

Henry David Thoreau's visits to Boxborough

by Alan Rohwer

There are three documented visits by Henry David Thoreau to Boxborough:

1. Return from Wachusett - 1842
2. Inches Woods visit - November 9, 1860
3. Inches Woods / chestnut visit - November 16, 1860

A map is included which plots the routes of Thoreau's 1860 visits as reconstructed from his journals.

1. Return from Wachusett - 1842

The first visit was a "pass through" on July 19 or 20, 1842 on his return from his trip to Mt. Wachusett. As documented in "A Walk to Wachuset" in Thoreau's Excursions one can infer that he returned from spending the night in Still River (Harvard) traveling through Boxborough on the Union Turnpike (Mass. Ave.) on his way back to Concord. This is of interest because he would have passed through the middle of Inches Woods, which he returned to visit in 1860.

Inches Woods

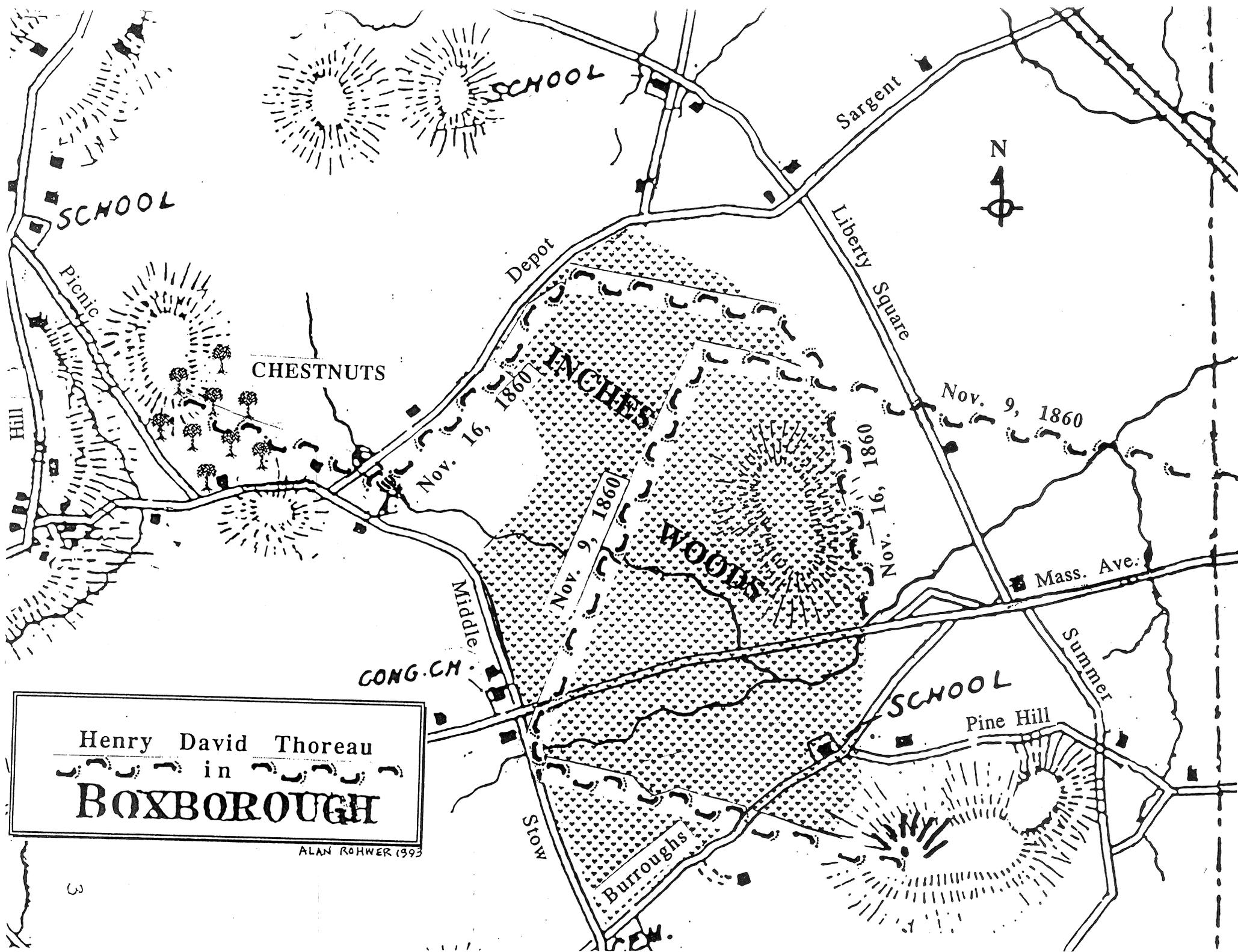
Thoreau made two visits to Boxborough and Inches Woods in November 1860. Excerpts from Thoreau's descriptions of these visits is contained in Boxborough's 1983 Bicentennial Town History. Inches Woods is described as "just the most remarkable and memorable thing in Boxboro." Thoreau in his lengthy journal entries remarked: "The handsomest thing I saw in Boxboro was this noble stand of oak wood. I doubt if there is a finer one in Massachusetts. Let her keep it a century longer, and men will make pilgrimages to it from all parts of the country..." And further: "Though a great many of those white oaks of the Inches Wood branch quite as low and are as spreading as pasture oaks, yet generally they rise up in stately columns thirty to fifty feet, diminishing very little... When, in the midst of this great oak wood, you look around, you are struck by the great mass of gray-barked wood that fills the air.... consisting of sturdy trees from one to three and even four feet in diameter, whose interlacing branches form a canopy... A peculiarity of this, as compared with much younger woods, is that there is little or no underwood and you walk freely in every direction, though in the midst of a dense wood. You walk, in fact, under the wood.... Seeing this, I can realize how this

