

## **HENRY'S RELATIVES**



### **JEAN THOREAU**

"He was a short man – a little taller than my father – stout & very strong a powerful man for his size..."

**"NARRATIVE HISTORY" AMOUNTS TO FABULATION,  
THE REAL STUFF BEING MERE CHRONOLOGY**



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

1737

[Friend David Orrok, Sr.](#) purchased of a shopkeeper, John Adams, the house at the north corner of Bennet Avenue in [Boston](#) that the shopkeeper had in 1727 purchased from Richard Sherwin. Make of this record what you can:



In 1727 Richard Sherwin sold the house at the north corner of Bennet Avenue to John Adams, and David Orrok bought it in 1737. His heirs sold to John Thoreau in 1705 [*sic*]. The next house [*sic*] was that of William Copp, and in 1728 the residence of John [*sic*] Thoreau, great grandfather [*sic*] of Henry Thoreau, the writer of Concord. He bought of the Orrok family, and lived here until he removed to Concord.

NOBODY COULD GUESS WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT





## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

**1754**

On the Isle of [Jersey](#) in the English Channel in this year, the [Huguenot](#) couple [Philippe Thoreau](#) and [Marie Le Galais Thoreau](#) had a baby boy they would have christened on April 28th as [Jean Thoreau](#) (which makes him a member of the 3d cohort subsequent to the great [Huguenot](#) diaspora). Later, the records of [Concord](#) town in Massachusetts would falsely reflect, as below, not only that Jean's given name was the English-language name "John" but also that he had been born in Concord, that is, that he was an American by birth rather than an immigrant:

### Births

Name	Sex	Birth Date	Birth Place	Father's Name	Mother's Name
<b>THOREAU, John</b>		<b>1754</b>	<b>Concord</b>		
<b>THOREAU, Mary</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>1786</b>	<b>Concord</b>	<b>John</b>	
<b>THOREAU, Sarah</b>		<b>1791</b>	<b>Concord</b>		
<b>THOREAU, Helen L.</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>1813</b>	<b>Concord</b>	<b>John</b>	<b>Cynthia</b>
<b>THOREAU, John</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>1815</b>	<b>Concord</b>	<b>John</b>	<b>Cynthia</b>
<b>THOREAU, Sophia Elizabeth</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sept. 27, 1819</b>	<b>Chelmsford</b>	<b>John</b>	<b>Cynthia</b>

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## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

The parish records of St. Hélier show that on this island in this year, also, Marie Guillet was born to Jaques Guillet and Elizabeth Quintal (or Quintare or Quintore) Guillet, and the godparents were listed as Jean Perrochon and Marie Thoreau.

On the peninsula of [Boston](#) in the Massachusetts Bay, at their house on [Prince Street](#), [Mr. Burns](#) and Mrs. [Sarah Orrok Burns](#) had a baby girl they named [Jane Burns](#).

### THOREAU LIFESPANS

(About all we know of this father is that he would not remain with his American family, at some point returning instead permanently to Stirlingshire, [Scotland](#).)



It was in this year that [Ammi White](#) was born in Groton, Massachusetts, son of Thomas White and Hannah Faulkner White. (They named their infant after its maternal grandfather Ammi Ruhammah Faulkner. Note that this infant could not have been the son of Deacon [John White](#) of [Concord](#), in whose store [Jean Thoreau](#)'s son [John Thoreau](#) eventually would work, since at the time he was only four or five years old. Deacon John White was a son of Thomas White's brother, Mark White, Jr., and therefore Ammi White's 1st cousin!)

