woman's Self-Denial: Alcott and Emerson's Contradictions." Mariani, pp. 145-52. [Louisa May Alcott and Emerson]

Girel, Mathias. "Les Angles de L'Acte. Usages d'Emerson Dans la Philosophie de William James." Jaworski, pp. 207-45 [Emerson's influence on James]

Gonnaud, Maurice. "Les Deux Visages de L'Automne Émersonien." Jaworski, pp. 13-24. [Tonal change in Emerson's later work]

Goto, Shoji. "Emerson, Necessity, and Contingency." Mariani, pp. 337-52. [Emerson's concept of sympathy]

Grusin, Richard. "The True Doctrine Respecting Forms: Emerson and the Proliferation of Mediation." Mariani, pp. 63-70. [Emerson and Italian painting]

Gura, Philip F. "Our Savonarola." *RevAmHist* 31[2003]:244-50. [Recent books on Emerson and Parker]

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Bibliography

*(Continued from page 5)*


Hallengren, Anders. "A Hermeneutic Key to the title *Leaves of Grass*." Pp. 45-59 in Stephen McNeilly, ed., *In Search of the Absolute—Essays on Swedenborg and Literature.* Swedenborg Society. [Emerson and Whitman]

Hallengren, Anders. "Swedenborgian Simile in Emersonian Edification: A Bicentenary Essay 1803-2003." Pp. 15-22 in Stephen McNeilly, ed., *In Search of the Absolute—Essays on Swedenborg and Literature.* Swedenborg Society. [Emerson and Swedenborg]

Harris, Mark W. *Historical Dictionary of Unitarian Universalism.* Scarecrow. [Reference volume on Unitarian history]

Hurth, Elisabeth. "Between Faith and Unbelief: Ralph Waldo Emerson on Man and God." *Amerikastudien* 48 [2003]:483-95. [Emerson, Fichte, and "ego-theism"]

Imbert, Michel. "La Perte de la Transparence." Jaworski, pp. 93-111. [Emerson's loss of creative vision]

Jaworski, Philippe and François Brunet, eds. *Ralph Waldo Emerson Dan Ses Textes: Rhétorique et Philosophie.* Université Paris 7, Cahiers Charles V. [Essay collection. Individual essays are also listed here under "Jaworski."]

Larson, Kerry. "Emerson's Strange Equality." *NCF* 59:315-39. [Equality and individualism in Emerson]

Laugier, Sandra. "Emerson, Le Scepticisme, L'Éducation et la Politique." Jaworski, pp. 171-203. [Emerson and democratic theory]

Leroux, Jean-François. *The Renaissance of Impasse: From the Age of Carlyle, Emerson, and Melville to the Quiet Revolution in Quebec.* Lang 2004. [Emerson and Quebec novelist Réjean Ducharme]

Lombardo, Agostino. "Emerson e l'Arte Americana." Mariani, pp. xxi-xxxi. [Emerson's role in American literary art]

Loreto, Paolo. "The Poetry of Pragmatic Imagination: The Circuitous Influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson on Derek Walcott." Mariani, pp. 171-84. [Emerson and Walcott]

Lysaker, John. "Taking Emerson Personally." *GaR* 63:842-50. [The challenge of Emerson's performative style]

Magee, Michael. *Emancipating Pragmatism: Emerson, Jazz, and Experimental Writing.* Alabama. [Emerson as a precursor of pragmatism and of improvisational art]

Maibor, Carolyn. *Labor Pains: Emerson, Hawthorne, and Alcott on Work and the Woman Question.* Routledge. [Women and vocation]

Marcus, James. *Amazonia.* New Press. [Memoir of Amazon.com founding with Emerson as a background figure]

Mariani, Giorgio. "Emerson 2003: An International Celebration of the Emerson Bicentennial." Mariani, pp. xiii-xix. [Emerson studies in Italy]

Mariani, Giorgio, et al., eds. *Emerson at 200: Proceedings of the International Bicentennial Conference*. Rome: Aracne. [Conference proceedings. Individual essays are also listed here under "Mariani."]

Mariani, Giorgio. "Read with Mussolini: The Italian Reception of Emerson Under Fascism." Mariani, pp. 123-31. [Emerson's reception under Fascism]

Maynard, W. Barksdale. *Walden Pond: A History.* Oxford. [Cultural history of Walden Pond]

McDonald, Matthew. "Silent Narration? Elements of Narrative in Ives's *The Unanswered Question*." *NCMus* 27:263-86. [Emerson and Charles Ives]

Morgan, Jack. "Thoreau's 'The Shipwreck' (1855): Famine Narratives and the Female Embodiment of Catastrophe." (*NH Rev* 7 [2003]: 47-57. [Thoreau and Fuller's death]

Myerson, Joel. "'Not Instruction, but Provocation': Emerson as Teacher." Mariani, pp. 23-38. [Emerson's theory of education]

Nardi, Paolo. "Nature as Scenery and Symbol: Marianne Moore's 'An Octopus' and Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Nature*." Mariani, pp. 185-93. [Emerson and Moore]

Niemeyer, Mark. "The Rhetoric of Nationalism in Emerson's 'The American Scholar.'" Jaworski, pp. 145-69. [Emerson's nationalism]

Nobles, Gregory H. "'One of His Ideas Was that Everyone Should Think for Themselves': Emerson, the Thoreaus, and the Transcendentalist Education of Edmund Q. Sewall." Mariani, pp. 239-50. [Recollections of Emerson and Thoreau]

Nocera, Gigliola. "Journeys of the Body and Pathways of the Mind: R. W. Emerson's Europe." Mariani, pp. 95-104. [Emerson's European travel]

