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EMERSON SOCIETY PAPERS

Emerson at West Point

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In June of 1863, Ralph Waldo Emerson visited the United States Military Academy at West Point as a member of an evaluation committee officially known as the "Board of Visitors." Other than a few comments in his journals and letters for the time, however, little is known about how he came to make this trip, what its official purpose was, or what the final report of the board recommended. It is the intention of this brief article to offer some answers to these basic questions.¹

The first Board of Visitors met at the Military Academy in 1815 and was appointed by the Secretary of War. Eventually, through an Act of Congress in 1846, the President was authorized to appoint the Board of Visitors, "whose duty it shall be to report to the Secretary of War, for the information of Congress...the actual state of the discipline, instruction, police, administration, fiscal affairs, and other concerns of the Institution."² The number of visitors was limited to half the number of states. Membership normally consisted of individuals prominent in education, the militia, public and political life, and the Army.³ They were paid no compensation other than travel expenses and room and board while at the Academy. There were nineteen members on Emerson's Board (no secessionist states were represented). Five of these were ministers, two were medical doctors, three were professors, three held law degrees, and one was a Major-General. Emerson and three others were listed simply as "Esq."

It is not clear how Emerson came to be chosen to perform this task, but informed conjecture is possible. By June of 1863 Emerson, who was already a prominent national figure, had undoubtedly acquired a fairly high level of visibility as a strong supporter of the Union cause. As Robert Richardson points out, "Emerson had become by 1863 an inescapable part—a fixture—of American public life." His activities in support of the Union were given increasing prominence in the press and, "At the huge meeting in Boston's Music Hall on January 1 to celebrate the first day of Emancipation, Emerson opened the program, bringing the crowd shouting and singing to its feet with his 'Boston Hymn.'"⁴ While Emerson had been a supporter of the war effort from the firing on Fort Sumter in April of 1861,

his commitment was undoubtedly bolstered by Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation announcement following the Battle of Antietam in September of 1862. For Emerson, as for other abolitionists, the war had always been a moral crusade against slavery and he was pleased and relieved to have the President finally confirm that truth. In January of 1862 in his lecture "American Civilization," which would be published in the April issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* (pp. 502-511), Emerson insisted that "Civilization depends on morality" and that "Everything good in man leans on what is higher," and because of this, "Emancipation is the demand of civilization. That is a principle; everything else is an intrigue" (504, 509). Later, at the end of January, he would reiterate these sentiments in Washington, D.C., in his lecture at the Smithsonian, a lecture which Lincoln very likely attended.⁵ While in Washington Emerson's guide was Charles Sumner, the fiery abolitionist Senator from Massachusetts whom Emerson deeply admired. During his visit Emerson took advantage of the opportunity to meet America's wartime leaders and, as Ralph Rusk notes, "Emerson struck up an acquaintance with the secretaries of war, navy, and treasury, and with the attorney general." Furthermore, "He was twice taken to see the President, first by Sumner and later by Seward."⁶ Emerson was very impressed with Lincoln and later described him in his journal as "a frank, sincere, well-meaning man" (*JMN* 15:187).

The spring of 1863 was a dark time for the Union. Edward Emerson would later reminisce that at this time, "The tide of the Rebellion seemed to be rising; the frightful sacrifice of our troops at Fredricksburg was recent, and the great failure of Chancellorsville was just coming on. Our finances were embarrassed. In the shipyards of Liverpool ironclad rams, against which our ports were defenceless, were being built, unchecked, for our foe."⁷ The North was suffering from war weariness, and the Copperhead movement, which sought a cessation of hostilities and accommodation with the South, was at its peak at this time.⁸ Emerson was concerned about these developments and remained adamantly committed to the need to vigorously prosecute the war and to achieve an unambiguous military victory over the

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Emerson at West Point

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slaveholders. To this end, in March of 1863, he volunteered his energies to promote enlistments in the Massachusetts 54th, one of the first all-black regiments in the Union Army. It is this regiment which Col. Robert Shaw, a young Harvard-educated Union officer, would lead to "glory" in an ill-fated assault on Fort Wagner, Morris Island, South Carolina. According to a report of the regimental fund-raiser, which appeared in the *Boston Traveller*, in his address Emerson spoke against racial prejudice. Overall, the *Traveller* concluded that the effort "was a great success, both socially and financially and will have a good influence in favor of the regiment."⁹

With all of this public activity in support of the war effort, and also his high standing in society, as well as his recent visit to Washington, it is not surprising that on 6 May 1863, Emerson was appointed to the Board of Visitors by Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. Undoubtedly Stanton made the appointment in the name of the President (L 9:107). The presence of one of America's most famous cultural figures on the Board of Visitors to West Point would not only bolster the war cause in the Congress and throughout the North during this critical time, but also, undoubtedly, serve to inspire the young cadets themselves.