country appeared when it was discovered. Such were the oak woods which the Indian treaded hereabouts."

2. November 9, 1860

From reading his complete journal entries one is able to draw a very accurate map of Thoreau's visits. A copy of this map is attached, along with portions of text of his republished journals.

From his entry of November 9, 1860, "We walked mostly across lots... some one and three quarters miles from West Acton, whither we went by train... to a point about a half mile north of the turnpike [Massachusetts Avenue]." "[This route would have taken him across what is now Reed Farm Estates and brought him across Liberty Square Road near the Henderson Inches sawmill site on Guggins Brook, which he may have visited]. Further he would have arrived just north northeast of Blanchard School at the northern end of the drumlin known locally as Hager Hill. It is near the end of Box Mill Road on Town land or in the southern end of the Liberty Hills development off Joseph Rd. From here Thoreau states the woods extended another half mile north, putting it up to or just beyond Depot Road, on the south shoulder of Patch Hill near the Liberty Square Road intersection. Next Thoreau "walked in the midst of the wood... southwesterly by west... about three quarters of a mile, crossing the turnpike {Mass. Ave.} west of the maple swamp..." This course put him on the western edge of the Guggins Brook wetlands, [crossing near the present Highway Barn or Apple Country Market] and ending up on Stow Road near the present location of the Boxborough Marketplace. This plots exactly to Stow Road which was the western boundary of Inches' land holdings! From here Thoreau describes walking "south by east nearly as much more...[three quarters mile]" to a vantage point "from a bare hill". This plots to a point near the summit of Pine Hill above Cedarwood Lane. From storm falls, pines on that portion of Pine Hill are presently approximately 75 years old, making it quite feasible that the hill was bare in Thoreau's time. In addition, this land is part of the old Burroughs Farm, one of the oldest farms in town (site of a colonial tavern) and very likely cleared in Thoreau's time. From this view point, which Thoreau says is "at the south end [of the woods]" he further describes the woods extent: "at least a mile and a half from north to south by a mile to a mile and a quarter possibly from east to west." These dimension correspond nicely with the Burroughs Road to Depot Road and Stow/Middle Road to Liberty Square Road



Henry David Thoreau
in
BOXBOROUGH

ALAN ROHWER 1993

descriptions passed on to us by oral tradition, as well as the bounds of Inches land from the deed maps.

