

Walden he was able
to construct his cabin.



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

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 if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived .

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

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

.. instead of a bonfire, or purifying destruction of them, there was an auction, of increasing of them. The neighbors eagerly collected to view them, bought them all, and carefully transported them to their garrets and dust holes, to lie there till their estates are settled, when they will start again. When a man dies he kicks the dust.

All aspects of life for Thoreau focused on simplicity. He ate simple meals, his diet consisting mostly of rye, Indian meal, potatoes, rice, a little pork, salt and molasses. He drank water. 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 call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run.” The naturalist seldom ate meat and never hunted. He was far too interested in preserving the animals around the pond:.

.. Every man who has ever been earnest to preserve his higher poetic faculties in the best condition, has been particularly inclined to abstain from animal food, or from much food of any kind.

He did eat fish, but considered his time too valuable to spend merely fishing for food. And by following this Spartan ideology, Thoreau was left free to pursue which to him were the important aspects of life; namely, observing, pondering, reading, and writing. In warm evenings I frequently sat in the boat playing the flute, and saw perch, which I seem to have charged, lowering around me, and the moon traveling over the ribbed bottom, which was strewn with the wrecks of the forest. While at Walden, Thoreau lived quite independently of 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 at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is.” The only thing that reminded Thoreau of the hectic lives of others was the whistle of the Finchburg Railway train that passed