

## A literary journey in New England: from 25 May to 1 June 2019

At the end of my second year at University, I suggested to my American friend to visit together some of the places in New England that I had heard of in my class of American literature, such as Concord, the cradle of Transcendentalism: Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau lived there, and Nathaniel Hawthorne also stayed a few years at the Old Manse. I also remembered from my childhood that the story of *Little Women*, by Louisa May Alcott, took place in Concord. My friend liked the idea to (re)visit some milestones in her own culture and came back to me with the outline of a 5-day itinerary, leading us to Connecticut and Massachusetts. Here it is...

### Saturday 25 May 2019

I arrived at night the previous day, at Newark airport. My friend took me up at the airport, and we went to her house in Murray Hill, New Jersey. Rest and family activities. Last preparations for our trip to New England.

**Sunday 26 May.** Warm and sunny day.

Morning: drive to **Hartford**, Connecticut. Visit Mark Twain's house:

<https://marktwainhouse.org/>



Mark Twain's house, own photo

After lunch, drive to **Amherst**, Massachusetts. Visit Emily Dickinson's house, now a museum:

<https://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org/>



We stayed at a friend's house for two nights. Diner together in Amherst.

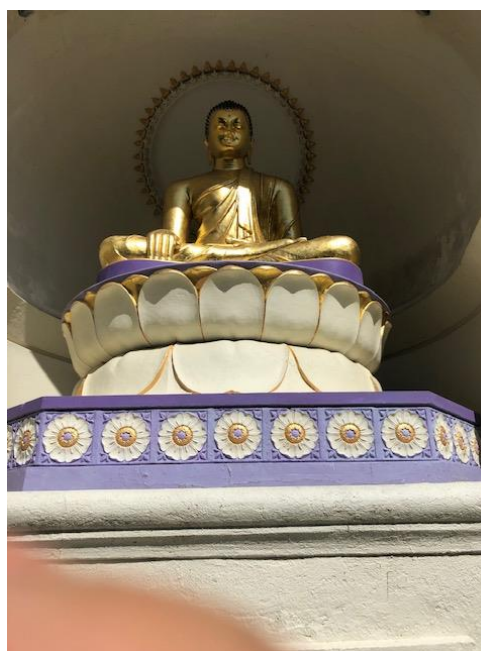
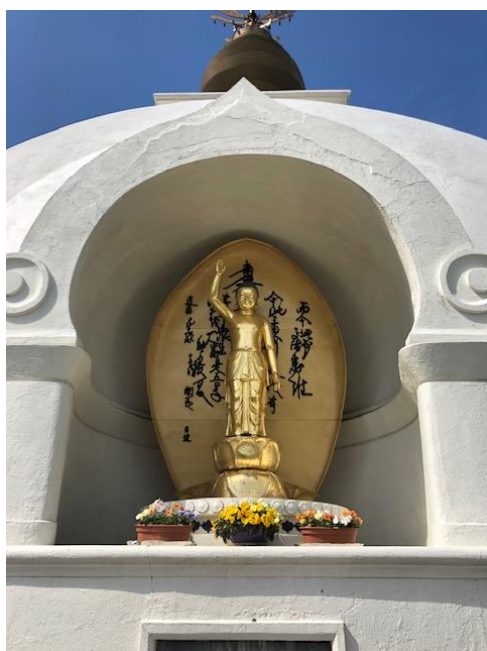


## Monday 27 May

Visit the area, drive to The Book Mill, in Montague, a delightful coffee shop and second-hand bookshop, on the banks of the Sawmill River: <https://maq.ujw.mybluehost.me/>,  
<https://newengland.com/travel/massachusetts/the-montague-bookmill/>.



A pleasant walk in a peaceful environment on a sunny day: we visited the New England Peace Pagoda in Leverett, completed and inaugurated in 1985: <https://newenglandpeacepagoda.org/>.





