

History Now. The Historians Perspective

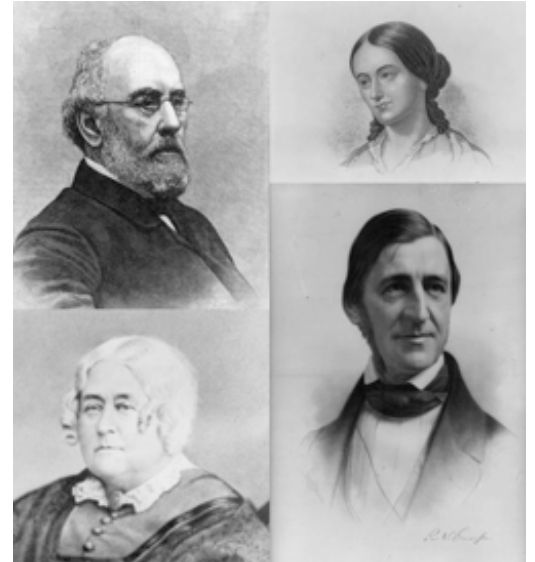
The Historian's Perspective

Transcendentalism and Social Reform

by Philip F. Gura

Those Americans who have heard of American Transcendentalism associate it with the writers Ralph Waldo Emerson and his friend Henry David Thoreau. Asked to name things about the group they remember, most mention Emerson's ringing declaration of cultural independence in his "American Scholar" address at Harvard's commencement in 1837 and his famous lecture "Self-Reliance," in which he declared that "to be great is to be misunderstood"; Thoreau's two-year experiment in self-sufficiency at Walden Pond and his advice to "Simplify! Simplify!"; and the minister Theodore Parker's close association with the radical abolitionist John Brown. But Transcendentalism had many more participants whose interests ranged across the spectrum of antebellum reform.[1]

To understand it fully, however, one must consider its origins. Transcendentalism's roots were in American Christianity. In the 1830s young men trained for the liberal Christian (Unitarian) ministry chafed at their spiritual teachers' belief in Christ's miracles, claiming instead that his moral teachings alone were sufficient to make him an inspired prophet.[2] Similarly, they rejected the widely accepted notion that man's knowledge came primarily through the senses. To the contrary, they believed in internal, spiritual principles as the basis for



Portraits of American Transcendentalists: (clockwise from top left) George Ripley, Margaret Fuller, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Elizabeth Peabody (Courtesy Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division) Click on image to enlarge.

man's comprehension of the world. These formed the basis of the "conscience" or "intuition" that made it possible for each person to connect with the spiritual world. When man thus moved above or beyond—"transcended"—the cares and concerns of the mundane, lower sphere, he was in touch with and lived through this spiritual principle, what Ralph Waldo Emerson termed the "Over-soul." [3]

At its core, Transcendentalism celebrated the divine equality of each soul. There was no arbitrary division between saved and damned, for anyone could have a transcendent experience and thereafter live his life connected to the spiritual world. Transcendentalism thus seemed the ideal philosophy for a nation dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal and have the same inalienable rights. In this, the movement began to overlap with antebellum efforts toward social reform, for if all men and women were spiritually equal from birth, they all deserved to be treated with social and political equality as well.

Because of this basic belief, many Transcendentalists became involved in efforts to reverse conditions that prevented individuals from realizing their full potential. For example, Bronson Alcott, Louisa May Alcott's father, began the Temple School, an educational experiment for elementary-age children that stressed their innate divinity and encouraged its early discovery and cultivation. He had to close the school after parents objected to how Alcott taught the Gospels. Alcott's assistant there, Elizabeth Peabody, went on to pioneer the kindergarten movement in the United States. Orestes Brownson, son of Vermont farmers and one of the few Transcendentalists not college-educated, remained loyal to his roots and dedicated his life to improving the conditions of the working class; his statements on the likelihood of class warfare between laborer and owner anticipated those of Karl Marx.

