

¹⁸ Rebecca Jane Billings's sister, Mary Ann Billings (1810-1888) and her brother-in-law, Charles Lowell (1807-1895), also lived in Bangor.

¹⁹ Apparently Thatcher had approached the Bangor Lyceum about inviting T to lecture there. On February 16 T wrote Thatcher that he would give a lecture in Portland on March 21, and that he hoped to go on to Bangor, both to lecture and to travel up to Chesuncook (see next letter). However, by March 16 he was reading the proofs of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* and the Bangor trip became impossible (see p. 15).

Copy-text: ALS (MaLiTIW, Thoreau Society Archives, Raymond Adams Collection)

Published: "Knowing the Means" 2007, 2

Editor's Note

This letter is addressed "Geo. A Thatcher / Bangor / ME." and postmarked "Concord Ms. 9 Feb".

Author's Alterations

West Point] west point
it] if
Rebecca Jane] *interlined above cancelled* Mrs Thatcher-
Cousins Charles & Mary] *interlined above cancelled* Mr & Mrs
Lowell

To George Augustus Thatcher

February 16, 1849

Concord Feb. 16th 1849

Dear George,

I am going as far as Portland to lecture before their Lyceum on the 3^d Wednesday^a in March.-¹ By the way they pay me \$25.00- Now I am not sure but I may have leisure then to go on to Bangor and so up river. I have a great desire to go up to Chesuncook before the ice breaks up-but I should not care if I had to return down the banks and so saw the logs running; and I write now chiefly to ask how late it will probably do to go up the river-or when on the whole would be the best time for me to start? Will the 3^d week in March answer?

I should be very glad if you would go with me, but I hesitate to ask you now, it is so uncertain whether I go at all myself. The fact is I am once more making a bargain with the Publishers Ticknor & Co, who talk of printing a book² for me, and if we come to terms I *may* then be confined here correcting proofs—or at most I should have but a few days to spare.

If the Bangor Lyceum should want me about those times, that of course would be very convenient, and a seasonable aid to me.³

Shall I trouble you then to give me some of the statistics of a winter excursion to Chesuncook?⁴

Of Helen I have no better news to send. We fear that she may be very gradually failing, but it may not be so.⁵ She is not very uncomfortable and still seems to enjoy the day. I do not wish to foresee what change may take place in her condition or in my own.

The rest of us are as well off as we deserve to be—

Yrs truly
Henry D. Thoreau

Correspondent: See p. 4]

¹ On March 21, T lectured in Portland on “Economy.” The lecture was the same as or similar to the one he gave in Salem on November 22, 1848, “Student Life in New England, Its Economy,” which drew on material later included in “Economy,” the opening chapter of *Walden*. One reviewer called the March 21 lecture “unique, original, comical, and high-falutin,” and editors of the *Portland Transcript* wrote: “Despite the no very slight touches of transcendentalism, there is much in it to furnish food for thought, as well as mirth” (“T’s Lectures before *Walden*” 1995, pp. 170 and 171).

² T refers to *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (see p. 10 note 1).

³ The publishing schedule for *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* made it impossible for T to lecture in Bangor; see p. 7, note 19, and p. 15.

⁴ T did not go to Chesuncook Lake with Thatcher until September 1853. This excursion would be the subject of the second of T’s Maine woods essays; see *Maine Woods* 1972, pp. 84–156.

⁵ T’s older sister, Helen, died of tuberculosis on June 14, 1849.

Copy-text: ALS (TxAuHRH, Henry David Thoreau Collection, MS-4222, 1.3)

Published: *Cor* 1958, 236-237

Editor's Note

This letter is addressed "Geo. A. Thatcher Esq / Bangor / ME"; postmarked "Concord Ms. 16 Feb", and endorsed "Thoreau- / Feb 1849".

Author's Alteration

Wednesday] wednesday

From William D. Ticknor and Company

February 16, 1849

Boston Feby. 16 1849

Henry D Thoreau Esq

Dear^e Sir,

In reply to your fav. of 10th inst. we beg to say that we will publish for your a/c- "A Week on the Concord River."-¹

The following general Estimate based upon a vol. 1/3 larger than Emerson's Essays. first Series (as suggested by you) we present for your consideration- Say-1000 Cops. 448 pages-like *Emerson's Essay. 1st Series* printed on good paper @ \$4.00 pr ream will cost in sheets- \$381.24.- The binding in our style-fine cloth-

12 ^e pr Copy-or for the Edn	<u>120.00</u>
	\$501.24

In the the above Estimate we have included for alterations & Extra corrections \$15.- It may be more,-or less- This will depend on yourself. The book can be condensed & of course cost less- Our Estimate is in accordance with Sample copy. As you would not, perhaps, care to bind more than 1/2 the Edⁿ at once,-You would need to send \$450.-to print 1000 Cops. & bind 1/2 of the Same.-

Yours Very Truly
W D Ticknor & Co

Concord
Mass^a