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STS.036 Technology and Nature in American History  
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## STS.036

### Reading questions for Steinberg, *Nature Incorporated*

- Why do you think Steinberg begins with the Thoreau vignette? What purpose—narrative, rhetorical, or otherwise—does Thoreau’s trip up the Merrimack River serve for Steinberg?
- What is the argument and purpose of the book?
- What’s so special about water as an analytic category? (14)
- What does Steinberg say about the local vs. the global with respect to histories of industrial capitalism? (15) How does “local” take on new meaning in an environmental history that is different from its meaning in, say, a social history?
- How did the legal logic of water rights change from the 1713 mill act to the 1796 mill act? (30-32)
- What were the environmental implications of how the BMC established its Waltham mills, in terms of both external and internal features? (42-43)
- What were the major differences between Slater’s enterprise and the BMC’s? (43)
- How did the need to navigate the Merrimack River at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. bring about efforts to control water? (56-57)
- How did the economic imperative of order/standardization/rationality shape the organization and technology of the Lowell mills, work and social life, and the built environment? (60-63)
- What problem was “Lowell’s waterpower labyrinth” designed to solve? (64)
- According to Steinberg, how did the perception of nature change along with the influx of industry? (69-70)
- What does Abbot Lawrence’s rhetoric of “improvement” say about the relationship between natural abundance and industrial prosperity? (70-71)
- How was the intellectual mission of the BSNH related to the economic goals of the Boston Associates? (72-76)