When first arriving at the Academy Emerson was dismayed to discover that the appointed length of stay for the Board was sixteen days, rather than the "two days' affair" which he was appar-

ently expecting. He told Lidian that he would try to disengage himself as soon as possible but two days later he would write that "It does not yet appear what day I shall find it honest to release myself from this Board, & I am kept pretty well occupied" (L 5:329, 330). It appears that he stayed for more than a week.¹⁰

Emerson took his job as examiner quite seriously; the war would necessitate that. Generally, he was quite impressed with the cadets he examined. In his journal at the time he states, "West Point Academy makes a very agreeable impression on me. The innocence of the cadets, the air of probity, of veracity, & of loyalty to each other struck me, & the anecdotes told us confirmed this impression. I think it excellent that such tender youths should be made so manly & masterly in rough exercises of horse & gun & cannon & mortar, so accurate in French, in Mathematics, geology, and engineering, should learn to draw, to dance, & to swim" (JMN 15:215). He also had some criticisms, however. In a later passage he notes, "I think that the point of competitive examinations should be urged on the Congress, and that a severer preliminary test should be required for admission. The Academy should be relieved of the task of teaching to spell & parse English" (JMN 15:216). This sentiment would later be reflected in the board's official report. Not surprisingly, while at the Academy Emerson apparently was invited to address the cadets and his journal notes indicate that he spoke of "the value of a sufficient man" who, joining with others, would produce victory (JMN 15:231).

The official report issued by Emerson's Board gives some insight into their visit, and the results.¹¹ It also reveals an Emersonian influence. Among the concerns and recommendations of the board were the following.

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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 editor, Douglas Emory Wilson, 1404 Christine Ave., Anniston, AL 36207-3924.

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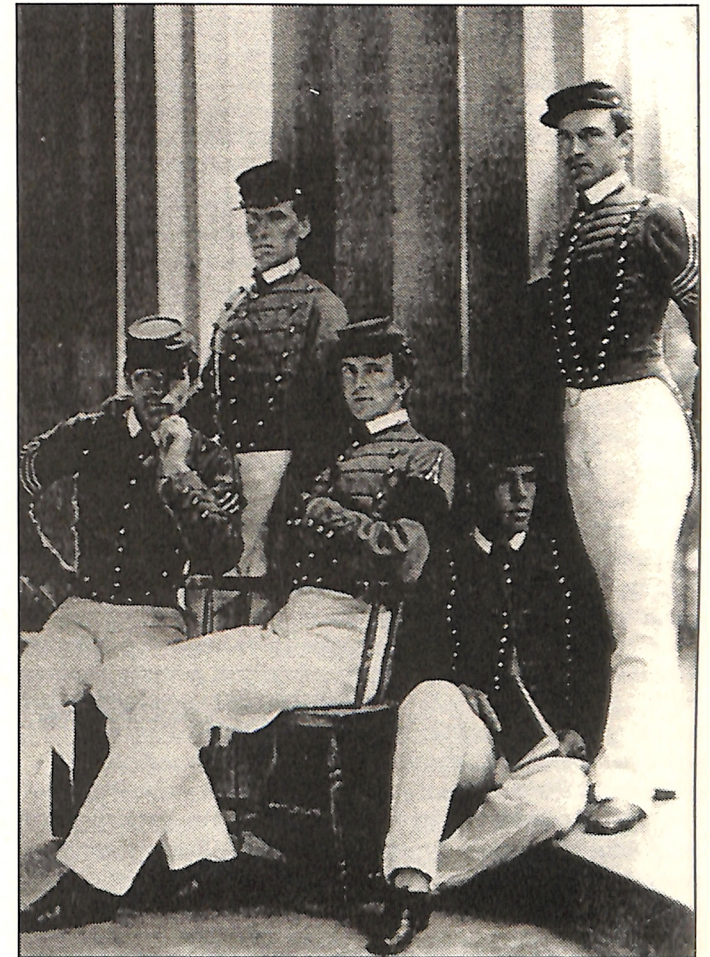
The board observed that "The department of ethics seems to us far too limited, both in the range and topics and the time devoted to them. Our duties to our fellow-men, to our country, and to God, deserve a more distinct recognition and fuller attention than the present programme of study...permits" (p. 78). This concern with "duties" and idealism was very much on Emerson's mind at this dark time, as noted earlier in his "American Civilization" address. He saw a lack of ethical idealism as eating away at the heart of the Union war effort. In his "Fortune of the Republic" address, which he would deliver several times between December 1863 and February 1864, he presents another reminder of this fact to a war-weary nation. "The difficulty with the young men, is, not their opinion and its consequences, not that they are copperheads, but that they lack idealism. A man for success must not be *pure* idealist;— then he will practically fail: but he must have ideas, must obey ideas, or he might as well be the horse he rides on."¹²