3. November 16, 1860

Thoreau returns on November 16, 1860 proceeding "first from Harvard turnpike [Mass. Ave.] at where Guggins Brook leaves it... due north along near the edge of the old wood... to the cross road, a strong mile [to Depot Rd]. He proceeds along Depot Road describing the woods and trees as he proceeds. He ends up eventually walking "across open land to the high hill northeast of Boxboro Center [off Picnic Street]. He finds: "In this neighborhood are many very large chestnuts... "beyond a new house, 13 11/12 feet in circumference..." plus other specimens. "These nine (or thirteen) specimens are evidently the relics of one chestnut wood of which a part remains and makes the northeast part of Inches Woods..." These were remarkable trees which now only remain in Thoreau's writings. Any of these which survived the ax would have fallen to disease earlier in this century.

What brought Thoreau to Boxborough in 1860?

Thoreau came to Boxborough doing natural history research, in particular observations on the succession of forests. His efforts have been published as Faith in a Seed by Henry David Thoreau, edited by Bradley P. Dean. Boxborough and Inches Woods are each mentioned in this book. Observations from his 1860 visit surely formed the basis of these references.

On November 10, 1860, Thoreau lamented:

"How little there is on an ordinary map! How little, I mean, that concerns the walker and the lover of nature. Between those lines indicating roads is a plain blank space in the form of a square or triangle or polygon or segment of a circle, and there is naught to distinguish this from another area of similar size and form. Yet the one may be covered, in fact, with a primitive oak wood, like that of Boxboro, waving and creaking in the wind, such as may have the reputation of a county, while the other is a stretching plane with scarcely a tree on it. The waving woods, the dells and glades and green banks and smiling fields, the huge boulders, etc., etc., are not on the map, nor to be inferred from the map." It is Hoped that the map in this Web site, along with the words written here will help rest Henry's lament.

Henderson Inches Millsite

The Henderson Inches sawmill site, on Guggins Brook where it crosses under Liberty Square is marked by a plaque and stone marker. It commemorates the Woods, the millsite and Thoreau's visit to Boxborough.

References:

Boxborough: Portrait of a Town by Talmadge, West, Calhoun & DeStefano, published by the Boxborough Bicentennial Commission, 1983.

Excursions, by Henry David Thoreau, Vol. 9, pp. 163-186, Thoreau's Works, Concord Public Library, 1884.

Thoreau's Journals pp. 223-249, Houghton-Mufflin, 1906.

Faith in a Seed, manuscript by Henry David Thoreau, edited Bradley P. Dean, Shearwater Books, Island Press, 1993.

Submitted by Alan B. Rohwer
Boxborough Historical Society, 1998.

in woodland paths or in pastures, as if an industrious farmer or a simpler had been collecting it by handfuls and had dropped his parcels thus. The fact is that they grow up many stems close together, and their branches are so interlaced as not to be easily separated; so that the wind operates the more powerfully and breaks them all off together at the ground, and then, on account of their form, these parcels are deposited exactly bottom up commonly, and you see three or four to fifteen or more stems within a diameter of four or five inches, looking just as if somebody had plucked them and laid them together.¹ I also see the fly-away grass going over a wall or rock from time to time.

The *Salix sericea* has just blackened the ground with its leaves.

These are annual phenomena.

Dr. (?) Manasseh Cutler, in the first volume of the Boston Academy's Reports for 1785, speaks of whortleberries only in the half-converted or disparaging way in which the English do, — and have reason to, — saying that children love to eat them in milk. His eyes had not been opened to their significance; they were without honor in their native country. But I have no doubt that he ate them himself in secret.

Nov. 9.² 12 M. — To Inches' Woods in Boxboro.

This wood is some one and three quarters miles from West Acton, whither we went by railroad. It is in the east part of Boxboro, on both sides of the Harvard

¹ So these seeds and fly-away grass seed dispersed.

² *Vide* also Nov. 16.

turnpike. We walked mostly across lots from West Acton to a part of the wood about half a mile north of the turnpike, — and the woods appeared to reach as much further north. We then walked in the midst of the wood in a southwesterly by west direction, about three quarters of a mile, crossing the turnpike west of the maple swamp and the brook, and thence south by east nearly as much¹ more, — all the way in the woods, and chiefly old oak wood. The old oak wood, as we saw from the bare hill at the south end, extends a great deal further west and northwest, as well as north, than we went, and must be at least a mile and a half² from north to south by a mile to a mile and a quarter³ possibly from east to west. Or there *may* be a thousand² acres³ of old oak wood. The large wood is chiefly oak, and that white oak, though black, red, and scarlet oak are also common. White pine is in considerable quantity, and large pitch pine is scattered here and there, and saw some chestnut at the south end. Saw no hemlock or birch to speak of.

