

own, only the sum of twenty-five dollars, not under the name of pecuniary compensation for the lectures but for travelling expenses—

An early and favorable reply will much oblige us.

With great respect.

Your obedient Servant.

Josiah. Pierce. Jr.

Henry. D. Thoreau. Esq.

*Correspondent:* Josiah Pierce (1827-1913), son of Josiah and Evelina Lewis Pierce, was born in Gorham, Maine. He graduated from Bowdoin in 1846 and practiced law in Portland. In 1855 he became the U.S. secretary of the legation in St. Petersburg and continued to live in St. Petersburg as a businessman after leaving the foreign service. In 1858 Pierce married Martha D. Lander (1833-1873), daughter of Edward and Eliza West Lander. In 1870, he moved to London, where he became a fellow of both the Royal Geographical Society and the Zoological Society.

<sup>1</sup> T delivered the eighth lecture of the Portland course on January 15, 1851; his topic was "An Excursion to Cape Cod." As the *Portland Transcript* reports, his presentation evoked lively commentary from the audience: one man described it as the "greatest piece of nonsense he ever listened to"; others found it "a rich treat" (John F. Jaques, "An Enthusiastic Newspaper Account of Thoreau's Second Lecture in Portland, Maine, January 15, 1851," *American Literature* 40 [November 1968]: 387-388).

<sup>2</sup> T had lectured in Portland on March 21, 1849; see p. 8, note 1.

*Copy-text:* ALS (NN-BGC, Henry David Thoreau Collection, 1837-1917, Series IV)

*Published:* *Cor* 1958, 267

*From Franklin Forbes*

*November 14, 1850*

Clinton Nov 14, 1850

Henry D. Thoreau Esq

Dear Sir

As one of the Committee on Lectures of the Bigelow Mechanic Institute of this town,<sup>1</sup> I wish to ascertain if you

will deliver your lecture on "Cap Cod" before the Institute on either Wednesday Evening of the month of January-<sup>2</sup>

An early answer will much oblige

Yrs respectfully  
Franklin Forbes.

P.S. If you prefer any other lecture of yours to the above mentioned, please name a day on which you can deliver it.

*Correspondent:* Franklin Forbes (1811-1877), son of Eli and Clarissa Nichols Forbes of West Cambridge, Massachusetts, graduated from Amherst in 1833 and taught in Lowell and Boston. He became a civil engineer in 1846 and the agent of the Lancaster Mills in Clinton in 1850. Forbes married Martha Ann Stearns Cushing (1818-1904), daughter of Edmund and Mary Stearns Cushing of Lunenburg, in 1837.

<sup>1</sup> In 1846, a group of Clinton residents formed "The Bigelow Mechanics' Institute in Clintonville," a society that organized public lectures and supported a lending library and a reading room. It was named for Erastus Brigham Bigelow (1814-1879), an inventor best known for devising a power loom designed to weave coach lace (an ornamental border material).

<sup>2</sup> T gave his Cape Cod lecture on Wednesday, January 1, 1851 (Emerson had given the first lecture of the season on November 13, 1850). The local *Saturday Courant* dismissed T's performance as "one of those intellectual efforts which serve to wile away an hour very pleasantly, but which leave little or nothing impressed upon the memory of real value" (Walter Harding, "On Thoreau's Delivery of 'Cape Cod' in Clinton," *Thoreau Society Bulletin* 197 [autumn 1991]: 2).

*Copy-text:* ALS (NN-BGC, Henry David Thoreau Collection, 1837-1917, Series IV)

*Published:* *Cor* 1958, 267-268

*Editor's Note*

This letter is addressed "Henry D. Thoreau Esq / Concord, / Mass" and postmarked "Clinton Ms. Nov 14".