The board was also critical of the religious instruction of the cadets which they described as "too Limited." The report observes that "We have been called an irreverent and irreligious nation. Events are proving that our institutions can be permanent only as they are founded on the broad principles of a common christianity cherished in the hearts of the people" (p. 80).

The board did note positively the strict discipline observed by the cadets. The report states that the "board have noticed with pleasure the ready obedience which is given to any cadet whom the law for the time being clothes with its authority. The principle thus inculcated is one which is peculiarly needed in our country, not only in the military, but also in every department of the civil service" (p. 82). Emerson undoubtedly agreed with this assertion and observes in his journal that "One fact appeared plainly, that this Academy was free of the bete noir of colleges, namely, criminal justice. Here they are once & forever freed from every question by means of martial law. Every cadet is instantly responsible to his superior officer, for his behavior, & is sent to the guard-house or has one or two hours' patrol-duty added to his day's work" for his offense (JMN 15:216).

The board also criticized the Academy's low admissions standards, as Emerson did in the journal passage noted earlier, and urged that more rigorous competitive entrance examinations be instituted. Emerson would touch upon this topic also in "Fortune of the Republic" where he urges the acceptance of civil service examinations "for every officer who may be appointed to a civil office under Government, and for every promotion." He goes on to note that "Honest members of Congress who have appointments in their gift to the Naval School, or to West Point, have already set excellent example of advertising a fair competition by examination free to all candidates in their district" and he would obviously like to see the practice made universal (p. 145). This idea is further stressed in the board's report where it notes, "The principle of appointment and promotion by merit which we advocate is in full and successful operation in the classification and advancement of cadets in the academy itself, and the country will be satisfied if the same principle can be fairly and vigorously enforced on all who aspire to enter, as well as on all promotions in the service after leaving the institution" (p. 88). Finally, the report insists that "No pains and no expense should be spared to exclude from the academy and the service incompetent, indifferent, and unteachable cadets and officers" (p. 90), the people who, Emerson notes in his journal, cannot "spell or parse English."

Overall, the positive impression of his West Point visit would stay with Emerson for some time. In the throes of war and at a



West Point cadets, Class of 1863—the year of Emerson's visit. Note the mourning band on the center cadet, suggesting the dark times of the war.
—Courtesy of U.S.M.A. Archives

time of national moral crisis, when the Union began to waver in its commitment to the high ideals and noble aims of the war, West Point and the rigorous lives of the young cadets there seem to have bolstered his confidence that the good cause would not be lost. The following month he would lecture at Dartmouth College to another group of young American men and he would tell them of his recent visit to West Point and of the discipline, independence, and commitment of the young cadets there. These qualities, he told the students, "are first steps to power" and at this moment of need such power will be telling.¹³

Notes

1. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Judith A. Sibley, Assistant Archivist, United States Military Academy at West Point, for providing me with a variety of documents which serve as the basis of this article.
2. Quoted from *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York* (June 1863).
3. *Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the United States Military Academy*, Record Group 404, Records of Boards and Committees, 1819-1975.
4. *Emerson: The Mind on Fire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), p. 551.

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REVIEWS

An Emerson Chronology.

By ALBERT J. VON FRANK. New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1994. xxxiii, 569 pp. \$65.00 cloth.