Beginning at the north end of our walk, the trees which I measured were (all at three feet from ground except when otherwise stated): a black oak, ten feet [in] circumference, trunk tall and of regular form; scarlet oak, seven feet three inches, by Guggins Brook; white oak, eight feet; white oak, ten feet, forks at ten feet; white oak, fifteen feet (at two and a half feet, bulging very much near ground; trunk of a pyramidal form;

¹ [Queried in pencil.]

² Four or five hundred.

³ *Vide* [p. 227].

Houghton Mufflin, 1906

first branch at sixteen feet; this just north of turnpike and near Guggins Brook); white oak, nine feet four inches (divides to two at five feet); white oak, nine feet six inches (divides to two at five feet); red oak, eight feet (south of road); white pine, nine feet; a scarlet or red oak stump cut, twenty and a half inches [in] diameter, one hundred and sixty rings.

I was pleased to find that the largest of the white oaks, growing thus in a dense wood, often with a pine or other tree within two or three feet, were of pasture oak size and even form, the largest commonly branching low. Very many divide to two trunks at four or five feet only from the ground. You see some white oaks and even some others in the midst of the wood nearly as spreading as in open land.

Looking from the high bare hill at the south end, the limits of the *old* oak wood (so far as we could overlook it) were very distinct, its tops being a mass of gray brush, — contorted and intertwisted twigs and boughs, — while the younger oak wood around it, or bounding it, though still of respectable size, was still densely clothed with the reddish-brown leaves.

This famous oak lot — like Blood's and Wetherbee's — is a place of resort for those who hunt the gray squirrel. They have their leafy nests in the oak-tops.

It is an endless maze of gray oak trunks and boughs stretching far around. The great mass of individual trunks which you stand near is very impressive.

Many sturdy trunks (they commonly stand a little aslant) are remarkably straight and round, and have so much regularity in their roughness as to suggest smooth-

ness. The older or largest white oaks were of a rougher and darker bark than Wetherbee's and Blood's, though often betraying the same tendency to smoothness, as if a rough layer had been stripped off near the ground.

I noticed that a great many trunks (the bark) had been gnawed near the ground, — different kinds of oak and chestnut, — perhaps by squirrels.

Nov. 10. Cheney gives me a little history of the Inches Woods. He says it was a grant to Jekil (John (?) Jekil) by the crown, and that it amounted to half of Boxboro as well as much of Stow and Acton. That Jekil had a summer house where Squire Hosmer's house stands in Stow, before the Revolution, but at that time withdrew into Boston. It was a great event when he used to come out to Stow in the summer. Boxboro was a part of Stow then. Mr. Hosmer had charge of the lands for Inches, and the kitchen of his house was partly the old summer house of Jekil, and he also remembered an old negro named York, who had been a slave of Jekil, and he, the negro, said that twenty of the thirty acres bought of Inches by Hosmer, behind his house, was once fenced in with a paling or picket fence ten or fifteen feet high, and formed a park in which Jekil kept deer. The neighbors used to come and peep through the paling at the deer. Henderson Inches, hearing of these lands about the time of the Revolution, went to the heirs of Jekil and purchased the whole tract quite cheap, and they had been a fortune to the family since. Many farms have been made of parts of the wood, and thousands of dollars' worth of wood have been sold at a time.

Had realized maybe \$150,000 from it. Cheney had heard that there were about four hundred acres of the Inches lands left. Henderson Inches died two or three years ago, and now his heirs wished to sell, but would not divide it, but sell in one body. Ruggles, Nourse, and Mason wished to buy, but not the whole. Except what has been sold, or generally, Inches would not have it cut. He was sharp and stood out for his price, and also liked to keep it. Hence it is a primitive oak wood and said to be the most of one in Massachusetts.

Collier tells me that his sunflower-head (now dried) measures just twenty-one and a half inches [in] diameter, — the solid part.

Most think that Inches Wood was worth more twenty or thirty years ago, — that the oaks are now decayed within. Some have suggested that it would be much for the benefit of Boxboro to have it cut off and made into farms, but Boxboro people answer no, that they get a good deal more in taxes from it now than they would then.

