

but endorsing the principle of self-defense . . . was in fact the same position that Williams had taken.”<sup>29</sup> Tyson explains that Williams supported a “flexible” resistance, encouraging non-violent tactics while also supporting the necessary use of violence. In fact, in March 1960, Williams led sit-ins at the local Jones’s Drug Store and was promptly arrested and forced into jail. Similar to Thoreau’s belief that prison is “the true place for a just man,” Williams considered himself “honored,” and later recalled, “I have never felt prouder in my life.”<sup>30</sup>

As the similar stances of Williams and King demonstrated, the “great debate” was not a battle between two different interpretations of Thoreau’s political writings. In nearly two decades of political writing, from “Resistance to Civil Government” to “The Last Days of John Brown,” Thoreau was consistent in his call for conscientious opposition to injustice. What mattered for Thoreau was the moral imperative to take action, not the form of the resistance. As he explained in “A Plea for Captain John Brown,” “The question is not about the weapon, but the spirit in which you use it.”<sup>31</sup> Thoreau was not, as my textbook had depicted him, strictly a believer in tax resistance, protests, strikes, and sit-ins. With his unwavering proclamations of the morality and power of resistance to unjust laws, Thoreau inspired the militant resister and the pacifist reformer alike in the belief that “Action from principle,—the perception and the performance of right,—changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary.”<sup>32</sup>

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Susan E. Gallagher is Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and a member of the Board of Directors of the Thoreau Society. The quote is from Robert F. Williams, *Negroes with Guns* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), 83.

<sup>2</sup> Robert F. Williams, “Is Violence Necessary to Combat Injustice? For the Positive: Williams Says ‘We Must Fight Back,’” *The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> Williams, *Negroes With Guns*, 83.

<sup>4</sup> Henry David Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government,” *Reform Papers*, ed. Wendell Glick (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 73.

<sup>5</sup> Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government,” 84.

<sup>6</sup> Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government,” 76, 77.

<sup>7</sup> Philip Van Doren Stern, *The Annotated Walden* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1970), 80.

<sup>8</sup> Thoreau, “Slavery in Massachusetts,” *Reform Papers*, 106.

<sup>9</sup> Thoreau, “Slavery in Massachusetts,” 106.

<sup>10</sup> Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government,” 64.

<sup>11</sup> Thoreau, “Slavery in Massachusetts,” 106.

<sup>12</sup> Thoreau, “Slavery in Massachusetts,” 108.

<sup>13</sup> Williams, “Is Violence Necessary to Combat Injustice?,” 111.

<sup>14</sup> Williams, “Is Violence Necessary to Combat Injustice?,” 111.

<sup>15</sup> Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 148.

<sup>16</sup> Williams, “Is Violence Necessary to Combat Injustice?,” 112.

<sup>17</sup> Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government,” 67.

<sup>18</sup> Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 155.

<sup>19</sup> Williams, *Negroes with Guns*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Williams, *Negroes with Guns*, xxiv.

<sup>21</sup> Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government,” 80-81.

<sup>22</sup> Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 284.

<sup>23</sup> Thoreau, “A Plea for Captain John Brown,” *Reform Papers*, 117.

<sup>24</sup> Thoreau, quoted in Stern, *The Annotated Walden*, 104.

<sup>25</sup> Anne Braden, *Southern Patriot* (January 1960), quoted in Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 211.

<sup>26</sup> Williams, “Is Violence Necessary to Combat Injustice?,” 112.

<sup>27</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr., “The Social Organization of Non-Violence,” *Eyes on the Prize*, 113.

<sup>28</sup> Anne Braden, *Southern Patriot* (January 1960), quoted in Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 217.

<sup>29</sup> Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 216.

<sup>30</sup> Williams, quoted in Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*, 219.

<sup>31</sup> Thoreau, “A Plea for Captain John Brown,” 133.

