

## TWELVE WEEKS ON THOREAU'S CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS

by Walter Harding

Henry David Thoreau started something when in the summer of 1839<sup>#</sup> he and his brother John built themselves a dory, fifteen by three and a half feet wide, painted it green and blue, equipped it with two sets of oars, two masts and sails, loaded it with home-grown potatoes, melons, a few utensils, buffalo robes, and a pair of wheels to roll it around falls and dams, and launched it on the Concord River, in Concord, Massachusetts, on Saturday, August 31, 1839, for a vacation trip on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, up to Hooksett, New Hampshire and back. It is doubtful if they then had any idea or

inkling of setting a precedent for dozens or perhaps even hundreds of other boaters for years to come, but that was what they indeed did. It was the book, A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, which Henry published ten years later, in 1849, which set it all off.

The book itself, when it was published, was a notoriously miserable failure. To get it published, Thoreau had to guarantee its cost. And when after four years it had sold only a few over two hundred of its thousand copies, Thoreau had to reimburse the publisher \$290, a large sum in those days. It was after carrying the 706 unsold copies up into his attic that Thoreau wrote in his Journal, "I have now a library of nearly nine hundred volumes, over seven hundred of which I wrote myself." If our grandfathers had been sharp, they would have picked up

those copies at \$1.25 a volume, for they now bring several thousand dollars regularly on the rare book market. Unfortunately, in the opinion of many, it is the weakest of all Thoreau's books. It generally takes a real Thoreau aficionado to get through the book, not to say revel in it. Its basic flaw is that it was an attempted amalgamation of a travel tale with an anthology of little-related essays and poems that just did not jell. James Russell Lowell put his finger on the difficulty when he said in an early review of the book, "We come upon them [the digressions] like snags jolting us headforemost out of our places as we are rowing placidly up stream or drifting down."

But despite its initial failure, the book was brought back into print the year of Thoreau's death (1862) and has remained in print virtually ever since, inspiring countless boaters from that day to this, and most particularly in recent years, to retrace Thoreau's route in their own boats. Just how many individuals have made the trip there is no way of knowing, for there has been no accurate way to keep a complete record. Dozens undoubtedly have made the

trip leaving no printed account of it behind them, having felt ample reward in the pleasures of the trip itself. But at least a dozen have taken the time to write out and publish accounts of their journeys.

The earliest such published account that I have found is also the longest--a nearly two-hundred-page book by one Rev. Pliny Steele Boyd, entitled Up and Down the Merrimack, and published in Boston in 1879. I might never have known of that one, for it is listed in none of the Thoreau bibliographies, had I not more than fifty years ago become acquainted with Boyd's then eighty-year-old son Herbert Wendell Boyd, who was himself then a retired clergyman living in my hometown of Bridgewater, Massachusetts. The son, learning of my interest in Thoreau, called the book to my attention and said that although Thoreau is nowhere mentioned in the book, it was Thoreau's Week that had inspired his father both to make the voyage and write the book.

It took me many years to track down a copy of the Boyd book, but it was immediately obvious to me, upon reading it, that it was indeed patterned on Thoreau's book. Its travel narrative is interspersed regularly with inserted essays on as diverse subjects as those of A Week--the travels of Columbus, the uses of salt, the basis for a modern utopia, and, since Boyd was a clergyman, lengthy and acerbic reports on three sermons he stopped to hear preached in country churches along the way. The travel narrative is based on a vacation trip he had taken in a dory with his two young sons, Wendell and Parsons, rowing up the Merri-

and return,  
mack from his hometown of Amesbury to Passaconaway Island. The flavor of the book is genteel and idyllic. The prose is, for the most part, and not surprisingly when we consider when it was written, rather saccharin for modern tastes. Consider, for example:

We on our sail could leisurely feast to the fill, and delight our eyes with sweet pictures. Winding our way up the crooked stream, we came at every turn to some new beauty, yielding a fresh delight and an added stimulus. Sweet fields of grain or meadow grass, fresh pastures where flocks and herds were grazing, groves of pine, oak or birch, musical with birds, higher and bolder banks, and forests stretching far back from the river, gave variety and at times the charm of wildness to the scenery. Nowad<sup>e</sup>ys one can take only a limited amount of that sugar. And except for his comments on other pastors' preachings, the only time he finds anything unpleasant to complain about was when one night about midnight a tree-toad burbling in a tree above their campsite woke him up and kept him awake for an hour and a half. Finally in desperation he got up, found himself a hatchet, and attempted to find the toad in order to "bisect" it. But the toad was a good ventriloquist and Boyd never did find it. He finally went back to bed and to sleep with the toad still happily burbling away.