How little there is on an ordinary map! How little, I mean, that concerns the walker and the lover of nature. Between those lines indicating roads is a plain blank space in the form of a square or triangle or polygon or segment of a circle, and there is naught to distinguish this from another area of similar size and form. Yet the one may be covered, in fact, with a primitive oak wood, like that of Boxboro, waving and creaking in the wind, such as may make the reputation of a county, while the other is a stretching plain with scarcely a tree on it. The waving woods, the dells and glades and green

banks and smiling fields, the huge boulders, etc., etc., are not on the map, nor to be inferred from the map.

That grand old oak wood is just the most remarkable and memorable thing in Boxboro, and yet if there is a history of this town written anywhere, the history or even mention of this is probably altogether omitted, while that of the first (and may be last) parish is enlarged on.

What sort of cultivation, or civilization and improvement, is ours to boast of, if it turns out that, as in this instance, unhand-selled nature is worth more even by our modes of valuation than our improvements are, — if we leave the land poorer than we found it? Is it good economy, to try it by the lowest standards, to cut down all our forests, if a forest will pay into the town treasury a greater tax than the farms which may supplant it, — if the oaks by steadily growing according to their nature leave our improvements in the rear?

How little we insist on truly grand and beautiful natural features! How many have ever heard of the Boxboro oak woods? How many have ever explored them? I have lived so long in this neighborhood and but just heard of this noble forest, — probably as fine an oak wood as there is in New England, only eight miles west of me.

I noticed young white pines springing up in the more open places and dells. There were considerable tracts of large white pine wood and also pine and oak mixed, especially on the hills. So I see that the character of a primitive wood may gradually change, as from oak to

pine, the oaks at last decaying and not being replaced by oaks.

Though a great many of those white oaks of the Inches Wood branch quite as low and are nearly as spreading as pasture oaks, yet generally they rise up in stately columns thirty or forty or fifty feet, diminishing very little. The black and red and scarlet oaks are especially columnar and tall, without branches for a long distance, and these trees are shaped more in their trunks like an elm than a pasture oak. They commonly stand aslant at various angles. When, in the midst of this great oak wood, you look around, you are struck by the great mass of gray-barked wood that fills the air. The leaves of these old oaks are now fairly fallen, and the ground is densely covered with their rustling reddish-brown scales.

A peculiarity of this, as compared with much younger woods, is that there is little or no underwood and you walk freely in every direction, though in the midst of a dense wood. You walk, in fact, *under* the wood.

The wood not having been cut to any extent, and the adjacent country being very little occupied, I did not notice a single cart-path where a wheel-track was visible, — at most a slight vista, and one footpath. I knew that I was near the southwest edge by the crowing of a cock.

This wood is said to have been a great resort for pigeons. We saw one large pigeon-place on the top of the hill where we first entered it. Now used.

Seeing this, I can realize how this country appeared when it was discovered. Such were the oak woods which the Indian threaded hereabouts.

Such a wood must have a peculiar fauna to some extent. Warblers must at least pass through it in the spring, which we do not see here.

We have but a faint conception of a full-grown oak forest stretching uninterrupted for miles, consisting of sturdy trees from one to three and even four feet in diameter, whose interlacing branches form a complete and uninterrupted canopy. Many trunks old and hollow, in which wild beasts den. Hawks nesting in the dense tops, and deer glancing between the trunks, and occasionally the Indian with a face the color of the faded oak leaf.

Grimes said that he could almost clasp the loins of my lynx as it hung up by the heels before it was skinned; it was so slender there that a man with a large hand could have done it.

Richardson in his "Fauna Boreali-Americana," which I consulted at Cambridge on the 7th, says that the French-Canadians call the Canada lynx indifferently *Le Chat* or *Le Peeshoo*, and Charlevoix falsely calls it *Carcajou*, which is the wolverene, and hence much confusion and error among naturalists. "Seven to nine thousand are annually procured by the Hudson's Bay Company. It is found on the Mackenzie River as far north as latitude 66°." Easily killed by a stroke with a small stick on the back! (?) Breeds once a year and has two young. Never attacks man. A poor runner, but a good swimmer. Audubon and Bachman repeat Richardson. According to Pennant, Lawson and Catesby repeat the falsehoods about its dropping from trees on deer, etc.

