

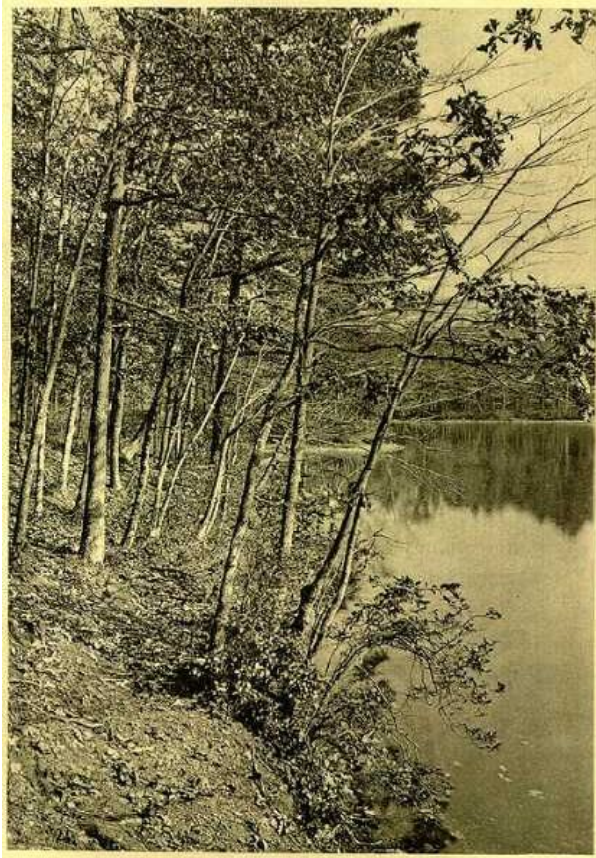
Henry David Thoreau

1817-1862



- Born second son and third child of John and Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau in 1817
- Growing up was very close to his older brother John
- Attended Harvard College

Influences



- While at Harvard read Nature by Emerson
- He and his brother took a trip along Merrimack and Concord Rivers
- The two taught school for several years
- Brother died suddenly in 1842

Writing of Walden



- Retired for two year, two months and two days to a cabin he built on Walden Pond
- Took manuscript through seven drafts
- Did not sell particularly well during his lifetime

Thoreau's Ideas



- Anticipated the crises that were to arise in the following centuries
- Opposed slavery vehemently
- Believed in the necessity of civil disobedience

Ideas Con't.



- Opposed destruction of environment
- A man of his time, but also of our time
- Walden is rich and complex, drawing on Thoreau's wide and deep reading of world literature

Other Works



- Kept an elaborate and detailed journal
- Wrote Civil Disobedience, a tract justifying one's acts against a government that is unjust
- A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers

Influence



- Thoreau died at the age of 44 from tuberculosis, the scourge of his family
- He is widely held to be one of the great American writers, influencing such thinkers as Martin Luther King and Mahatma Ghandi