Boyd however was not without his wit and like Thoreau took pleasure in creating his own legends for the river, suggesting for example that the crookedness of the Merrimack could be blamed on a drunken Irishman by the name of Merry Mack, who in reeling from pub to pub to refill his ever-emptied bottle wandered from city to city, from Concord to Manchester to Nashua to Lowell and so on.

The highpoint of their journey, astonishing even for their day, was to spot a brown bear on the riverbank and watch it climb a tree. Even more surprising was the fact that the bear was spotted within the city limits of Lawrence, Massachusetts! Theirs apparently was still the day of the Victorian father, for whenever they came to a canal around a falls or a dam, it was

the two little boys who got out and pulled the tow ropes while the father sat royally in the dory. I wonder now that son Wendell never complained to me about that--but then Wendell, like his father, was a gentleman.

The only other nineteenth-century narrative of a Concord and Merrimack voyage I have been able to find is in Henry Parker Fellows' Boating Trips on New England Rivers, published in Boston in 1884, which includes a chapter on a voyage Fellows and his friend C. C. Powers took in an eleven-foot skiff. <sup>ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK</sup>

While not ostensibly following Thoreau's exact route, Fellows often mentions Thoreau in his narrative and talks at one time of making a special pilgrimage to Walden Pond. They did however take out enough time to sit in on some sessions of the Concord School of Philosophy, that final outburst of Transcendentalist enthusiasm, ~~and felt amply rewarded when upon returning to their boat they found a beautiful young lady swinging in their hammock.~~ Fellows and Powers embarked on the upper reaches of the Sudbury River and upon <sup>ATTAINING</sup> ~~reaching~~ Lowell, turned down the Merrimack to Newburyport, rather than following Thoreau upstream. Taking eleven days to cover about one hundred miles on the three rivers--the Sudbury, the Concord, and the Merrimack, theirs was quite the longest journey I have found record of.

There is now a long gap in the records, ~~I have found.~~ How many trips that were taken that I have found no record of, I of course have no way of knowing, ~~but~~ I would not be surprised to have some others turn up. But the next narrative I did find <sup>occurs on</sup> ~~jumps to~~ the one hundredth anniversary of Thoreau's trip, in 1939. Wishing to celebrate the centennial of the Thoreau brothers' journey, <sup>Edwin May Tuck, the well-known naturalist,</sup> ~~he~~ found unfortunately he could only take Labor Day

week-end off from his work as a staff-writer for Popular Science Magazine. He resorted thus to retracing the journey in his car and then reported on it in his ~~essay~~ essay "On the Trail of Thoreau" published in ~~his collection~~ The Lost Woods in 1945. Starting in Concord, Massachusetts, he traveled as close as he could to the course of the two rivers, stopping frequently to investigate more closely the rivers themselves. He tells us:

The changes that a century had wrought were obvious, of course, all during that day's drive northeast and north along the Concord and the Merrimack and during the following day's journey south again. Concrete highways carried their steady flow of speeding cars. Traffic lights flashed on and off. Highway signs warned of forty-five-mile-an-hour speed limits. New bridges spanned the Merrimack. Billboards, gaudy with contrasting colors, spoke of wares incomprehensible to a man of Thoreau's time. Airplanes droned, bee-like, high overhead. Country stores displayed among their wares mass-production goods that had had their origin in distant countries as well as in many parts of America.

But among the new, there were old things, also. There were old names, old places, old ferry-sites and streams. Chelmsford, Dracut, Salmon Brook, Thornton's Ferry, Merrimack, Reed's Ferry, Sowhegan River, Amoskeg Falls, Manchester and Hooksett, these and other landmarks remained. And, always, there were the ancient, the timeless things of the world of

Nature. They had been the same, unaltered and familiar to all the centuries of the white men. The trees, the grass, the clouds, the birds, the singing insects, the fish that rose to the surface or lay in the deep pools of the river, all of them lived lives on which the passing century had left but little mark. In them, the eyes of the present saw the world as Thoreau had seen it.

