60th REUNION READING LIST, for the Thursday program in Lexington and Concord**

**LEXINGTON (The American War of Independence)**

**AMERICAN SPRING** by Walter R. Borneman

A very factual account that follows a fledgling nation from Paul Revere's ride and the first shots fired on Lexington Green through the catastrophic Battle of Bunker Hill, culminating with a Virginian named George Washington taking command of colonial forces on July 3, 1775.

**LEXINGTON AND CONCORD** by George C. Daughan

As well as facts, this book uses correspondence. This detailed account challenges the prevailing narrative of the American War of Independence. It was, Daughan argues, based as much on economic concerns as political ones. When Massachusetts militiamen turned out in overwhelming numbers to fight the British, they believed they were fighting for their farms and livelihoods, as well as for liberty. In the eyes of many American colonists, Britain's repressive measures were not simply an effort to reestablish political control of the colonies, but also a means to reduce the prosperous colonists to the serfdom Benjamin Franklin witnessed on his tour of Ireland and Scotland.

**APRIL MORNING** by Howard Fast

For a lighter, but authentic rendering of the events of April 19, 1775, APRIL MORNING tells the tale through the eyes of a fifteen-year old fictional narrator.

**CONCORD (The literary revolution)**

**Primary sources:**

**LITTLE WOMEN** by Louisa May Alcott

The novel follows the lives of four sisters detailing their passage from childhood to womanhood, and is loosely based on the author and her three sisters. See also if you can get the PBS documentary on Orchard House, which we will be visiting.

**WORK: A STORY OF EXPERIENCE** by Louisa May Alcott

This is a fictional account of one woman’s struggle to find meaningful employment in a nineteenth century world, where women’s work is undervalued. It is reminiscent of Louisa May Alcott’s own struggles as an independent young woman to find gainful employment.
THE ESSENTIAL WRITING OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON. The Modern Library Edition with an introduction by Mary Oliver

This is considered the definitive collection of Emerson's major speeches, essays, and poetry. As one of the architects of the transcendentalist movement, Emerson embraced a philosophy that championed the individual and emphasized independent thought.

THE PORTABLE MARGARET FULLER edited by Mary Kelley

Margaret Fuller was a pioneering feminist as well as a Transcendentalist radical, the first editor of the journal THE DIAL, a self-supporting journalist and the first literary critic for Horace Greeley's NEW YORK TRIBUNE. This edition includes excerpts from her autobiographical writing, reportage for the TRIBUNE, criticism, essays and a sampling of her correspondence.

THE SCARLET LETTER by Nathaniel Hawthorne

This novel with a slender plot and few characters has as its great dramatic force their mental states and their relations to one another.

WALDEN by Henry David Thoreau

Thoreau condenses his over two-year stay at Walden Pond into a single year, using the four seasons to symbolize human development—a cycle of life shared by both nature and man.

Secondary Sources:

AMERICAN BLOOMSBURY: LOUISA MAY ALCOTT, RALPH WALDO EMERSON, MARGARET FULLER, NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, AND HENRY DAVID THOREAU: Their Lives, Their Loves, Their Work by Susan Cheever

This narrative reminds us that these nineteenth-century literary geniuses were once considered avant-garde, bohemian types, at odds with the establishment. Perhaps inevitably, given the smallness of Concord, Massachusetts and the idiosyncrasies of its residents, the members of this prestigious circle became both intellectually and romantically entangled.

EDEN'S OUTCASTS: THE STORY OF LOUISA MAY ALCOTT AND HER FATHER by John Matteson. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Biography

The famous Alcott during Louisa's youth was her father, Bronson—an eminent teacher and friend of Emerson and Thoreau. He desired perfection for the world and from his family. Louisa challenged with her mercurial moods and yearnings for money and fame.
**EMERSON: THE MIND ON FIRE** by Robert D. Richardson, Jr.

Richardson has, as much as possible, let Emerson speak for himself through his published works, his many journals and notebooks, his letters, his reported conversations. This is not merely a study of Emerson's writing and his influence on others, it is Emerson's life as he experienced it. We see the failed minister, the struggling writer, the political reformer, the poetic liberator.

**MARGARET FULLER: A NEW AMERICAN LIFE** by Megan Marshall. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Biography

Megan Marshall recounts the trailblazing life of Margaret Fuller: Thoreau's first editor, Emerson's close friend, daring war correspondent, tragic heroine.

**HENRY DAVID THOREAU: A LIFE** by Laura Dassow Walls

There was much more to Thoreau than his brief experiment in living at Walden Pond. A member of the vibrant intellectual circle centered on his neighbor Ralph Waldo Emerson, he was also an ardent naturalist, a manual laborer and inventor, a radical political activist and more.

* Most of these synopses borrow language from Amazon.com

**Thanks for classmate Phyllis Atack Ferlinz, a member of the Thursday program committee, for putting together this list.**