

# **THE THOREAU PENCIL: A NEW LOOK AT SOURCES & COMPOSITION**



**A presentation by Henrik Otterberg and Feng-I Tai  
Wednesday, July 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.  
Concord Free Public Library Periodical Room**

Those familiar with Thoreau's life are aware of his family's longstanding and innovative commitment to pencil manufacture. For nearly three decades—from the mid-1820s to early 1850s—Thoreau pencils earned a reputation as being among the finest quality writing instruments produced in America. Through archival research and spectroscopy analysis, presenters Henrik Otterberg and Feng-I Tai have studied the technical, physical and chemical literature Thoreau is known to have owned or consulted, which may have had bearing on the improved pencil manufacture process and ingredients. They will present their tentative findings to date, including a number of spectroscopic slides, while welcoming discussion and comments toward a more comprehensive view of the Thoreau pencil and its development.