<sup>32</sup> Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government,” 72.

www.thoreausociety.org

## The 19th-Century Concord Digital Archive

Amy E. Earhart

Imagine being able to map the travels Thoreau describes in his journal on a particular day. Imagine following a Concord neighborhood through a period of time, visually tracing the movements of people in and out of houses, and quickly locating references to these individuals in particular literary works. These are possibilities that the 19th-Century Concord Digital Archive (CDA) will open to scholars.<sup>1</sup> The CDA is a long-term digital project that gathers cultural records of Concord, Massachusetts, from 1800 to 1865 in an interactive site, encouraging researchers to combine textual and visual materials in new and innovative ways. It aims to facilitate groundbreaking scholarship through unique searchable access to digitized literary and historical materials.

The 19th-Century Concord Digital Archive will make available historical documentation of Concord, Massachusetts, in a free-access digital archive. The materials included in the archive will set the Concord authors in context with groups that have traditionally been underdocumented in textual sources—free African-Americans, Irish immigrants, the poor, and the criminal class. Inspection of the documents identified for inclusion in the archive suggests that the interaction between these multiple groups was far more complex than scholars have realized.

While the archive will include Concord’s well-known nineteenth-century writers (Thoreau among them), its goal is broader than a traditional edition of a particular writer or group of writers. The CDA is a town-based archive that locates particular writers within the context of their environment—their neighbors, their town governance structures, their social milieu, and more. However, the CDA will not perpetuate the “cult of the New England Village,” to use a phrase coined by Lawrence Buell, who argues that towns like Concord functioned “as a social model and as literary and mythic images—thanks partly to the New England influence, in each case—throughout much of America as a whole.”<sup>2</sup> The project seeks instead to reveal the intricate and intertwining relationships of those who lived and wrote in Concord—a unique, specific place—while also inviting the scholar to revisit the concept of the New England village and engage with new and emerging critical approaches to scholarly work.

The inspiration and model for the CDA comes from current work in the digital humanities field. Exemplary projects such as the Walt Whitman Archive and the Rossetti Archive are models of sound scholarly editorial practice applied to open-access digitization of literary documents. My invitation to the 2005 NINES workshop held at the University of Virginia was crucial to the development of the project. Founded by Jerome McGann, NINES (Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-Century Electronic Scholarship) has been developing evaluation processes for digital projects and tools to aggregate use of scholarly

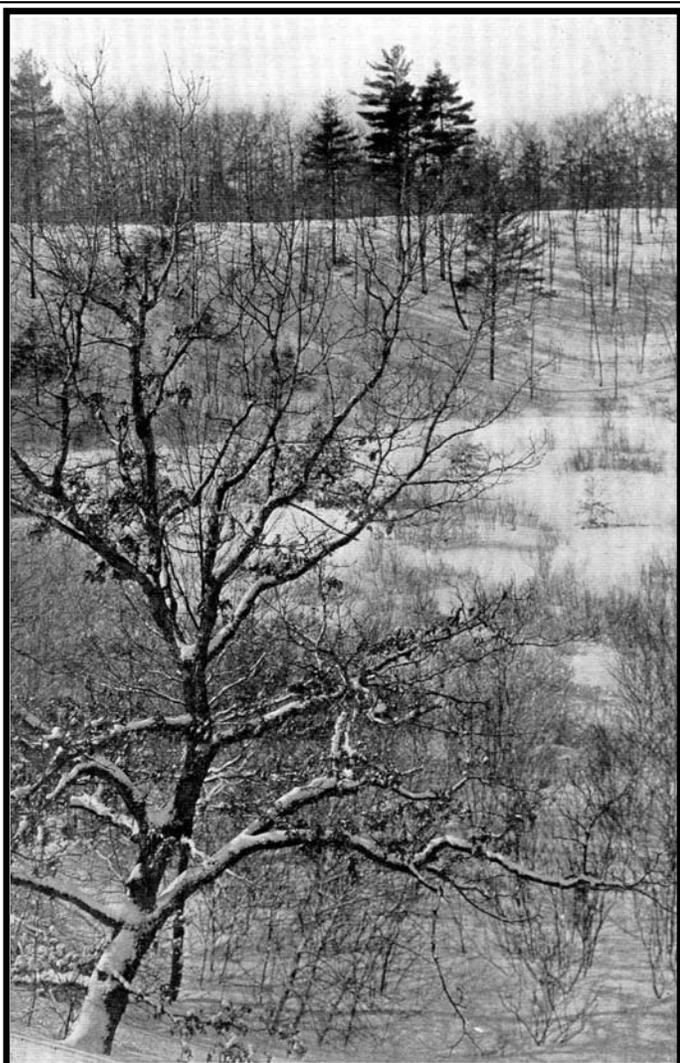


Image by Herbert Wendell Gleason to illustrate the poem  
 “Winter,” from *Through the Year with Thoreau* (1917).