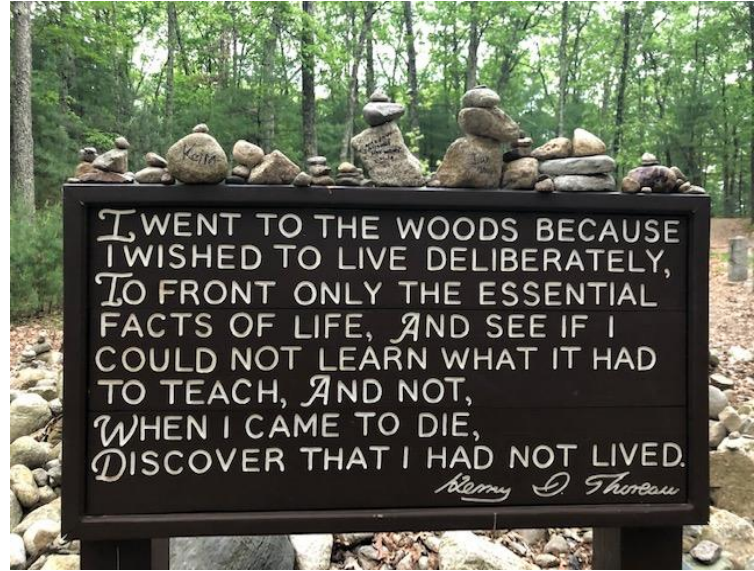


In the afternoon, drive to **Concord**. Accommodation at Concord's Colonial Inn, 48 Monument Square: <https://www.concordscolonialinn.com/>.



Visit Walden Pond State Reservation before dark:



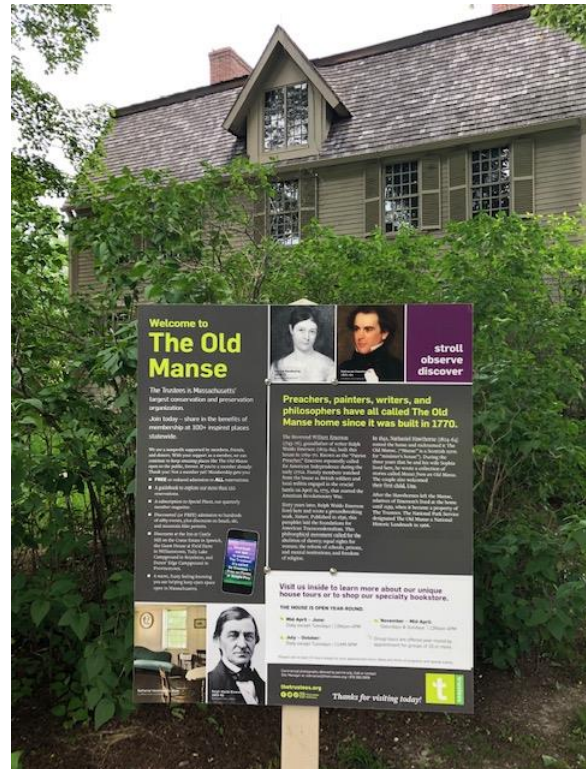


**Tuesday, 28 May.** Clouds and rain.

Unfortunately, that day we could only visit the surroundings of the Old Manse, “the centre of Concord’s political, literary, and social zeitgeist for a century”: <https://www.nps.gov/places/the-old-manse.htm>, <https://thetrustees.org/place/the-old-manse/>

“The Old Manse has stood witness to momentous events that helped shape the American character; from the first shots of the American Revolution—on 19 April 1775, Reverend Emerson and his family witnessed the battle at Concord's North Bridge from the second-floor windows—to the literary revolution of the mid-19th century. It was home to revolutionaries and to writers, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Nathaniel Hawthorne”.





Visit the Minute Men National Historical Park, which commemorates the opening battle in the American Revolutionary War on 19 April 1775: <https://www.nps.gov/mima/index.htm>.

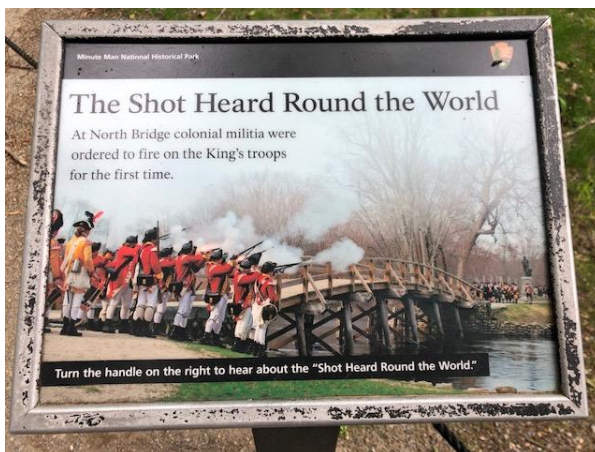
- Concord's North Bridge,
- Daniel Chester French's *The Minute Man* statue of 1874,
- The Obelisk Monument, believed to be the country's first memorial to its war casualties.