Every so often, an unassuming work of scholarship comes along that, though it does not promise a radical reinterpretation of an author or period, unquestionably promises to change the way each of us goes about our work. In fact, most of us have some half dozen or so works on our shelves that are probably some of the most "overworked" volumes in our libraries. Think of the hundreds of times we have all used Joel Myerson's bibliographies, Perry Miller's anthology, *The Transcendentalists*, or classic biographies from Rusk, Harding, and others. The cracked spines, dog-eared pages, and numerous "post-it" notes protruding from the books' pages all testify to such volumes' usefulness. If such is the fate of the most commonly used books in an Emerson scholar's library, Albert J. von Frank's *An Emerson Chronology* will most certainly begin to look like some of these other workhorse volumes in our libraries in rather short order. (I heartily recommend buying two copies.) The book is one of the handiest works to come out in years, and every Emersonian is indebted to von Frank for having undertaken the task.

Von Frank's book, as the introduction explains, is a chronology not a biography. The chronology differs from narrative biographies, he writes, "most essentially in its attention to sequences of precisely datable events, most often involving the social or outer life." As such, it offers "a kind of framework or context for something substantially more important: the continuous movement or evolution of Emerson's life of the mind" (ix). The task of compiling such a work, however, does involve considerable judgment. After observing that any chronology must necessarily "leave out a great deal more than it puts in," von Frank candidly admits that each entry "reflects my interpretive decision that a certain aspect of Emerson's activity should figure proportionally in what the whole sequence of entries manages to convey" (ix). The result is a thoroughly researched, voluminous, balanced work that offers literally thousands of entries documenting Emerson's day-to-day activities.

Following an introduction that sets forth the author's methodology, von Frank includes a section of "Biographical Sketches of Recurrent Figures" which includes entries for sixty-eight of Emerson's closest friends, family members, and correspondents. This segment, along with the detailed index, assists the user immeasurably in obtaining quick information regarding the sequence of events in Emerson's life. Of equal value, however, for those less familiar with Emerson's earlier years is von Frank's first chapter, "'Born to Be Educated,'" an essay that brings the reader from Emerson's genealogy through his years as a schoolteacher. Each subsequent chapter covers one year and contains a brief headnote summarizing the main events in Emerson's life followed by the daily entries.

Von Frank makes use of all of the published sources that one might expect (Emerson's letters, journals, and notebooks, as well as the letters of Hawthorne, Fuller, Ellen Tucker Emerson, and Lidian Emerson), but he has also not failed to cite manuscript sources and significant primary and secondary sources (through Myerson's *Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Descriptive Bibliography*

and Burkholder and Myerson's *Emerson: An Annotated Secondary Bibliography*). Most of the entries are neat, readable, and fully supported, and the reader will quickly find that the work's accuracy and accessibility make it an excellent companion volume to Emerson's journals, notebooks, letters, and primary works. While the work does not pretend to provide researchers and students with the kind of comprehensiveness the vast array of other sources can provide, the book is a true time saver when one is looking for a particular date, much quicker than checking standard biographies, the indices of each of the volumes of the *JMN*, or even the indices of the *Letters*.

Aside from the many laborious hours spent poring through the numerous sources that inform the work, the author has clearly spent an equal amount of time considering very carefully the question of just how to present the reader with a judicious selection of events that truly does justice to the different facets of Emerson's personal, professional, philosophical, and literary lives. Because of this, von Frank has presented us with a volume that is both practical and illuminating. The author's own assessment of the work's place in Emerson scholarship is too modest. True, it is a work that serves as a reference tool, but it is also a work that, because its author has such an appreciation for the depth of Emerson's personality and the breadth of his life, provides us with an opportunity to survey that depth and breadth in a manner that is sure to leave a lasting impression upon us.

—GUY LITTON
Texas Woman's University

Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism.

Ed. WESLEY T. MOTT. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996. xxxiii, 280 pp. \$75.00.

Biographical Dictionary of Transcendentalism.

Ed. WESLEY T. MOTT. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996. xvi, 315 pp. \$79.50.

Beyond even their fancy price, these are valuable books. Unlike most encyclopedias and dictionaries, useful primarily for selective scavenging, these manageably sized (circa 300 pages each), graphically appealing (with legible and uncrowded print), and—most importantly—Transcendentally focused volumes also reward both browsing and cover-to-cover reading. Taken together, which is their cross-referential design, the *Encyclopedia* and *Dictionary* survey the before, during, and after of American Transcendentalism, from influences to impacts, literally from "A" to "Z" (albeit there are no "Z" entries). Although this Transcendental compendium comprises 349 entries (145 in the *Encyclopedia* and 204 in the *Dictionary*) by more than 100 contributors, there is a combinative gestalt—an emerging "big picture," seamed like a jigsaw puzzle but similarly whole. Useful as a source for answers to specific research questions, these paired books thus also serve a larger purpose. Whether one reads them separately, following their alphabetical format, or chases the "hypertext" links of asterisked terms from entry to entry and volume to volume, the result of an extended or complete reading likely will be a more comprehensive awareness—and better understanding—of American Transcendentalism. (Despite their global reach, these volumes might be better served by the addition of "American" to their titles.)

