

Andrew C. McKeivitt is *John D. Winters Endowed Professor of History at Louisiana Tech University*. He is the author of *GUN COUNTRY: GUN CAPITALISM, CULTURE, AND CONTROL IN COLD WAR AMERICA* (2023).

The California Days of Ralph Waldo Emerson. By Brian C. Wilson. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2022. Pp. 240. \$26.95 paperback.)

By 1871, when Ralph Waldo Emerson went on an extended trip to the American West, he was already something of a cultural institution. The encounter between a treasured public intellectual and a landscape thought to represent that nation's ideals is the subject of Brian C. Wilson's *The California Days of Ralph Waldo Emerson*.

The trip to California was planned and funded by John Murray Forbes, a wealthy industrialist whose son, Will, had married Emerson's youngest daughter, Edith, six years earlier. Emerson scholars have long known of the journey, which lasted roughly a month and a half, but the episode usually receives short shrift in biographies. Emerson was considered past his prime, already slipping into the penumbral dementia that Christopher Hanlon has chronicled in *Emerson's Memory Loss*. And his record of the trip is surprisingly sketchy. Emerson's journals of this period are sparse, and most of the letters he sent home were lost. An exception is the charming note he sent his grandson describing sea lions basking off the coast of San Francisco: "Some of them are twelve feet long, that is, if they could stand upright on their hind-feet they would be twice as tall as I am." (77)

Wilson has found a way around this lack of primary source material by focusing on a cache of letters from a member of Emerson's entourage, the lawyer and constitutional law theorist James Bradley Thayer, who chronicled the trip in daily letters to his wife, Sophia Bradford Ripley Thayer. The group accompanying Emerson included Forbes's large family and Wilkie James, son of Henry James, Sr., who was still recovering from physical and psychic wounds incurred during service in the Civil War. But it is Thayer who commands center stage.

Emerson's experiences during the long train trip west and then in California is refracted through the genial perspective of a Transcendentalist acolyte who relished every meal or cigar shared with the celebrated older man.

Among the things Thayer recounts are the luxuries of travel in a Pullman car, stray views of wild game, and a meeting with Brigham Young in Salt Lake City. Once the party reached San Francisco, Emerson went on a tour of opium dens in Chinatown and was feted by leaders of the Unitarian church. The picture presented by Thayer is of a seemingly tireless sightseer eager to soak up every moment of the trip. We watch as Emerson devours histories and guidebooks of California, while at the same time remaining patient to curious strangers who sought an audience.

Only once in this account does Emerson break out of the role of public figure and come alive as an intellectual, revealing a spark of his earlier days, when he meets John Muir in the woods of Yosemite. Muir, then thirty-three years old, resembled nothing so much as a western Thoreau, a young autodidact enthralled by the splendors of the massive sequoias beneath which he often camped. The two hit it off immediately. Muir showed his guest his collection of botanical samples and discussed the properties of each plant. He tried to convince an enthusiastic Emerson to spend a night outside, away from travel lodgings and beneath the stars, but the older man's friends intervened in the interests of his health. The men never saw each other again, but they exchanged an intermittent correspondence, each trying to cajole the other into visiting.

For much of the trip, one gets a sense that Emerson was performing "Emerson," the public persona he crafted during the heyday of Transcendentalism. At a series of lectures in San Francisco, he deployed a favorite trick from the past, pretending as though the pages of his talk were out of order, forcing the veteran author to pick his way from one inspiration to the next. Newspaper reviews of his theatrics were mixed at best. Overall, *The California Days of Ralph Waldo Emerson* presents a vivid picture of the aging Transcendentalist as he encounters a raw, brash society that he helped to summon into existence.

Randall Fuller is *Herman Melville Distinguished Professor of American Literature at the University of Kansas*. He is the author of *THE BOOK THAT CHANGED AMERICA: HOW DARWIN'S THEORY OF EVOLUTION IGNITED A NATION* (2017).

The Shores of Bohemia: A Cape Cod Story, 1910–1960. By John Taylor Williams. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2022. Pp. 300. \$35.00 cloth.)

Nature writer Robert Finch described Cape Cod as a “storied place,” where nature, history, and culture are inextricably intertwined. This is especially true of the Outer Cape, the large area of windswept bluffs and beaches on one side and sheltered bays on the other that stretches south from Provincetown through Truro, Wellfleet, Eastham, and Orleans to Chatham. What appears to be a timeless natural setting of ocean, sand, fields, and forest has been shaped by successive generations of indigenous peoples and European-American farmers, fisherman, real estate developers, and conservationists. Beginning with Henry David Thoreau in the mid-nineteenth century, artists and writers have played a major role in shaping visitors’ perceptions of the Outer Cape, which has, in turn, reshaped the environment as the local economy shifted to support tourism.

The Shores of Bohemia closely follows two generations of artists, writers, and architects who lived through this dramatic transformation and at times accelerated it. Soon after the Portland Gale of 1898 damaged the local fishing industry, Charles Hawthorne founded the Cape Cod School of Art and writer Mary Heaton Vorse moved to Provincetown. Taking advantage of the depressed local economy, Greenwich Village artists and writers associated with either the art school, Vorse, or both started summering there, and a seasonal bohemian colony grew. Intellectual historians might disagree with the author’s definition of “bohemian” and who belongs in that set, but the approach works well here. Some errors arise, such as misstating when New York moved its capital to Albany (7), confusing the American Federation of Labor with the Western Federation