Packer, Barbara. "Transcendentalism." *Cambridge History of American Literature*. Vol. 4. Ed. Sacvan Bercovitch. Pp. 87-136. Cambridge. [The poets of Transcendentalism]

Partridge, Jeffrey E.L. "The Politics of Ethnic Eating: Li-Young Lee, Emerson, and Whitman at the Banquet Table." (*SLitI* 37:103-26. [Emerson and Asian-American poet Li-Young Lee]

Patterson, Anita. "Emerson, Transnationalism, and the Enigma of Friendship." Mariani, pp. 39-52. [Emerson and Hafiz]

Poirier, Richard. "Emerson: Abolishing Individualism." Mariani, pp. 3-21. [Emerson's acts of self-renewal]

Porte, Joel. *Consciousness and Culture: Emerson and Thoreau Reviewed.* Yale. [Gathering of new and previously published essays on Emerson and Thoreau]

Portelli, Alessandro. "Unfinished Creations: Between Emerson and Leslie Marmon Silko." Mariani, pp. 287-94. [Emerson and Silko]

Proietti, Salvatore. "Emerson and the Minimal Bodies of American Postmodernism." Mariani, pp. 209-18. [Image of the cyborg]

Reynolds, Larry J. "Subjective Vision, Romantic History, and the Return of the 'Real': The Case of Margaret Fuller and the Roman Republic." *SCRev* 21:1-17. [Fuller and the Italian Revolution]

Ricciardi, Caterina. "Ralph Waldo Emerson and Elio Vittorini." Mariani, pp. 113-210. [Emerson's reception in 1940s Italy]

Richardson, Robert D. "The Perils of Writing Biography." Pp. 253-60 in Robert D. Habich, ed., *Lives Out of Letters: Essays on American Literary Biography and Documentation, in Honor of Robert N. Hudspeth.* Fairleigh Dickinson. [On the work of the biographer]

Robinson, David M. *Natural Life: Thoreau's Worldly Transcendentalism.* Cornell. [Thoreau's developing perspectives on ethics and natural history, with reference to his relationship with Emerson]

Robinson, David M., ed. *The Political Emerson: Essential Essays on Politics and Social Reform.* Beacon. [Emerson's political writings with historical introduction]

Robinson, David M. "Thoreau and Idealism: 'Face to Face to a Fact.'" *NCProse* 31, ii: 30-50. [Thoreau and Emerson on idealism]

Rubeo, Ugo. "Quacks and Jingle-Men: Emerson, Poe, and Modernity." Mariani, pp. 135-44. [Emerson and Poe]

Sattelmeyer, Robert. "*Walden:* Climbing the Canon." *NCProse* 31, ii:12-29. [Reception of *Walden* from Emerson to the present]

Scannavini, Anna. "A Chronology of Italian Translations of Emerson." Mariani, pp. 353-58.

Schneider, Richard J. *Henry David Thoreau: A Documentary Volume. Dictionary of Literary Biography,* vol. 298. Gale. [Extensive gathering of material on Thoreau, Concord, and Transcendentalism]

Schulz, Dieter. "Concord und der amerikanische Transzendentalismus in Ives' Ästhetik." *Muzik-Konzepte* 123:109-21. [Emerson and Charles Ives]

Schulz, Dieter. "'Walking' and the Method of Nature: Thoreau, Emerson, Gadamer." pp. 158-86 in Heimo Hofmeister, et al., eds., *Wissenschaft und Ethik in der Gesellschaft von Heute.* Philosophische Gesellschaft [St. Petersburg, Russia]. [The concept of "ecstasy" in "Walking" and "The Method of Nature"]

Scorza, Jason A. "Liberal Citizenship and Civic Friendship." *PolT* 32:85-108. [Friendship and community]

Silver, Bruce. "George Ripley and Miracles: External Evidence Versus Internal Conviction." *MidWStudPhilos* 28:19-36. [Hume and the Ripley-Norton controversy]

Sioli, Marco. "From Sicily to the Alps: Ralph Waldo Emerson's Trip to Italy." Mariani, pp. 71-77. [Emerson's Italian travel]

Specq, François. "Emerson's Rhetoric of Empowerment in 'Address to the Citizens of Concord on the Fugitive Slave Law' (1851)." Jaworski, pp. 115-29. [Antislavery and moral reform]

Specq, François. "L'Ethique Littéraire d'Emerson." Jaworski, pp. 45-64. [Emerson's literary form and self-examination]

Tattoni, Igina. "From Word to Voice: Language in the Light of 'The Lord's Supper.'" Mariani, pp. 313-23. [Changing theory of language]

Taylor, Andrew. "'Mixture is a Secret of the English Island': Transatlantic Emerson and the Location of the Intellectual." *AtlanticSt* 1:158-77. [Transnationalism and *English Traits*]

Terrie, Philip G. "Emerson in the Wilderness." Mariani, pp. 279-86. [Emerson's trip to the Adirondacks]

Tichi, Cecelia. "Emerson, Darwin, and *The Custom of the Country.*" pp. 89-114 in Carol J. Singley, ed. *A Historical Guide to Edith Wharton.* Oxford [2003]. [Wharton's use of Emerson]

Tuchinsky, Adam-Max. "'Her Cause Against Herself': Margaret Fuller, Emersonian Democracy, and the Nineteenth-Century Public Intellectual." *ANCH* 5:66-99. [Fuller, Emerson and Transcendentalism]

Urbas, Joseph. "'The Other,' and 'The *Otherest*': The Hidden Figure in Emerson's 'Montaigne; or, The Skeptic.'" Jaworski, pp. 247-86. [Emerson and Hume]