As its "Preface" states, "The *Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism* is a comprehensive guide to the major philosophical concepts, antecedents [including people], genres, institutions, organizations, movements, periodicals, events, and places associated with Transcendentalism in the United States." Employing a "history-of-ideas approach," the book elucidates the "religious, philosophical, literary, artistic, educational, political, scientific, and reform aspects" of Transcendentalism. Focused on the New England Renaissance, the *Encyclopedia* also covers "classical, European, Oriental, and native sources and influences." A 15-page "Chronology" "affords an overview of events and publications significant to the emerging, flourishing, and memorializing of American Transcendentalism, with selected historic events included as benchmarks" and to point up "parallels" and "ironies." A helpfully divided "Bibliography" of book-length studies supplements the specialized "References" accompanying individual entries.

The *Biographical Dictionary of Transcendentalism*, according to its "Preface," covers "figures most prominent in 19th-century and modern accounts of Transcendentalism and in the public and private writings of the leading Transcendentalists themselves—writers, theologians, philosophers, educators, scholars, politicians, scientists, artists, reformers." The volume includes "significant American and international antecedents, mentors, friends, relatives, and disciples who lived until at least 1830, as well as those who carried on, transformed, or memorialized the spirit of Transcendentalism after 1865, and important contemporaneous authors whose stances toward the movement may have been aloof, critical, or antagonistic but whose writings in various ways engaged with Transcendentalism." As the book's concluding "Bibliographical Essay" states, "this *Dictionary* is the first comprehensive reference work to include 'major' and 'minor' American figures, international counterparts, critics of the movement, and great artists who, not necessarily Transcendentalists themselves, creatively grappled with the tenets of Transcendentalism." This bibliographic overview supplements the specific "References" with the separate entries.

As for shortcomings, inevitably individual readers will question the absence of certain subjects, the presence of others, and the amount of attention paid to still others. For example, the *Encyclopedia* includes only two entries under "G," "I," and "V"; one for "K," "Q," and "U"; none for "X," "Y," and "Z." The *Dictionary* has only one entry for "V" and none at all for "I," "Q," "U," "X," "Y," and "Z." Do the gaps here represent an actual void? And while the *Encyclopedia's* index cites 11 page references for the "Over-Soul," this key Transcendental term does not have its own entry, whereas the "Not-Me" does. Two aspects of the development of the *Encyclopedia* and *Dictionary* should mute excessive carping over either the selection of entries or the quality of their content. As to selection, editor Wesley Mott meticulously developed his list of subjects—first by combing tables of contents and indexes in an abundance of relevant books from O. B. Frothingham's 1876 history of *Transcendentalism in New England* on up; then by securing authoritative reviews of that list, a process that added some 75 entries and in other ways refined its scope. As to quality, suffice it to say that both the vetting of subjects and the resulting essays were executed by the many authoritative contributors to this project, including an honor roll of scholars in American literary history (Moldenhauer, Myerson, Richardson, Robinson, Sattel-

meyer, et al.) and experts from other disciplines.

Originally conceived as a single-volume *Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism*, the project was divided at the publisher's request into an *Encyclopedia* and a *Biographical Dictionary*. While the separate volumes are more comfortably sized, this bifurcation creates a few problems beyond simply increasing the cost of the combined information. For one, the distinction between "encyclopedia" and "dictionary" is not readily apparent. Yes, the entries in the former are longer on average, but there are enough exceptions both ways to make length a suspect criterion. Whatever their nuanced distinction, the titles are misleading because the *Encyclopedia* also contains biographical entries—specifically, those "significant philosophical, theological, and literary antecedents who died before 1830" in contrast to the *Dictionary's* post-1830 listings. This division of human subjects may in fact be helpful, especially if a user knows the dates of the figure he or she seeks, but the titles belie the fact that both volumes are needed if one wishes to encounter the entire pantheon. Also disadvantageous, the two-volume format requires a shifting back and forth that the referencing apparatus imperfectly guides. Helpful indeed are the asterisked terms within entries that direct readers to other entries in both volumes (one asterisk for the same volume, two for the other volume). Regrettably, though, this sense of the essential reciprocity between volumes does not inform their indexes, which, unlike the asterisks, refer only to the volume at hand.