materials. I continue to work with NINES, the leading organization for digital production of nineteenth-century literature, and was recently appointed to its Americanist and Executive boards. Work with NINES encourages best digital scholarly practices and the vetting of materials by peer review.

The CDA has garnered grant support of more than \$40,000 from the National Endowment for the Humanities and other funding sources. We intend to apply for additional external funding necessary to expand the project.

While the archive is founded on a solid foundation of editorial work, it also draws upon new techniques of visualization and mapping. Many scholars who work with Concord discuss the importance of location, physical structures, and landscape within a variety of literary texts, but the way in which these textual materials might be explored in standard print presentations is limited. Too often a digital archive is merely an electronic repository of static texts, rather than a carefully constructed set of data that includes innovative interfaces and/or interpretive visuals. And, given the importance of the geography and landscape of Concord, a visual means of addressing humanities information creates interesting new modes of research.

The development of the CDA would not be possible without the partnership of the Concord Free Public Library, as shaped by Leslie Wilson, Curator of the William Munroe Special Collections there. The Special Collections of the Concord Free Public Library forms the primary archive of Concord history, life, landscape, literature, and people from 1635 to the present time, and as such constitutes the major repository and comprehensive interpretive agency for the town. A recently signed legal contract between the CDA and the Concord Free Public Library allows us to develop and test shared materials, metadata, searches, and interfaces. This collaboration permits creation of searchability across separately owned, separately hosted, and separately maintained digital resources.

Materials to be digitized and made searchable include literary texts, historical documents, maps, photographs, census materials, educational reports, broadsides, physical artifacts, and town records. However, our first efforts have focused on a much smaller set of materials to enable the development of a sound technology infrastructure. Our initial set of texts has focused on Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. We will be adding materials related to the dedication of the cemetery, such as the 1855 broadside “Fourth of July Breakfast and Floral Exhibit,” which includes a song and poem by Frank Sanborn and Emerson’s “Address to the Inhabitants of Concord, at the Consecration of Sleepy Hollow,” plus related broadside materials. We are also transcribing and editing the *Reports of the Selectmen and Other Officers of the Town of Concord* (1841-1865) and Concord census materials, and adding selected historical maps. Connecting a variety of texts and documents with visual materials through technology will result in a rich resource for scholars in many fields.

The project applies standard editorial practices and the blended use of databases and TEI/XML markup of texts, the de facto international standard for encoding texts in the humanities. This means that a keyword search draws upon an editorially constructed set of metadata attached to the internal workings of the text. Rather than the lighter description found in a library database, the metadata process we use allows us to connect all mentions of particular people and places. The ability to find every reference to Sam Staples (Thoreau’s jailer and town dogcatcher), for example, offers clear possibilities. The printed Concord town reports reveal how many dogs Staples caught each year, how large a paycheck he received for such work, his additional town work for hire, and more. One may discover, too, references in Thoreau’s journals and texts to Staples, or to dogs or dogcatchers. Other sources will yield information about Staples’s position in the Middlesex County administrative structure. Through other site features, users will be able to physically identify, place, and visualize Sam’s various Concord homes. By relying upon the computer to complete initial searches, the scholar is free to concentrate on understanding the text, the historical moment, and the literary construction. In addition, our metadata ensures that our materials may also interact with other texts across the Web that are so encoded.

