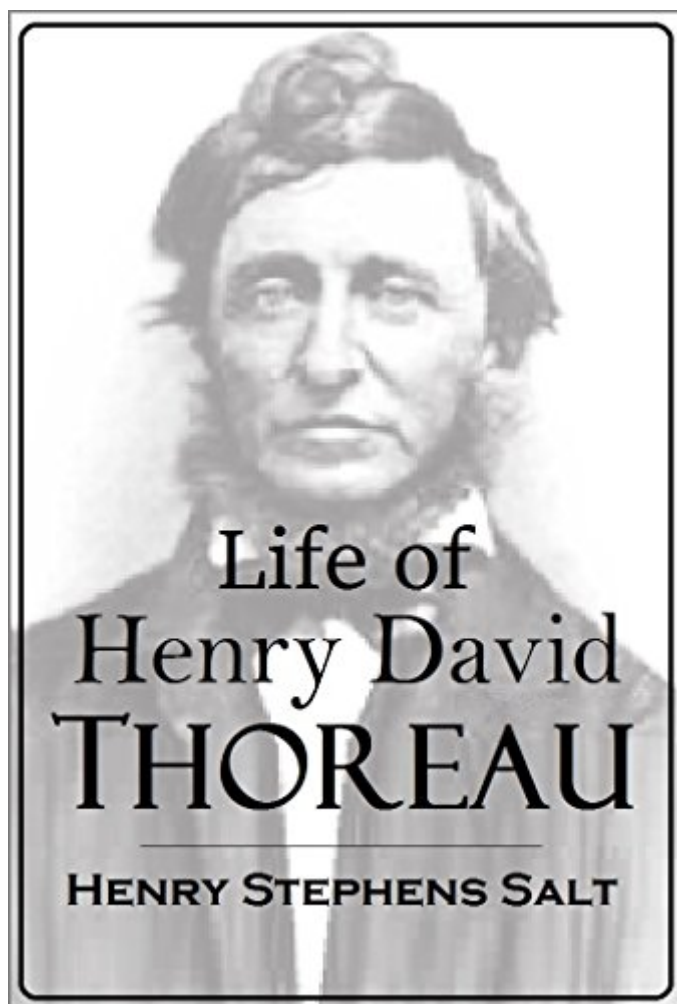


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Life Of Henry David Thoreau (1896)



Synopsis

Henry Stephens Salt (1851 – 1939) was an English writer and campaigner for social reform and was well known as a literary critic, biographer, classical scholar and naturalist. It was Salt who first introduced Mohandas Gandhi to the influential works of Henry David Thoreau. In 1890, Salt produced an acclaimed biography of philosopher Henry David Thoreau, "Life of Henry David Thoreau" an interests that later led to a friendship with Mahatma Gandhi. Combining a concise narrative of Thoreau's life with a perceptive treatment of his ideas and writings, Salt's work stands as a penetrating study of Thoreau that stresses his distinctive individuality as a great thinker. The writings of Henry David Thoreau, little regarded during his lifetime, have steadily and quietly won their way to high esteem in the minds of an increasingly large number of readers. Today almost every page that Thoreau ever wrote has been printed, and portions of his works have been translated into various European languages. Selections from the books of this somewhat eccentric philosopher, poet, and naturalist, are included in the courses of instruction for high-school and college students in the United States – not merely as samples of a distinctive product, but as a part of our best literary heritage. On the whole, the fame of Thoreau has constantly grown during the last half-century and now, more than ever before, he is understood to be one of those few persons whose complete life-records have meaning and value for posterity. The permanent charm of a quaintly individual high-mindedness, of an original yet conscientiously truth-seeking spirit, is felt in Thoreau's life-story with the actuality that only full biographical treatment can give.

CONTENTS.

I. The artificial and the natural; Henry Thoreau's birth and parentage; Thoreau's boyhood; the Thoreau family; his career at Harvard University: opinion of college system; early tendency to idealism

II. Choice of a profession; the Transcendental movement; effect on Thoreau; abandonment of professional pursuits; adopts an open-air life; early writings;

III. Influence of Emerson on Thoreau; acquaintance with Hawthorne; Thoreau's individualism; plans for living in retirement; why he went to Walden

IV. Walden Pond; site of Thoreau's hut; building and furnishing; mode of life in the woods; simplicity of dress and diet; solitude; visitors from the village; fugitive slaves; refusal to pay poll-tax; imprisonment; studies in natural history; reasons for leaving Walden; value of Thoreau's experiment

V. Thoreau's personal appearance; mode of dress; fitness of body and mind; keenness of senses; idealism; its effect on his friendships; dislike of society; a poet-naturalist; magnetism of his character

VI. Second residence with the Emersons; a fugitive slave assisted; publication of Walden;

VII. Thoreau's mode of travelling; excursions to Cape Cod; the Yankee in Canada; three excursions to the Maine Woods; letter to T. W. Higginson; love of mountains;

VIII. Signs of ill-health; the Harper's Ferry incident; Thoreau's "Plea for John Brown "; appreciated by his townsmen; his

confidence in the future; the Civil War; Thoreau's last winter; his courage and cheerfulness; his death; burial in "Sleepy Hollow" IX. Thoreau's aversion to system; idealism combined with practicalness; originality; optimistic nature-worship; views on religion; insistence on self-culture and self-respect; dislike of "business"; a champion of individuality X. Thoreau's disregard of "style" XI. Uniqueness of Thoreau's personality; compared with other naturalists; erroneous criticisms of his doctrines by Lowell and others; their true significance; final estimate of his character Originally published in 1896; may contain an occasional imperfection

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Customer Reviews

Widespread fame eluded Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) during his lifetime. Posthumous biographies helped to draw attention to his life in Concord and thus to his writings. These books can be shelved into four categories:(1) His journals themselves, in addition to his books and essays, provide the closest primary information. Chronologically though, they should be ranked third because they were made available to the public more than 40 years after his death when they were first printed in 1906.(2) A few friends and acquaintances released book-length biographies based on

their personal relationships with the man. William Ellery Channing's *Thoreau: the poet-naturalist* (1873) and Frank B. Sanborn's *American Men of Letters: Henry D. Thoreau* (1882) are the classics.⁽³⁾ Men who were inspired by Thoreau's writings began to correspond with his Concord friends in order to learn more and to write their own books. Examples include the 1890 publications of Henry S. Salt's *Life of Henry David Thoreau* and Samuel Arthur Jones's *Thoreau: A Glimpse*.⁽⁴⁾ Everyone who came afterward had to rely on interpretation of all of the writings and letters from those previous categories. The most famous remain Henry Seidel Canby (*Thoreau*, 1939) and Walter Harding (*The Days of Henry Thoreau: A Biography*, 1962). Englishman Henry S. Salt (1851-1939) published his first Thoreau biography in 1890, and released a revision in 1896. Neither one sold well. By 1908, he was looking for a publisher to print a third and more complete edition. While he spent the rest of his life in that search, his efforts were to no avail.

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