

hoe] *PE*; ho{*MS torn*}  
 be] *PE*; b{*MS torn*}  
 market] *PE*; mar{*MS torn*}et

*Author's Alterations*

Nature] nature  
 if] *added in margin*  
 hoe] *interlined above*  
 lecturer] *interlined above cancelled* speaker  
 I will . . . do.] *interlined above and below cancelled* You shall say  
 when, & I will come then or set another day.

*To Horace Greeley*

*July 24, 1850*

Wedns. Morn.

Dear Sir-

If W<sup>m</sup> E. Channing<sup>1</sup> calls-will you say that I am gone to Fire-Island<sup>2,e</sup> by cars at 9 this morn. via Thompson.<sup>3</sup> with W<sup>m</sup>. H. Channing<sup>4</sup>

Yrs

Henry D Thoreau

*Correspondent:* Horace Greeley (1811-1872), son of Zaccheus and Mary Woodburn Greeley of Amherst, New Hampshire, married Mary Young (or Youngs) Cheney (1811-1872), daughter of Silas and Polly Young (or Youngs) Cheney, in 1836. He established the *New-York Tribune* in April 1841 as a Whig paper. By the middle of the decade it had become the best paper in the country. In 1844 Greeley hired Margaret Fuller to be his book editor and later published the letters she wrote from Europe. An indefatigable reformer, Greeley admired Fourier, hated slavery, and opposed the Mexican War. As his champion and literary agent, Greeley gave T advice, sent his work to editors and publishers, and faithfully reviewed and complimented his writing.

<sup>1</sup> William Ellery Channing the Younger (1817-1901) was Fuller's brother-in-law and T's frequent walking companion.

<sup>2</sup> T was on his way to Fire Island, off of Long Island, to superintend the search for the bodies and possessions of Margaret Fuller and her family, all of whom perished on the morning of July 19, when the merchant freighter *Elizabeth*, bound for New York City from Leghorn, Italy, was wrecked in a hurricane within sight of Fire

Island. Sarah Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), daughter of Timothy and Margaret Crane Fuller and the most accomplished woman writer of her generation, had known T since the 1830s. As editor of the *Dial* from 1840 to 1842, she published four of T's poems but rejected his essay "The Service" with sharp criticisms. In 1844, Fuller moved to New York City to be the review editor for Horace Greeley's *New-York Tribune*; she left the city in 1846 and traveled in Europe as a foreign correspondent for the paper. In Rome she met and married the Marquis Giovanni Angelo Ossoli (1821-1850), a young Italian nobleman whose father and brothers served in the government of the Vatican. Fuller and Ossoli took part in the revolutions of 1848-1849 in Italy, joining the ranks of the Roman revolutionaries in 1849 when the French attacked the city. After the defeat of the short-lived Roman Republic, they fled to Florence and then sailed to the United States, where Fuller planned to resume her writing career.

<sup>3</sup> Thompson was the stop on the Long Island railroad closest to the scene of the wreck.

<sup>4</sup> William Henry Channing (1810-1884), a Unitarian minister, was Ellery Channing's cousin and Fuller's close friend.

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

*Published:* *Letters of RWE* 1939, 4:219; *Cor* 1958, 261

#### *Editor's Notes*

This letter is addressed, in Emerson's hand, "Horace Greeley, Esq. / Tribune Office / New York. / H. D. Thoreau." T mentions in his July 25 letter to Emerson that he has not seen Greeley (p. 63); presumably he left the letter at the office of the *New-York Tribune*.

PE supplies the date "July 24, 1850": T's letter is a postscript to a letter dated "July 23, 1850" from Emerson to Greeley, and in 1850, July 24 fell on a Wednesday. Emerson wrote his letter first and left it unsealed so that T could write his and send both to Greeley. Emerson's letter reads:

Concord, 23 July 1850

My dear Sir,

The best thing we can think to do in these worst news of last night concerning Margaret Fuller, is to charge Mr. Thoreau to go, on all our parts, & obtain on the wrecking ground all the intelligence &, if possible, any fragments of manuscript or other property. I know you will give him the best counsel &

help: you, & Mr Spring,<sup>1</sup>-& I shall cordially unite with you in any expense this calamity makes necessary.

Yours

R. W. Emerson.

<sup>1</sup> Marcus Spring (1810-1874) was a dry goods merchant and a prominent reformer. He married Rebecca Buffum (1811-1911), daughter of Arnold and Rebecca Gould Buffum, in 1836. The Springs had persuaded Fuller to accompany them to Europe in 1846 and probably paid part of her expenses.

Fire-Island] *PE*; Fire- / Island *in MS*

*To Ralph Waldo Emerson*

*July 25, 1850*

Fire Island Beach

Thursday morn.<sup>a</sup> July 25 '50

Dear Friend,

I am writing this at the house of Smith Oakes,<sup>1</sup> within one mile of the wreck.<sup>2</sup> He is the one who rendered the most assistance. W<sup>m</sup> H Channing came down with me, but I have not seen Arthur Fuller<sup>3</sup>-nor Greeley, Nor Spring.<sup>4</sup> Spring & Sumner<sup>5</sup> were here yesterday but left soon. Mr Oakes & wife tell me (all the survivors came or were brought directly<sup>e</sup> to their house) that the ship struck at 10 minutes after 4 AM. and all hands, being mostly in their night clothes made haste to the fore-castle-the water coming in at once<sup>e</sup>. There they remained the, passengers *in* the fore-castle, the crew *above* it doing what they could. Every wave lifted the fore-castle roof & washed over those within. The first man got ashore at 9. Many from 9 to noon- At flood tide about 3½ o'clock when the ship broke up entirely-they came out of the fore-castle & Margaret sat with her back to the fore-mast with her hands over her knees-her husband & child<sup>6</sup> already drowned-a great wave came & washed her off. The Steward? had just before taken her child & started for shore; both were drowned.