Sadly the day that Teale had chosen to make his trip, the exact one hundredth anniversary of Thoreau's trip was the ~~week~~ <sup>day</sup> ~~and~~ that World War II broke out in Europe. Although Thoreau had traveled in peace, Teale traveled in an atmosphere of impending doom and he records;

A radio was shattering the Sabbath quiet, raucous with direful news. Germany had invaded Poland. Warsaw was being bombed. French troops were on the move. The British parliament was sitting in extraordinary session. War with Germany was certain.

Later, towards the end of his life, Teale, along with the Colorado naturalist Ann Zwinger, started work on a book on the Concord River and its sources; Teale was to write the sections on the Sudbury River and Zwinger on the Assabet, and then they were to join forces on the Concord itself. Sadly illness and then death caught up with Teale before he could complete his Sudbury section. Zwinger polished the rough~~d~~ draft he had left of the Sudbury section and added her part on the Assabet but decided not to attempt completing the Concord section by herself. The book was published in 1982 as A Conscious Stillness: Two Naturalists on Thoreau's Rivers. While the authors had had no intent to trace again Thoreau's Week journey, they had hoped to add many details about Thoreau's trip to their book. I had the good fortune to know Teale personally and he and I explored many sections of the Concord by canoe. He gathered together many notes on Thoreau's journey but unfortunately they were left in to~~x~~ fragmentary a state to include in the book.



Sometime in the early 1950s--the author is never very specific about the date--Francis Russell, ~~a free lance writer of the day,~~ using "a light folding skiff, 17 feet long and blue and silver in color, that stowed away into two smallish carrying bags and weighed only 56 pounds," paddled down the Concord River from the Battleground to where Thoreau had turned into the now filled-in Middlesex Canal. Later that summer Russell made "patchwork trips" in his spare time covering the Merrimack section of Thoreau's journey. It was his original intent to edit and publish an abridged edition of Thoreau's Week, confined to Thoreau's journey narrative, eliminating, as he said, "all <sup>the</sup> accretions and irrelevancies of the old text," and illustrating it with photographs taken on his own journey. That project, for some unknown reason, fell through and Russell ended up publishing three very similar articles about his trip, spread over a period of more than twenty years in the Christian Science Monitor for July 1, 1953, Appalachia for June, 1956, and the Country Journal for July, 1975. Unfortunately, even though he said it three times, Russell had little or nothing new to say and his accounts could well be forgotten.

Our next expedition is a much more workman-like job--one of the most thorough and detailed accounts of the journey written. Robert Jay Evans, a history teacher from Beverly, Massachusetts, in September, 1960, took a five-day trip in a nine-foot kayak from Concord, Massachusetts, to Hookset, New Hampshire (Thoreau's destination), reporting on it in seven daily columns in the Boston Globe from September 11 to 17, 1960. Evans did his home-

work before he started out, obviously studying closely Thoreau's Week ~~the~~ <sup>and</sup> consulting the pertinent maps and history books. The result is a vivid, lucid, ~~and~~ <sup>and lively</sup> pleasantly learned account that I personally wish were more readily available than in old dusty newspaper files. He, for example, searches out each of Thoreau's old camp sites and uses them himself. ~~The~~ <sup>He</sup> tracks down most of the landmarks that Thoreau mentions and reports on their present condition, noting for example that while Thoreau saw the rotting abutments of Concord's original Old North Bridge, Evans saw a modern reconstruction. When Evans came to the filled-in Middlesex Canal, he took the time to retrace the old tow path though it meant crawling through forests of burdocks and thistles. The fifteen-acre desert Thoreau had seen at Nashua, Evans noted, had become a housing tract. Although Russell had declared they had all disappeared, Evans was able to trace out remnants of most of the canal locks Thoreau had ~~noted~~ <sup>observed</sup>, and he even found traces in Manchester of an old Indian village Thoreau had missed. Despite the advances (?) of civilization, he was able to find most of the wildflowers that Thoreau had mentioned still blooming and he even spotted a live beaver in the river at Nashua.

In conclusion Evans reports:

Certain things have changed in the valley since Thoreau's time 121 year ago. There are countless thousands more people living here now, but fewer closer to the river. There is extensive agriculture in the form of truck farms mostly, not the small homestead farms of his day. The railroad was the coming thing in 1839. It already had reached Nashua and was pushing ever northward each year. Today the railroad is in its decline. When Thoreau passed through, New Hampshire's

chief industry was sheep raising. Now its chief industry is recreation.