We are currently working with the Map and GIS Collections Librarians at Texas A&M University to position various historical maps within the environment of Google Earth. By overlaying maps, including selected Thoreau surveys in the Concord Free Public Library collections, the scholar is able to envision the past and present in ways previously impossible. Thoreau often included considerable natural and environmental detail in his work. In his 1853 “Plan of a New Road from the N.E. Burying Ground in Concord to William Pedrick’s House” (7i in the CFPL Thoreau

survey collection<sup>3</sup>), he presented not only the topography of the landscape but also the swamps along the projected road. (These would need draining to ensure the roadbed's stability.) When the survey is overlaid on a contemporary map in Google Earth, the user not only sees how the particular environment has shifted over time, but can manipulate the map to explore (through the layering of other images) changes in the built and natural landscape, to study locations from different angles, and more.

In addition to the visual possibilities offered by map overlays, the project will allow the scholar to browse textual materials through typical scholarly interfaces such as an index and keyword search and through a map interface. The map will have various on-and-off keyword buttons, allowing the scholar to sift textual materials through historical and contemporary maps in search of appropriate links and connections, aided by editorially constructed categories. For example, you might look for references to Irishman John Field, who figures large in Thoreau's *Walden*. Relying on keyword buttons to define time period, gender, nationality, profession, and title of literary text, you will locate Field. From that point, you may want to pinpoint his residences over a period of time and to chart the ethnic, class, and professional makeup of his neighbors to see if his social position shifted as he moved from place to place. You might discover that Field was mentioned in a Thoreau journal entry (that for August 23, 1845), and could compare Thoreau's discussion of his neighbor there with his reference in *Walden*. You might also find that Field is listed as living in Lincoln in the 1850 census. Moreover, the search capabilities that we are constructing will permit scholars to select from multiple categories to mix and match search terms, allowing ready identification of pertinent information. The ability to create an archive that works with a broad range of Concord-related sources to accomplish by machine the "grunt work" associated with archive use will aid the scholar in quickly finding the materials most useful for a particular research pursuit.

While we have made progress in developing an initial model for the CDA, there is much more to do. And, as the course of other digital projects suggests, the most successful are those based on input from the scholarly community. I will work at editing and markup of materials related to Concord; the staff of the Concord Free Public Library Special Collections will continue to select and digitize parts of the library's collections for its website<sup>4</sup>; and all parties involved hope that interested scholars will consider participation in the CDA. The Texas A&M University team will remain responsible for developing the technological infrastructure and visualization tools that underpin the project, but there are a number of ways in which individual scholars might contribute. In our practice of scholarship, we often find materials that are related to our work but are unlikely to be published. Sometimes this material is shared among a small scholarly group, but not disseminated across the broader profession. It may be of a "notes and queries" type of interest, useful but inappropriate for full-scale exposition. If you have a broadside, a note, a transcribed newspaper article, or other item related to Concord, we might well be interested in adding it (or the information within it) to the CDA. We will take care to properly credit all materials used, to maintain professional editorial standards, and to add the metadata that will make all such contributions useful for scholarship. Materials will be vetted by the CDA board to ensure the quality of the site.

I recognize that there may not be immediate scholarly reward for participation in the CDA. The project inhabits a digital environment outside the print culture traditionally valued by tenure and promotion committees. However, review and

oversight by the CDA board will hold the project to editorial standards equal to those applied to print scholarship. Further, digitization allows scholarly inquiry that can't be conducted in the print-bound medium. The intellectual rewards of participation in the CDA lie in the development of a searchable body of material that will creatively enhance scholarship. Your participation in this project will not only help us to develop digitized materials of use to the greater scholarly community, but will allow you to explore an important literary town in productively original ways.

If you would like more information about the CDA or to discuss participating in it, please contact Amy Earhart at [aeahart@tamu.edu](mailto:aeahart@tamu.edu). Questions about the Concord Free Public Library's role should be addressed to Leslie Wilson at [lwilson@minlib.net](mailto:lwilson@minlib.net).

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The CDA (as so far developed) is accessible on the Web at <http://www.digitalconcord.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence Buell, *New England Literary Culture: From Revolution through Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 305.

<sup>3</sup> Accessible on the Concord Free Public Library website at [http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau\\_Surveys/7i.htm](http://www.concordlibrary.org/scollect/Thoreau_Surveys/7i.htm).

<sup>4</sup> Note that an antebellum Concord newspaper project is currently underway, as is the preparation of a transcription in electronic form of the diary of John Shepard Keyes.

