

# [Walden he was able to construct his cabin.](https://assignbuster.com/walden-he-was-able-to-construct-his-cabin/)

Waldenby Henry David Thoreau(1817 – 1862)Type of Work: Natural history essaySettingWalden Pond, Concord, Massachusetts; 1845to 1847Journal Overveiw(The summer of 1845 found Henry DavidThoreau living in a rude shack on the banks of Walden Pond. The actualproperty was owned by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great American philosopher. Emerson had earlier published the treatise entitled “ Nature,” and the youngThoreau was profoundly affected by its call for individuality and self-reliance.

Thoreau planted a small garden, took pen and paper, and began to scribethe record of life at Walden.)Thoreau’s experiment in deliberate livingbegan in March of 1845. By planting a two-and-a-half acre parcel borrowedfrom a neighbor who thought it useless, he harvested and sold enough peas, potatoes, corn, beans and turnips to build and to buy food. He purchasedan old shanty from an Irish railroad worker and tore it down. He also cuttimber from the woods surrounding Walden Pond. From the razed material, he was able to construct his cabin. He used the boards for siding and evensalvaged the nails from the original shack.

By mid-summer, the house was ready to inhabit. Thoreau built a fireplace and chimney for heat and cooking. He plasteredthe inside walls and made sure he could comfortably survive the freezingNew England winters, Doing all the work himself and using only native material, the house cost only about twenty-eight dollars to build, less than Thoreauhad to pay for a year’s lodging at Harvard. But the main purpose for his experiencewas to allow time for writing, thinking, observing nature, and learningthe “ art of living.” I went to the woods because I wished tolive deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see ifI could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discoverthat I had not lived .

.. I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrowof life .

.. Thoreau also went to Walden with the firmbelief that man was too encumbered with material things – too much possessedby his belongings. He believed that a man is rich only “ in proportion tothe number of things he can afford to let alone.” One passage from Waldentells of an auction, held to dispose of a deacon neighbor’s possessions. Thoreau scorned the affair, referring to the accumulations as “ trumpetery” that had lain for “ half a century in his garret and other dust holes”: And now .

.. instead of a bonfire, orpurifying destruction of them, there was an auction, of increasing of them. The neighbors eagerly collected to view them, bought them all, and carefullytransported them to their garrets and dust holes, to lie there till theirestates are settled, when they will start again. When a man dies he kicksthe dust.

All aspects of life for Thoreau focusedon simplicity. He ate simple meals, his diet consisting mostly of rye, Indian meal, potatoes, rice, a little pork, salt and molasses. He drankwater. On such foods he was able to live for as little as a dollar a month.” The cost of a thing,” he reasoned, “ is the amount of what I will calllife which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the longrun.” The naturalist seldom ate meat and never hunted. He was far too interestedin preserving the animals around the pond:.

.. Every man who has ever been earnestto preserve his higher poetic faculties in the best condition, has beenparticularly inclined to abstain from animal food, or from much food ofany kind.

He did eat fish, but considered his timetoo valuable to spend merely fishing for food. And by following this Spartanideology, Thoreau was left free to pursue which to him were the importantaspects of life; namely, observing, pondering, reading, and writing. In warm evenings I frequently sat in theboat playing the flute, and saw perch, which I seem to haze charged, loweringaround me, and the moon traveling over the ribbed bottom, which was strewnwith the wrecks of the forest. While at Walden, Thoreau lived quite independentlyof time. He used neither clock nor calendar – free to study the local plants, birds and animals: “ Time is but the stream I go-a fishing in.

I drink atit; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow itis.” The only thing that reminded Thoreau ofthe hectic lives of others was the whistle of the Finchburg Railway trainthat passed