Looking to the future, Evans pleads:

Let us . . . by zoning, by law, by argument and by persuasion put an end to the pollution of this river. It is an ignorant, short-sighted thing to do. Let the Merrimack be scrubbed clean so even the most fastidious may swim in it. . . . Let the old canal locks be revitalized so recreational boats can travel from Lowell to Concord, N.H. in a day. . . . While paddling these many miles, I've learned that man needs--and must preserve--his rivers.

Of all the accounts of retracing Thoreau's journey Evans is by far the most comprehensive and the best. It is worth going back to those dusty files to dig it out.

Our next report is as brief as Mr. Evans' was detailed. Entitled "Two Days on the Concord and Merrimac" and published in the July 29, 1965 Concord [Massachusetts] Journal, it is by a Concordian, John J. Flynn, Jr., and tells about his adventures in a seventeen-foot aluminum canoe with his three small sons. Supplied with modern sleeping bags, beans, and canned drinks rather than Thoreau's buffalo robes, potatoes, and melons, they put in at Concord's Southbridge boathouse, and arriving at Lowell, turned downstream to Newburyport rather than following Thoreau upstream. Downpours spoiled much of their fun and they were distraught when in Lowell they attempted to follow the old canals only to have them disappear under the streets. They ~~had~~

were forced to hire a truck to carry them and their canoe five miles before they could continue their journey on the Merrimack. Despite their mishaps, they obviously had a fun journey though their account of it is hardly memorable.

As we have read these various accounts in chronological order, the complaints about the ever-increasing pollution of the rivers' waters has become more obvious. James Parker Fellows, back in 1884, spoke of the "slippery slime" and "foul and miasmatic odors." Teale in 1939 noted, "As I followed the river, I could see factory and sewer still continuing their work; at places, chemicals dumped into the stream made swirling patterns that extended along the surface for a hundred yards from shore." Russell noted that few people any longer lived on the riverbanks simply because of the atrocious odors and pollution. Evans had similar things to say. Only the Rev. Pliny Steele ~~Boyd~~ failed to comment on the pollution, and he, I suspect, only because he was too genteel to speak of it.

By 1969 the pollution was so foul that the Lowell Sun filled *two* ~~to~~ boats with reporters, photographers, pollution experts, and even a local congressman, and sent them out to retrace Thoreau's route "to observe the changes in the rivers and their environment since the days of Thoreau," and reported their findings in the Sun for August 31 and September 3, 7, and 10, 1969. Obviously a muckraking piece, the men were instructed "to observe the nature of the river, its pollution, the causes of pollution, the effects of pollution, and to learn why it is not cleaned up." They found plenty of muck to rake. Oftentimes the sights they found led them literally to vomiting. Every city along the Merrimack poured raw

sewage directly into the river. "The heavy solids in the sewage at one of the outfalls," they tell us, "had <sup>built</sup> ~~built~~ up a mound around the pipe carrying the waste into the river about three feet high for 20 feet from the pipe. . . . A rat infested river of blood and other animal wastes . . . flowed from a Manchester slaughter house directly into the river. . . . The gushing blood, still warm and steaming, flow[ed] periodically into the Merrimack, [a]ffected by no pollution controls except the beady eyes of an army of rats along the pipe entrance." Even where the city of Lowell took its water supply directly from the river, the raw effluent, it was found by analysis, made up nearly five per cent of the fluid. Vegetables grown along the river banks and irrigated with water taken from the river showed significant pollution by fecal coliforms. Fishermen were often found taking their fish directly at the sewage outlets where the fish were feeding on the raw effluents.

The reporters, using various state and federal reports, attempted to estimate the cost of the pollution to the residents of the valley and came to the conclusion that it was forty million dollars a year (this was twenty years ago) in loss of revenue that could have been realized from the fishing, swimming, and boating potential of the river were it not polluted. The cost of cleaning up the river (again at 1969 prices) they estimated at \$250 million dollars. Many of our earlier voyagers had noted how deserted the river was because of the pollution. The Sun reporters said that sharp real estate dealers, anticipating a clean-up of the river forced by public opinion, had already begun buying up choice river frontage lands for a song. Their foresight

paid off, and many of them made fortunes reselling the lands for summer homes when the river was eventually cleaned up.