Van Cromphout, Gustaaf. "Emerson on the Realization of Freedom." *MidWStudPhilos* 28:69-84. [Emerson on free will and determinism]

von Rautenfeld, Hans. "Charitable Interpretations: Emerson, Rawls, and Cavell on the Use of Public Reason." *PolT* 32:61-84. [Emerson and theories of public discourse]

Wilson, Eric G. *The Spiritual History of Ice: Romanticism, Science, and the Imagination.* Palgrave. [Romantics, including the Transcendentalists, via history of science]

Wilson, Eric G. "Thoreau, Crystallography, and the Science of the Transparent." *SIR* 43:99-117. [Transparency and history of science]




# Reviews

**Emerson's Life in Science: The Culture of Truth.**
LAURA DASSOW WALLS. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003. viii + 280 pp. $35.00 cloth.

That Ralph Waldo Emerson's writing career began with an interest in science is well known. Upon visiting the Paris Museum d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris, on 13 July 1833 he wrote in his journal, "I say continually 'I will be a naturalist.'" Yet despite Emerson's book *Nature* that followed this vow, it is his younger friend Henry David Thoreau who is remembered as the Transcendentalist scientist, defender of nature, and patron saint of American environmentalism. Laura Dassow Walls' book explains this apparent paradox by asserting that Emerson was every bit as immersed in science as Thoreau was, but that Emerson pursued a different kind of science than did Thoreau.

Walls begins by distinguishing between two different scientific expressions of the Romantic desire to find unity in nature. While Thoreau's impulse was toward "empirical holism," a search for patterns in the individual details of nature, Emerson embraced the more common Romantic approach of "rational holism," an assertion of a unified universe ordered by single transcendent intelligence. This emphasis on unity was nonetheless pervaded by Emerson's interest in science, a vision of science, which Walls describes as "radical, daring, and challenging" (13).

Emerson came to a crossroads of his personal and professional life during a period when the study of science (still called "natural philosophy" in the early 1830s) was also at a crossroads. The study of nature had always been a means to the end of understanding God's truth, the moral principle that ordered the universe. Empirical science threatened to reveal myriad facts while losing sight of that ordering truth. In her first chapter, "The Sphinx at the Crossroads," Walls shows how Emerson enlisted wholeheartedly on the side of science as a search for moral principle. Science, for Emerson, is first of all essentially moral: The laws of physics can reveal the laws of ethics. Science is also synthesis, a search for the essential principle or principles underlying all knowledge. Finally, science must be dynamic and progressive, affirming that God's world is continually changing. Such a moral and dynamic vision of science was at the core of what Walls calls Emerson's "culture of truth."

Walls' second chapter, "Converting the World: Knowledge, Science, Power," focuses on how Emerson's reading in philosophy shaped his view of science. The keystone of Emerson's ideas about science was his reading of Sir Francis Bacon. Like Bacon, Emerson needed to see a correspondence between moral ideas and natural facts. Just as Bacon speculated that axioms of mathematics might be axioms of justice, Emerson needed to find a way of integrating moral truth and material facts. Both Bacon and Emerson hoped to reclaim the power of the human mind through the study of nature. This was the endeavor of "the American Scholar." Emerson's essay on "The American Scholar" thus offers a vision of a new America that would be "Bacon's New Atlantis realized" (Walls 42).

In chapter two, Walls traces the roots of Emerson's view of science to his eclectic reading in religion, science, and philosophy. In religion his views of science were shaped by ideas of natural theology such as the idea of nature as proof of God's beneficent design in William Paley's *Natural Theology* and in the Bridgewater Treatises. In science, besides Bacon, some of his strongest influences were from Isaac Newton, John Herschel, and William Whewell. In his reading in philosophy one can trace the ideas of Kant, Coleridge, Johann Herder, and Dugald Stewart. In considering all of these sources of Emerson's thinking about science, it is troubling to sense that Emerson would likely be a proponent of "Intelligent Design" if he were alive today, but the desire to find a principle of unity and purpose in the universe was perhaps even stronger in his day than it is in ours.

The use of science to understand God's design in nature would be central to Emerson's career, but he would approach science as a philosopher rather than as a researcher in the field. In chapter three, Walls effectively shows that Emerson's early science lectures demonstrate his early enthusiasm for science's potential to demonstrate that "It is all design. It is all beauty." But she also reminds us that after his 1834 lecture "The Naturalist" Emerson would write no more essays focusing specifically on science. Instead he would turn to what Walls calls "gnomic science." The goal of such science is, as Walls describes it, "to grasp the infinitely large by revelation of its principle of production" (113)—to see, like William Blake, "a world in a grain of sand." A gnomon is a geometric figure which "when added to an original figure, leaves the resultant figure similar to the original." It is a figure that changes yet stays the same. For Emerson, man was, in Walls' alliterative phrase, "the necessary gnomon to nature." Man is "the completing figure through which the generative law of creation extends itself upward and outward, in ecstatic spiral, ever to the next level of ascension" (126), like a chambered nautilus building itself ever more stately mansions.

