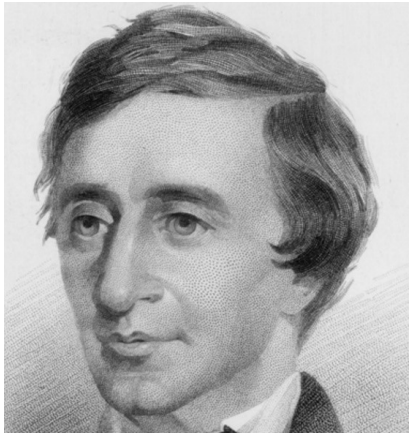
Two Years, Two Months, and Two Days

Walden Pond State Reservation

A Writer's Reflection, Living At The Pond



In 1845, 27 year-old Henry David Thoreau built a simple house on the shore of Walden Pond on land owned by his friend and influential writer Ralph Waldo Emerson. He lived here for two years, two months and two days. This period became transformative for him and, ultimately, a meaningful reflection for us all.

> *"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."*
> *-Henry David Thoreau*

Thoreau bought an old shanty from an Irish laborer and built himself a small 10' x 15' house, moving in on Independence Day 1845.

He had two main purposes in moving to the pond:

- To write his first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, as a tribute to his late brother John, and,
- To conduct an experiment, to see if it were possible to live simply and economically.

While he lived at Walden Pond between July 4, 1845 and September 6, 1847, he took long "saunters" through the woods, and journaled extensively about nature and simple living. These journal entries became his famous book—*Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854). Despite the book's modest success, it brought Thoreau good reviews and a following of admirers. Today, it is considered Thoreau's masterpiece which has influenced people and movements all around the world.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) oversees Walden Pond State Reservation, including over 450,000 acres of state parks, forests, beaches, bike trails, parkways, watershed lands, and dams across the Commonwealth. DCR's mission is to: *Protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural and recreational resources for the well-being of all.*

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