Other Transcendentalists moved directly toward what we would recognize to-

day as socialism. Brownson's close friend George Ripley resigned from his Unitarian pulpit near the Boston waterfront and started the Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education. Through this utopian experiment in communal living he tried to break down the barriers between intellectuals and laborers, and divided the community's profits according to socialist principles. At Brook Farm members rotated through different forms of work, the most educated having their turn at farming, husbandry, and crafts, and common laborers given the opportunity to engage in art, music, drama, and other activities to which they had been little exposed.[4] Alcott, seeking a new project after the failure of the Temple School, began the quixotic Fruitlands experiment in Harvard, Massachusetts, where he and a handful of other idealists sought to live as vegetarians, giving up even shoe leather and beasts of burden in their respect for all life. The "community" did not last through its first autumn.[5]

In another arena, Margaret Fuller, influenced by Emerson's doctrine of self-reliance, became the foremost advocate of women's rights in her day. Her pioneering *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845), in which she argued, on Transcendentalist principles, the economic and psychological equality of the sexes, influenced many Transcendentalists and others. Not afraid to put her principles into operation, she later traveled to Europe to report on the political and social revolutions of 1848 for Horace Greeley's *New-York Tribune*; she and her husband, an Italian count, died in a shipwreck sailing from Europe to the United States in 1850.

For some, such reform activities were the natural outgrowth of Transcendentalist thought, and they made social reform virtually the entire focus of their Transcendentalism. Until the 1840s Emerson was not the de facto leader of the group. Rather, the most visible members of the loosely associated group were Ripley and Brownson, both of whom stressed social engagement in their Unitarian ministries in Boston.

The impoverished, the mentally and physically challenged, the imprisoned and those otherwise institutionalized, and the enslaved: Transcendentalists recognized these members of society as their equals in spirituality, and America's promise would not be fulfilled until the benefits of its citizenship were available to all. Ripley's Brook Farm was the most dramatic attempt to resolve the inequities in the mundane world. He abandoned his ministry among middle-class Bostonians in large measure because his congregation was content in their comfort and felt no compulsion to extend understanding and charity in the way their minister wished. Similarly, Brownson, appalled at what he saw as the rapidly deteriorating social condition of the working class, first started his own reformist periodical, the *Boston Quarterly Review*, and then embraced Roman Catholicism, whose ethic of brotherhood he believed better served the impoverished and oppressed.

Ripley's and Brownson's centrality began to fade when Emerson emerged as a major Transcendentalist spokesperson in the wake of the furor over his "Divinity School Address" (1838), when he insulted the Harvard theological faculty by claiming that their preaching was uninspired, and the publication of his first book of essays three years later. In these and other works he provided Transcendentalists another way to define and act on their beliefs, one that revolved around his glorification of the individual rather than active engagement in social reform. Emerson, for example, never joined Brook Farm, although his close friend and cousin Ripley implored him to do so, aware that Emerson's participation would bring the experiment even more attention. He wrote Ripley a blunt refusal, explaining that he still had far to travel on his own personal, spiritual journey before he could get so directly involved with the reformation of others' lives. Allied with Emerson in this belief that self-reform trumped social engagement was his disciple Henry Thoreau, and, for a while, Margaret Fuller. Both stressed the importance of individual responsibility and attention to one's own conscience rather than amelioration of others' conditions, potentially a distraction from self-improvement.

This split among Transcendentalists did not go unremarked. Peabody, for example, wondered if Emerson's stress on self-reliance and individual fulfillment might not lead to what she termed "ego-theism," his setting up himself, or comparably inspired individuals, as somehow gods themselves. She concluded that when one held such self-centered views as Emerson did, "faith commit[ed] suicide" when an individual failed to realize that "man proves but a melancholy God" in comparison to the divine being whom she still worshipped.[6] Similarly, after reading Emerson's *Essays: First Series*, one of Fuller's protégés, Caroline Healey (Dall) thought that what he had to say about self-reliance was "extravagant and unsafe."[7] Another of Emerson's friends, Henry James Sr., echoed this criticism: "The curse of our present times, which eliminates all their poetry," he observed of his contemporaries' resistance to socialism, is the "self-hood imposed on us by the evil world."[8]

