

identifies a progression in the chosen texts whereby “nonhuman matter” comes to hold “as much import for Thoreau as human—so much so that a distinction between the two ... need hardly be made.” Under the pathetic fallacy, as we recall, external nature dances to the tune of the moods and experiences of the anthropocentric self. Schrimper, we might say, attributes a *pathetic truth* to Thoreau, whereby his natural environment by perceptual osmosis to an extent writes itself in his poetry. The essay includes theory by Jane Bennet, Rochelle Johnson, and Gilles Deleuze, and its discussion of “enmeshedness” may also be compared to that of McGinnis in the same volume (see ref. above).]

Talbot, Shelagh. “Questions Answered about the First Steamboat on Moosehead Lake.” *The Piscataquis Observer*, Dover-Foxcroft, Maine (December 26, 2018): 1, 3. [Article discusses the steamer on which Thoreau travelled in 1853 on Moosehead Lake, *The Moosehead*, and another, *The Amphitrite*, which Thoreau records having seen (see pages 89-90 in *The Maine Woods*, ed. Joseph J. Moldenhauer (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972).]

Thoreau Society Panel at The Modern Language Association Annual Convention, Boston, January 4, 2019. *Thoreau Society Bulletin* 304 (Winter 2019): 14-15. [Chaired by James S. Finley; Respondent Laura Dassow Walls. Report includes abstracts by Jacob Risinger, Ohio State University, “Reframing Thoreau’s Stoic Biography”; by Karah Mitchell,

University of North Carolina, “‘I think I might learn some wisdom of him’: Post-Human Thoreau”; by John Ronan, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, “Thoreau without Emerson?”; and by Stan Tag, Western Washington University, “Who Touches This: Thoreau and the (Auto) Biographical Imperative.”]

Thorson, Robert M. *The Guide to Walden Pond: An Exploration of the History, Nature, Landscape, and Literature of One of America’s Most Iconic Places*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018. Reviewed by Corinne H. Smith in *Thoreau Society Bulletin* 304 (Winter 2019): 12-13.

West, Michael. “Teaching Thoreau Together with Robert Frost.” *Thoreau Society Bulletin* 304 (Winter 2019): 8-9. [West discusses five decades of teaching Thoreau on his own and in comparison to other writers. Of the pairing mainly discussed, West writes: “In prickly eccentricity Thoreau rivalled Frost. But students sensed in him an integrity that eluded them in the poet, compelling a grudging respect even in many with vastly different goals and only modest interest in nature.”]



We are indebted to Michael Berger, Mark Gallagher, Scot Miller, Glenn H. Mott, and Richard E. Winslow III for contributions to the present list. Please keep your bibliography editor informed of items not yet added and new items as they appear (henrik.otterberg@lir.gu.se).

President’s Column: Thoreau Society Welcomes Penobscot Nation

by Ron Hoag

Looking much as Thoreau described it at the end of *The Maine Woods*, Joseph Polis’s house, a private residence closed to the public, still stands on Indian Island. Down the road, Joseph Attean’s gravestone adorns a small cemetery. Elsewhere on the island, near the Penobscot River itself, an outdoor kiosk illustrates and annotates “The Thoreau-Wabanaki Trail.” At the trail’s July 2007 dedication in Greenville, Maine, beside Moosehead Lake, the Thoreau Society was represented by our current Executive Director. Since then many canoers and hikers have followed this trail, including, in May 2014, Penobscots, Thoreauvians, and others on a 16-day journey commemorating the sesquicentennial of Thoreau’s book. This trip was featured on *CBS Sunday Morning* and in an expansive *Yankee Magazine* cover story. On board for the first few days, paddling with Penobscot hunter, story teller, and now “friend forever” Charlie Brown (born Chris Francis but permanently nicknamed by his grandmother), I was one of several Thoreau Society members to participate in this historic event. A day before launching our canoes at Greenville, the “excursion” (to borrow a Thoreau term) began with a tour of Indian Island led by Penobscot historian James Francis. A year later, James, Charlie Brown, and Penobscot material-culture expert Chris Sockalexis gave well-received presentations at the Society’s July Annual Gathering in Concord.

To honor the Thoreau-Penobscot connection in Henry’s time and ours, we are delighted to welcome the Penobscot Nation as a



Photo courtesy of Gayle Moore

James Francis, the Thoreau Society’s new Honorary Advisor, presents at the Thoreau Society’s 2015 Annual Gathering.

group member of the Thoreau Society, joining some 1200 members in all 50 states and more than 20 countries. Along with providing subscriptions to our publications for the cultural center, the Indian Island School, and several community leaders, we invite members of Penobscot Nation to participate in Society-sponsored events according to their tribal and individual interests.

We are especially pleased to name James Francis an Honorary Advisor to the Society, joining eminent biologist E.O. Wilson and distinguished nature writer and ecologist Terry Tempest Williams. With his advisor appointment comes an opportunity to advance

the Thoreau-Penobscot connection through activities in Concord, Maine, and beyond. It was a pleasure to receive James's email reply to my first communication regarding Penobscot Nation membership in the Thoreau Society. He began, auspiciously, "Fellow Thoreauvian."

Increasingly prominent in the Thoreau canon, *The Maine Woods* is now regarded by many as second only to *Walden* in importance. Thoreau's abiding interest in Native Americans—manifested in arrowheads gleaned from field walks and ten "Indian Notebooks" gleaned from voracious reading—endured till his final days and deathbed utterance, "moose" and "Indian." These words allude, almost certainly, to his formative Maine experiences with his wilderness-icon moose and Penobscot guides Attean (spelled Aitteon by Thoreau) and Polis, both called "Joe" in the book.