[THE DEACONS OF CONCORD](#)



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

**LIFE IS LIVED FORWARD BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD?  
— NO, THAT’S GIVING TOO MUCH TO THE HISTORIAN’S STORIES.  
LIFE ISN’T TO BE UNDERSTOOD EITHER FORWARD OR BACKWARD.**

April 28, Sunday: [Jean Thoreau](#), son of [Philippe Thoreau](#) and [Marie Le Galais Thoreau](#), was baptized at St. Helier on the Isle of [Jersey](#). A certificate of this baptism would be made out on parchment on May 3, 1773, and would be in the possession of [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) who would lend it to her nephew [Henry Thoreau](#) in November or December of the year 1836, who would transcribe it as follows:

*Extrait du Registra des Baptismes de la paroisse de S<sup>t</sup> Helier en L’Isle de Jersey—*

*Jean fils de M<sup>r</sup> Philippe Thoreau & de M<sup>se</sup> Marie le Gallais sa femme fut Baptisé le vingt huiteme jour D’Avril mille sept Cents Cinquante Quatre*

*Mons<sup>r</sup> Jean le Montays De la paroisse de S<sup>t</sup> Ouèn / Parrain & Marie le Preveu sa femme Marraine, ... Nous sousignés recteur & surveillans de la Paroisse de S<sup>t</sup> Helier certifions l’Extrait cidessus conforme à l’original à Jersey ce 3<sup>e</sup> Mai 1773.*

*J Du Pre Recteur.*

*N Messerz [??] } Surveill’  
Cha<sup>s</sup> Marinel }*

*Nous Sousignés Recteur & Principaux de la Paroisse de S<sup>t</sup> Helier certifions que Jean Thoreau à participé au Sacrament de la S<sup>te</sup> Cène dans l’Elgise de la d<sup>te</sup> Paroisse de S<sup>t</sup> Helier et que, du meilleur de notre Connaissance, il s’est toujours conduit conduit [sic] dune maniere edificante et chretienne, En foi de quoi nous lui avons signé le plresent certificat a Jersey ce 3<sup>e</sup> Mai 1773*

*N Messerz [??]*

*Eduar Patriarche J Dupré rect—*

*N Messerz [??] } Surveill’  
Cha<sup>s</sup> Marinel }*

*Rich<sup>d</sup> Carteret Cha<sup>s</sup> Le Maistre*



**JEAN THOREAU**

**JEAN THOREAU**

*Thos Hilgrove*  
*Chas D'Auvergne*  
*Matt<sup>u</sup> Gosvet*  
*Jaques Hemery*  
*D<sup>e</sup> Mallete*

*John Luce*  
*J. Durell*  
*J<sup>n</sup> Montays*

**THE FUTURE IS MOST READILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT**





## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

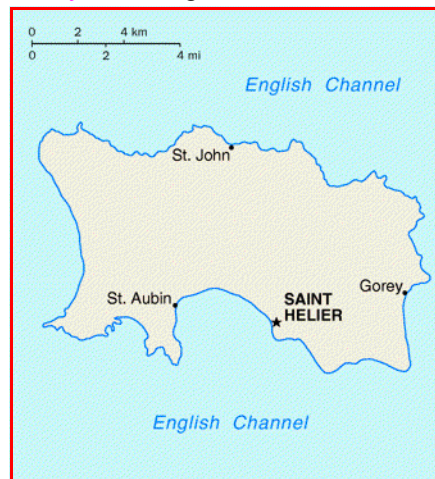
1773

May 3, Monday: [William Bartram](#) arrived in Savannah.

[Henry Thoreau](#)'s paternal grandfather [Jean Thoreau](#) (1754-1801) took the Protestant sacrament in St. Hélier, on the island of [Jersey](#) in the English Channel,

HUGUENOTS

HENRY'S  
RELATIVES



in preparation for embarking on a [privateering](#) voyage that would eventually, after a shipwreck, dump him at Boston Harbor without any intention on his part of going there.

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## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU



Jean's father [Philippe Thoreau](#) was a wine merchant on Jersey but by family tradition the Thoreaus had originated either in Tours or in the Poitou-Charentes district of France. (Jean's mother's name was [Marie Le Galais](#).) Some of the Thoreaus married English and it is said one descendant was a military officer. John would begin as a merchant in America on [Boston](#)'s Long Wharf with one barrel of sugar, and would go privateering again, and eventually would possess a fortune of \$25,000.<sup>00</sup> and a home on [Prince Street](#) — the American dream!<sup>1</sup>

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1. On July 26, 1851 at Cohasset, while going along for the experience of it on a commercial cruise for mackerel, [Thoreau](#) would meet up with a Captain Snow who would be able to remember hearing fishermen say they “fitted out at Thoreau’s.”





JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

1779

It has been alleged that at some point during the revolution, [Henry Thoreau](#)'s paternal grandfather [Jean Thoreau](#) served as a private in a unit under the leadership of fellow [Huguenot Paul Revere](#).<sup>2</sup>

## THE FUTURE CAN BE EASILY PREDICTED IN RETROSPECT



“Thoreau & Hayse” was a shop on the Long Wharf of Boston. [Jean Thoreau](#) was in partnership at first with a Hayse, and later with a Phillips. Their fittings shop was at #43 and #45 on the wharf:



October 1856: Father told me about his father the other night, who died in 1801, aged forty-seven. When the Revolutionary war came on, he was apprentice or journeyman to a cooper in Boston, who employed many hands. He called them together and told them that, on account of the war, his business was ruined, and he had no more work for them. So my father thinks he went into privateering. Yet he remembers his telling him of being employed digging at some defences, when a cannon-ball came and sprinkled sand all over them. After the war he went into business as a merchant, commencing with a single hogshead of sugar. His shop was on Long Wharf. He was a short man, a little taller than Father, stout, and very strong for his size. Levi Melcher, a powerful man, who was his clerk or tender, used to tell my father that he did not believe himself so strong a man as Grandfather, who would never give in to him in handling a hogshead of molasses, —setting it on its head, or

2. Well, at the least, he may have been in some sort of dustup which also involved [Paul Revere](#) or Riviere. Note that at the onset of the Revolutionary War, when General George Washington had issued a draft order covering “all young men of suitable age to be drafted,” there was an exclusionary clause, “except those with conscientious scruples against war.” It would appear that Jean did not seek to avail himself of this exclusionary clause — which is to say, conscientious objection was not part of the Thoreau family heritage.

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the like.



[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) would add a footnote to this, to the effect that this strong clerk Levi Melcher had been one of his, F.B. Sanborn's, mother's uncles, whom he remembered well, and was of an old New Hampshire family in Rockingham County, and subsequently had made his fortune in the same wartime [privateering](#) business as had [Jean Thoreau](#).

### DO I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION? GOOD.



November 13, Saturday: The *Sensible* sailed out of [Boston](#) harbor, bound for France with John Adams aboard. About a week later, before passing the Grand Banks, the ship hailed the *General Lincoln*, an American privateer under the command of Captain Barnes. When there was some difficulty in ascertaining the name of the *Sensible*, a seaman helped by running out onto the bowsprit of the vessel and yelling at the top of his lungs "La *Sensible*!" This privateer seaman was [Jean Thoreau](#), grandfather of [Henry Thoreau](#).

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## JEAN THOREAU

1781

August 19, Sunday: The seaman [Jean Thoreau](#) discarded his sailor's finery to marry Friend [Jane Burns](#), daughter of a Scottish [Quaker](#). Both were 27 years old. The maiden Jane and her aunts Ann Orrok and Hannah Orrok were joint heirs to the house in [Prince Street](#) in [Boston](#). In this home Jean and Jane would have seven of their eight children, excepting Elizabeth. This 1887 sketch by George R. Tolman is a side view of the building that had been their home, as it appeared in the Reverend Edward Griffin Porter's *RAMBLES IN OLD BOSTON, NEW ENGLAND*.<sup>3</sup>



3. Boston marriage records, volume 30, page 409: "John Thoreau & Jenny Burn / Int. reads [Jenney Burns]."



# JEAN THOREAU

# JEAN THOREAU

1783



January 23, Saturday, 1858: ... Mrs. William Monroe told Sophia last evening that she remembered her (Sophia's) grandfather very well, that he was taller than Father, and used to ride out to their house—she was a Stone and lived where she and her husband did afterward, now Darius Merriam's—when they made cheeses, to drink the whey, being in consumption. She said that she remembered Grandmother too, Jennie Burns, how she came to the schoolroom (in Middle Street (?), Boston) once, leading her little daughter Elizabeth, the latter so small that she could not tell her name distinctly, but spoke thick and lispingly,—“Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau.”<sup>4</sup>