In his 1837 poem, "Concord Hymn", thinker and author Ralph Waldo Emerson immortalized the North Bridge Fight as "the shot heard round the world":



Visit Louisa May Alcott's Orchard House, now a museum: <https://louisamayalcott.org/>





Unfortunately, we could not visit Ralph Waldo Emerson's house that day, like the Old Manse, it was closed... "Emerson's residence helped make Concord the centre of American Transcendentalism, a movement which included philosophers and writers such as Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Bronson Alcott, and Elizabeth Peabody."

See : [Ralph Waldo Emerson House \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/ralphwaldoemersonhouse/)



Own photo

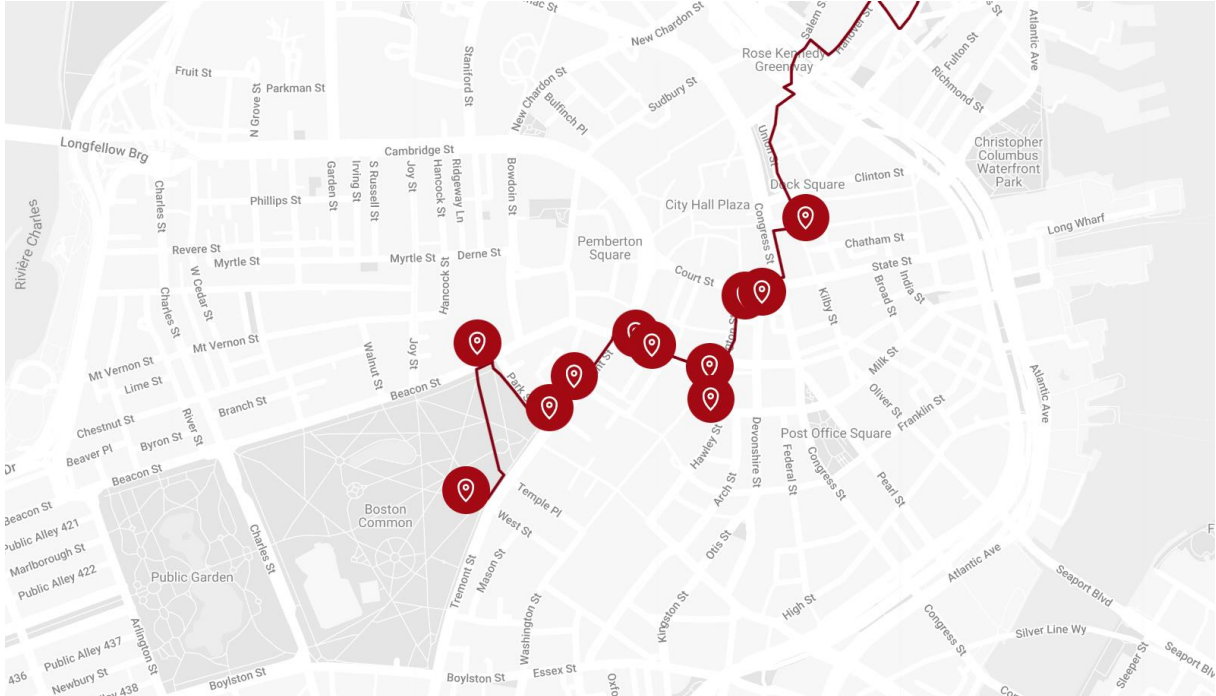
Drive to **Boston**, accommodation at Boston Marriot Long Wharf, 296 State Street, for two nights: [Boston Harbor Waterfront Hotels](#) | [Boston Marriott Long Wharf](#) | [Faneuil Hall Boston MA Hotels](#). Diner at a traditional lobster restaurant on the wharfs:





**Wednesday, 29 May.** Cold and windy.

Historic tour in Boston city centre with Freedom Trail Walking Tours, Boston National Park Service 15 State Street (1,3 km W from hotel): [Walk Into History®](#) | [The Freedom Trail](#)

