May 9th is celebrated for the communion of two prophets, John Muir and Ralph Waldo Emerson, in Yosemite Valley. In 1871, they toured and talked together for four days before Emerson left. They enjoyed each other’s company immensely. They spoke of plants and geology and poets. On the last day, they visited the Mariposa Grove of sequoias, where Muir wanted them to camp, but Emerson’s companions refused in deference to his venerableness’ well-being. Muir then spent the night alone there, thankful for the birds and beasts and the presence of Emerson’s spirit.

This was Emerson’s only trip to California. Twenty-two years later, 8 June 1893, Muir made a pilgrimage to Emerson’s home, Concord, Massachusetts, the sage having died in 1882. There he walked about the hamlet and Walden and dined with Emerson’s son, Edward. Though Muir made four more transcontinental trips to New England, he never returned to Concord. Each at least experienced the sanctuary of the other, if only once.

On one of those four days that Emerson and members of his party were together with Muir, the latter received a gift: a copy of Emerson’s Poems (Ticknor & Fields, 1864) inscribed “John Muir from S.S Forbes.” This is Sarah Swain Hathaway Forbes (1813-1900), wife of John Murray Forbes (1813-1898) of Milton, Massachusetts. Mr. Forbes made possible the Muir-Emerson connection by proposing and financing Emerson’s railroad excursion to California in spring 1871. Four Forbes children accompanied their parents on this journey with Emerson: Alice, Sarah, Mary, and William. Six years earlier on 3 October 1865, the latter had married Emerson’s younger daughter Edith, who was also part of this entourage, while her sister Ellen cared for their three children, her sick brother Edward, and mother Lidian back east in Concord.

Customarily, Emerson presented copies of his books to friends, noting recipients in his journal. He had given Mrs. Forbes The Conduct of Life (Ticknor and Fields, December 1860), May-Day and Other Pieces (Ticknor and Fields, April 1867), Society and Solitude (Fields, Osgood, March 1870). Possibly, then, he had given her his Poems, though I find no reference.

Apparently, she had read Poems. At least on the “Contents” pages she marked and/or dated ten titles: “1869” (four poems: “Woodnotes, I,” “Forerunners,” “Ode to Beauty,” and “Merlin, I”); “6th February 1871” (one poem: “Each and All”); “Feb 1871” (one poem: “Initial, Daemonic, and Celestial Love”); “Feb” (one poem: “Threnody”); “1871” (three poems: “Hymn, Sung at the Completion of the Concord Monument,” “The Rhodora,” “Bacchus”—all dates prior to her meeting Muir (with the unlikely exception of 1871). The “F” in February also matches the “F” in holograph “Forbes” of the inscription. All four of the poems dated 1869 include a penciled “x” between date and title, while the last three of these on their respective pages have an “x” or “+” at or near their first lines. “Hymn...” has a tiny, unexplainable, penciled upper case “B” between the title and first line. Lines 9 and 10 of “Each and All” on page 14 are joined with a penciled squiggle in the left margin.

Muir read Poems some time in May, June, July. “Several times,” he told Emerson in early July 1871. “I have been very deeply interested with them and am far from being done with them.” They all were new to him, except “Woodnotes,” which their mutual friend Jeanne Carr had introduced to him, and “The Humble-Bee.” I assume he means both “Woodnotes I” and “Woodnotes II.”

Muir, no indoor naturalist, felt free to edit his mentor. In “Woodnotes II” he underlined “grass” of “Yesterday was a bundle of grass,” adding to its right “a fern” [91/48]. In “Each and All,” Muir pencilled “(thrills)” beneath the textual “pleases” of “He sings the song, but it pleases not now, For I did not bring home the river and sky;—” [14/9].

