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The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail

Department of Theatre, Florida International University

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*“The
Night
Thoreau
Spent
In Jail”*



FIU
theatre •

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he bears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he bears, however measured, or far away."

Henry David Thoreau

THE CAST

Waldo Dick Gullage
Lydian Barbara Berg
Mother Frances Cook
Henry Ed Ericsson
John Dick Stewart
Baily Ralph E. Wakefield II
Deacon Ball Daniel J. Putman
Ellen Christi Lynn LeMaitre
Sam Staples Glenn Jordan Zeller
Edward David Gullage
Williams Irving Peele
Townpeople Susan Brooks
Ingeborg Horn
Kevin Koloff
Greg Powers
Laurie Schneider
Penny Skeen
Bob Soto
Craig Tussey
Ed Upshaw
Theresa Wise



There will be
one fifteen minute intermission.

Production Staff

Director Philip Giberson
Costume Design Lou Antrim
Light and Sound Coordinator George Ricketts
Assistant Director Ray Mills
Production Assistant Laurie Schneider
Stage Manager Lynda Giberson
House Manager Marcie Siegel

Production Crews

Construction: Timi Brock, Ed Ericsson, David Feinman, Beverly Gruver, Larry Hughes, Kevin Koloff, Charles Martinez, Ray Mills, Michele Pick, Don Popejoy, Mike Reuter, Laurie Schneider, Marcie Siegel, Penny Skeen, Craig Tussey, Ralph Wakefield,

Costumes: Joy Kane, Crewhead, Terry Antrim, Donna Berube, Diane Edwards, Lyn Ericsson, Mary Fama, Jamie Fotiou, Diane Greenberg, Lenore Jordan, Laurie Schneider, Wendy Willcox

Props: Lenore Jordan, Crewhead, Flora Colayaco, Barry Edwards, Diane Haley, David Trimble

Lights: Larry Hughes, Crewhead, Ed Ericsson, Charles Martinez, Ray Mills, George Spelvin

Sound: Charles Martinez, Crewhead.

Publicity: Timi Brock and Sara Mann, Crewheads.



Many people have worked very hard to make FIU's first theatre production a success, and we thank them all. A few, however, deserve special thanks. Without the generous assistance of Lou Antrim, George Ricketts and Frank Wyroba, "Thoreau" would not have been possible.

THE NOW THOREAU

by

Jerome Lawrence & Robert E. Lee

The man imprisoned in our play belongs more to the 1970's than to the age in which he lived.

For more than a century, Henry David Thoreau was dismissed as a gifted weirdo. Only a rebel like Emerson's handyman would dare to question the benefits of technology! Why, it is obvious to any educated mind that technological advancement and progress are synonymous. To create a better world, all we have to do is make things bigger, faster, stronger, or cheaper.

But materialism is *not* the way.

THOREAU KNEW THAT.

He smelled the smog before we saw it.

It smarted his soul before it smarted our eyes.

He spoke out, but in those television-less days men were slow to listen. He sang out in nonviolent defiance, but how few men since could carry the tune: Gandhi, Count Tolstoi, Martin Luther King.

It was the material-mindedness of his government which drove the mystic Thoreau to the shores of Walden. His outrage is closely akin to the anger of many young people today. Young Thoreau was disgusted by the lies and confusion which clouded the bloody conflict with a smaller nation, Mexico.

The President of the United States (James Polk) had made a pretense of trying to settle differences at the conference table. Then, without a Declaration of War or Congressional approval, U. S. forces plunged into Mexico. An inaccurate and incomplete report from the President (which has been lamely explained by the lack of electrical communication) brought authorization from Congress.

Hawks and White-supremacists of the day cheered. But the intellectual community gasped in horror.

The text of the play contains a denunciation of the war actually made by a young Whig Congressman from Illinois - who was not re-elected because of his stand, but who later became the first Republican President of the United States.

American secret agents smuggled in a puppet-president from Havana. Overwhelmed by U. S. armor, the Mexicans resisted all the way to the gates of their capitol, which fell only when their ammunition ran out. On the side of the invaders, there was hot friction between secret envoys from the White House, an alarmed Congress, and the ambitious military leaders - two of whom became Presidents of the United States and one of the Confederacy.

A captain in the army of General Winfield Scott reported that the American troops acted like savages. They shot noncombatants on trivial pretexts. "Their conduct toward the poor inhabitants has been horrible and their coming is dreaded like death in every village."

Another eyewitness, U. S. Grant, wrote in his Memoirs: "I do not think there was ever a more wicked war than that waged by the United States on Mexico. I thought so at the time, when I was a youngster, only I had not the moral courage to resign." Grant had the option of resignation, which has not been granted to youngsters of later wars.

According to Santayana, "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it." Perhaps this play will jog our memories as we relive the poetic protest of one of America's freest men.

Time is awash in this jail cell. We are not trapped in happenings past, but are concerned about THE NOW THOREAU - the explosive spirit who addressed himself to the perils of our time with more power and clarity than most angry young men writing now about NOW.

Thoreau is a fascinating paradox:

A man who was - and is.

A self-effacing giant.

A wit who rarely laughed.

A man who loved so deeply and completely that he seemed, sometimes, not to have loved at all.

"The Night Thoreau Spent In Jail" is produced by special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

A Public Document, this program was promulgated at an annual cost of \$122.70 or 12.27 cents per copy to provide information for members of the theatre audience.