Another scientific principle that was essential to Emerson's philosophy was polarity, the subject of Walls' fourth chapter. The metaphor of magnetic attraction of opposites had captivated him early in his career and merged seamlessly with the philosophic polarity of matter and spirit, subject and object so much in the wind among the Romantics, especially Coleridge. Like Coleridge, Emerson was convinced that polarity and unity were the same, that matter and spirit, man and nature were originally one. Emerson found this polarity both in the philosophy of Kant and in the comparative geography of the Swiss geographer Arnold Guyot. One of its key manifestations in his own thought was in his concept of compensation. As he says in his essay "Compensation," "Polarity, or action and reaction, we meet in every part of nature." But polarity too is gnomic, for as he says in that same essay, "Whilst the world is thus

*(Continued on page 8)*

# Reviews

*(Continued from page 7)*

dual, so is every one of its parts. The entire system of things gets represented in every particle." This optimistic faith that for every loss there is an equal gain, would be tested on a personal level by the death of his son Waldo, and he would wrestle with it in his essay "Experience." The ultimate challenge of polarity, however, was how to reconcile the polarity of the individual and society in a "culture of truth."

Emerson persisted throughout his life in seeing science as the key to both culture and truth. In chapter five, Walls discusses a key issue connecting science and culture in Emerson's day: the heated debate about the function of race, which was viewed as rooted in basic biology. Were races really different species, as America's leading scientist Louis Agassiz would argue? Or were races simply different kinds of humans, and, if so, how many different kinds were there? Were some races inferior to others, or were all potentially equal? In the debate between "progressionists," who saw the development of humans as the progress toward the goal of a divine plan, and "transmutationists," who saw a proto-Darwinian genealogical development from simpler forms of life toward humanity, Emerson, the ex-clergyman, was most sympathetic to the former. Thus Emerson makes more than one comment about the inferiority of the black race and the possibility that it is one of the races designed to serve only a temporary function in God's plan and thus, like the American Indian, to eventually become extinct. Yet as Walls and other critics point out, to see Emerson simply as a typical racist of his day is not accurate. His view was that human development was a case of "arrested and progressive development." Races progressed but in doing so simply revealed the essence of humanity in a different form. The more humans changed, the more they essentially remained the same. Ultimately, she argues, Emerson's "saving insight" about race was that races could not be fixed biological categories, an insight that allowed him to argue eventually for the abolition of slavery.

Science enabled Emerson not only to find a view of the relation of races to the whole of humanity that he could accept but also to find a solution to the problem of the individual's relation to society. How can one become a member of society's "joint-stock company" and still retain individual integrity? Again an answer came from science in the form of Adolphe Quetelet's "social physics." Statistical analysis suggested to Quetelet that there was a regularity to human behavior. Each year approximately the same number of people would commit a crime, the same number would become drunk, the same number would write letters that ended up in the dead-letter office. Thus at the center of any society was the individual "social man," a type from whom everyone else in society was a deviation. After initially balking at Quetelet's cold statistics, Emerson eventually (1854) admitted that "I accept the Quetelet statistics." "In a million men," Emerson writes, there is "one Homer, & in every million." The upshot of this approach, as Walls succinctly puts it, is that "every particle, every individual, was needed—even if it wasn't needed much" (192). The average man was the great man, and collectively such men formed the center of a culture of truth.

During Emerson's later years, his dominant scientific metaphors were drawn from optics, the key to Walls' last chapter. From both philosophy (Plato) and science (Goethe, Chambers, Whewell, Stallo) Emerson gleaned the idea of a correspondence between the eye and light. The eye, according to this view, is made for and by the light, but the eye also "looks" the world into existence. Stallo dubbed this concept the "solar eye" of science, and Walls argues that it is the "foundation for Emerson's late work" (200). Finally, science was for Emerson essentially a tool in service to a subjective view of truth, a truth that was created and "cultured" by humans. That truth, however, could be created only by a "cultured" individual, a superior person perceptive enough to see the poetry of analogies that was science. This yoking of science to a new way of seeing makes Emerson, Walls argues, "the prophet and midwife of the twentieth—and even the twenty-first—centuries" (225).

This argument for science as the core of Emerson's modernity is amply supported by Walls' impressive mastery both of the history of science and of Emerson's subtly shifting ideas. She effectively invites us to evaluate Emerson's view of science by the standards of his own day. Many readers in our own objective age will likely find it hard to accept Emerson's subjective view of science and will struggle with its implications for matters of race, gender, class, and "intelligent design." Nonetheless, Walls' case for the significance of Emerson's pioneering attempt to find a new way to yoke science and philosophy is a strong one. Some readers might also wish that Walls had applied Emerson's immersion in science to more close readings of Emerson's texts; the readings that she does include are so enlightening that one wishes for more. However, readers of her book will find it impossible to read Emerson again without noticing themselves the central role that science plays throughout his writings. Through her exploration of Emerson's metaphorical science Walls opens a new door into Emerson's thought and development. This book is thoroughly convincing and will prove to be essential reading for any student of Emerson and of the history of science.

—Richard Schneider
*Wartburg College*

**The Political Emerson: Essential Writings on Politics and Social Reform.**
Edited by David M. Robinson. Boston: Beacon Press, 2004. x, 212 pp. $16.00 paper.

In his new edition of Emerson's political writings, David Robinson continues his work of illuminating ignored energies of the American mind. Emerson criticism for much of the twentieth century was focused on Emerson's transcendental harmonies. As a corrective to this non-political perspective on Emerson, many new historicists since the 1980s have challenged this traditional approach. These materialist critics have attacked Emerson for cultivating self-growth at the expense of the masses. The problem with these images—Emerson as spiritual liberator, Emerson as political oppressor—is that neither takes into account Emerson's political writings. In making Emerson's political works available in an easily accessible form, Robinson's edition helps to save Emerson from his traditionalist admirers and new historicist detractors alike.