He also made his own index, a practice he continued throughout his life. On the rear fly leaf at top left Muir has written in pencil “39.” referring to the poem “Alphonso

(Continued on page 3)
John Muir and Emerson's Poems

(Continued from page 1)
of Castle," of which Muir marks with avertical line to the right of the lines:
There, growing slowly old at ease,
No fatter than his planted trees,[39/22]
His only other index item in this volume is:
"43. Up mind thine own aim, and
which refers to the remaining lines of the poem "To J.W.,"
Muir kept in touch with Sarah S. Forbes after she returned to Massachusetts. He sent her
replacements (WPI, Worcester, MA 01609-2280).

The wom condition of the marbled board covers of Muir's volume of Emerson's Poems speaks of contact with rock and earth. Though Emerson missed camping with Muir, his Poems surely did not. Imagine Poems ascending with Muir out of his Yosemite Valley home to the heights of Nevada Fall and Half Dome, accompanying him higher and higher on his grand glacial work. What scenery these Poems saw! What brilliant light they were exposed to! What a baptism they experienced in "God's mountains!" Were they present on the South Fork of the San Joaquin River that late September of 1873, when Muir named a grand peak for Emerson? I wish they could tell us of their memories.

Notes
1. There are several accounts of this meeting. Those by Emerson and Muir and James Bradley Thayer, who accompanied Emerson, are the primary ones. Secondary versions are provided by biographers, such as John McNab, Ralph Waldo Emerson: Days of Empire (Lippincott, 1943), 597-609. A fine recent contribution is by Michael P. Birnza, "Angels guiding gently", Western American Literature, August, 1997, 1-11.
2. See Lawrence Beutel, The Environmental Imagination (Harvard University Press, 1983), 316-318. The date of their meeting is Thursday 8 June 1873, although Thursday 7 June (1873, given Muir was 55 then), not "almost exactly the same age as Thoreau when he died" [46]. They were entertained at the home of John Shepard Keys, whose diary in the Concord Public Library records this event.
3. It was originally published by James Monroe & Company in 1846, though dated 1847 (an English edition preceded this by 13 days). For publication history see Joel Myerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson: A Descriptive Bibliography (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1982), 155-156, and "Note on the Text" by Harold Bloom and Paul Kane in Ralph Waldo Emerson: Collected Poems and Translations (The Library of America, 1994), 570 [Benjamin W. CFAT].

Little of John Muir's collection of Emerson is in the public domain. Self-Reliance (1841) is in the Huntington and Proven Works (1870) is in the Briscoe of Yale University. I am indebted to Stan Huchinson of Sierra Beinecke of Yale University. I am indebted to Stan Hutchinson of Sierra McAleer, Ralph Waldo Emerson: Days of Encounter (Little, Brown, 1984), 119-120, and "Note on the Text" by Harold Bloom and Paul Kane in Ralph Waldo Emerson: Collected Poems and Translations (The Library of America, 1994), 570 [Benjamin W. CFAT].

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The 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 Wesley T. Mott, Department of Humanities & Arts, Emerson Society Papers, 193 Main North, Hamilton, NY 13346.

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 categories are Life ($500), Sustaining ($50), Contributing ($25), and Regular ($10). Please send check payable to The Emerson Society (U.S. dollars only) to Wesley T. Mott, Secretary/Treasurer, Dept. of Humanities & Arts, WPI, Worcester, MA 01609-2280.
In his brief discourse on the subject of the sciences, Emerson speculates if there is a link between Emerson and science. Indeed, Gay Wilson Allen in his book Waldo explores the idea of perspective and point of view. Emerson would continue to speak on the subject and pose questions for his readers and audiences to ponder, while young Einstein would need to study the age of 26 in order to acquire the necessary mathematical background to answer his questions in the form of theories and equations. Facing the waning years of his life, on 31 August 1872, Emerson reflected on aspirations that time could not afford him. I thought today, in these rare seaside woods, that if absolute leisure were offered me, I should run to the College for the Scientific school which offered the best lectures on alphabets of those sciences clear to me. How could leisure or labor be better employed.

A current trend in the scholarship on transcendentalism is the exploration of the scientific writings of Henry David Thoreau. However, we should be careful not to limit science to physics, and which forever changed the science, our lives too are made of elementary quantum.