Despite the relatively minor navigational problems associated with the two-volume format, the *Encyclopedia* and *Dictionary* tell the story of American Transcendentalism in a coherent, if necessarily incremental, fashion. To encourage the kind of sustained reading that reveals this integrity, each volume would be enhanced by a prominent list of its alphabetical entries, the equivalent of a library's open stacks, conducive to browsing and serendipitous discovery. Under the existing arrangement, a curious reader must either skim each volume to survey its contents, or closely scan the index for italicized page numbers (often one or two numbers among many) that indicate an entry. At the least, these page numbers and the indexed entries they refer to should be **boldtyped** to promote easy alphabetical review of the volume's contents.

Nit-picking aside, the *Encyclopedia of Transcendentalism* and the *Dictionary of Transcendentalism* are the most comprehensive resources of their kind in the broadly construed field of American Transcendentalism. These books should be welcomed not just as study guides for a game of Transcendental Pursuits but as a fact-filled overview of a complex period, suitable for all concerned with that period from students seeking a comprehensive introduction to fully fledged scholars hoping to recall what they have forgotten and possibly discover what they never knew. Together these two volumes are a welcome corrective to specialization and theorizing, reminding advanced scholars of the breadth and topography of the larger field containing their own turf. Indispensable for libraries, they are little less than that for anyone with a serious interest in American Transcendentalism whose knowledge falls short of encyclopedic. My own copies are already well thumbed.

—RONALD WESLEY HOAG
East Carolina University

PROSPECTS.



American Literature Association Conference

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society will present two panels at the ninth annual conference of the American Literature Association in San Diego, California, on 29 and 30 May:

SESSION I

Teaching the Anthologized Emerson.

FRIDAY, 29 MAY

CHAIR, DANIEL SHEALY, *Univ. of North Carolina-Charlotte*

PANELISTS: LAURA DASSOW WALLS (*Lafayette Coll.*),

RONALD A. BOSCO (*Univ. at Albany SUNY*),

ROBERT N. HUDSPETH (*Univ. of Redlands*).

Each panelist will present a brief (5-10 minute) talk, followed by open discussion.

SESSION II

Emerson and the Question of Reform.

SATURDAY, 30 MAY

CHAIR, SARAH ANN WIDER, *Colgate Univ.*

"Be Yourselves Declarations": Emerson's Defense of John Brown," Harold K. Bush, Jr. (*Michigan State Univ.*)

"Emerson's Political Spirit and the Problem of Language," T. Gregory Garvey (*State Univ. of New York, Coll. at Brockport*)

"Emerson, Slavery, and the Evolution of the Principle of Self-Reliance," Michael P. Stryck (*Davidson Coll.*)

The ALA conference will be held at the Bahia Resort Hotel in San Diego on 28-31 May (Thursday through Sunday). A welcoming reception will be held from 8:30 to 10:30 for those arriving on Wednesday evening, 27 May. Preregistration conference fees will be \$50 (with a special rate of \$10 for independent scholars, retired individuals, and students). The hotel (619-488-0551) is offering a conference rate of \$85 a night (single) or \$92 (double). Inquiries should be sent to the conference director, Professor Jeanne Campbell Reesman, English Department, University of Texas, San Antonio, San Antonio, TX 78249; e-mail reesman@lonestar.utsa.edu.

A Japanese Translation of Whicher

Emerson Society member Yoshio Takanashi has translated *Freedom and Fate: An Inner Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson*

into Japanese and is in negotiation with a Japanese publishing company. He would appreciate information about any U.S. subvention grants available for publication of American works into foreign languages. Please write to Professor Takanashi at 10-7 Miwa 2 chome, Nagano-shi, Nagano-ken, 380 Japan.

Professor Takanashi is presently studying resemblances of the views of Nature between Ralph Waldo Emerson and Dogen, a Japanese Zen priest in the Kamakura period.

ESP has received the following communication:

"Life As It Is Known"

Life, as Emerson described, is marked by a ceaseless battle between higher thinking and material worship. In each stage of history's course, there remain the evidences of this bitter struggle. Mr. Emerson fought for higher thinking, but the odds were great. Today, our society does not want to think; the poet's voices have grown cold in the blue glow of a billion reality defining television sets. Is the struggle for the control of the consciousness of this country finally over? Does it hurtle forward on definite tracks leading to a planned forthcoming? Could Mr. Emerson himself have been involved in an experiment to change the course of history? Please mail all comments or inquiries to Kenneth Bauman, 5101 W. Whitley Road, South Whitley, IN 46787.