Ray Mungo, then one of the better known writers of the hippy generation, had retreated to a farm in Vermont to live the simple life. There one night he had a dream of "floating silently downstream in a birchbark canoe, speechless me watching vistas of bright New England autumn open up with each bend, slipping unnoticed between crimson mountains, blessing the warm sun by day and sleeping on beds of fresh leaves under a canary harvest moon by night." And so he and his friends were inspired to retrace Thoreau's journey on the Concord and the Merrimack. Putting their bright orange, eighteen-foot aluminum canoe into the Concord River at the battleground, they started their journey. But instead of finding their dream, as he tells us in an essay entitled, "If Mr. Thoreau Calls, Tell Him I've Left the Country," in the staid pages of the May, 1970 Atlantic.

Monthly, they found they "paddled through water actually being used, before our very eyes, as an open sewer. Worse yet, we recognized that the scuz and sludge pouring forth from the mill[s] through six-inch drainpipes would follow us downstream, that it was, in fact, better to navigate on dead but quiet waters than on water teeming with Elimination, at times even belching out gaseous bubbles, and smelling like fresh bait for tsetse flies and vultures." At Lowell, he says, "the canoe quickly became trapped between rocks, which shared the water now with old tires, a refrigerator, a washing machine, wrecked cars and trucks, metal hoops, and bobbing clumps of feces. . . . The bank, *when* I reached it, was knee-deep in garbage of all kinds--metal, paper, and glass. Rolls of toilet paper had been strung like Christmas tinsel on the brittle limbs of the trees, and cardboard containers by the hundreds, flattened by snow and made soggy by rain, had formed layers of *mush* ~~mush~~." The Merrimack proved no better, he reports; "Route 93, which runs from Boston up through Lawrence and north, follows the course of the Merrimack exactly, so that no camping spot or island left on the river can be free from the vroom-vroom noises of hell-for-leather diesel trucks and all-night passenger cars."

With their dream-vision destroyed, Mungo and his friends fled the valley once they had reached their destination on the Merrimack, and heading back to their rural Vermont, pledged, "We'll burn no oil or gases in our houses, or in our cars. We'll bury our organic waste as deep as we can. We'll try to stay alive, for what else can we do? Friend, we are barking up the right trees." *I wonder if they have been able to keep their pledge?*

In the summer of 1979, checking to see if the efforts to clean up the Merrimack had succeeded at all, one David Sylvester paddled seventy-three <sup>miles</sup> ~~lines~~ down the river in a canoe from Franklin, New Hampshire, to the sea and reported on his voyage in the October 1979 Yankee Magazine. He said "the water is closer to what Thoreau knew than it has been for years." Summer homes are beginning to



appear on the river banks. Fishermen are catching clean bass below the river's dams. Bathing is no longer prohibited. Apparently because of its bedrock bottom, shallow depths, and strong current, the Merrimack River has purged itself much more rapidly than anyone had expected it to, once it was given a chance.

Two years later a much more light-hearted and less serious-minded tour of the rivers was conducted by two Boston newspapermen, David Arnold and Peter Woodberry and reported in the Boston Globe for June 20, 1981. They started out in a canoe "loaded with a well-stocked cooler [well-stocked with beer or something stronger, we suspect], 10 pounds of charcoal, a hibachi, a guitar, two umbrellas, two partially deflated air mattresses, a can of Raid and a piano dolly." When the wind accomodated them, they unfurled the umbrellas and sailed by wind-power. After all, Thoreau and his brother had not been adverse to the use of sails. The men portaged their canoe around falls and dams on their piano dolly and the reverberations of its casters on the cobblestone streets could be heard for blocks. When they rested by a parking meter, a burly policeman checked to be sure that they did not intend to camp there. "Prodding a pregnant-looking canoe through congested city streets," they commented, "approximates how it must feel to arrive in a parade float at the wrong city." When they eventually reached the Merrimack, they decided it was easier to float down with the current than to paddle upstream and so saying, "To heck with Henry David Thoreau," they turned downstream and headed for Newburyport. They lamented that they "saw neither chattering

monkeys, nor snoozing snakes, no<sup>R</sup> trumpeting elephants" on their journey, but had to admit as they staggered up the riverbank at Newburyport that at least they had enjoyed their trip.

