Chronology

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| 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. |