*The Political Emerson* will be of great use to scholars, teachers, students, and general readers. Robinson opens with an informative essay on the moral contexts of Emerson's political engagements. The primary idea behind Emerson's moral philosophy issued from the Scottish Enlightenment: Human beings possess an innate "moral sense" that tells them they should base their actions on "selfless concern for others" (2). This moral sense, in Robinson's words, was not a "scorecard of right and wrong hardwired in the brain" but rather a "dynamic course of energy and perception that allowed each individual to understand the implications of an action or event in an ever-broadening framework of relations, and to recognize the inexhaustible potential for betterment in every act, event, or situation" (3). Emerson throughout the 1830s expanded his definition of this flexible faculty into something akin to the Romantic imagination, the ability to understand complex interactions between part and whole.

Emerson faced a great problem in transferring this theory to political action. The difficulty grew from a second moral idea revealed by the moral sense: The constitution of the universe is ethical. If nature compensates evil with punishment, then political action is superfluous. The mental mortality reveals the metaphysics of physics but does not encourage direct resistance to concrete injustice. Emerson needed to figure out how to transform contemplation into action, holistic harmony into particular deeds.

Emerson showed only a passing interest in political injustices in the 1830s and 1840s. It took a major political event to galvanize him against slavery, the primary evil of his day. The Compromise of 1850 required northerners to return fugitive slaves to authorities. Emerson had to witness escaped slaves captured on his own soil. Outraged, he concluded, as Robinson puts it, that even if a "sense of the right order of things gives us a general faith that slavery will eventually end, it is nevertheless critical that as moral agents, we become part of the process by which the end is achieved, and perhaps hastened" (17). Emerson throughout the 1850s delivered scathing attacks on slavery. His most notable assault came in the form of "American Slavery" (1855), an aggressive diatribe and an astute analysis. These lectures seemed to awaken Emerson's ire against other oppressive institutions. Also in 1855, he delivered "Address at the Woman's Rights Convention," which strongly argues for women's rights even as it wonders if women are suited for entering into the male "sphere" of politics.

Emerson continued to engage in politics, especially during the Civil War. As he shows in "Fortune of the Republic" (1863), he believed that the War Between the States was a major historical event, for it revealed the moral principle at work in the collective mind. The Civil War reinforced for Emerson an idea he had been cultivating ever since he had embraced abolition: Valuable as individualism is, the collective is often the only power capable of pushing the spirit forward to the end it most desires.

In revealing this collectivist Emerson in his judicious selection of political works, Robinson has again done a great service. He has once more shown us that Emerson is a vexed, expansive soul trying with all his considerable might to bring together the two great poles ripping the world asunder—the quiet mind and the body that hurts.

—Eric Wilson
*Wake Forest University*

**Consciousness and Culture: Emerson and Thoreau Reviewed.**
Joel Porte. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004. 256 pp. $30.00 cloth.

Joel Porte's recent collection of essays, gathered from more than forty years of scholarship and teaching on Emerson and Thoreau, invites us to look at the Transcendentalists as earthier figures than those ethereal "wisdom writers" to whom many of us have become accustomed (xv). Porte claims that his work has placed him in the forefront of the "strong current interest in re-historicizing and re-contextualizing Emerson," a critical movement that some have dubbed the "de-Transcendentalizing" of antebellum writing. Porte's Emerson and Thoreau move between high-mindedness and lower forms of culture with ease, revealing their humorous sides, their talents as literary stylists, and a fascination with "wildness" and mystery that runs deeper than Thoreau's Walden Pond.

Porte's central argument, as Larzer Ziff has observed, is that Emerson and Thoreau must be considered primarily as writers. This is an obvious point, perhaps, but one that Porte contends has been obscured by our tendency to idolize Emerson "as one of the leading saints in the select American hagiology" (30). Our obsession with Emerson the "emblem" obscures Emerson's actual literary achievements as a master of "language and figure" and a poet of metaphorically unified prose (37). Porte locates Emerson's guiding tropes in familiar places, such as the all-seeing "eye" of Nature and its progeny in later essays. His belief in the potential of rereading Emerson with an eye to formalist elements of his writing is persuasive, and particularly compelling for those who teach Emerson to younger readers. In one vignette, Porte conjures up a classroom full of students tuning out abstractions such as the "Over-Soul," but reengaging with texts as they trace the images that recur and develop over the course of Emerson's lifetime (36). Porte's claim for Emerson's linguistic skill reaches its highest pitch in the book's final essay, in which he refutes Richard Poirier's assertion that Emerson was skeptical of language's power to arrive at any kind of truth. For Emerson, Porte contends, language is truth.

A significant corollary to Porte's emphasis on Emerson and Thoreau's literary style is his delight in their pervasive and under-recognized sense of humor. Stemming from a desire to challenge, to recreate, and to make things "new," the Transcendentalist brand of humor bursts the bubbles of Puritan reserve and republican industriousness as often as it skewers its own intellectual pretensions. The Transcendentalists made a point of "convicting and exposing folly, of shaming the world out of its nonsense" (23), and no target, from stodgy Harvard administrators to chaotic reform conventions to Emerson's own grotesque self-portrait as "transparent eye-ball," was safe from their "rapier-like wit and sarcasm" (113). The Emerson and Thoreau who gleefully satirize their contemporaries prove themselves far more engaged with their times than we would expect of aloof advocates of "self-culture." Porte's Transcendentalists have more in common with the renegade aspects of Byron than they do with the lofty habits of Wordsworth. Porte uncovers a gap between the public and the private Emerson, between the lecturer who pursued a "universalizing objective" and the journal writer who indulged his "satiric impulse" (76). The latter, Porte finds, was more likely "to represent his age and country comprehensively and without restraint" (78).