JANE “JENNIE” BURNS THOREAU  
JEAN THOREAU  
CONSUMPTION

One should not forbear to mention that it would not have taken much to be “taller than Father” [John Thoreau](#), who was a remarkably short man, and that thus this passage in the journal **in no way** implied that [Jean Thoreau](#) had been tall:

4. Vide February 7th.



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

Table of Altitudes



Yoda	2' 0"
Lavinia Warren	2' 8"
Tom Thumb, Jr.	3' 4"
Lucy (Australopithecus Afarensis)	3' 8"
Hervé Villechaize ("Fantasy Island")	3' 11"
Charles Proteus Steinmetz	4' 0"
<a href="#">Mary Moody Emerson</a> per FBS (1)	4' 3"
Alexander Pope	4' 6"
<a href="#">Benjamin Lay</a>	4' 7"
Dr. Ruth Westheimer	4' 7"
Gary Coleman ("Arnold Jackson")	4' 8"
Edith Piaf	4' 8"
<a href="#">Queen Victoria with osteoporosis</a>	4' 8"
Linda Hunt	4' 9"
<a href="#">Queen Victoria as adult</a>	4' 10"
Mother Teresa	4' 10"
Margaret Mitchell	4' 10"
length of newer military musket	4' 10"
Charlotte Brontë	4' 10-11"
Tammy Faye Bakker	4' 11"
Soviet gymnast Olga Korbut	4' 11"
jockey Willie Shoemaker	4' 11"
Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec	4' 11"
<a href="#">Joan of Arc</a>	4' 11"
Bonnie Parker of "Bonnie & Clyde"	4' 11"
Harriet Beecher Stowe	4' 11"
Laura Ingalls Wilder	4' 11"
a rather tall adult Pygmy male	4' 11"
Gloria Swanson	4' 11"1/2
Clara Barton	5' 0"
Isambard Kingdom Brunel	5' 0"
Andrew Carnegie	5' 0"
Thomas de Quincey	5' 0"
Stephen A. Douglas	5' 0"
Danny DeVito	5' 0"



# JEAN THOREAU

# JEAN THOREAU

Immanuel Kant	5' 0 "
<a href="#">William Wilberforce</a>	5' 0 "
Dollie Parton	5' 0 "
Mae West	5' 0 "
Pia Zadora	5' 0 "
Deng Xiaoping	5' 0 "
Dred Scott	5' 0 " (±)
Captain William Bligh of HMS <i>Bounty</i>	5' 0 " (±)
<a href="#">Harriet Tubman</a>	5' 0 " (±)
<a href="#">Mary Moody Emerson</a> per FBS (2)	5' 0 " (±)
<a href="#">John Brown of Providence, Rhode Island</a>	5' 0 " (+)
<a href="#">John Keats</a>	5' 3/4 "
Debbie Reynolds (Carrie Fisher's mother)	5' 1 "
Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher)	5' 1 "
Bette Midler	5' 1 "
Dudley Moore	5' 2 "
Paul Simon (of Simon & Garfunkel)	5' 2 "
Honore de Balzac	5' 2 "
Sally Field	5' 2 "
Jemmy Button	5' 2 "
Margaret Mead	5' 2 "
R. Buckminster "Bucky" Fuller	5' 2 "
Yuri Gagarin the astronaut	5' 2 "
William Walker	5' 2 "
<a href="#">Horatio Alger, Jr.</a>	5' 2 "
length of older military musket	5' 2 "
the artist formerly known as Prince	5' 2 1/2 "
typical female of Thoreau's period	5' 2 1/2 "
Francis of Assisi	5' 3 "
Voltaire	5' 3 "
Mohandas Gandhi	5' 3 "
Sammy Davis, Jr.	5' 3 "
Kahlil Gibran	5' 3 "
Friend Daniel Ricketson	5' 3 "
The Reverend <a href="#">Gilbert White</a>	5' 3 "
Nikita Khrushchev	5' 3 "
Sammy Davis, Jr.	5' 3 "
Truman Capote	5' 3 "





