



Great God, What a Man!

Over seven years ago, John Rosemerry contacted the Rochester Hills Museum for information about Calvin H. Greene. Although the Museum receives over 100 research requests every year, this request was interesting since Mr. Rosemerry lives in Texas and was researching a typical small town farmer from Rochester. Upon further discussion, Mr. Rosemerry explained that he was a Rochester native.

His interest in Calvin H. Greene began in the 1930s when he was reading Henry David Thoreau's "Walden" at the Avon Township Library. It was then that he noticed Calvin Greene's name listed on the inside cover of the book and many others by Thoreau. Greene's name was forgotten until 1945 when Mr. Rosemerry received a copy of University of Michigan's "Quarterly Review" while enlisted in the Navy. It was in this magazine that Greene was referred to as a "western correspondent" for Henry David Thoreau. Mr. Rosemerry's interest continued through the years and upon retirement he began researching the relationship between this Rochester native, Calvin H. Greene, and Henry David Thoreau.



Henry David Thoreau

Recently, Mr. Rosemerry completed an article entitled "Great God, What a Man!: Notes Concerning Calvin Harlow Greene." In this piece, the relationship between Thoreau and Greene is explained. It appears that in 1854, Greene read a review in the *New York Tribune* of Thoreau's new work "Walden." At that point Greene wrote to the publisher to purchase the book. Upon receipt of the book, Greene discovered that Thoreau had written an earlier book. Since this publication was no longer available through the publisher, Greene contacted Thoreau directly in 1856 to purchase a copy of the book...and the correspondence between the two men began!

Interestingly, in his research Mr. Rosemerry discovered another Rochester tie to Henry David Thoreau. This tie was with Fidelia Gillette. Fidelia was married to Hartson Gillette who ran a mill on the Clinton River one mile from Calvin Greene's mill. She was a Universalist preacher and a published writer. One of her poems entitled, "Henry David Thoreau" was found in the scrapbook of Thoreau's sister, Sophia. Fidelia Gillette has been inducted into the Community Hall of Fame exhibit at the Rochester Hills Museum.

During his research, Mr. Rosemerry also discovered another Calvin Greene in Rochester. This gentleman, Calvin A. Greene, lived at the same time as Calvin Harlow Greene. To differentiate between the two of them, Calvin H. was referred to as "Harlow."

Mr. Rosemerry's research began many years ago as a young man in his local library reading a book by Thoreau, as did the interest of another young man, Calvin H. Greene reading the same book some 75 years earlier!