Transcendentalists & Friends

An exhibit selected from
The Joel Myerson Collection
of Nineteenth-century American Literature

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Thomas Cooper Library
University of South Carolina
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by
Joel Myerson

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Cover illustration: Christopher Pearse Cranch, Caricature of lines from Emerson's *Nature*, [ca. 1838].

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Our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests.

R. W. Emerson, 1837.

Emerson’s well-known call for a self-consciously-independent American literature heralds an extraordinary flowering of American literary publication. The names are all instantly recognized—Emerson, Fuller, Thoreau, Whitman, Dickinson. The collection previewed in this exhibition, the Joel Myerson Collection of Nineteenth-Century American Literature, marks a major step forward for the University of South Carolina in the library’s provision for the study of this central period in American culture and the American tradition.

The names are all instantly recognized. Not so widely recognized are the intractable problems that the American Renaissance has traditionally posed for research libraries. First, most nineteenth-century American books were not impressive calf-bound folios and quartos, but modest machine-printed volumes in commercial cloth bindings. With technological change and an expanding book-market, print-runs were often sizable, especially as the author gained some reputation. For over a hundred years, library copies circulated freely, and it took time for collectors (and longer for libraries) to recognize the vulnerability and value of copies in original condition. Second, the cheapness and availability of printing in even the smallest towns of mid-nineteenth century America facilitated an outpouring of pamphlets, sermons, orations, broadsides, and newspapers. Few libraries acquired such ephemera on its first appearance. The survival rate for such publications, even by writers soon to become famous, was small, and collector-prices correspondingly high. Until recently, basic bibliographical information was often patchy. Third, when American literature belatedly entered the college curriculum, soaring enrollments led to heavy and repeated undergraduate use of biographical, critical and other secondary materials on the Renaissance authors, leaving even strong libraries scrambling to replace items that are simply wearing out from over-use.

The Joel Myerson Collection is the first recent addition to Thomas Cooper Library’s American literature collections focussing on 19th-century authors. It brings to the University comprehensive collections of first editions for Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), Theodore Parker (1810-1860), Walt Whitman (1819-1892), and Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), along with manuscripts, letters, proofs, later and posthumous editions, and associated scholarship. With these core collections are smaller collections for lesser-known writers of the Transcendentalist movement, such as Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813-1892), significant groups of early editions from other writers of the period such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Bronson and Louisa May Alcott, Herman Melville, and Harold Frederic, important runs of contemporary periodicals, and a seven thousand-volume reference collection of the scholarly publications about the period.
Among the outstanding items in the Myerson Collection are the first edition of Emerson's Phi Beta Kappa Address ("The American Scholar") (1837), and Emerson's corrected proofs for its second edition; Margaret Fuller's own copy of Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1845), inscribed by her; the first edition of Whitman's Leaves of Grass (1855), making Thomas Cooper Library one of very few to hold both variants, along with galley proofs and wrappered issues from Whitman's later additions; and Emily Dickinson's first and only lifetime publication in book-form, together with both British and American issues of the first posthumous Dickinson collection. For Emerson alone, there are fifty original autograph letters and signed documents.

The Myerson Collection was built up over a period of more than thirty years by one of the leading scholars on the movement it represents, Professor Joel Myerson, Carolina Distinguished Professor of American Literature and a former chair of the English Department. His contributions to his field have been recognized by the publication of Emersonian Circles: Essays in Honor of Joel Myerson (1997). Professor Myerson has published some sixty books on nineteenth century American literature, from his early studies of Margaret Fuller to such recent titles as Transcendentalism: A Reader (2000) and The Later Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson (2 vols., 2001). He has published the standard scholarly bibliographical studies on each of the main authors he has collected; and he established and edited the major scholarly journal in the period, Studies in the American Renaissance (20 vols., 1977-1996). As his introduction and notes to this catalogue indicate, the collections he built drew upon this research and knowledge, while in turn the materials he was acquiring for the collections often contributed to the discoveries he made.

Nineteenth-century American literature remains a field in which there is still scope for informed volume-by-volume collection-building. There is as yet no dedicated endowment for further acquisitions in this period of American literature, but many less well-known authors from the last decades of the century are only now attracting scholarly reassessment, and the opportunities are there. Continued growth of the collection requires not only funding, but expertise. The library is extremely pleased that Professor Myerson has agreed to help us identify and capitalize on the very real possibilities this area offers.