Another fundamental Emersonian idea that Einstein conveys is that, "The naturalist sees one type under every metamorphosis, and regards a horse as a running man, a fish as a swimming man, a bird as a flying man, a tree as a rooted man" (CW, 2:27). Albert Einstein, probably the greatest genius of our century, took what was true in Emerson’s heart and made it universally accepted by all in the scientific community. As Emerson declared in several of his essays, a true thought or genuine feeling is true in Emerson’s heart and made it universally accepted by all in the scientific community. As Emerson declared in several of his essays, a true thought or genuine feeling is true in Emerson’s heart and made it universally accepted by all in the scientific community.

**Note:**


3. Cited parenthetically hereafter as CW.

**PROSPECTS.**

American Literature Association Conference

The Ralph Waldo Emerson Society will present two panels at the tenth annual conference of the American Literature Association in Baltimore, Maryland, on Friday, 28 May. Both sessions will be held in Maryland E.

**SESSION I—1:20-2:35 p.m.**

**Emerson and His Correspondence.**

Chair: Linch C. Johnson (Colgate Univ.)

That Muse—so loved—so wild": Mary Moody Emerson's Letters on the Poetic Calling,” James W. Armstrong (Northwestern Univ.)

"Conversing with Authority: The Question of Emerson's Letters," Sarah Ann Wider (Colgate Univ.)

"Apologies and Silences in Emerson's Letters," William Merrill Decker (Oklahoma State Univ.)

**Panelists:**

Joel Myerson (Univ. of South Carolina) and Ronald A. Merrill Decker (Oklahoma State Univ.)

**SESSION II—2:45-4:00 p.m.**

Emerson and His Correspondents: A Discussion.

Chair: Len Gougeon, (University of Scranton)

Pre-registration fees may be sent to Professor Alfred Bendixen, Executive Director, American Literature Association, Dept. of English, California State University, Los Angeles, CA 90032-8110. Inquiries should be sent to the conference director, Laura Skandera-Trombley, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Coe College, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402; e-mail: lskander@coe.edu; fax: 399-36830.

News from Japan

Hideo Kawasaki, an Emerson Society member from Tokyo, has published Dickens and America (Tokyo: Sairyusha, 1998).

"Re-Forming Emerson": Concord in July

Program Chair and President-Elect Len Gougeon announces that the Emerson Society's annual session in Concord, in conjunction with the Annual Gathering of the Thoreau Society, will be held in July.

"Emerson's Career in Reform and Its Influence, Bringing Forward Previously Unseen Aspects That Will Contribute," Gary L. Collison (Penn State Univ., York): "Theodore of the Civil War," Thursday evening from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m., with a closing discussion of "The Legacy of Reform." Marti was a late-19th-century Cuban poet and revolutionary leader who was deeply involved in the Civil War and the politics of Lincoln's re-election efforts. Joe Thomas (Sam Houston State Univ.) will talk on "Reading Marti: Reading Emerson, the Legacy of Reform."" Marri was a late-19th-century Cuban poet and revolutionary leader who was deeply influenced by Emerson.

The panel will be presented on Friday afternoon, 9 July, time and location to be announced. The topic of Emerson and reform, crucial to the ongoing reevaluation of Emerson's life and thought, is especially timely as the Thoreau Society observes the sesquicentennial of Thoreau's "Resistance to Civil Government" ("Civil Disobedience") at its July meeting.

Pre-registration fees may be sent to Professor Alfred Bendixen, Executive Director, American Literature Association, Dept. of English, California State University, Los Angeles, CA 90032-8110. Inquiries should be sent to the conference director, Laura Skandera-Trombley, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Coe College, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402; e-mail: lskander@coe.edu; fax: 399-36830.

**REVIEW**

The Trials of Anthony Burns: Freedom and Slavery in Emerson's Concord


The passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in September, 1850, was part of a larger legislative effort known as the "Compromise of 1850." The avowed purpose of this legislation was to bring an end to growing tensions between slaveholding and free states and, thereby, to preserve the Union. It had the opposite effect. By turning every citizen in every free state into a Federal slave catcher, the legislation made militants out of pacifists and virtually assured that every attempt to return a fugitive slave would become a cause célèbre. The rendition of Anthony Burns from Boston in the summer of 1854 was one of the most celebrated.

