

Thomas Snape Tunaley meets Ralph Waldo Emerson, American poet, author and philosopher,
1847.

Foreword

From: [https://www.opednews.com/QuoteAuthor/2/Ralph Waldo Emerson](https://www.opednews.com/QuoteAuthor/2/Ralph+Waldo+Emerson)

"Ralph Waldo Emerson (Boston, Massachusetts May 25, 1803 – April 27, 1882) American essayist, philosopher and poet: "champion of individualism and critic of the pressures of society that oppose such individualism. His support for abolitionism late in life created controversy, and at times he was subject to abuse from crowds while speaking on the topic".

Emerson's work and writings are much used in American schools today. Emerson toured Europe in 1832 and, from 1847 to 1848, toured England, Scotland, and Ireland. In 1856 he wrote of his travels in his book "English Traits".

Intro:

Emerson, originating from Boston, MA, appears to have had personal links with the Bootts also of Boston, prior to his lecture tour of England, 1847. In particular, there'd been a tutor-pupil relationship between Emerson and the young Francis Boott at the Ripley School, Waltham, a small boarding school owned by the Ripleys (see next section) where Emerson had taught when on vacation from Harvard. As a result, Emerson would have had some knowledge through both Francis and the school of [Mary Tunaley](#)'s family background. Coincidentally, perhaps, these links also included Emerson, in 1824, setting up a school in the increasingly populated township of Chelmsford, MA, where Kirk Boott Jnr. was involved in the expansion of the Lowell system in East Chelmsford next to the Merrimack River. .

Background:

Emerson's father William Emerson Jnr. was the half brother of Samuel Ripley (1783-1847) minister of the First Church, Waltham, who owned the Ripley School where Francis Boott was educated for five years. The school was run by Ripley's wife Sarah Bradford Ripley (1793-1867) whom Samuel Ripley married 1818.

The following section provides evidence as to how Francis Boott, son of Mary Tunaley and Francis Boott Snr. became enlisted as a pupil at Emerson's half-uncles's Ripley School at Waltham.

From Wikipedia regarding Sarah Bradford Ripley: "She was an American educator and noted scholar at a time when women were rarely admitted to universities. She acquired most of her knowledge of the classics, philosophy, modern languages, botany, astronomy, and chemistry through independent study. She was reputedly "one of the most learned women of the nineteenth century."

The various Emerson-Ripley relationships are complicated:

Ralph W. Emerson's grandfather William Emerson Snr.(1743-1776) was a revolutionary minister ("chaplain to the Continental Army when war broke out"). He died from dysentery aged about 33 at Fort Ticonderoga - this event when William Emerson Jnr (1769-1811) was just seven years of age.

Ezra Ripley (1751-1841) Samuel Ripley's father, subsequently married William Snr.'s widow Phebe Emerson (Bliss) with William Emerson Jnr. then becoming part of the Ripley family. The Ripleys and Emersons, incidentally, all of Unitarian persuasion as were many of the Lunar and Enlightenment protagonists in England.

More significantly, Ralph Waldo Emerson acted as tutor at Ripley School whilst on vacation from Harvard. This the same time that Francis Boott was a pupil at Ripley.

One telling statement found on the website at

<https://www.laphamsquarterly.org/roundtable/sight-unseen>

"With the opening of the mill in 1814, the town (Waltham) was transformed from a hamlet into a village with a vibrant social life. Mill-related associations, often initiated with non-mill townspeople, included a dance group and a speaker series. Even a lending library was created, an uncommon institution for the time."

With Kirk Boott Snr, Francis Boott's uncle, having been an influential member of the [Boston Associates](#), that membership now taken over by son Kirk Jnr. following his father's death, the Bootts were almost certainly part of these "mill-related associations" and likely influenced John Wright Boott's choice, in 1821, of the Ripley School at Waltham for the young Francis, J.W.Boott being the eldest son of Kirk Boott Snr. and by now the legal guardian of cousin Francis following first the death in 1814 of Francis Boott Snr, husband of Mary Tunaley Boott and then in 1817 of J.W.B.'s father Kirk Boott Snr.

The Ripley School was a small boarding school with only 14 pupils, according to [Wikipedia](#). Consequently, Ralph Waldo Emerson, tutor at the school whilst on vacation from Harvard, may well have become familiar with Francis's family background. And it may have been with this

knowledge that, in 1847, Emerson came to meet Thomas Snape Tunaley, half-brother of Francis's mother, Mary Tunaley, in Derby, England (see below).

General

During his tour of Britain in 1847, Emerson made copious notes, since transcribed and kept at the Houghton Library, Harvard University including lists of those people he met. These included, most notably from the Tunaley point of view, Thomas S. Tunaley of Full Street, Derby, who on December 10th, 1847 accompanied Emerson, along with R.W. Birch, on a visit to "[Keddleston Hall](#)" (correct spelling "Kedleston") seat of George Curzon, made Lord Scarsdale in 1911 and Viceroy of India (1898-1905).

The names of other people that Emerson saw in Derby may provide further clues as to Thomas's position at that time:

R.W. Birch is given in the notes as resident at "Wardwell", Derby. The name "Wardwell" shown in italics in Emerson's records possibly suggesting a difficulty in transcription. In fact the R.W. Birch, mentioned, is most likely to have been R.W. Birch, Solicitor, of 20, Wardwick, Derby. Charles Harding Esq. of "Bale Hall" Tamworth is also given in the notes. According to William West's "The History of Warwickshire" (click [here](#)), Charles Harding was a smallware manufacturer in Tamworth, Warwickshire. Meanwhile, the 1841 census for Tamworth (click [here](#)) has Charles, "aged 55 and Manufacturer" based at Bolehall, Tamworth.

The location and occupation significant as Thomas married [Catherine Smith](#) 1850, i.e. 3 years after Emerson's visit, with records showing Catherine hailed from Tamworth with the married couple's daughter, [Kathleen Constantia](#), also born there 1852.

Footnote:

In 1826, Mary Tunaley Boott had Francis moved from the Ripley School in Waltham to the Round Hill School in Northampton, MA. Francis, in his memoirs, compared one of Ripley's later teachers to Charles Dickens's tyrannical Wackford Squeers.

Mary now married to Jeremiah Lee of Marblehead, (marriage 1825). This second marriage for Mary suggesting that although John Wright Boott, according to Francis's memoirs, was still the latter's guardian, Mary, alongside "Jerry", now had more control over Francis's future. By then, Emerson had long left the Ripley School, i.e. around 1823/1824, initially setting up a school in Chelmsford before later moving on to Roxbury and then Cambridge.