Near these apparently a black (?) oak, or maybe a chestnut (?), twenty inches [in] diameter and seventy-four rings, but the centre was within four inches of the westerly side.

A white oak standing by the fence west of Spanish Brook dam on Morse's lot, circumference six feet and two twelfths at three feet. Near by a hornbeam a foot and a half [in] circumference at three feet.

J. Baker's pitch pines south of upper wood-path north of his house abundantly confirm the rule of young white pines under pitch pines. That fine young white pine wood west of this is partly of these which were left when the pitch pines were cut.

Baker's hill between farm and Pleasant Meadow, oak (apparently a black), diameter twenty-six, seventy-one rings. The stumps here were cut some five or six years ago and have fifty to sixty rings. Commonly no sprouts from those of this age here.

On top of Mt. Misery, looked again at those old stumps (of the 8th). There are three or four quite plain, just showing themselves above the surface, with rounded, flaky, decaying and crumbling edge, close to the recent stump of the shoot or shoots which sprang from them and which were cut last winter. One of these recent stumps, counted to-night, gives sixty years, but the first two or three are uncertain. Hence this old stump is as old as the century.

There are several perfectly dry and exposed stumps on bare rocky shelves, or else lying on rocks on their sides, quite well preserved and showing the marks of the axe, which I have but little doubt are of the same

age, preserved by being tipped out of the earth many years ago.¹

Am surprised at the very slow growth of some hickory (stumps) along the wall on the top of this hill, — so fine I did not count quite accurately.

One was 10 inches in diameter with	104 rings
“ “ 6½” “	“ about 115 “
“ “ 14½” “	“ 84 “
“ “ 11¾” “	“ 121 “

I think that the oak stumps have lasted unusually long on this hill, on account of their having originally grown slowly here and since been so much exposed to the light and air over and amid the rocks.

Nov. 14. River two feet four inches above summer level (and at height) on account of rain of 10th and 11th and 12th.

The red maple on south edge of Trillium Wood is six feet three inches in circumference at three feet.

Yellow butterflies still.

Almost all holes in and about stumps have nutshells or nuts in them.

Nov. 16. This and yesterday Indian-summer days. P. M. — To Inches Woods.

Walked over these woods again, — first from Harvard turnpike at where Guggins Brook leaves it, which is the east edge of the old wood, due north along near the edge of the wood, and at last more northwest along edge to the cross-road, a strong mile.

¹ Vide account of pine stump, April 5, 1859.

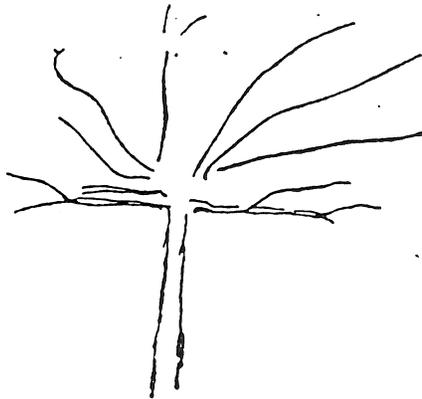
² Have this. Vide Nov. 19th.

I observe that the black, red, and scarlet oaks are generally much more straight and perpendicular than the white, and not branched below. The white oak is much oftener branched below and is more irregular, — curved or knobby.

The first large erect black oak measured on the 9th was by the path at foot of hill southeast of pigeon-place. Another, more north, is (all at three feet when not otherwise stated) ten and a half [feet] in circumference.

There is not only a difference between most of the white oaks within Blood's wood and the pasture oaks without, — the former having a very finely divided and comparatively soft tawnyish bark, and the latter a very coarse rugged and dark-colored bark, — but there is here a similar difference within this wood; *i. e.*, some of the white oaks have a hard, rugged bark, in very regular oblong squares or checkers (an agreeably regular *roughness* like a coat of mail), while others have a comparatively finely divided and soft bark.

I see one white oak shaped like this: —



It happens oftenest here, I think, that the very largest white oaks have the most horizontal branches and branch nearest the ground, which would at first suggest that *these* trees were a different variety from the more upright and rather smaller ones, but it may be that these are older, and for that reason had more light and room and so temptation to spread when young.