2001, the University's bicentennial, has been a banner year for Thomas Cooper Library. The library has a proud history, and the past decade has brought it a series of great collections. Few libraries, however, ever add in a single year pristine first editions of the first books of two such major authors as Whitman and Hemingway, and add them, not as single items, but as part of comprehensive research collections reaching well beyond those authors' own works. As the University begins its third century, we can take pride in the legacy these collections, of American authors from the University's first and second centuries, will provide for Carolinians of the future. The library is deeply grateful to the generosity and foresight that have brought such acquisitions to this University at this time.

Patrick Scott
Associate University Librarian for Special Collections
INTRODUCTION

I began buying too many books when I was in junior high school. The modest bookcase given me by my parents had filled and my desk was overflowing, so I got another couple bookcases. Then they filled and we put shelves up on the walls. I bought even more books in college, quickly extending the shelf of books I promised to read when I had time to a bookcase full. In graduate school I went book hunting with my dissertation director, Harrison Hayford, and we would come back from trips with shopping bags full of books. I left graduate school owing Harry $500, a considerable sum when my first year’s salary at USC was $10,000. I rationalized this expense on a grad student’s pittance of a stipend by saying that someday I might be teaching at a southern university with a poor library, a prognostication that proved true when I arrived here in 1971 and discovered that the Thoreau section in the library was the two or three books shelved between a multitude of Simmses and Timrods.

I stopped accumulating books and started collecting them when I arrived at USC and discovered the department was full of first-class collectors such as Matt Bruccoli and Ross Roy. The first really rare book I bought was a copy of Margaret Fuller’s Woman in the Nineteenth Century inscribed to Thoreau’s mother and, therefore, most likely the copy read by Henry. (Actually, I bought it for the university but quickly came to my senses and told the dealer to send it to me instead.) Thereafter, all my collections centered on bibliographical and editorial projects—that is, they were working collections. I was not above picking up a bargain when I could, but my goal was to be able to work out of my home, and it was easier to try and buy everything than be selective. Also, as a bibliographer, I needed as many copies as possible of titles so that I could compare them for variations. This exhibit and this catalogue present representative items from the major author collections that I have assembled, as well as other works of interest.

J. M.
THE EXHIBIT

PART A: MAIN MEZZANINE GALLERY

Case 1: Margaret Fuller

Margaret Fuller was the first author I collected with any seriousness, and when I started collecting her, she was little-known and all of her writings were out of print. One dealer, when I asked if he had any “Fuller,” replied, “Full a what?” My first trip to the Credit Union to borrow money was for a group of her first editions priced at $250 by Western Hemisphere. Once I had assembled the collection, I was able to do a descriptive primary bibliography, the first time Fuller’s complete writings were listed. From here, I was able to do an anthology of her works. I am pleased that Fuller is now included in all anthologies of American literature.

  Fuller’s translations of two poems from Goethe are her first contributions to a book.

- *Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life*. Boston: Hilliard, Gray, 1839.
  This translation of a work by Eckermann is Fuller’s first book-length publication and continues to document her lifelong interest in Goethe.

  Wrappers. Another translation from the German, this copy is inscribed by Fuller to her friend Rebecca Spring.

  Over 700 copies printed. Fuller’s first original work, this book describes her trip to the midwest. This copy is inscribed by Fuller to Constanza Arconati, her closest female friend in Italy.

  The English edition of *Summer on the Lakes* was also the first attempt to collect Fuller’s works.

Wrappers. This work is now recognized as the first major feminist statement by an American woman. I bought this copy from a dealer who wanted to know if he would get more money for it if he bound it in leather; I said "no" and told him to send it to me as is.


The English edition of Woman, an unauthorized edition or "piracy," is exceedingly rare. This is the only known copy in publisher's cloth with inserted illustrated title leaf.


Before leaving for Europe in 1846, Fuller collected her newspaper and magazine pieces in this two-volume work.

Upright 1: Margaret Fuller and Edgar Allan Poe

New-York Weekly Tribune, 15 February 1845, with front page review of Fuller's Woman in the Nineteenth Century.


Fuller and Poe were at odds over both professional and personal matters, so I take the liberty of placing here the negative obituary by Rufus Wilmot Griswold (writing as "Ludwig") of Poe that misled biographers and made Poe out to be worse than he ever was for generations to come.