Attean and Polis lived on Indian Island in the Penobscot River, close to Old Town where legendary canoes are still made, upriver from Bangor and its modern giant-lumberjack statue, on the edge of what was, in Thoreau's day, a significantly logged forest but, in his view, an *essentially* wild Maine Woods. Today, though less logged for economic reasons and less wild due to tourism and encroaching development, the diminished but still-massive woods continue to provide what Thoreau went there for and what visitors go for now, "a wilder experience than the town affords."

On his first Maine Woods trip in 1846, Thoreau climbed Mount Katahdin ("Ktaadn" in his spelling), the Algonquian "Greatest Mountain" defined by him as "Highest Land," where the tracks of moose transcended the marks of man and the Penobscot god Pamola ("Pomola") is always angry with men who trespass on the

sacred mountaintop. Also recorded in "Ktaadn" is Thoreau's first, frustrating attempt to hire an Indian guide. On his second try, in "Chesuncook," he fared better with Joe Attean, who did the job expected but struck him as somewhat less "Indian" than hoped for in demeanor and skills. Thoreau underestimated Attean, regarded highly by both Penobscots, who made him their chief, and by the Yankee loggers with whom he often worked. A leader on a logging crew, Attean died a hero trying to save men in a spring river-drive accident. Finally, on his "Allegash and East Branch" excursion, Thoreau found his own Penobscot hero, Joe Polis, a guide in every sense, whose mark was a bear paddling a canoe and whose skill navigating two cultures made him a tribal spokesman in Augusta, Boston, and Washington, D.C. Historian James Francis told the Annual Gathering audience that Thoreau came to Maine with the idealized "noble savage" in mind but found something else.

Indeed, over three trips and a dozen years, encounters with the living Penobscot nation confounded and enriched Thoreau's thinking about Native Americans and their shared "new" world. Thoreau records that early in his last Maine excursion, "I told [Joe] that in this voyage I would tell him all I knew, and he should tell me all he knew, to which he readily agreed." *All* is a lot to ask, but clearly some of Joe Polis did rub off on Thoreau, leaving him—and his readers—better for the experience. Presumably Joe himself got more than money from his exchanges with Henry. In any event, a closer relationship between the Thoreau Society and the Penobscot Nation has precedent and promise for all concerned.

• **Ron Hoag** is the president of the Thoreau Society.

Notes from Concord

by *Michael Frederick*

In the spring of 1838, Henry and John Thoreau engineered their boat, *Musketaquid*, and later that summer they embarked in it for New Hampshire and Mount Washington, Agiocochook, "the place where the spirit dwells." As spring evenings begin to last longer and grow warmer here in Concord, I'm reminded of July days when Society members gather here for festivities in honor of their hero, Henry Thoreau. This year we are focusing on "Engineering Thoreau: Nature, Technology, and the Connected Life." We will consider Thoreau's interest in mechanical systems, ecosystems, and the endless connections his example continues to inspire.

The Dana S. Brigham Memorial Keynote Address features another Henry, Henry Petroski, professor of civil engineering and history at Duke University. He will be discussing "Engineering Before and During the Time of Thoreau." The keynote will foster continued interest in comparative studies of Thoreau and offer us new insights into his engineering mindset.

Following the keynote address, the Society will recognize the late poet Mary Oliver, who was the recipient of the 2019 Thoreau Prize for Literary Excellence in Nature Writing. We will be joined by Deborah Cramer, author of the award-winning *The Narrow Edge: A Tiny Bird, an Ancient Crab, and an Epic Journey*, who will address the Society in memory of Oliver's work as a poet.

The Annual Gathering schedule can be viewed at ThoreauSociety.org under "Events." Reviewing the schedule and deciding which events to attend can be a daunting task. But

whether you are coming for the first time or have been many times before, this year's program will have something for all. Among the usual complement of excellent papers and panel presentations, here are some highlights:

Walks will take place over four days, led by veteran guides Peter Alden, Robert Thorson, Henrik Otterberg, Bob Young, and Corinne Smith. Deborah Medenbach will again be guiding paddlers Sunday morning on the Concord and Sudbury rivers.

Theater, music, and film programs are scheduled beginning Wednesday evening with plays written by Tammy Rose and Michael Sperber. Sinton Stranger will lead a Japanese tea ceremony in the Thoreau Room, a section of the Colonial Inn where Henry's aunts ran a boarding house. On Friday evening we will have a brilliant musical performance by UK native Helen Sherrah-Davies, a five-string violinist, composer, and professor of Harmony at Berklee College of Music. Saturday evening after our book signing, all are welcome to "bring your own instrument" for our impromptu music circle. Sunday concludes with a screening of "Henry Thoreau: Surveyor of the Soul" and a panel discussion with the filmmaker, Huey, and Thoreau biographer Laura Dassow Walls.

The Gathering is a community effort, and we are grateful to the partners who help make this year's events possible, including: Association for Literature and the Environment, Concord Free Public Library, Concord Museum, Innermost House Foundation, Louisa May Alcott Society, Margaret Fuller Society, Orchard House, Ralph Waldo Emerson Society, Thoreau Farm, Thoreau Prize, and the Walden Woods Project.

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