Northwesterly from pigeon-place (near base of hill), —

A white oak $6\frac{3}{4}$ in circumference

“ “ “ $8\frac{1}{2}$

“ “ “ $6\frac{1}{2}$

The last one grows close against a rock (some three feet high), and it has grown over the top and sides of this rock to the breadth of twelve and eighteen inches in a thin, close-fitting, saddle-like manner, very remarkable and showing great vigor in the tree.

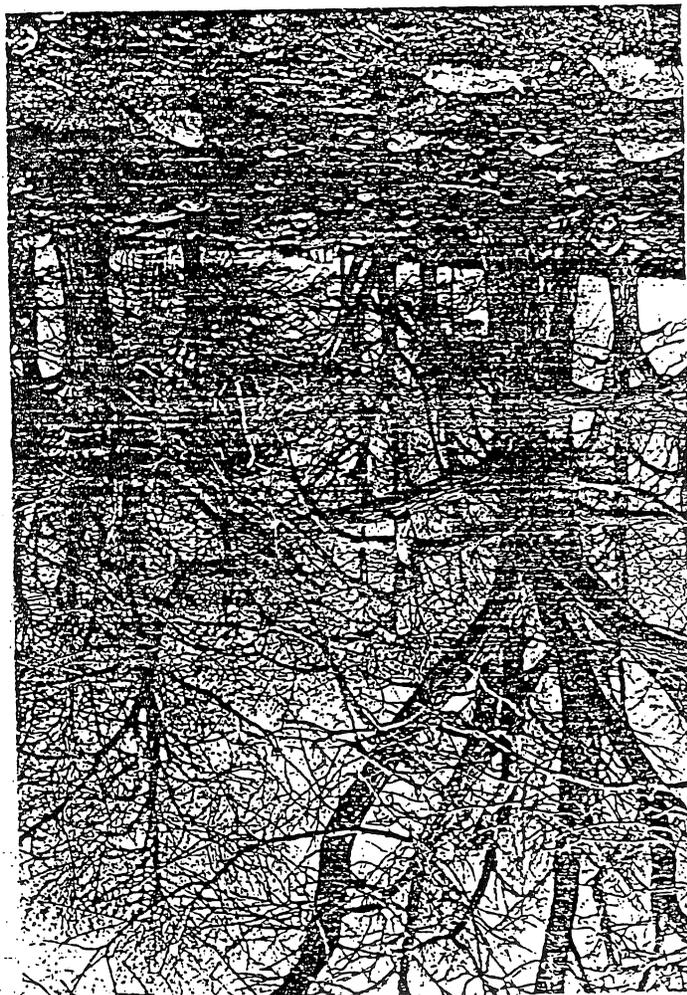
Here, too, coming to water, I see the swamp white oak rising out of it, elm-like in its bark and trunk. Red maples also appear here with them. It is interesting to see thus how surely the character of the ground determines the growth. It is evident that in a wood that has been let alone for the longest period the greatest regularity and harmony in the disposition of the trees will be observed, while in our ordinary woods man has often interfered and favored the growth of other kinds than are best fitted to grow there naturally. To some, which he does not want, he allows no place at all.

Hickories occasionally occur, — sometimes scaly-barked, if not shagbarks, — also black birch and a few little sugar maples.

Still going north, a white pine nine feet [in] circumference.

The wood at the extreme north end (along the road) is considerably smaller. After proceeding west along the road, we next went west by south through a maple and yellow birch swamp, in which a black oak eight feet and four twelfths [in] circumference, a red maple six feet and a half, a black birch seven feet, a black birch eight feet. And in the extreme northwesterly part of the wood, close to the road, are many large chestnuts, — one eleven and three quarters feet [in] circumference with many great knobs or excrescences, another twelve and seven twelfths.

