Chronology

1837:

Thoreau graduates from Harvard at twenty, comes home to Concord, and looks for a career. Probably begins a journal.

1838:

Gives his first lecture before the Concord Lyceum, thus initiating a practice that was to have an important effect on his writing.

1839:

With his brother John, embarks on a “fluvial excursion” along the Concord and Merrimack, and gather material for The Week.

1840

Makes his bow as a poet: the Transcendentalist Dial prints his lyric about Edmund Sewall.

1841

As handyman and friend, takes up residence with the Emersons. Is attracted to Linda Emerson.

1842

Publishes in eh Dial which carries nine of his best poems and his essay “Natural History of Massachusetts”

1843

Leaves Emerson’s home to act as a tutor to Emerson’s nephew at Staten Island and to try his luck with the New York literary market. More publications of essays and poems.

1845:

Goes to live in a hut beside Walden Pond. Commences his period of greatest literary productivity.

1846

Travels to Main; gathers some of the material later to go into The Maine Woods.

1847.

Ends Walden experiment; resumes residence at Emerson home.

1849:

Thoreau’s first book, the Week, and most influential essay, “Civil Disobedience,” published.

1854

Walden or Life in the Woods published.

1857

Fight over slavery intensifies; Thoreau meets John Brown and is deeply impressed by him.

1860

More essays, including two on Brown are printed.

1862

Dies of tuberculosis on spring.