As von Frank states, "The Burns case was the heart of a revolution of the thought of its time. Its effects were to topple a government in Massachusetts, destroy certain political parties, and extemporize others." It was yet one more step toward what Emerson would call "our second revolution," the Civil War.

This masterful and widely researched study unfolds like a Greek tragedy. We all know what is going to happen. The question is, how do we get there? The study is divided into forty-seven chapters, which provide the various strands that will woven into the fabric of the piece. These include thumbnail sketches of the many key figures, background on the complex legal issues involved, outlines of historical, political and social issues, etc. The narrative begins with the arrest of Burns in late May, 1854. News of this arrest sent an electric shock through the milling throngs of Boston. No slave have been returned from that city since the unfortunate case of Thomas Sims three years earlier, and the Vigilance Committee, under the leadership of Theodore Parker, was determined that it would not happen again. A mass meeting called and speeches were made by such notables asHorace Mann, William Henry Channing, Wendell Phillips, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson. For a period of time the would-be defenders of Burns argued over the best way to secure his freedom, some favoring passive resistance, others insisting on the efficacy of armed resistance.

Eventually the latter, largely through the influence of Higginson, prevailed, and an assault was launched against the court house where Burns was being held. In the ensuing melee a Marshal was killed and the assault was repulsed. Burns' supporters then turned to the courts for his defense, but despite the articulate arguments of Richard Henry Dana, Jr., which von Frank opposes in detail, Burns was removed to his captors and, under heavy Federal guard, eventually returned to his "owner" in Virginia. Most citizens of Massachusetts were shocked by this course of events, and their resistance to Federal authority, which was now perceived as largely under the influence of the slaveholding states, hardened in anticipation of further and inevitable conflict.

For Emersonians, one of the most interesting aspects of von Frank's study is the emphasis it places on the influence of Transcendentalism, and Emerson in particular, in formulating this social revolution. Several of the major figures directly involved in the case were Transcendentalists. These include such notables as Theodore Parker, T. W. Higginson, Bronson Alcott. Von Frank insists that it was the tangible influence of Emerson's thought on these major players, and others, which eventually brought them to the forefront in the struggle against slavery. He refers to the abolitionists generally as "romantic reformers" who evince the influence of Emerson and Thoreau in their belief in the superiority of moral law to civil law, and he notes that this "helps to explain why in 1854 the antislavery revolution virtually fell into the hands of the followers of Emerson." Not only was Theodore Parker strongly influenced by Emerson, but other lesser lights "show themselves as responding to, in statement and in action, ... the liberating, progressive quality of Emerson's thought" especially in its opposition to conservative formalism. This, in turn, authorized "a bolder, more lively engagement with the world" (101). Indeed, according to von Frank, because of this development Transcendentalism came to form "the active, articulate core of the 'progressive climate of the time' (106). Add the incendiary influence of the Burns affair, and 'Transcendentalism, deposed as antislavery, becomes revolution'" (261). Ultimately, Emerson was exorcised from the political scene.

The only quibble I have with this very fine study is that, because of its emphasis on events in 1854, it tends to create the impression that Emerson was less active than in the antislavery movement prior to this time. Thus, the author states that Emerson "began in June 1854 to involve himself in such unaccompanied activities as political organization, local committee work, petitioning the governor, and raising funds for Kansas emigrants" (329). In actuality, Emerson was deeply involved in such matters long before 1854. For example, he signed on to many petitions, both state and Federal, beginning in the 1830s. Probably the most famous of these concerned the removal of the Cherokees in 1838 (which also resulted in his famous public letter to President Van Buren). He began his campaign as an anti-slavery orator in earnest in 1844 (his first speech on the topic was in 1837) with his famous "Address on the Emancipation of the Negroes in the British West Indies" and he would speak several more times on the topic before the end of the decade. He also attended many public protest meetings, especially in Concord, regarding such matters as the Cherokee removal, the annexation of Texas, and the expulsion of his neighbor, Samuel Hour, from South Carolina in 1844. Finally, his involvement in the political movement prior to this time was considered important, reached new heights in the spring of 1851 when he actively served as a stump orator in John Gorham Palfrey's unsuccessful bid for a Congressional seat on the Free-soil ticket from Emerson's Middlesex district. It is certainly true, however, that Emerson's antislavery activities accelerated in response to the various events of the 1850s and the Burns case was one of the most significant.