Small case: Margaret Fuller


Fuller inscribed this copy "S. M. Fuller I sent her by Mr Delf, I bound for her use I by Mr McElrath, I N.Y. Jany 1846." Thomas Delf was Wiley and Putnam's agent in London; Thomas McElrath was Horace Greeley's partner in the firm that published the American edition of Woman. Fuller acknowledged receiving this book on 10 December 1845. I bought this as a nice association copy from a dealer who had noted only the inscription from Fuller's brother Arthur; when it arrived and I saw Fuller's inscription, I realized once again the virtue of buying as many copies of a book as one can.
Case 2: Margaret Fuller


  The first biography of Fuller attempted to sanitize her for public consumption by making her conform to what the editors considered to be the model of a woman writer; and thus a passionate and questioning individual was changed into a somewhat prim and proper lady. Also on display is a letter from Fuller to W. H. Channing, 10 October 1840, which served as printer’s copy for Memoirs.


  This copy is inscribed by Daniel Ricketson to Henry D. Thoreau’s mother, and thus was almost certainly part of Henry David Thoreau’s library.

- Caroline W. Healey [Dall]. Margaret and Her Friends. Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1895.

  As a young woman Dall attended the classes for women (or “Conversations”) that Fuller gave on various topics. This is her recording of one of the few at which men were allowed to participate (because Fuller felt that they tended to monopolize the conversation when present). Also on display is a letter from Dall to Mr. Hardy, 25 October 1895, concerning reading proofs for this book.

Case 3: Theodore Parker

Another writer I feel still needs critical resurrection is the Unitarian minister, advocate for women’s rights, and abolitionist Theodore Parker. Parker was arguably the most brilliant mind and polished writer during the controversy surrounding the debates in the 1830s and 1840s over the accuracy of biblical miracles, and his A Discourse on the Transient and Permanent in Christianity (1841) is in many ways better than Emerson’s contribution to the debate, his Divinity School Address (1838).
• *Theodore Parker’s Experience as a Minister*. Boston: Rufus Leighton, Jr., 1859.

This copy of Parker’s autobiography is one of the few known copies of the book bound in wrappers.

• Autograph manuscript on the Fugitive Slave Law, [n.d.].

Parker was an active abolitionist and was heavily involved in the campaign to free the slaves.

• Printer’s copy manuscript for *The Great Battle between Slavery and Freedom*, 1856.

After Parker’s sermon was reported in a newspaper, he clipped it out and pasted it on paper, which he then revised for publication *Great Battle between Slavery and Freedom* (Benjamin H. Greene, 1856).

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**Small case: Emily Dickinson**


This copy of the “Ninth Edition” is inscribed by Emily’s sister Lavinia Dickinson, probably to the Boston bookdealer George Goodspeed.
Upright 2: Ralph Waldo Emerson and George Ripley

- Broadside order of exercises for George Ripley’s ordination on 8 November 1826.

Ripley later resigned his ministry to found in 1841, along with his wife Sophia, the Brook Farm community, which was the Transcendentalists’ entry into the communitarian or utopian world of the time.


This broadside memorializes a friend of Emerson’s who was active in the abolitionist movement. The Myerson Collection also contains a letter of condolence from Bronson Alcott to Stearns’ widow.

Case 4: Emily Dickinson

The works of Emily Dickinson pose interesting questions for a bibliographer because she died before her first book was published. My collection is particularly rich in reprints of the three volumes (or “series”) of her poems and the edition of her letters, all of which document binding and textual changes.


Dickinson’s first appearance in a book was the poem “Success,” which appeared anonymously. This was also the only book containing a poem by Dickinson published during her lifetime. On display are both the regular and “Red Line” formats, with one copy containing identifications of the anonymous contributors by the famous editor Nathan Haskell Dole.


Only 500 copies of one of the most famous books of American poetry were printed. The English edition, though, did not sell well, and the copy on display has the name of Harper and Brothers on the spine, rather than the original publisher, demonstrating that it was bound six years after the original publication date, when the original firm was purchased by Harpers.


The success of the first series of Dickinson’s poems led to this second volume, of which 960 copies were printed. On display is a copy of the 1892 second printing

2,500 copies printed in two printings. This example shows why bibliographers buy multiple copies of the same work—on display are volumes showing the six binding variants for this work: green buckram with goldstamping and “Roberts Brothers”; brown smooth cloth with silverstamping; green buckram with goldstamping and “Little Brown”; two-volumes-in-one; and green buckram with goldstamping and blackstamped Indian pipes.


