

CONCORD CONNECTIONS: Henry Thoreau - New England Existentialist

INTRODUCTION

Henry Thoreau was born on a farm about two miles from Concord, Massachusetts, in the year 1817. Originally, he was given the name "David Henry" in memory of his father's brother of the same name who passed away shortly following the child's birth. In later years, the author himself chose to effect the reversal due to his personal preference.

During his "growing years" the Thoreau family resided at various locations in and around Concord including Chelmsford and Boston. Eventually, Henry's father - John, Sr. - brought the family back to Concord to establish a home while he operated a pencil-making business.

Henry and his brother - John - eventually studied at the Concord Academy which had been established as an alternative to the town's public schools. In 1833, despite his own reservations about the matter, Henry enrolled at Harvard College.