Emerson himself recognized the conflict. Asked to speak at a memorial for the great reformer Theodore Parker, who had died on the threshold of the Civil War, he demurred, remarking how different they were in their approaches to the problems of the age. "Our differences of method and working," he wrote to the organizing committee of the memorial, were "such as really required and honored all [Parker's] Catholicism and magnanimity to forgive in me." In the privacy of his journal, he was even more candid: "I can well praise him [but only] at a spectator's distance, for our minds & methods were unlike—few people more unlike."[9]

Through the 1840s this division persisted among Transcendentalists and associated groups, but in the next decade it gradually ceased to be of great significance. After the signal year 1850, in which Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law, all parties pulled away from internecine squabbling as the sectional crisis challenged all Americans to confront the immense problem of chattel slavery. Transcendentalists who had advanced social reforms that included efforts to

increase rights for women, labor, and the indigent redirected their energies toward extinguishing the institution of slavery.

Theodore Parker was the leader in this fight, but he was a special case, for even as he vociferously condemned the Southern slaveholders and the politicians they elected (and any Northerners complicit with them), he continued to preach about the great inequities of wealth in cities like Boston. He understood the connections between northern businessmen and southern slaveholders, and declared worship of Mammon—or wealth—the evil. In one sermon he told his audience that he was speaking in a city “whose most popular idol is mammon, the God of God; whose Trinity is a Trinity of Coin!” “The Eyes of the North are full of cotton,” he continued. “They see nothing else, for a web is before them; their ears are full of cotton, and they hear nothing but the buzz of their mills; their mouth is full of cotton, and they can speak audibly but two words—Tariff, Tariff, Dividends, Dividends.” [10] He genuinely worried that liberty might fail. If men continued to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law, he said, he did not know when the struggle would end but did not care if the Union went to pieces.

Other Transcendentalists were similarly swept up in this fervor, believing slavery the great evil to be extinguished before all others. Many women who hitherto had devoted themselves to women’s rights were swayed by such arguments and believed that their turn for equality would come after the African Americans’. Unfortunately, in this they were disappointed. Speaking of the Transcendentalists’ commitment to abolition in the 1850s, the Unitarian clergyman Octavius Brooks Frothingham explained in 1876 why they and others were so quick to put aside other pressing issues. He recalled that in the 1850s the “agitation against slavery had taken hold of the whole country; it was in politics, in journalism, in literature, in the public hall and parlor.”[11]

When the Civil War was over, what became of the movement? Some of its lead-

ers did not even live to see the end of the war, most notably Parker, Thoreau, and Fuller. Others moved on to new causes. After the failure of Brook Farm in the late 1840s, Ripley moved to New York City, replacing Fuller as book reviewer at Greeley's *Tribune*. Brownson became an apologist and proselytizer for Roman Catholicism. Peabody embraced the kindergarten movement and, later, Native American rights. That left Emerson as the public face of Transcendentalism.

There was some progress in the area of women's rights, with Caroline Healey Dall assuming Fuller's place as one of the intellectual leaders of the women's movement, and Brook Farm alumna Almira Barlow providing it new guidance. Ministers like John Weiss (Parker's disciple), David Wasson, and Samuel Johnson, however, defended Transcendentalism against the rise of the scientific method that placed most value on material facts rather than spiritual ideals. Few Transcendentalists, however, were involved in the growing disputes between labor and capital, the reformation of asylums and penitentiaries, or other matters on a reformist agenda.

By the 1870s, the uneasy balance between the self and society that had characterized the antebellum phase of the Transcendental movement tipped irrevocably in the direction of the self. The intellectual power of Transcendentalists was directed toward individual rights and, implicitly, market capitalism, not humanitarian reform. Emerson's admittedly demanding philosophy of self-reliance, an artifact of the early 1840s, was simplified and adopted as a chief principle. More and more, people identified Transcendentalism with the idea of individualism alone, rather than with the ethic of brotherhood that was supposed to accompany it, a process that only accelerated after Emerson's death in 1882. It was left to others to promulgate a religion, the Social Gospel, that reached out to the poor and forgotten.