1,000 copies were printed of this, the final installment in the series. On display is a copy inscribed by Lavinia Dickinson, probably to the Boston bookdealer George Goodspeed.

Case 5: Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ralph Waldo Emerson is, by any stretch of the definition, a “major” writer. My collection was assembled so that I could publish a descriptive primary bibliography of him and, because I bought multiple copies, many unique items fell my way. Unlike the other authors for whom I assembled major collections, Emerson went out of copyright in the 1880s and 1890s, so that almost every reprint firm in the country did an edition of some work of his. Tracing the genealogy of these reprintings was a challenge, because while one firm might publish (and bear the expense of setting type for) an edition, it would loan the plates to other firms for reprinting, as well as printing separate title pages for other firms to attach to its own reprinting of the text; and because nearly all these reprintings are undated, considerable research in contemporary book trade publications was necessary to establish the priority of the reprintings. This collection also gave me bragging rights: although the standard edition of Emerson’s writings fills twelve volumes, I could point to the over two thousand books by Emerson I had and tell visitors I had read them all.


Emerson’s first magazine publication, signed with an acronym of the final letters of his name.

Emerson’s first separate publication.

**Nature.** Boston: James Munroe, 1836.

Possibly 1,500 copies printed. Although published anonymously, everyone knew Emerson was the author of this book, the first and in many ways the most important document of the Transcendental movement. The Myerson Collection contains seven copies of *Nature*, all in different bindings, reflecting the fact that the book was bound up in small batches as sales warranted it.


Wrappers; cover title. 500 copies printed (Boston). Emerson’s American Scholar address, called by Oliver Wendell Holmes “America’s literary declaration of independence.” The British edition is a piracy.

**An Address Delivered before the Senior Class, Divinity College . . . 15 July 1838.** Boston: James Munroe, 1838.

Wrappers. 1,000 copies printed. Emerson’s Divinity School Address marked his formal break with the conservative Unitarian establishment.


Wrappers. Possibly 500 copies printed. This copy is inscribed by Emerson to Frederic Henry Hedge, a friend and minister in Bangor, Maine, whose visits to Boston were to result in the start of the Transcendental Club.

**Essays: First Series.** London: James Fraser, 1841.

750 copies printed. Emerson received royalties on this edition. The preface by Emerson’s friend Thomas Carlyle was intended to boost sales, but to many it was the endorsement of a confusing writer by an utterly mystifying one.
Small case: Ralph Waldo Emerson


  One of 100 copies specially bound, this one was inscribed by Emerson to Grindall Reynolds, his minister in Concord.

![Image of inscription by Emerson to Grindall Reynolds]

Case 6: Ralph Waldo Emerson


  2,000 copies printed. On display are a copy inscribed by Emerson to his sister-in-law, Lucy Jackson Brown, and a copy in wrappers.

- *Poems.* Boston: James Munroe, 1847.

  Glazed boards. 1,500 copies printed.


  Cloth; glazed boards. The clothbound edition, for which Emerson received royalties, was intended for a more “serious” audience than was the other, which, in its gaudier glazed boards, was intended for general sale, and especially to be read on railways.


  2,000 copies printed. This copy was specially bound in leather by the publisher for presentation, in this case, by Emerson’s wife Lidian.
Upright 3:
Program for Harvard College college commencement, 29 August 1821.

Emerson is listed as participating in a discussion “On the Character of John Knox, William Penn, and John Wesley.”

Manuscript page from Emerson’s lecture, “Man the Reformer,” [1841].

Emerson delivered this lecture on 25 January 1841. The manuscript for the entire lecture is now lost.

Signed printed document, Concord Free Public Library Committee, 5 September 1877.

Emerson acknowledges the gift of a book in his role as chair of the Committee.
Case 7: Walt Whitman

Walt Whitman was not only a great poet but a consummate self-publisher. He presented an enormous bibliographical challenge because he did everything for many of his books, from setting type to choosing the binding to overseeing printing to writing publicity to reviewing the work himself. And there was no good bibliography of his writings. Whitman's bibliographical history proved to be a major jigsaw puzzle, one that was fun to put together from the evidence of multiple copies.

- Franklin Evans; or The Inebriate. New York: New World, 1842.
  Cover title. Whitman's first publication, a special issue of a New York newspaper, was a temperance novel.