Did Emerson feel constrained by his obligations to speak to matters of broad concern, or did he in fact feel most comfortable in the realm of what he called the "old largeness," an infinite space of speculative inquiry that escaped historical particulars? Porte does not give us a convincing answer. His attempts to make Emerson "representative" of his age lead him back to the same generalizing rhetoric about the man himself that he condemns in his provocative calls for attention to stylistic and comic elements of Emerson's writing. In one essay, some might find that Porte gets too familiar with Emerson, calling him "Waldo" and assuring us that he suffers from a "Hamlet-complex" (64). Emerson and Thoreau's work as cultural—and specifically national—critics is simply too strong to cast them as representatives of "America," and their individual characters too distinctive to compare casually to later authors such as Wallace Stevens. Porte is at his best in this book when he allows Emerson and Thoreau to mediate between extremes of American life and to find a middle ground between philosophical peregrinations and quotidian concerns. In response to critics who force their own agendas on the Transcendentalists, Porte cautions, "Emerson, Thoreau, and the rest of the 'tribe' remain for me neither pragmatists nor rationalists, neither liberals nor conservatives. They are ineluctably themselves—complex, self-contradictory, endlessly fascinating and fecundating—and not ourselves" (191-92). We should be grateful to Porte for his tremendous contributions to our understanding of the many facets of the Transcendentalists, and seek to follow his example by perpetually making our most beloved authors new.

—Leslie E. Eckel
*Yale University*

## In Memoriam

# Bradley P. Dean

## 1954–2006

Bradley P. Dean died of a massive heart attack on 14 January 2006, leaving a son and his wife, the accomplished poet Debra Kang Dean. Born 4 February 1954 at the Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines, Brad served a stint in the military service and worked in the real world, both of which gave him a sense of responsibility and a true understanding of deadlines, as well as a lack of sympathy for academic silliness. His 1984 master's thesis at Eastern Washington University studied the early "Life without Principle" manuscripts, and assumed legendary status among Thoreauvians and textual editors for its accuracy and brilliant reconstruction of the manuscript. Brad's 1993 dissertation at the University of Connecticut, a textual study of the "Dispersion of Seeds" manuscripts, formed the basis for *Faith in a Seed* (1993). His other books were editions of Thoreau's *Wild Fruits* (2000) and *Letters to a Spiritual Seeker* (2004), Thoreau's correspondence with H. G. O. Blake.

SCOT MILLER

He served both as editor of the *Thoreau Research Newsletter* and *Thoreau Society Bulletin.* Brad was working on Thoreau's unpublished "Indian Notebooks" at the time of his death.

Brad's detective work in tracking down Thoreau's sources and other materials about his life and those of his contemporaries made him universally recognized as the person who knew the most about Thoreau's biography, and one of the two or three people best informed about Thoreau's compositional habits. Brad's computer expertise as unsurpassed by anyone else working on the Concord circle, and all scholars are in his debt for the superb work he did as Director of the Media Center at the Thoreau Institute for finding, scanning, and mounting thousands of documents relating to Thoreau and Emerson on the Institute's Web site; indeed, I believe it fair to say that all the intellectual content on the Institute's Web site is the result of Brad's work or those of his friends whom he got to contribute to it. Brad was also instrumental in making Eugene Irey's concordance to Emerson's writings first available and later in arranging for it to be mounted on the Concord Free Public Library's Web site.

I met Brad over twenty years ago, when he and his wife were having lunch with Tom Blanding and Marilyn Blaisdell on the porch of their house in Concord. I sometimes think Brad and I became friends not just because we liked Emerson and Thoreau, but because I too was interested in stab holes, and Brad was starved for an audience on that subject. I still have somewhere his chart of watermarks in the papers that Thoreau used for his writings, another interest that he and I shared in the face of much scorn, real or seemingly humorous. Brad had a guileless enthusiasm for Thoreau, tempering his delight in reading him with his scholarly rigor in studying him. He was a great scholar, whose published writings gave us new texts and new ways of looking at existing texts, as well as a string of interesting shorter pieces on how Thoreau's reading and travels affected his intellectual life and his writings. Brad was also a superb resource for all scholars, always willing to answer questions.

Brad's early death stunned us all, and I hate like hell to write about him in the past tense.

*—Joel Myerson*

## The Emerson Journals Digital Archive

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Institute is pleased to announce the completion of a two-year project: the publication of the ten-volume Emerson *Journals,* originally published from1904 to 1914 and edited by Edward Emerson. The Archive, comprising over 5,000 pages of material, has been scanned and edited by the Institute staff and is being offered for sale on CD in Acrobat Reader PDf files, conveniently searchable and printable. The price for the CD is $75, including postage and handling; it can be purchased through the Web site at www.rwe.org. In addition, the ten volumes will be available in February through online booksellers as eBooks, at a per volume price of $7.50.

The Digital Journals are made available through the generosity of supporting members of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Institute, New York, N.Y., and now join the Centenary Edition of the *Complete Works* and other Emerson-related materials featured on the Web site.

Important note for the academic community: In the Introduction to the Archive, users are reminded that the 1904-14 *Journals* are not definitive or complete and that the 16-volume Harvard University Press edition of the *JMN* represent the authoritative record and should be consulted prior to use in books, articles, dissertations, or formal papers. The present Digital Archive will nonetheless serve as a valuable tool in research and will further interest in Emerson's life and work among the reading public.

Board of Directors of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Institute are James Manley, Chairman, Webmaster; Alexander Forbes Emerson, Vice-Chairman; Susan Imholz, Treasurer; Richard Geldard, Secretary, Archive Editor; Barbara Solowey; David Beardsley.