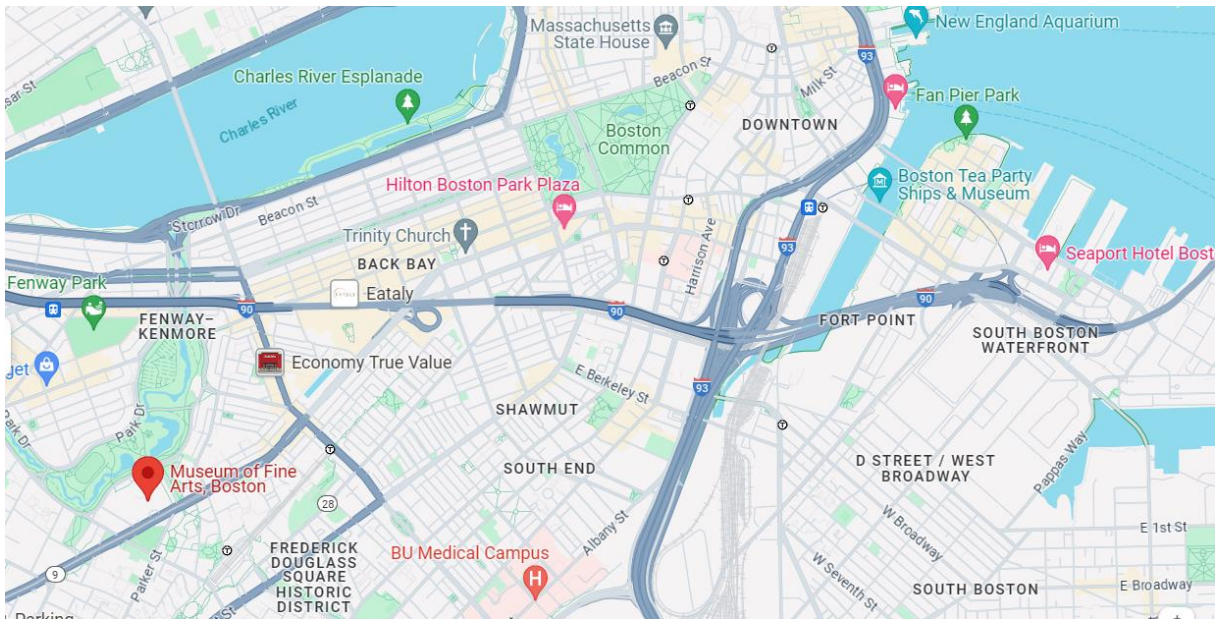


Walk in the streets, window shopping.





Visit the Museum of Fine Arts, 465 Huntington Avenue: <https://www.mfa.org/>



Visit Boston Public Library: <https://www.bpl.org/> and especially its art and architecture: <https://www.bpl.org/art-architecture/>

“Established in 1848, the Boston Public Library is a pioneer of public library service in America. It was the first large free municipal library in the United States, the first public library to lend books, the first to have a branch library, and the first to have a children’s room.”



The courtyard, own photos

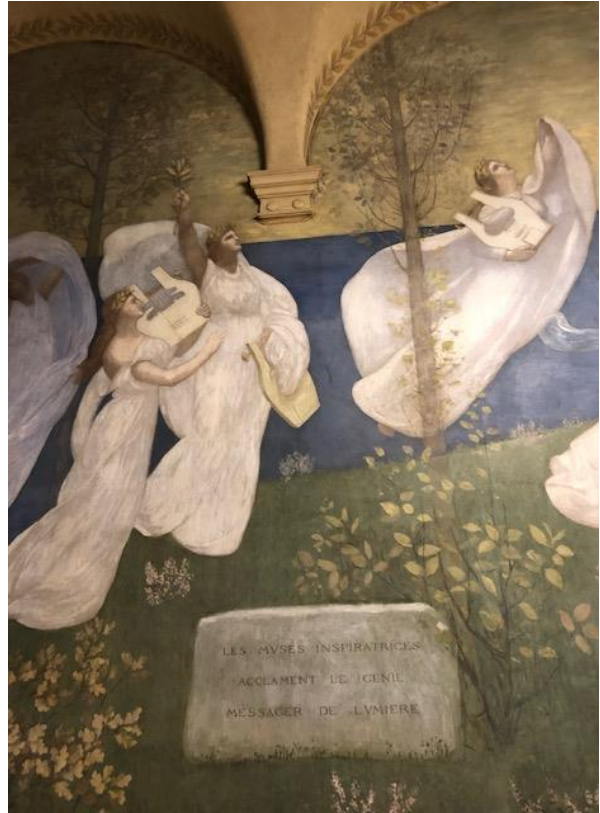
“John Singer Sargent spent 29 years of his career adorning an impressive hall on the third floor of the McKim Building between 1890 and 1919. His chosen theme, *Triumph of Religion*, incorporates a broad range of moments and iconography from early Egyptian and Assyrian belief systems, Judaism, and Christianity, as he had come to know them through study. Sargent painted his mural panels in England, traveling with them to Boston for four installation phases. To illuminate his painted figures in the skylit hall, the artist incorporated gilded moulding and over 600 pieces of raised relief in materials such as plaster, metal, wood, and glass”.