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Emerson Society members have responded generously to the appeal by Past President Ronald A. Bosco to join at new levels of membership. All donations above the \$10 annual regular membership go to support the "Emerson in 2003" Bicentennial celebration now being organized. Dues for 1998 are \$50-Sustaining; \$25-Contributing; \$10-Regular. Please send check payable to The Emerson Society (U.S. dollars only) to Wesley T. Mott, Secretary/Treasurer, Dept. of Humanities and Arts, WPI, Worcester, MA 01609-2280.

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J. Frank Schulman

CLARENCE L. F. GOHDES 1901 - 1997

On 8 December 1997, Clarence Gohdes, James B. Duke Professor Emeritus of American Literature in Duke University, died in Durham, N.C. Decades earlier, he had worked energetically in teaching and publishing sound studies of American Transcendentalists and their outreach. Brook Farm, A. B. Alcott, Ripley, Thoreau, Emerson, Whitman, and Dickinson numbered among his subjects. In the first issue of *American Literature* (March 1929) appeared his essay on "The Divinity School Address," and that same year his "The Western Messenger and The Dial" in *Studies in Philology*, a journal at the time exceptionally hospitable to works on American literature. In 1931 came *The Periodicals of Transcendentalism*, a book inspired, naturally enough, by Gohdes's Columbia teacher, Ralph L. Rusk, which remains a standard work. An edition of uncollected early Emerson lectures (1932) was followed by volumes publishing items from the Duke University Whitman collection. *American Literature in Nineteenth Century England* (1944) shed new lights on other aspects of Transcendentalism. Gohdes's graduate seminars in Emerson and Whitman were renowned at Duke, and his signal works on Whitman continued to appear into the 1970s, when he retired. Mentor to such notables in Transcendentalist researches as Gay Wilson Allen and John A. Christie, Gohdes also served as consultant for editions of Emerson and Whitman. His longtime connection with *American Literature* brought him additional renown. Gohdes the bright young man—whose accomplishments impressed those formidably learned professors A. H. Quinn, Jay B. Hubbell, Paul F. Baum (with whom he edited Whitman materials)—ultimately became Gohdes the bright elder statesman, who, till his death at 96, maintained keen interests in the work and careers of younger scholars, and whose own mind never seemed to age. Like many of the Transcendentalists, Gohdes was learned in the Classics (which he also taught, after earning a Harvard degree in Classical Studies), a lifelong avid gardener and lover of the great outdoors. The death of this pioneer Americanist concludes an epoch in academe that commenced during the 1920s and '30s, when he and others performed aggressively to develop and promote studies in American literature.

—Benjamin F. Fisher

SHIRLEY JEAN HANSON MOTT 1923 - 1998

Shirley J. Mott, a Founding Member of the Emerson Society, died on 9 January after a fourteen-year struggle with cancer. In recognition of her courage and her service and comfort to others with the disease, she was honored as a "Survivor of the Year" in 1994 during the annual National Cancer Survivors' Day. She frequently attended the Emerson Society's summer programs in Concord, and she helped promote awareness of the Walden Woods Project's work to protect and preserve historic land in Concord and Lincoln.

A graduate of Burdett College in Boston, she was the mother of three sons and co-owner and manager of Mott the Florist in Foxboro, Mass., her home for most of her life. She was an overseer of Old Sturbridge Village and a trustee of the Foxboro Universalist Church, which she served also as organist for many years. Her memorial service featured selections from Emerson's "Terminus," "Address at the Consecration of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery," and "Threnody." A florist and avid gardener who eagerly awaited the annual New England Spring Flower Show, she especially liked Emerson's "The Rhodora: On Being Asked, Whence Is the Flower?"