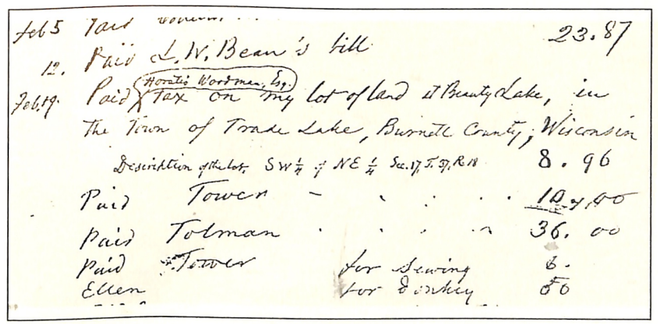
## Emerson Land Gifted

*(Continued from page 1)*

While neither Emerson nor the Woodmans probably ever saw the Bass Lake property, they may have had dreams of logs being floated on the small creek exiting Bass Lake (or skidded on ice roads) to the nearby Trade River and then on to the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers. The white pines on this property today are probably descendants of the earlier pine forests that existed in that area in the 1850s.

Perhaps Emerson would have liked a "quick turn" on his money, but the financial panic of 1857 hit almost immediately, and extreme real estate pressure existed for about five more years. By that time the excitement about the west had cooled. Although Emerson continued to hold his land for many years thereafter, he was probably disappointed in his investment because he continued paying real estate taxes, and no significant interest was ever shown in his repeated attempts to sell the property.

What happened during his ownership? Emerson suffered from fatigue in 1871 and loss of memory during lectures in 1872. He stopped writing in his journals in 1875 after more than fifty years of thoughtful and diligent recording and reflections. He continued to be involved in the handling of his affairs, however, as witnessed by his account book entry of 19 February 1876, recording the payment of his Wisconsin real estate taxes, and by his cover letter of the same date to his attorney Horatio Woodman: "I should be better pleased with your kind care of my lot in Trade Lake, Wisconsin, if you would add to the tax the proper fee of the attorney who is kindly attending to it. With this view, I add $2.00 with my thanks. R. W. Emerson."[6]



Feb 5 Paid L. N. Bean's bill 23.87
12. Paid (Horatio Woodman Esq) Tax on my lot of land at Beauty Lake, in
Feb 19. The Town of Trade Lake, Burnett County, Wisconsin
Description of the lots SW¼ of NE¼ Sec. 17, T. 39, R. 18 8.96
Paid Tower . . . 10.00
Paid Tolman . . . 36.00
Paid Tower for Sewing 6.
Ellen for Donkey 50

*Detail from Ralph Waldo Emerson's Account Books, including an entry of 19 February 1876 noting payment of taxes on his Wisconsin property. MS Am 1280H (112h), Houghton Library, Harvard University. By permission of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association.*

By 1879, Emerson began showing up unexpectedly at the Cambridge, Massachusetts, home of attorney Cyrus Woodman, brother of the now deceased Horatio. He probably wanted to establish a business relationship with him and to discuss his Western Lands and perhaps some other matters. In his letters of 15 June, 12 July, and 14 October 1879, Woodman repeatedly apologized for not being home and courteously and patiently suggested setting up an appointment at Mr. Emerson's home in Concord.[7]

On 9 October 1880, Woodman wrote his friend Wisconsin State Representative H. L. Humphrey in Washington asking him to look over Emerson's property when he returned to Wisconsin and to describe it and the value of property in the immediate area. On 2 February 1881, Andrew Ahlstrom, Burnett County Clerk, wrote to the same Humphrey offering to buy Government Lot 5 from Emerson for $2.00 per acre on behalf of C. Meyer—$25.00 down and the balance in the fall. Humphrey forwarded the letter to Woodman, who sent a refusal to Humphrey because he felt the sale of one parcel might detract from the sale of the rest of the Emerson property, and because the price was too low. He also believed the land had to be examined first.

Ahlstrom wrote Humphrey on 15 October 1881, that his client would be willing to buy both Lots 4 and 5, and that he (Ahlstrom) would be willing to examine the land for Woodman for $5.00. On the same date, Woodman again wrote Humphrey for the name of someone to examine the land. On 19 October, Humphrey sent Woodman the Ahlstrom offer, and on 24 October Woodman sent Humphrey $5.00 and asked him to engage Ahlstrom if he trusted Ahlstrom's integrity and judgment.

Attached to Woodman's letter of 21 December 1881 to Emerson was Ahlstrom's report that the land was of poor quality, not saleable as a whole, and worth only $230-250 for the 129.12 acres. (In those days lake property commanded no premium.) Ahlstrom, however, now offered $100 for Lot 5.

Emerson's daughter Ellen wrote Woodman on 24 December that, after consultation with his family, Emerson had decided to sell Lot 5, and asked for the purchaser's name in order that title could be transferred. Woodman requested this information from Humphrey and Ahlstrom. Ahlstrom responded, "Ertendall his initial I think is John." Woodman insisted on the full legal name. Ahlstrom responded, "O. J. Ortendahl." Woodman answered, "initials of names are not names." After such fruitless correspondence, Woodman wrote Ortendahl himself, got the full name, and sent the deed to Humphrey on 11 March 1882.

On 7 April 1882, Woodman yet again wrote Ahlstrom, this time concerning a certificate dated 28 February 1882, recently received by Emerson, confirming that his land had already been sold for unpaid 1880 taxes of $7.12. Woodman stated that he had a receipt dated 17 March 1881 from O. Hake, town Treasurer, for the $7.12, and that the 1880 taxes, therefore, were paid. He further argued that this amount "should appear on the books of Mr. Hake if he is an honest man. But the trouble is that an error in his receipt escaped his attention. For the tax of 1880, he used an old blank in which the year 1879, instead of 1880, is printed. This error also escaped your attention and mine." Woodman requested the tax sale of Emerson's property be cancelled, and it was.