The New York Unitarian clergyman and erstwhile Transcendentalist Samuel

Osgood summed this up well. Reacting to a suggestion that in the 1870s Transcendentalism had lost its relevance, he argued that the group's very success in spreading its ideas had made their philosophy less visible. "The sect of Transcendentalists has disappeared," he wrote, "because their light has gone everywhere." [12] He meant that American culture had absorbed Emerson's most distinctive thought, the deification of the individual. With more hindsight, however, one might argue differently. Emerson's fame presaged, ironically, the death knell of the higher principle of universal brotherhood for which Transcendentalism, more than any other American philosophy, might have provided the foundation.

[1] Philip F. Gura, in *American Transcendentalism: A History* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2007) offers a thorough brief overview of the subject.

[2] William R. Hutchison, *The Transcendental Ministers: Church Reform in the New England Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), is still the best source for the religious roots of the controversy between younger and older Unitarians.

[3] Emerson makes the distinction between the Reason and Understanding in his "Divinity School Address" of 1838. He speaks of the Oversoul in 1841 in the essay by that name.

[4] See Sterling F. Delano, *Brook Farm: The Dark Side of Utopia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[5] See Richard Francis, *Fruitlands: The Alcott Family and Their Search for Utopia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

[6] Elizabeth Peabody, "Egotheism, the Atheism of Today" (1858), reprinted in Peabody, *Last Evening with Allston and Other Papers* (Boston: D. Lathrop, 1886),

3.

[7] Helen R. Deese, ed., *Selected Journals of Caroline Healey Dall*, in Massachusetts Historical Society, *Collections* 90 (2006), 81.

[8] Henry James, *Moralism and Christianity; or, Man's Experience and Destiny* (New York: Redfield, 1850), 84.

[9] Ralph Waldo Emerson to Moncure Daniel Conway, June 6, 1860, in Ralph L. Rusk and Eleanor M. Tilton, *Letters of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, 10 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939–1995), 5:221; and Emerson, *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks*, ed. William H. Gilman, et al., 16 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960–1982), 14:352–353.

[10] Theodore Parker, *A Sermon of War* (1846) in *The Collected Works of Theodore Parker*, ed. Frances Power Cobbe, 12 vols. (London: Trüber, 1863–1865), 4:5–6 and 25.

[11] Octavius Brooks Frothingham, *Transcendentalism in New England: A History* (New York: Putnam, 1876), 331.

[12] Samuel Osgood, "Transcendentalists in New England," *International Review* 3 (1876), 761.

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For a list of books and websites about Transcendentalism and social reform,

visit our [Additional Resources Page](#).

For documents from the Gilder Lehrman Collection related to American reform movements, [click here](#).

HOME

Books

The best brief overview of the Transcendentalist movement is by Philip F. Gura, author of the essay you've just read here:

American Transcendentalism: A History. New York: Hill & Wang, 2007.

While this next book is a half-century old, it remains your best source for the religious roots of the controversy between younger and older Unitarians.

Hutchison, William R. *The Transcendental Ministers: Church Reform in the New England Renaissance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

Ralph Waldo Emerson is the Transcendentalist best known to most Americans. Here are some recent studies of his life that you'll find helpful:

Buell, Lawrence. *Emerson*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003. Excellent biography.

Dolan, Neal. *Emerson's Liberalism*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009. Examines Emerson as part of the liberal tradition in western thought.

Fuller, Randall. *Emerson's Ghosts: Literature, Politics, and the Making of Americanists*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. Emerson's intellectual and cultural legacy through the twentieth century.

Gougeon, Len. *Virtue's Hero: Emerson, Antislavery, and Reform*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990. Definitive account of Emerson's views on the slavery question and his activist role in the abolitionist cause.

Richardson, Robert D. *Emerson: The Mind on Fire*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. An intellectual biography by a leading scholar in the field.

Sacks, Kenneth. *Understanding Emerson: "The American Scholar" and His Struggle for Self-Reliance*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003. Rigorous study of the background of Emerson's path-breaking lecture.