We next walked across the open land by the road to the high hill northeast of Boxboro Centre. In this neighborhood are many very large chestnuts, of course related to the chestnut wood just named. 1st, — along this road just over the north wall, beyond a new house, one $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet in circumference; 2d, 16, a few rods more west by the wall; then, perhaps fifty or sixty rods more west and maybe eight or ten rods north from the road, along a wall, the 3d, $15\frac{2}{3}$; and then, near the road, southwest from this, the 4th, $15\frac{4}{3}$; and some rods further north, toward hill and house of O. and J. Wetherbee, the 5th, $13\frac{7}{3}$; then northeast, in lower ground (?), the 6th, 16 feet, at ground $21\frac{1}{3}$; then, near base of hill, beyond house, the 7th, $16\frac{2}{3}$ at two feet from ground; next, some rods west of the hill, the 8th, $17\frac{8}{3}$ at three feet, at ground $23\frac{1}{3}$; and then, a considerable distance north and further down the hill, the 9th, $13\frac{4}{3}$. (There [were] also four other good-sized chestnuts



on this hillside, with the last three.) Or these nine trees averaged about $15\frac{1}{2}$ feet in circumference. The 3d tree had a limb four or five feet from the ground, which extended horizontally for a rod toward the south, declining a little toward the earth, and this was nine feet in circumference about eighteen inches from the tree. The 7th had a large limb broken off at one foot above the ground on the side, whose stump prevented measuring at the ordinary height. As I remember, the 8th was the finest tree.

These nine (or thirteen) trees are evidently the relics of one chestnut wood of which a part remains and makes the northwest part of Inches Wood, and the trees are all within about a quarter of a mile southeast and northwest, the first two being by themselves at the southeast.

The chestnut is remarkable for branching low, occasionally so low that you cannot pass under the lower limb. In several instances a large limb had fallen out on one side. Commonly, you see great rugged strips of bark, like straps or iron clamps made to bind the tree together, three or four inches wide and as many feet long, running more or less diagonally across the trunk and suggesting a very twisted grain, while the grain of the recent bark beneath them may be perpendicular. Perhaps this may be owing to old portions of the bark which still adhere, being wrenched aside by the unequal growth of the wood. I think that all these old trunks show this.



northwest end. Chestnuts at the northwest and southeast ends.

The bark of the oaks is very frequently gnawed near the base by a squirrel or other animal.

Guggins Brook unites with Heather Meadow Brook, and then with Fort Pond Brook just this side of West Acton, and thus the water of this old oak wood comes into the Assabet and flows by our North Bridge. The seeds of whatever trees water will transport, provided they grow there, may thus be planted along our river.

I crossed the brook in the midst of the wood where there was no path, but four or five large stones had evidently been placed by man at convenient intervals for stepping-stones, and possibly this was an old Indian trail.

You occasionally see a massive old oak prostrate and decaying, rapidly sinking into the earth, and its place is evidently supplied by a pine rather than an oak.

There is now remarkably little life to be seen there. In my two walks I saw only one squirrel and a chickadee. Not a hawk or a jay. Yet at the base of very many oaks were acorn-shells left by the squirrels. In a perfectly round hole made by a woodpecker in a small dead oak five feet from the ground, were three good white oak acorns placed.

In the midst of the wood, west of the brook, is a natural meadow, *i. e.* in a natural state, — a narrow strip without trees, yet not very wet. Evidently swamp white oaks and maples might grow there. The greater part of this wood is strewn with large rocks, more or less flat or table-like, very handsomely clothed with moss

and polyphy. The surface of the ground is finely diversified, there being hills, dells, moraines, meadows, swamps, and a fine brook in the midst of all. Some parts are very thickly strewn with rocks (as at the northwest), others quite free from them. Nowhere any monotony.

It is very pleasant, as you walk in the shade below, to see the cheerful sunlight reflected from the maze of oak boughs above. They would be a fine sight after one of those sticking snows in the winter.

On the north end, also, the first evidence we had that we were coming out of the wood — approaching its border — was the crowing of a cock.

Nov. 17. P. M. — To Blood's woods.

Sawed off a branch of creeping juniper two inches [in] diameter with fifteen rings.

On one square of nine rods in Blood's wood, which seemed more dense than the average, are thirteen sizable trees. This would give about two hundred and thirty to an acre, but probably there are not more than one hundred and eighty to an acre, take the wood through. This is but little more than one to a square rod. Yet this is a quite dense wood. That very solid white oak stump recently sawed in this wood was evidently a seedling, the growth was so extremely slow at first. If I found the case to be the same with the other oaks here, I should feel sure that these were all seedlings and therefore had been preceded by pines or at least some dense evergreens, or possibly birches. When I find a dense oak wood, whether sprouts or