“French painter Pierre Puvis de Chavannes was considered one of the greatest muralists of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. His commission at Boston Public Library represents his only mural work outside of France. Encircling the main staircase are eight panels representing disciplines that one could pursue in the library: *Philosophy, Astronomy, History, Chemistry, Physics, Pastoral Poetry, Dramatic Poetry, and Epic Poetry*. A long panel flanking the entrance to Bates Hall bears *The Muses of Inspiration Welcoming the Spirit of Light*.”





**Thursday 30 May:** Travel back to Murray Hill, New Jersey. Rest and family time.

**Friday 31 May:** Warm and sunny

Drive to one of the wonderful New Jersey beaches, walk on the promenade...



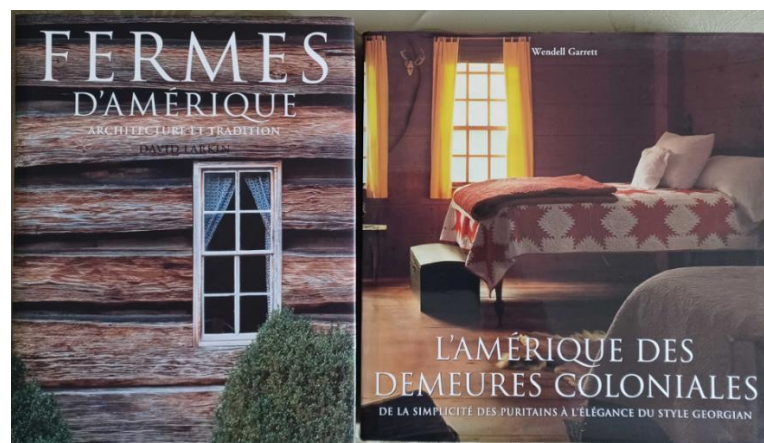
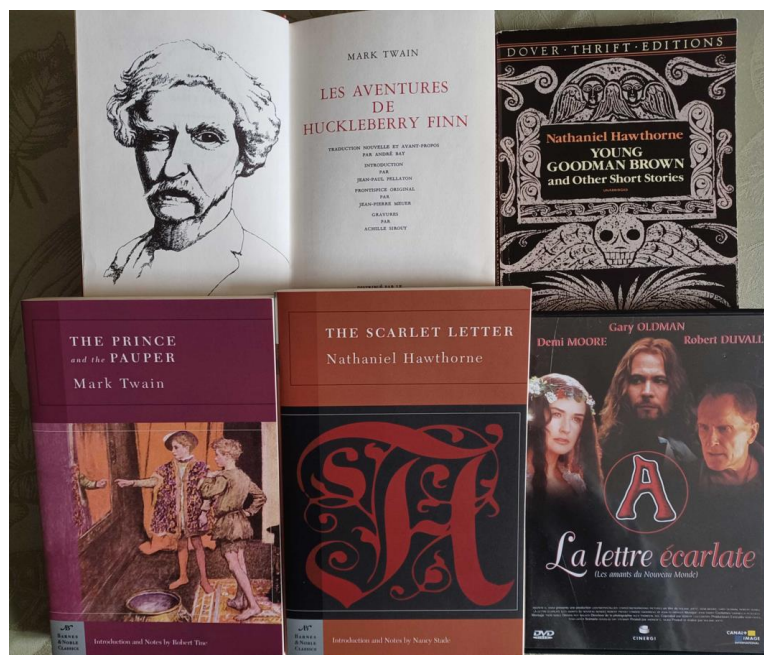
**Saturday 1 June 2019:**

Last minute shopping in the morning (books, mainly!)

Afternoon: Newark airport and travel back to Luxembourg...

To conclude, here is a little selection of books and DVDs linked to this literary trip:





Eva Anglessy, Revised on 12 March 2024