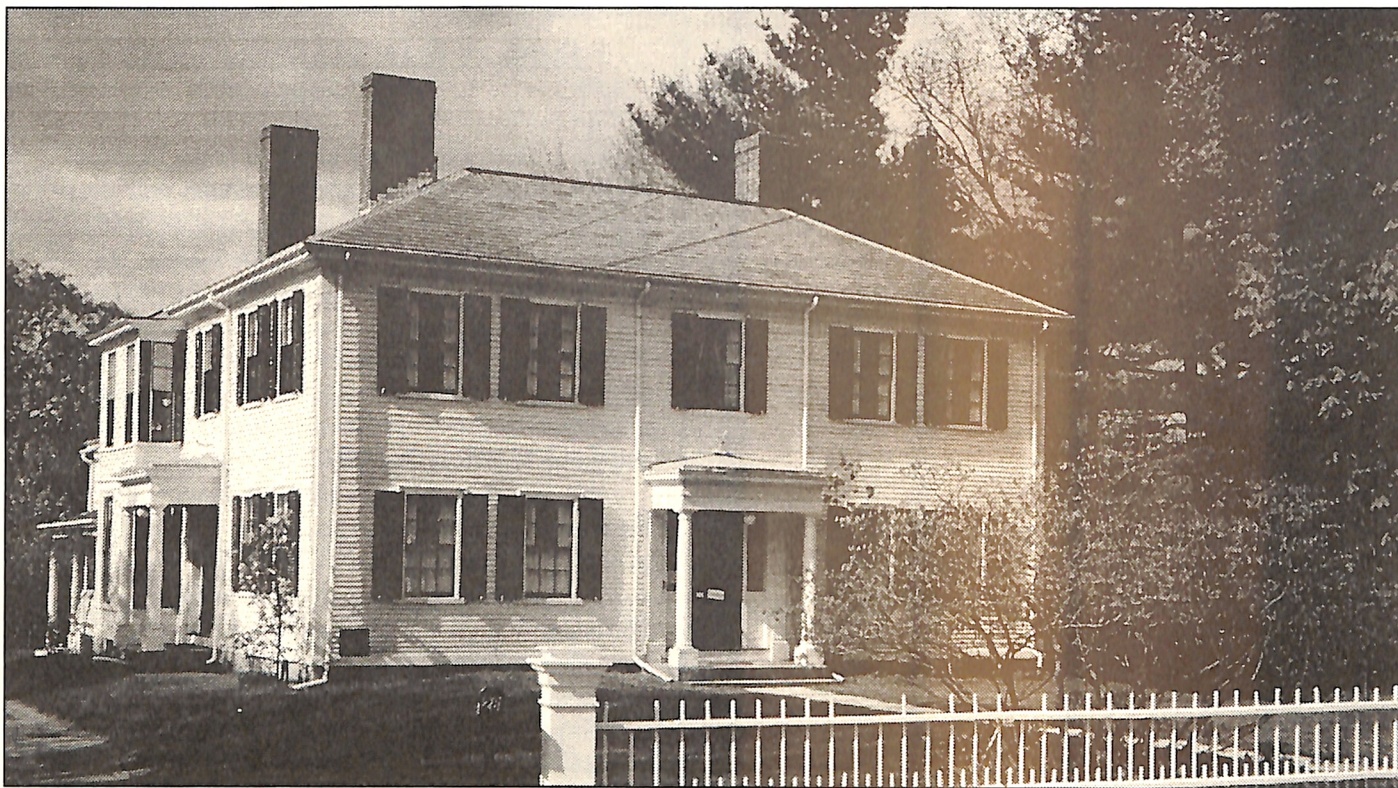
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!

I never thought to ask, I never knew:

But, in my simple ignorance, suppose

The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.

—WTM



The Ralph Waldo Emerson House, at 28 Cambridge Turnpike in Concord, Mass., is open for the 1998 season. For dates, times, and rates, call 508-369-2236.

—Photo by W. T. Mott

Emerson at West Point

(Continued from page 3)

5. Richardson, p. 548.
6. *The Life of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949), p. 414.
7. *The Early Years of the Saturday Club: 1855-1870* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1918), p. 312.
8. See my *Virtue's Hero: Emerson, Antislavery, and Reform* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), p. 297.
9. Gougeon, *Virtue's Hero*, p. 298.
10. Albert J. von Frank, *An Emerson Chronology* (New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 1994), p. 387.
11. Report of the Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy at West Point (Extracted from *Senate Documents*, 1st Session, 38th Congress, 1863, pp. 76-100).
12. Len Gougeon and Joel Myerson, eds., *Emerson's Antislavery Writings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 140.
13. "The Man of Letters," *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 12 vols., ed. Edward Waldo Emerson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin 1903-4), 10:251,257.

1998 ANNUAL MEETING

The 1998 annual meeting of The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, Inc. will be held at the American Literature Association Conference in San Diego, California, on Saturday, 30 May.

The time and location will be announced at the Conference and during the first Emerson Society panel. (See PROSPECTS.)