- Leaves of Grass. Brooklyn: [Rome Brothers, 1855].
  800 copies printed. Whitman assisted in setting type for this book, which was published anonymously, even though there is a picture of Whitman as a frontispiece and his name is mentioned in the copyright notice and in one of the poems.
Leaves of Grass. Brooklyn: [Fowler and Wells, 1856].

Possibly 1,000 copies printed. After Emerson wrote Whitman a letter praising the 1855 edition of Leaves, Whitman emblazoned "I Greet You at the Beginning of A Great Career R. W. Emerson" in goldstamping at the foot of the spine; Emerson, who was not consulted, was not pleased.


Wrappers. Whitman served as his own best publicist, as he assembled this collection of reviews (some of which he had written himself) and comments on Leaves to help sell the 1860 edition of the book.

Walt Whitman's Drum Taps. New York: [Peter Eckler], 1865-1866 [1865].

This copy (the second issue of 1,000 copies) contains the "Sequel" with "When Lilacs Last in the Door-Yard Bloom'd," Whitman's poem on the death of Lincoln.


Leaves of Grass. Washington: [The Author], 1871.

Passage to India. Washington: [The Author], 1871.

All wrappers. 500 copies of Democratic Vistas printed; unknown number of the other two. In 1871 Whitman himself published collections of his prose and poetry in wrappers, of which this is a complete set. The sheets of Passage to India were later combined with other works into various editions of Leaves of Grass; the sheets of Democratic Vistas subsequently became part of Two Rivulets (1876). Leaves of Grass and Passage to India are from the personal collection of Joel Myerson.

Case 8: Walt Whitman

As a Strong Bird on Pinions Free. And Other Poems. Washington: [The Author], 1872.

Possibly 600 copies. Also on display are sheets of this book marked by Whitman for the printer.

Memoranda During the War. Camden, N.J.: [The Author], 1875-'76 [1876].

1,000 copies printed, most of which were bound up in Two Rivulets (1876). The remainder of Whitman's description of Washington in wartime and his experiences as an army hospital nurse were specially bound as "Remembrance Copies" for friends, and signed by Whitman, as is this one.
Two Rivulets. Camden, N.J.: [The Author], 1876.
Possibly 800 copies printed. This is the first collection of Whitman’s prose works. On display are a copy in a special half leather binding similar to Library of Congress deposit copy, containing Whitman’s handwritten corrections; and a copy with a frontispiece picture of Whitman signed by him.

1,000 copies printed. A number of unbound copies of this book, in unsewn sheets, were found in Whitman’s room after his death; this is undoubtedly one of them.

Small case: Walt Whitman

Leaves of Grass. With Sands at Seventy & A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads.
[Philadelphia: Ferguson Brothers, 1889].
300 copies printed on the occasion of Whitman’s seventieth birthday. This copy is inscribed by Whitman to Thomas Harned, who would later be one of his literary executors.

Small case: Walt Whitman

1,000 copies printed, of which only 100 are in this presentation binding. This copy is inscribed by Whitman to Thomas Harned, who would later be one of his literary executors.
Case 9: Transcendentalism

I naturally collected other writers from the Transcendentalist movement, as well as materials relating to them.


  Peabody published the first edition of the *Record*, her edited account of Bronson Alcott’s Temple School in Boston (the basis for Louisa May Alcott’s Plumfield School) in 1835, and Alcott supervised a revised edition in 1836, attempting to blunt criticisms of his unusual teaching methods (and his—for the time—frank discussions of sexuality and religion).


  500 copies printed. Emerson edited this book by a younger friend who was accused of being insane because he felt the poems had been dictated to him by the Spirit. On display is the copy belonging to W. P. Andrews, editor of Very’s *Poems* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1883), with his copy of that book as well.


  On display are the first American edition (1854) and the first appearance of the book in England in 1884 (from sheets of the twenty-second American printing of 1884 with a new title page).


  Wrappers. An example of the later phase of Transcendentalism, these lectures were given at the Concord School of Philosophy, an annual series of talks by various well-known people and discussions led by Bronson Alcott.


  This cornerstone work of women’s literature is included because it mentions the writings of Emerson, one of Chopin’s favorite authors, in significant ways.
Poet and artist, Christopher Pearse Cranch was undoubtedly the wittiest of the Transcendentalists. He combined wit and art in a series of caricatures based on passages from Emerson’s writings. This one, the most famous pictorial image relating to the movement, draws on the famous passage from *Nature* about Emerson’s epiphany while crossing the Boston Common: “Standing on the bare ground,—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space,—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God.”

