This thesis is an investigation of the “sense of place” in American literature and the use of setting in selected works by four major American authors. A theory about the importance of setting in American writing is postulated and four categories are established for defining an author's use of setting in his work. Regional and local color writing are discussed because of their special interest in the physical environment of their characters. A survey is made of the importance of setting in the work of major authors from the time of Benjamin Franklin to that of Ernest Hemingway. The general problems involved in providing suitable maps and illustrations for an “Atlas for American Literature” are studied, and methods for solving these problems discussed. Examples of specific problems and solutions to these problems are provided by maps and illustrations for one book by each of three authors who represent important periods in American literary development, namely James Fenimore Cooper, Mark Twain and John Steinbeck. The latter half of the thesis is a comprehensive study of the setting of all of Henry David Thoreau's writings and the provision of maps and illustrations to accompany them. Maps by Thoreau, contemporary maps and modern reconstructions are included, as well as selected illustrations relevant to the settings of his work. A chronology of all of Thoreau's travels beyond the Concord and Boston area has been compiled and a partial index drawn up for the thirty-six maps.

Collections
Arts: Theses and Dissertations [1512]
Brahma” Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau show changes in the concept of the American self in the early 19th Century. Transcendentalists like Bronson Alcott and Robert Owens and George and Sophia Ripley created experimental utopian colonies to counteract the attitudes created by the Industrial Revolution. Transcendentalism was a philosophical, social movement.

Suggested Research Topics for American Literature
Prepared by Mary C.

Henry David Thoreau was christened David Henry Thoreau; he reversed his first two names after graduating from Harvard. Nobody knows why. Fresh from university, Thoreau decided to change his forenames around and become known as Henry David, though he never formally had his named changed and remained, officially, David Henry. It’s a quintessentially American move, a mini-declaration of independence, and one of the key texts in the American Transcendentalist movement. However, Thoreau did not go and live miles from civilisation, but just a couple of miles from his family home in Massachusetts. Walden sold slowly at first, and it was five years before it sold 2,000 copies. An online video game of Walden is reportedly in development.