All the journeys so far are remarkable in that they had few if any serious troubles in their adventures. Rains dampened their spirits at times. The Boyds<sup>R</sup> broke one oar and young Parsons Boyd managed to cut his finger slightly when he tried whittling a stick. Evans nearly lost his boat when an upstream dam suddenly released a flood of water with no warning. While portaging at Coos Falls, he slipped on the slime-covered rocks and toppled into the stream, camera and all, but was not seriously injured. Fellows and Powers came closest to danger when they heard "the rattle of a scattering charge of shot" whistling by their heads. A careless sportman had not looked where he was shooting, and as Fellows reports they had a "somewhat animated conversation" with the young man, setting him straight.

*There is a*  
~~I have one final journey~~ *Trip* to report. Commemorating the 150th anniversary of Thoreau's journey, on July 10, 1989, forty hardy Thoreauvian canoeists in a flotilla of twenty canoes embarked from Hooksett, New Hampshire, on the Merrimack, under the direction of Bob Madison of Annapolis, Maryland, and under the joint sponsorship of the Thoreau Society, the American Canoe Association, the Western Pennsylvania Paddle Sport Association, the New Hampshire Humanities Council, and the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. Spending four days, they covered four interludes totaling a little less than thirty of the forty-eight miles down the Merrimack and up the Co<sup>n</sup>cord to Concord, Massachusetts.

The canoeists came from points as far away as Ely, Minnesota, and Paris, France, and ranged in age from blooming youth to specimens of antiquity ~~like me~~, in <sup>the</sup> ~~my~~ seventies. We survived the trip with only minor mishaps such as falling into the river (accomplished by two young ladies who had never been in a canoe before), being scattered to the four winds by a minor typhoon that hit us momentarily one afternoon just as we were pulling out, and being soaked to the skin by rain the entire first day. But despite our trivial mishaps, our voyage was a glorious one.

Despite the ravages of civilization, the two rivers are not only surviving, but thriving. Pollution controls are having their effect. While they are not perfect yet by any means, we were amazed at how free the shores of the rivers generally were ~~free from~~ <sup>of</sup> debris and how few signs there were of pollution. (We did spot a total of five rusted car wrecks in our thirty miles and one small stream that was obviously to both our eyes and noses pouring in untreated <sup>sewage</sup> with all its foul odors and untreated feces.) As we crossed the state line into Massachusetts signs of pollution increased as did the housing. Apparently the real estate dealers had prospered and had been pocketing their profits, for vacation and permanent housing appeared more and more frequently. I was astonished, to say the least, to find myself hosted for the night in Nashua, New Hampshire, in a development of condominiums named Thoreau's Landing (The street address was Walden Pond Road!). But my hostess re-assured me that Thoreau's Landing and Walden Pond Road were both figments of a real estate dealer's imagination--Thoreau had actually landed further up the river.

One sight astonished me and would have astounded Henry Thoreau--the sight not far below Hooksett of four obviously half million dollar (or more) vacation homes each with its private

seaplane parked on its riverfront. None of the occupants obviously had ever heard Thoreau's plea of "Simplify, simplify."

For most of the journey being down on the river was like being in another world--a world like that Thoreau experienced when he made his journey one hundred and fifty years ago. Dense trees and shrubbery hid most of the signs of civilization except for the occasional power lines and bridges. When we paddled through the heart of Nashua, New Hampshire, I think most of the canoeists were not even aware of it so well were the stores and offices hidden by the trees. (When several of us that evening tried to find the Salmon Brook Falls that Thoreau extolled, we discovered that it had been completely built over and paved over by a run-down shopping mall and could no longer be seen.) Obviously one must continue the fight against intrusion and pollution.

Nonetheless nature still held sway. From just casual observation we spotted and/or heard more than fifty species of birds along the river banks and the signs of both muskrat and beavers. Obviously ours is not to be the last retracing of Thoreau's river journey. ~~Already, I understand, another 150th anniversary run of the rivers has been scheduled and~~ I am sure there will be many more to come. If they continue to increase in numbers as they have over the past few years, public officials are going to have to start thinking about installing traffic lights on the river to handle crowds. But nonetheless I am sure that future boaters on the rivers will continue to enjoy themselves as Thoreau did and we did a hundred and fifty years later, and that they will be able to say, as we can, "We came, we saw, we Concord the Merrimack--Thoreau-ly."