

# Charles Stearns Wheeler Biography

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# Biography

Charles Stearns Wheeler (19 December 1816-13 June 1843), editor and travel writer, was born at Lincoln, Massachusetts, near Concord. In 1833 he and his classmate, Henry David Thoreau, were recommended for Harvard College, and in August the two enrolled as roommates. At Harvard, Wheeler financed his education by helping Jared Sparks on his *Library of American Biography*, teaching, editing, copying, and indexing. He also contributed to the *Christian Examiner*, coedited the undergraduate magazine, *Harvardiana*, and won the Bowdoin Prize in his senior year. Wheeler stayed in Cambridge and pursued his literary interests by helping Emerson edit and publish American editions of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1836), *French Revolution* (1836), and *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* (1838-1839). On his own, he edited Macaulay's *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, and introduced Tennyson to America when he edited his *Poems* (1842). In 1842 he prepared an annotated edition of Herodotus which was adopted for classroom use at Harvard. An appointment as Greek tutor in 1838 to replace Jones Very was supplemented by an instructorship in history the following year. While at Harvard, Wheeler often vacationed at a hut he built at Flint's Pond, a move which some believe later influenced Thoreau to move to Walden Pond. By 1842 Wheeler had saved enough money to travel to Europe. He spent most of his time in Germany and reported on the local events in travel letters to James Russell Lowell's *Pioneer* and the Transcendentalists' periodical, the *Dial*. Wheeler took ill the next year and died in Leipzig in June. Thoreau commented that Wheeler's death had "left a gap in the community not easy to be filled."