*Upright 4:*

**Program for Harvard College commencement, 30 August 1837.**

Thoreau’s graduation program from Harvard, showing that he participated in a discussion of “The Commercial Spirit of Modern Times, considered in its influence on the Political, Moral, and Literary Character of a Nation.”

**Christopher Pearse Cranch, oil painting, [n.d.].**

This oil painting shows a more serious side of Cranch’s art than do his caricatures, and indicates why he is discussed respectfully as a member of the Hudson River School.

**Whitman, [Letter to William Michael Rossetti, 17 March 1876].**

Broadside. One way Whitman kept in touch with his British admirers was to write one of them with the full knowledge (and hope) that his letter would be passed on to a wider audience. In this case, Rossetti printed up copies at his own expense for distribution.
Case 10: The business of publishing

Publishing was and is a business, and one thrust of my scholarly career has been to examine that principle in the authors on whom I publish. I also collect objects relating to the business end of literature.

- Whitman, galley proof for Old Age’s Ship & Crafty Death’s (1890) and offprint of With husky haughty lips, o sea! (1884).
  Broadsides. Whitman always thought in print. Because he had access to printers, he often sent his first-draft manuscripts to be set in type, and then revised on a series of galley proofs. He also used to send final copies of the proofs to friends as a sort of offprint of the poem. Some of these galleys and offprints are displayed here. Old Age’s Ship & Crafty Death’s is from the personal collection of Joel Myerson.

- Emerson, manuscript letters to Welch, Bigelow, 13 August 1875, and to James R. Osgood & Co., 30 [May?] 1877.
  Emerson’s contract with his publishers gave him the right to set printing runs and dates. These letters instruct printers to reprint some of his books.
Emerson, check from Ticknor and Fields, 13 August 1867, endorsed.

Whitman, manuscript letter to David McKay, 18 December 1886, acknowledging receipt of royalties.

There is no better proof that writing is a business than receipts for royalties. The Whitman letter is from the personal collection of Joel Myerson.

![Receipt Image]

**PART B: IN THE GRANITEVILLE ROOM**

**Case 11: Christopher Pearse Cranch**

- Christopher Pearse Cranch, manuscript letters to Emerson, 2 March 1840 and 12 September 1841.

  When the *Dial* was established, Cranch wrote Emerson about contributing, enclosing some of what became his most famous poems, including “To the Aurora Borealis,” “Inworld,” and “Outworld.”

- Autograph manuscript of comments on Emerson.

- Autograph manuscript of a children’s story, “Dr. Theophilus.”

  This is an excellent example of how collecting helps scholarship. After purchasing this manuscript, Greta Little and I edited it along with Cranch’s previously-published children’s books as *Three Children’s Novels by Christopher Pearse Cranch* (Georgia, 1993).
Cranch illustrates the passage "The poor and the low find some amends to their immense moral capacity, for their acquiescence in a political and social inferiority. They are content to be brushed like flies from the path of a great person, so that justice shall be done by him to that common nature which it is the dearest desire of all to see enlarged and glorified."

Case 12: The Alcotts

My work on Bronson and Louisa May Alcott naturally meant that I would pick up interesting items by them, as shown in this case.


The Town and Country Club (1849-1850) was one of the clubs to which Emerson belonged (such as the Transcendental Club and the Saturday Club); Alcott served as its secretary.

Alcott earned what living he did from his “Conversations” or discussions on various topics. As he got older, the most popular of these was his recollections of the famous people of the Transcendentalist movement with whom he had been friends.


50 copies printed for Emerson’s birthday on 25 May. Alcott wrote this appreciative work, the first book-length study of Emerson, for his Concord neighbor and friend. On display is the copy inscribed by Alcott to Benjamin Marston Watson, a friend of Thoreau’s.

Louisa May Alcott, manuscript letter to Mary Livermore, [April 1866].

Alcott writes about taking care of her “babies,” her sister Anna’s boys Frederick (age three) and John (age ten months).


This is Alcott’s first book, a retelling of fairy tales she first heard from Emerson’s daughter Ellen, to whom the book is dedicated.

Case 13

Brooklyn Daily Eagle, 1 January-31 December 1846.

A full year’s run of this newspaper during the time at which Whitman was the editor and contributor of some 450 items.