On 29 April, two days after Emerson's death, Humphrey sent Woodman $95.00, thereby concluding the sale of government Lot #5. He had deducted a $5.00 commission that he offered to divide with Woodman, but Woodman wouldn't hear of it. (Woodman never charged Emerson for any of his many services, according to Woodman's letter of 28 May 1882 to Emerson's son-in-law William H. Forbes.)

*(Continued on page 12)*

## Emerson Land Gifted

*(Continued from page 11)*

CRAIG L. SOLUM

*Part of Emerson's land in Burnett County, Wisconsin*

Is it any wonder that in his letter of 23 May 1882 to "Dr. Emerson [RWE's son Edward] and Wm. H. Forbes, Executors of the Estate of Ralph Waldo Emerson," Woodman, no longer actively practicing law, asked "to be excused from further service therein." He also asked to be excused "from receiving any compensation" for what he had done for Mr. Emerson. Woodman apparently felt it was a privilege to help the prominent but ailing philosopher. Woodman had written Humphrey on 2 May that "Mr. Emerson has left us full of years and honors, and of the admiration of men wherever the English language is spoken."

One of those admirers was James Elliot Cabot, who commented that even though Emerson's family faced years of "straitened circumstances," he still found a way for a "purchase of land to preserve a bit of his favorite woodlands from the otherwise inevitable axe."[8] Cabot refers, of course, to Emerson's earlier purchase of another lake property on the northern edge of Walden Pond, where he allowed Henry David Thoreau to build a cabin and conduct his experiment in Transcendental living in 1845-47.

In a letter to his brother William dated 4 October 1844, Emerson wrote,

> I have lately added an absurdity or two to my usual ones, which I am impatient to tell you of. In one of my solitary wood-walks by Walden Pond, I met two or three men who told me they had come thither to sell & to buy a field, on which they wished me to bid as purchaser. As it was on the shore of the pond, & now for years I had a sort of daily occupancy in it, I bid on it, & bought it, eleven acres for $8.10 per acre. The next day I carried some of my well beloved gossips to the same place & they deciding that the field was not good for anything, if Heartwell Bigelow should cut down his pine-grove, I bought, for 125 dollars more, his pretty wood lot of 3 or 4 acres. and so am landlord & waterlord of 14 acres, more or less, on the shore of Walden, & can raise my own blackberries.[9]

Renowned thinker, philosopher, essayist, and lecturer, Emerson never forgot the importance of nature. "I do not count the hours I spend in the woods," he wrote in his journal in 1857, "though I forget my affairs there & my books. And, when there, I wander hither & thither; any bird, any plant, any spring, detains me. I do not hurry homewards for I think all affairs may be postponed to this walking. And it is for this idleness that all my businesses exist."[10]

Could Emerson, who took walks and observed nature at Walden with Thoreau, have done other than love his Wisconsin property? Here he would have seen white pines, oaks, maples, birches, eagles, loons, ducks, owls, pheasants, woodpeckers, swallows, bluebirds, bear, deer, beavers, rabbits, chipmunks, turtles, frogs, northern pike, large-mouthed bass, sunfish, wildflowers, butterflies, and finally zillions of insects (mainly mosquitoes).

If Ralph Waldo Emerson's spirits had risen in Massachusetts woodlands, they most certainly would have risen also at his unseen property on Bass Lake in Burnett County, Wisconsin!

**Notes**

1 Hubert H. Hoeltje, "Emerson's Venture in Western Land," *American Literature* 2 (January 1931): 438-440.

2 Robert C. Nesbit, *Wisconsin: A History,* 2nd edition, revised and updated by William F. Thompson (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 143.

3 E. Wade Hone, *Land & Property Research in the United States* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Ancestry, 1997), 115-126.

4 Nesbit, *Wisconsin: A History,* 321, 323, 325, 327.

5 Nesbit, *Wisconsin: A History,* 140.

6 Auction Catalog Number 73, *Historical and Literary Autographs and Manuscripts—The Collection of Hon. Alexander Berley, NY, NY* (New York: New York Book and Art Auction Co., 22 March 1938), 25.

7 Emerson's previous attorney, Horatio Woodman, had been under intense financial and other pressures for many years, and in 1879 he was inexplicably lost from a steamboat. The Cyrus Woodman letters cited here and subsequently are found in the Cyrus Woodman Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives. The letter of 15 June from Cyrus Woodman to Emerson referred to Emerson's conversation with Cyrus's daughter about Western lands under the previous care of Horatio. The 12 July letter refers to land, Horatio, and taxes. The 14 October letter mentions a $10 payment but not specifically what the money was for. Emerson and Cyrus Woodman likely knew each other at this time but were not close friends.

8 James Elliot Cabot, *A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* 2 vols. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1887), 2:492.

9 *The Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* edited by Ralph L. Rusk, 6 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 3:262-263.

10 *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson,* edited by William H. Gilman, Ralph H. Orth et al., 16 volumes (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960-1982), 14:145.

[***Editor's Note:*** The Holmbecks' stewardship of Emerson's Wisconsin land was the subject of a feature newspaper article that enjoyed national syndication: Pat Cunningham, "Beauty unspoiled: Rockford couple make sure developers won't get near gift," *Rockford (Ill.) Register Star,* Sunday, 1 January 2006, B1-2.]