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# JEAN THOREAU



Kim Jong Il (North Korea)	5' 3 "
Stephen A. "Little Giant" Douglas	5' 4 "
Francisco Franco	5' 4 "
President <a href="#">James Madison</a>	5' 4 "
<a href="#">Iosef Vissarionovich Dzugashvili "Stalin"</a>	5' 4 "
Alan Ladd	5' 4 "
Pablo Picasso	5' 4 "
Truman Capote	5' 4 "
Queen Elizabeth	5' 4 "
<a href="#">Ludwig van Beethoven</a>	5' 4 "
Typical Homo Erectus	5' 4 "
typical Neanderthal adult male	5' 4 1/2 "
Alan Ladd	5' 4 1/2 "
<i>comte de Buffon</i>	5' 5 " (-)
<a href="#">Captain Nathaniel Gordon</a>	5' 5 "
Charles Manson	5' 5 "
Audie Murphy	5' 5 "
Harry Houdini	5' 5 "
Hung Hsiu-ch'üan 洪秀全	5' 5 "
Marilyn Monroe	5' 5 1/2 "
T.E. Lawrence "of Arabia"	5' 5 1/2 "
average runaway male American slave	5' 5-6 "
Charles Dickens	5' 6? "
President <a href="#">Benjamin Harrison</a>	5' 6 "
President <a href="#">Martin Van Buren</a>	5' 6 "
<a href="#">James Smithson</a>	5' 6 "
<a href="#">Louisa May Alcott</a>	5' 6 "
<a href="#">Johann Wolfgang von Goethe</a>	5' 6 1/2 "
<a href="#">Napoleon Bonaparte</a>	5' 6 1/2 "
Emily Brontë	5' 6-7 "
<a href="#">Henry Wadsworth Longfellow</a>	5' ? "
average height, seaman of 1812	5' 6.85 "
Oliver Reed Smoot, Jr.	5' 7 "
minimum height, British soldier	5' 7 "
President <a href="#">John Adams</a>	5' 7 "
President <a href="#">John Quincy Adams</a>	5' 7 "
President <a href="#">William McKinley</a>	5' 7 "
"Charley" Parkhurst (a female)	5' 7 "





## JEAN THOREAU

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<a href="#">Ulysses S. Grant</a>	5' 7"
<a href="#">Henry Thoreau</a>	5' 7"
the average male of Thoreau's period	5' 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<a href="#">Edgar Allan Poe</a>	5' 8"
President Ulysses S. Grant	5' 8"
President William H. Harrison	5' 8"
President James Polk	5' 8"
President Zachary Taylor	5' 8"
average height, soldier of 1812	5' 8.35"
President Rutherford B. Hayes	5' 8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
President Millard Fillmore	5' 9"
<a href="#">President Harry S Truman</a>	5' 9"
President Jimmy Carter	5' 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<a href="#">Herman Melville</a>	5' 9 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "
Calvin Coolidge	5' 10"
Andrew Johnson	5' 10"
Theodore Roosevelt	5' 10"
Thomas Paine	5' 10"
Franklin Pierce	5' 10"
<a href="#">Abby May Alcott</a>	5' 10"
Reverend <a href="#">Henry C. Wright</a>	5' 10"
<a href="#">Nathaniel Hawthorne</a>	5' 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
Louis "Deerfoot" Bennett	5' 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<a href="#">Friend John Greenleaf Whittier</a>	5' 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
President Dwight D. Eisenhower	5' 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<a href="#">Sojourner Truth</a>	5' 11"
President Grover Cleveland	5' 11"
President Herbert Hoover	5' 11"
President Woodrow Wilson	5' 11"
President Jefferson Davis	5' 11"
President Richard M. Nixon	5' 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<a href="#">Robert Voorhis the hermit of Rhode Island</a>	< 6'
<a href="#">Frederick Douglass</a>	6' (-)
Anthony Burns	6' 0"
<a href="#">Waldo Emerson</a>	6' 0"
<a href="#">Joseph Smith, Jr.</a>	6' 0"
David Walker	6' 0"
Sarah F. Wakefield	6' 0"