For more background on Alcott, Ripley, and their Utopian experiments at Brook Farm and Fruitlands, look at these studies:

Anderson, Thomas Irving. *The Intellectual and Social Development of George Ripley*. Providence, RI: Brown University, 1976.

Crowe, Charles Robert. *George Ripley, Transcendentalist and Utopian Socialist*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, [1967].

Dahlstrand, Frederick C. *Amos Bronson Alcott, An Intellectual Biography*. Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1982.

Delano. Sterling F. *Brook Farm: The Dark Side of Utopia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004. This focuses on some of the grimmer realities of life at Ripley's agrarian experiment.

Francis, Richard. *Fruitlands: The Alcott Family and Their Search for Utopia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010.

Francis, Richard. *Transcendental Utopias: Individual and Community at Brook Farm, Fruitlands, and Walden*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997. Com-

parison of the three.

Golemba, Henry L. *George Ripley*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977.

Raymond, Henrietta Dana. *Sophia Willard Dana Ripley: Co-Founder of Brook Farm*. Portsmouth, NH: P. E. Randall, 1994.

You and your students will probably want to learn more about the other fascinating Transcendentalist figures mentioned in Professor Gura's essay. Here are recent book-length studies:

Elizabeth Palmer Peabody:

Elbert, Monika M., et al., eds. *Reinventing the Peabody Sisters*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006. Scholarly essays reexamining the remarkable lives of Elizabeth Peabody and her sisters, Mary Peabody Mann and Sophia Peabody Hawthorne.

Ronda, Bruce A. *Elizabeth Palmer Peabody: A Reformer on Her Own Terms*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Ronda, Bruce A., ed. *Letters of Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, American Renaissance Woman*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984.

This is the newest, and the definitive biography of Orestes Brownson:

Carey, Patrick W. *Orestes A. Brownson: American Religious Weathervane*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2004.

Caroline Healey Dall:

Deese, Helen R., ed. *Daughter of Boston: The Extraordinary Diary of a Nineteenth-Century Woman: Caroline Healey Dall*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2005. Focuses on

1838–1865.

Deese, Helen R., ed. *Selected Journals of Caroline Healey Dall, Volume 1: 1838–1855*. Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society 90. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 2006. First volume of a scholarly edition of Dall's diaries, covering 1838–1855. Excellent source materials. Keep alert for later volumes in the series.

Margaret Fuller:

Capper, Charles. *Margaret Fuller: An American Romantic Life*. 2 vols. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992 and 2010. The definitive study of Fuller.

Dickenson, Donna. *Margaret Fuller: Writing a Woman's Life*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Fuller, Margaret. *Woman in the Nineteenth Century: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, Criticism*. Edited by Larry J. Reynolds. New York: Norton, 1998.

Von Mehren, Joan. *Minerva and the Muse: A Life of Margaret Fuller*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994. One-volume study by an independent scholar.

Henry David Thoreau:

Richardson, Robert D. *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986. Good scholarly biography.

Schneider, Richard J. *Henry David Thoreau*. Boston: Twayne, 1987. Short biography, part of the United States Authors series.

Theodore Parker:

Grodzins, Dean. *American Heretic: Theodore Parker and Transcendentalism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

These authors analyze the personal and intellectual relationships among Transcendentalist leaders:

Alcott, Amos Bronson. *Notes of Conversations, 1848–1875*. Edited by Karen English. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007. Transcripts of conversations conducted by Alcott with such well-known figures as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, William Lloyd Garrison, Elizabeth Peabody, and Caroline Healey Dall.

Hoeltje, Hubert H. *Sheltering Tree, a Story of the Friendship of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Amos Bronson Alcott*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1943. Republished in 1965.

Lysaker, John T., and William Rossi, eds. *Emerson and Thoreau: Figures of Friendship*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010. Collection of essays.

Schreiner, Samuel Agnew. *The Concord Quartet: Alcott, Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau, and the Friendship That Freed the American Mind*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2006. The intellectual life of the town, 1834–1888.

Smith, Harmon L. *My Friend, My Friend: The Story of Thoreau's Relationship with Emerson*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999.