Cases 14 and 15: Ralph Waldo Emerson

Manuscript letter to Samuel Ripley, 12 April 1827, written from Charleston, South Carolina, where Emerson had travelled for his health, and in which he comments on how the locals “have no particular pretensions to a religious character any farther than a decided hostility to Unitarianism, as ‘the Yankee religion.’” Personal collection of Joel Myerson.
● Partial corrected proof sheets for the American Scholar address.

● Manuscript letter to James Munroe & Co., 18 April 1839, about sending review copies.

● Autograph manuscript of “To Eva,” a poem based on Emerson’s first wife, Ellen. This manuscript served as printer’s copy for the 1847 London edition of Emerson’s Poems.

● Manuscript letter to Thomas Carlyle, 2 March [1848], about a visit to his house in London, along with the envelope addressed in Emerson’s hand.

● Manuscript letter to Alexander Ireland, 3 May 1848, about visiting London and Paris.

● Manuscript letter to Zina Fay, 22 August 1859, about her work, his family, Sanborn’s school in Concord, and Margaret Fuller (“No doubt Margaret Fuller’s life makes a just impression on you”).

● Manuscript letter to H. F. Tarbox, 4 January 1866, about lecturing. This letter is typical of the hundreds Emerson wrote during his forty-year-plus career as a lecturer.

● Manuscript letter to William Batchelder Greene, 8 July 1873, about the Dial.

**Case 16: Periodicals**

Because my dissertation was on the Transcendentalists’ periodical the Dial, the ways in which American literature presented itself in the magazines of the day has always interested me. Here are some representative examples of how writers and writing looked in the press.

● *Scriptural Interpreter* (1831-1837).

  The Myerson Collection has a complete run of this periodical edited by Theodore Parker when he attended the Harvard Divinity School, and to which he contributed his first published writings.

● *Western Messenger* (1835-1841).

  This magazine was edited by the Transcendentalists living in the Ohio Valley. The Myerson Collection has a complete run plus a number of issues in wrappers. On display is the issue of November 1840 with a review of the Dial.
**The Dial (1840-1844).**

This is the major publication by the Transcendentalists, a journal that lasted for four years and published sixteen issues, with contributions by nearly all the major figures in the movement including Emerson, Fuller (whose “The Great Lawsuit” in the July 1843 issue was an early version of *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*), and Thoreau. The Myerson Collection contains two complete runs (including the set of William Batchelder Greene, a contributor), plus a number of individual volumes and issues. On display is the issue of July 1842 with Thoreau’s “Natural History of Massachusetts.”

**Aesthetic Papers (1849).**

Wrappers. The first and only issue of this magazine, known for publishing Thoreau’s “Resistance to Civil Government” (more popularly known as “Civil Disobedience”).

**Putnam’s Magazine (1853-1858).**

Most of Herman Melville’s short stories (and his novel *Israel Potter*) first saw print in this New York publication. The Myerson Collection has a complete run plus six volumes in publisher’s cloth. On display are the issues for June-August 1855, containing Thoreau’s *Cape Cod*.

**Atlantic Monthly, August 1862.**

Wrappers. This issue contains Emerson’s essay on Thoreau, which was interpreted by many as being so negative that it kept people from reading Thoreau’s writings for many years.

**United States Service Magazine, July-December 1864.**

These five issues contain Louisa May Alcott’s story “Love and Loyalty.”
Case 17:

• William Emerson, printed and filled out bill for the funeral of Waldo's father, 22 May 1811.

• Jones Very, autograph manuscript of "The Journey," a poem known only through the existence of this manuscript, [ca. 1838].

• George Ripley, manuscript letter to H. M. Goodwin, 8 May 1843, replying with information about the Brook Farm community.

• George Ripley, manuscript letter to John Sullivan Dwight, 4 November 1847, about moving the Brook Farm journal, the Harbinger, to New York.

• James T. Fields, manuscript letter to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 7 February 1872, inviting him to a meeting with Emerson and Henry James the Elder.

• Florence Whiting Brown, manuscript journal kept in Concord, including a description of Emerson's death and funeral, 1882.
Also in the Graniteville Room:

- Engraving of Emerson by S. A. Schoff.
  Limited striking on rice paper, framed. Schoff is also known for doing the frontispiece engraving of Whitman for the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

- Daniel Chester French, bust of Emerson.
  This bust by French is one of the best-known images of Emerson. French was taught art by Louisa's sister May Alcott, and later went on to such commissions as the Minuteman statue in Concord and the Lincoln Memorial in Washington.