Overall, this is a marvelous study; meticulously researched, superbly written, a major contribution to our understanding of Emerson and his world.

—Len Gougeon

University of Scranton

Spring 1999
David Emerson, Ralph Waldo Emerson’s great-grandson and former president of the Ralph Waldo Emerson Memorial Association, died 1 December 1998 in Elizabeth City, N.C., where he had been living in retirement since 1987. Born in Concord, Massachusetts, he graduated from Harvard College in 1938 and became a fighter pilot in the Army Air Corps during World War II. After the war he worked for the investment firm of J. M. Forbes & Co. in Boston, eventually becoming a partner. Devoted to his birthplace, he served in many capacities in Concord town affairs and was one of the co-founders of the Concord Land Conservation Trust.

Older Emersonians will remember his commitment to the various projects which, beginning in the 1950s, began to publish textually reliable editions of the manuscripts of his famous ancestor. Disclaiming any particular aptitude for literature or philosophy himself, he nevertheless encouraged and supported the efforts of two generations of scholars to make the letters, lectures, journals and notebooks of Emerson available to both specialists and the wider public. Every summer from the 1960s through the early 1980s he invited those Emersonians who were staying in Cambridge to join him for an extended lunch in one or another of his favorite restaurants in Boston, where his genial spirit reflected the well-known courtliness of his great-grandfather. What Emerson says of the gentleman in “Manners,” that “the word denotes good-nature or benevolence: manhood first, and then gentleness,” that a gentleman “is good company for pirates, and good with academicians,” will always serve, to the academicians who knew him in those days, as an apt description of David Emerson.

—Ralph H. Orth

David Emerson died 1 December 1998 at his home in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, where he retired several years ago. He and his wife, Mary, built a home on the Great Dismal Swamp, far removed culturally and geographically from their home on the Concord River. They moved there partly for the seclusion and partly to be near Kitty Hawk.

David was a great-grandson of Ralph Waldo Emerson, though it was later in life that he developed a keener interest in his lineage. He was proud of his ancestry but he felt hampered by it. He often thought he was asked to serve or honored because of his great-grandfather, not because of his merits.

David was a man of conservative politics and values. Once in a conversation about the Revolution I mentioned his ancestor, William, as having been chaplain to the Minutemen. David replied that had he been alive then, he would have been on the other side.

He was a kindly man. At the centenary commemoration of RW’s death (David always referred to him by his initials) he came across a man from Australia who had come to Concord to attend the ceremonies. David invited him to join the family and intimate friends for dinner at the Emerson House.

David was a modest man and enjoyed the stories and opinions of others more than his own. He had a splendid self-effacing humor and laughed heartily. He was devoted to his family, his Navion airplane, and a variety of sports. He was a refined man of easy tastes; sometimes his Concord homestead more resembled a menagerie. He enjoyed working around the land and tinkering with his airplane. He spoke little of his own accomplishments.

He was active in Concord town affairs in a variety of activities. He was especially interested in conservation issues.

David was patriotic and proud that his family had so strong a part in the history of the country. It was a sad part of his life that the Emersons had lost a son in every war, including his own son, William, in the Vietnam War.

David is survived by his wife, Mary, four daughters, three sons, a sister and a brother. He was a life-long member of the First Parish in Concord, where memorial services were held.

David inherited a vast cultural tradition and he did well by it. He welcomed strangers, gave to causes without attribution, and was open to all opinions except sham and hypocrisy.

—Frank Schulman