Stoehr, Taylor. *Nay-saying in Concord: Emerson, Alcott, and Thoreau*. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1979.

Doubtless you'll need some additional materials on abolitionism and the related issues that made Transcendentalists focus on this issue after 1850. Our issue on [Abolition](#) and the sources recommended there will be helpful, as will the [Women's Suffrage](#) issue.

In addition, we suggest:

Campbell, Stanley W. *The Slave Catchers: Enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, 1850–1860*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, [1970].

Harrold, Stanley. *Border War: Fighting over Slavery before the Civil War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Lubet, Steven. *Fugitive Justice: Runaways, Rescuers, and Slavery on Trial*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010.

Petrulionis, Sandra Harbert. *To Set This World Right: The Antislavery Movement in Thoreau's Concord*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006. Interesting study of the abolitionist movement in the town that Thoreau, Emerson, and Alcott called home.

Internet

I wasn't just pleasantly surprised, I was amazed and delighted when I discovered what a wide choice of fine websites you'll have to use for studying Transcendentalism further.

The Dictionary of Unitarian-Universalist Biography of the Unitarian and Universalist History Society—a work in progress—provides an alphabetical index to entries that will eventually appear in this online reference tool. You'll find that there are completed sketches on George Ripley and Brook Farm, the Alcott family, Brownson, Dall, Emerson, Fuller, Horace Greeley, Parker, and Peabody:

<http://www25-temp.uua.org/uuhs/duub/listaf.html>

Virginia Commonwealth University mounted a terrific “Web of American Transcendentalism” site several years ago. You'll find several scholarly essays,

and a very useful section of “Authors and Texts” that provide biographic sketches of prominent Transcendentalists, links to online versions of some of their most significant writings, bibliographies, and links to related websites:

<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/index.html>

This includes works like Fuller’s *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*.

Transcendentalist.com is overseen by Jone Johnson Lewis, a Unitarian Universalist minister and Ethical Culture leader in Virginia. The sketches of Emerson and “Others in the Circle” may be of special interest:

<http://www.transcendentalists.com/>

Individual Transcendentalist figures have their own websites as well. There’s an Amos Bronson Alcott website with a good (although slightly out of date) page for links and a nice piece on Fruitlands and sketches of Wasson and Weiss:

<http://www.alcott.net/frame.html>

As well as a piece on Alcott as an educator and his Temple School:

<http://www.alcott.net/alcott/home/education.html>

I think students will really like the online facsimile from Google Books of Elizabeth Palmer Peabody’s contemporary account of the Temple School, *Record of a School: Exemplifying the General Principles of Spiritual Culture* (Boston: James Monroe, 1835):

<http://books.google.com/books?id=rsMAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Chapter 4 of Paul P. Reuben's online *Perspectives in American Literature* is devoted to the Transcendentalists and their contemporaries. You'll want to read his analytical chapters as well as the sketches of authors mentioned in this essay. This online "research and reference guide" is especially useful as it is continually updated to reflect current scholarship:

<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap4/CHAP4.HTML>

Finally, you'll be especially grateful to the Emerson Society, a group of scholars and laymen devoted to encouraging "scholarship on and appreciation of" Emerson's life and works. The Society helped fund a wonderful website maintained by Texas A&M University:

<http://emerson.tamu.edu/>

You'll find texts and links to the texts of Emerson writings and writings about Emerson, a chronology of Emerson's life, images of Emerson portraits, and links to related Internet sites. I'll confess that my favorite section of the site, though, is "Emerson Ephemera," a collection of Emerson images that remind us how influential a figure in popular culture Emerson was in his own day:

<http://emerson.tamu.edu/EmersonEphemera.html>

Even PBS makes a contribution here. Interestingly, though, this discussion of "The American Renaissance and Transcendentalism" was mounted as part of the website for "I Hear America Singing," a *Great Performances* broadcast on American Concert Song. Thomas Hampson (one of my favorite baritones, if you care), Carla Thomas Hampson, and Carla Maria Verdino Süllwold collaborated on a useful Cultural History of American Concert Song that includes this chapter:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/ihas/icon/transcend.html>