## *Passions for Nature: A Review*

*Richard J. Schneider*

Rochelle Johnson. *Passions for Nature: Nineteenth-Century America's Aesthetics of Alienation*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009. 300 p.

The nineteenth-century "American Renaissance" is commonly viewed as the beginning of an essentially ecological vision of nature in American culture. Writers such as Emerson and Thoreau are viewed as advocates for greater attention to and greater preservation of nature. In *Passions for Nature*, however, Rochelle Johnson reminds us that attitudes toward nature in nineteenth-century America were more complicated than is generally acknowledged.

The plural in Johnson's title refers to two conflicting American cultural "passions" toward nature. The dominant passion views nature essentially as a metaphor for American experience that focuses nature's value in humanity, an attitude ecocritics have often termed "anthropocentric" or "human-centered." This attitude views nature as an abstraction, not valuable in its own right. The second, less prevalent passion is a counteraesthetic which views nature as having value in itself apart from any use that it might have for humanity, an attitude often termed "biocentric" or "ecocentric."

These conflicting attitudes have been much discussed regarding twentieth-century and current American culture, but Johnson argues that this conflict was present even in American Renaissance cultural figures who seemed most passionate about nature. Uncovering this conflict, she says, "shakes up the typical story of nineteenth-century American passion for nature and draws our attention to some inconsistencies in our familiar story of the ideal relationship to nature" (4).

In her introduction, Johnson establishes the historical context for nineteenth-century Americans' attitude toward nature.

a critical praxis that resists logics of domination and recognizes the interdependency and reciprocity between individuals and their ecological communities.”

Wheeler, Joseph C. “The Thoreau Birth House Restored!”  
*Thoreau Society Bulletin* No. 268 (Fall 2009): 6.



We are indebted to Richard Winslow III for information used in this Bulletin. Please keep your editor informed of items not yet added and new items as they appear.

## Notes & Queries

*Leslie Perrin Wilson*

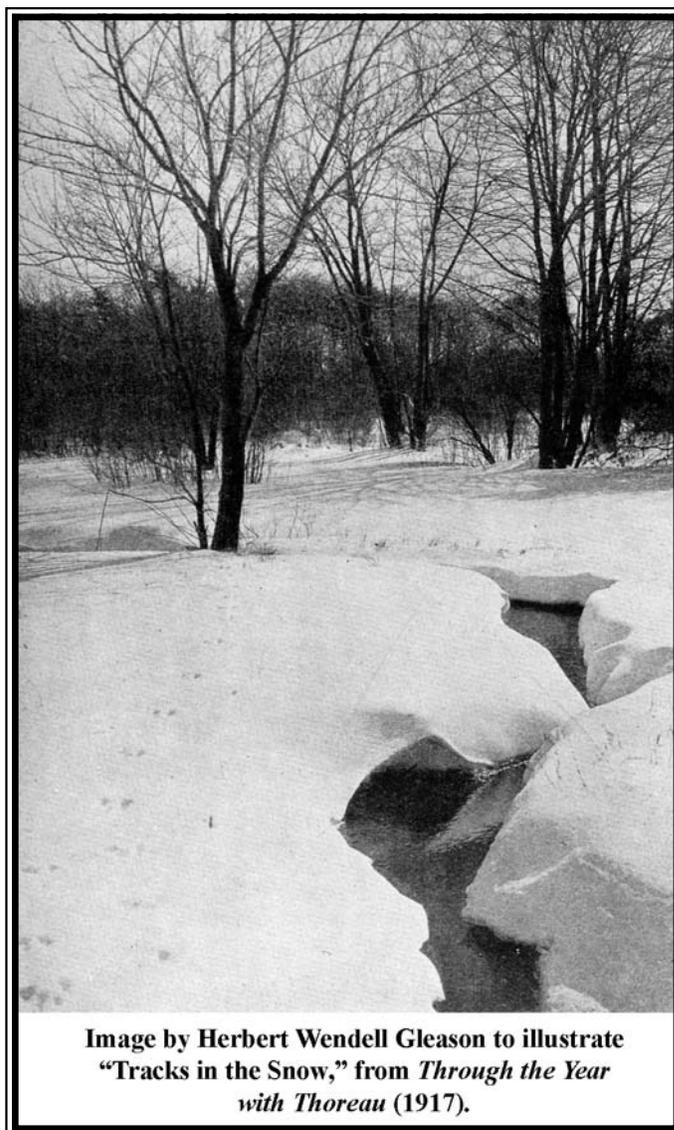
**M**y thanks to all who contributed to *TSB* 269, in particular to those who wrote essays for this issue. **John Hessler** is Senior Cartographic Librarian in the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. **Jan Hokeš** is an English teacher and a translator of Thoreau’s work into Czech. **Jack Doyle** is a high-school senior at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Texas A&M University, **Amy E. Earhart** specializes in nineteenth-century American literature and culture and in digital humanities. **Richard J. Schneider** is Professor Emeritus in English at Wartburg College, author and editor of numerous books and essays on Thoreau, and former editor of the *Concord Saunterer*.

