

EMERSON & THOREAU



RALPH WALDO EMERSON

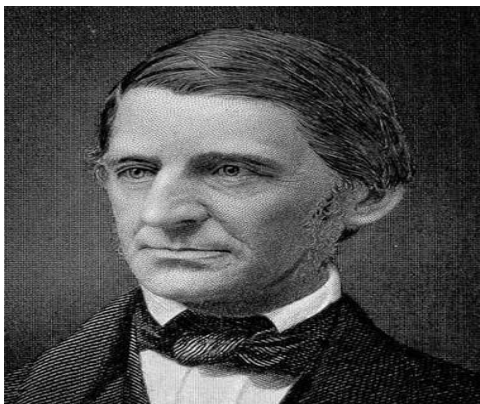
Ralph Waldo Emerson was born May 25, 1823 into a family of eight children. He would be the only child to survive until maturity. At only eight years old, Emerson lost his father, a Unitarian minister, to tuberculosis.

Emerson's life had been scheduled for him since a very early age. Emerson attended Harvard at the age of fourteen, planning to go into ministry just as the eight generations had done before him. Upon graduation, between 1821 and 1825, he worked as a teacher in the Boston area at a school run by his brother. This job would prepare Emerson for the world of Unitarian ministry. In the year of 1827, he was appointed by the American Unitarian Association to preach. It wasn't until 1829 that Emerson would resign from ministry and take an extended tour of Europe. While in Europe, he met and spoke with many influential writers. This was the same year Emerson married Ellen Louise Tucker on the 30th of September. She passed away February 8, 1831 from tuberculosis.

After returning to the United States in 1833, Emerson began a new career as a public speaker. After settling in Concord, Massachusetts, Emerson married Lydia Jackson. Emerson worked on one of his most important works, "Nature" in 1836. The same year he became a member of the transcendental club, "Dial", which was a literary paper that was first published in 1840 with co-members Elizabeth Peabody, Henry David Thoreau, and others. In 1837, Emerson wrote "The American Scholar", one of his most popular essays. He also wrote "The Divinity School Address" in the same year.

Throughout the years of 1847 and 1848, Emerson delivered a series of lectures titled "Mind and Matters of the Nineteenth Century". Around this same time, he wrote one of his most notable works, "Self Reliance". The year of 1865, Emerson became inspired by Lincoln's assassination. He wrote an essay named "Culture", which was later included in the book entitled "The Conduct of Life".

In later years, Emerson suffered from severe memory loss and had trouble in recalling everyday words. This predicament increased his public silence, and if he made a public appearance, he read from notes. Emerson passed away April 27, 1882 at the age of 78.



Ralph Waldo Emerson

EMERSON & THOREAU

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

Henry David Thoreau was born David Henry Thoreau July, 12 1817 in Concord, Massachusetts. His parents were John Thoreau and Cynthia Dunbar and he had three siblings. Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote that Thoreau was as ugly as sin but it suited him.

Thoreau went to Harvard from 1833 to 1837. After graduating from Harvard in 1837 Thoreau taught school in Canton, Massachusetts. But he got fired because he wouldn't administer corporal punishment. In 1838 Thoreau and his brother John opened a grammar school in Concord.

After Harvard Thoreau met Ralph Emerson, who took a paternal and at times patronizing interest in him. Emerson took Thoreau under his wing. Thoreau followed Transcendentalism, a loose and eclectic idealist philosophy that was popular during his time. In 1841, Thoreau moved into the Emerson house where he served as the children's tutor, editorial assistant, and repair man/gardener. In 1844 Thoreau returned to Concord and worked in his family's pencil factory. He rediscovered the process to make a good pencil out of inferior graphite by using clay as the binder. Thoreau embarked on a two-year experiment in simple living on July 4, 1845 so he could have solitude to write his first book. In 1851, Thoreau became increasingly fascinated with natural history and expedition narratives.

Thoreau was a naturalist and a transcendentalist. He is best known for his book *Walden*, a reflection upon simple living in natural surroundings, and his essay, *Civil Disobedience*, an argument for individual resistance to civil government in moral opposition to an unjust state. Thoreau's books, articles, essays, journals, and poetry total over 20 volumes. His health declined over three years with brief periods of remission, until he eventually became bedridden from tuberculosis. He died on May 6, 1862 at age 44.



Henry David Thoreau

Bibliography

Reuben, Paul P. "Chapter 4: Ralph Waldo Emerson (1830-1882). *PAL: Perspectives in American Literature- A Research and Reference Guide*. WWW URL:

<http://web.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap4/emerson.html> (January 9, 2009)

Bengtsson, Gunnar. "Biography of David Thoreau."

<http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/thoreau/>. 2008/2009. 8 Feb 2009