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Editor's Notes

This letter is addressed "H. G. O. Blake. / Worcester / Mass.," post-marked "Concord Ms. 17 {*illegible*}," and endorsed "Ap. 17, 1849." and "Ap. 17, '49."

T wrote the letter on p. 1 of a folio and the address on p. 4. Blake copied T's letter, including the closing and signature, on the opposite side of the address leaf; then he tore the folio in half at the fold, presumably so that he could give away the original letter. Following his copy of T's letter, Blake added:

The above is a copy of a note of Thoreau, written to me on the other half of this sheet, the original of which I intend to give to Miss Rice who lives near Adams Square, Worcester. H. G. O. Blake. Worcester, Sept. 14, 1893. The signature had been previously cut *out*, of course, to give away.

Alteration

A change appearing in the manuscript copy is reported below; it could be either a faithful representation of the original manuscript or an error made and corrected by the copyist.

Mr] Mrs

To Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz

June 30, 1849

Concord Mass June 30th

-49

Dear Sir,

Being disappointed in not finding you in Boston a week or two since, I requested Dr. Gould¹ to make some inquiries of you for me; but now, as I shall not be able to see that gentleman for some time, I have decided to apply to you directly.

Suffice it to say, that one of the directors of the Bangor (ME.) Lyceum has asked me to ascertain simply—and I think this a good Yankee way of doing the business—Whether you will read *two* or *three* lectures before that institution early in the next lecture season, and if so, what remuneration you will expect.

Of course they would be glad to hear more lectures, but

they are afraid that they may not have money enough to pay for them.

You may recognise in your correspondent the individual who forwarded to you through Mr Cabot many firkins of fishes and turtles a few years since,² and who also had the pleasure of an introduction to you at Marlboro' Chapel.³

Will you please to answer this note as soon as convenient?

Yrs respectfully
Henry D. Thoreau

Correspondent: Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz (1807-1873), born in Switzerland, was an internationally known zoologist and geologist. He had a distinguished career from 1832 to 1846 at the University of Neuchâtel, where he made his reputation with his self-published *Histoire naturelle des poissons d'eau douce de l'Europe centrale* (Neuchâtel: d'O. Petitpierre, 1839-1845) and *Études sur les glaciers*. Agassiz opposed the theories of Charles Darwin, and he was the first to publicize the idea that the earth had once experienced an ice age. He came to the United States in fall 1846 with support from the Prussian government and an invitation to lecture at the Lowell Institute in Boston. What began as a temporary stay became permanent when Agassiz was offered a professorship at Harvard's newly created Lawrence Scientific School. He taught at Harvard from 1847 to 1873.

¹ Augustus Addison Gould (1805-1866), son of Nathaniel and Sally Prichard Gould, was a doctor in Boston and a leading authority on mollusks. Gould graduated from Harvard University in 1825 and from the Harvard Medical School in 1830. He was a frequent contributor to scientific journals and coauthored, with Agassiz, *Principles of Zoology* (Boston: Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 1848). T owned a copy of his *Report on the Invertebrata of Massachusetts* (Cambridge, Mass.: Folsom, Wells, and Thurston, 1841).

² James Elliot Cabot (1821-1903), son of Samuel and Elizabeth Perkins Cabot, graduated from Harvard University in 1840 and from the Harvard Law School in 1845. An amateur naturalist, Cabot worked for some time as Agassiz's assistant. He corresponded with T several times during 1847-1848 and enlisted T's help in collecting specimens for Agassiz's laboratory (see *Cor 1* 2013, pp. 290-292, 292-295, 299-300, 302-303, 303-304, and 350-352). Cabot was elected corresponding secretary of the Boston Society of Natural

History in May 1850, and he held that position until he resigned in June 1853.

³ The Marlboro Chapel hosted a regular course of popular and scientific lectures sponsored by the Lowell Institute. The lecture series began at Boston's Odeon in 1839; in 1847 it moved to the Tremont Temple and in 1848 to the Marlboro Chapel, where Agassiz lectured frequently. The Lowell Lectures have featured prominent intellectuals down to the present. It is not known when T met Agassiz at the Marlboro Chapel.

Copy-text: ALS (MH-H, MS Am 1419 [634])

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Editor's Note

This letter is addressed "Prof. Louis Agassiz / Cambridge / Mass.," postmarked "Concord Ms. 30 Jun", and endorsed "Henry D. Thoreau / Concord, June 30/49 / Autograph-".

From Jean Louis Rodolphe Agassiz

July 5, 1849

Dear Sir,

I remember with much pleasure the time when you used to send me specimens from your vicinity and also our short interview in the Marlborough Chapel. I am under too many obligations of your kindness to forget it, and I am very sorry that I missed your visit in Boston, but for 18 months I have now been settled in Cambridge.

It would give me great pleasure to engage for the lectures you ask from me, on behalf of the Bangor Lyceum; but I find it has been last winter such an heavy tax upon my health, that I wish *for the present* to make no engagements, as I have some hopes of making my living this year by other efforts and beyond the necessity of^a my wants, both domestic and scientific, I am determined not to exert myself, as all the time I can thus secure to myself must be exclusively devoted to science. You see this does not look much like business making; but my only business is my intercourse with nature and could I do without