Thanks also to stalwart proofreaders **Dave Bonney**, **Ron Hoag**, and **Bob Hudspeth**.

**Michael Berger** informs us that in a review of books about going-green experiments (*New Yorker*, August 31, 2009), Elizabeth Kolbert refers to Thoreau’s Walden “experiment” (or “stunt”). **Clarence Burley** sends word that in Robert Lanza’s *Biocentrism: How Life and Consciousness are the Keys to Understanding the True Nature of the Universe* (with Bob Berman; published 2009), Emerson and Thoreau are repeatedly cited in explaining (via quantum physics) that matter, space, and time are constructs of consciousness, without objective reality. Clarence also notes the use of Thoreau in the Zippy the Pinhead comic strip for April 27, 2008, online at [http://zippythepinhead.com/Merchant2/merchant.mv?Screen=PROD&Store\\_Code=ZTP&Product\\_Code=27-Apr-08&Category\\_Code](http://zippythepinhead.com/Merchant2/merchant.mv?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=ZTP&Product_Code=27-Apr-08&Category_Code).

Following up on an earlier communication, **Matthew Edney** forwarded an electronic copy of the chapter on Thoreau, cartography, and *The Maine Woods* in Kent Ryden’s *Landscape with Figures* (2001). **Bob Clarke** notes that Douglas Brinkley’s *The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America* includes—among its 800-plus pages—a few mentions of Thoreau. **Bob Hudspeth** has found recent evidence of Thoreau as inspiration for poetry (Anne Shaw’s “Thoreau Dying,” in the Fall 2009 issue of the *Beloit Poetry Journal*; William Heyen’s “Heaven” in the July/August 2009 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*) and for music (*Facets 3*, a CD issued in 2009 by Crystal Records, featuring John Holt playing the trumpet and including “Four Thoreau Songs,” based on texts by HDT).

As part of a sabbatical research project in 2010, **John Kitterman** is looking for information about people who have



imitated Thoreau’s experience by building a replica of his cabin at Walden Pond. They may or may not have lived in it; it may have been for educational or recreational purposes. John plans to interview these people, preferably in person, and include them in a book, along with photos of their cabins. Please send any information to [jkitterman@ferrum.edu](mailto:jkitterman@ferrum.edu) or call (540) 365-4326. (John lives in Virginia and teaches at Ferrum College.)

Your editor received an opinion piece from **Paul Carr** on the demise of the autonomous individual, inspired by the 2009 Annual Gathering. **Elise Lemire**, whose *Black Walden* was published in 2009 by the University of Pennsylvania Press, recently sent word about an article she wrote (“Walden Woods Was a Black Space Before It Was a Green Space”) for *History News Network*, accessible at <http://hnn.us/articles/116046.html>.

**Sandy Petrulionis** has reported a couple of “Thoreau sightings” in the magazine *Alaska* for November 2009, in a photograph accompanying a profile of naturalist Richard Nelson, and an article by Sherry Simpson titled “Going Thoreau.” **Richard Winslow III**, too, sent information about Simpson’s piece, in which Thoreau figures in the description of a three-day stay in a cabin at Eagle River Nature Center. Richard also came across Tess Taylor’s poem “Reading Walden