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Thomas Wentworth Higginson	6'0"
President James Buchanan	6'0"
President Gerald R. Ford	6'0"
President James Garfield	6'0"
President Warren Harding	6'0"
President John F. Kennedy	6'0"
President James Monroe	6'0"
President William H. Taft	6'0"
President John Tyler	6'0"
John Brown	6'0 (+)"
President Andrew Jackson	6'1"
<a href="#">Alfred Russel Wallace</a>	6'1"
President Ronald Reagan	6'1"
Venture Smith	6'1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<a href="#">John Camel Heenan</a>	6'2"
Crispus Attucks	6'2"
President Chester A. Arthur	6'2"
President George Bush, Senior	6'2"
<a href="#">President Franklin D. Roosevelt</a>	6'2"
President George Washington	6'2"



# JEAN THOREAU

# JEAN THOREAU

Gabriel Prosser	6 ' 2 "
Dangerfield Newby	6 ' 2 "
Charles Augustus Lindbergh	6 ' 2 "
President Bill Clinton	6 ' 2 1/2 "
President <a href="#">Thomas Jefferson</a>	6 ' 2 1/2 "
President Lyndon B. Johnson	6 ' 3 "
Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.	6 ' 3 "
Richard "King Dick" Seaver	6 ' 3 1/4 "
President Abraham Lincoln	6 ' 4 "
Marion Morrison (AKA John Wayne)	6 ' 4 "
Elisha Reynolds Potter, Senior	6 ' 4 "
Thomas Cholmondeley	6 ' 4 " (?)
<a href="#">Franklin Benjamin Sanborn</a>	6 ' 5 "
Peter the Great of Russia	6 ' 7 "
<a href="#">Giovanni Battista Belzoni</a>	6 ' 7 "
<a href="#">Thomas Jefferson</a> (the statue)	7 ' 6 "
Jefferson Davis (the statue)	7 ' 7 "
Martin Van Buren Bates	7 ' 11 1/2 "
<a href="#">M. Bihin, a Belgian exhibited in Boston in 1840</a>	8 ' "
Anna Haining Swan	8 ' 1 "



[John Thoreau](#)'s sister [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#), was reared, like him and the other six children, in the Thoreau home in Concord after the death of their mother [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau](#) in 1896, by [Jean Thoreau](#)'s second wife, the widow [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#).

Eventually [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#) married and went to live in Maine. So: what was her husband's name, Thatcher or Lowell? Where did they live? Did Henry visit them on his trips to Maine?

**CHANGE IS ETERNITY, STASIS A FIGMENT**



**JEAN THOREAU**

**JEAN THOREAU**

**1787**

October 8, Monday: [John Thoreau](#) was born in [Boston](#), son of [Jane “Jennie” Burns Thoreau](#) and [Jean Thoreau](#) (a member of the 4th cohort after the great [Huguenot](#) diaspora that had begun during the 16th Century, which would make his son [Henry Thoreau](#) out to be a member of the 5th cohort).<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, back in France, King Louis XVI was issuing an “Edict of Toleration” which, among other things, was bringing to a state of legitimacy all the bastards who had been produced by a previous state ruling — that any marriage between loyal French Catholics and loyal French [Huguenots](#) was outside the law.

**THOREAU  
LIFESPANS**

5. Note: We don't have a date of birth for the other [John Thoreau](#), who would become a British officer. The most we can do safely is, to assign him to the same generation of the Thoreau family as this American [John Thoreau](#).



**JEAN THOREAU**

**JEAN THOREAU**

**1792**

July 15, Sunday: [David Thoreau](#) was born to [Jean Thoreau](#) and [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau](#) in Boston. This infant would die in December.

December: During this month the [David Thoreau](#) who had been born on July 15th in Boston to [Jean Thoreau](#) and [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau](#) died.



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

1794

Another male infant was born to [Jane “Jennie” Burns Thoreau](#) and [Jean Thoreau](#) in Boston, and was christened as [David Thoreau](#) to memorialize their David who had died still an infant during December 1792. It would be **this** David who would be the paternal uncle of Henry David Thoreau, who would die in 1817 at the age of 23 shortly after Henry was born — and shortly before Henry was, in his memory, christened as David Henry Thoreau.

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**1795**

The central peak known as Sentry Hill in [Boston](#), which would eventually take the name Beacon Hill and be the site not only of the John Hancock mansion but also of the Bulfinch State House –and was so steep that you needed to pull yourself up hand over hand along a rope– was in this year being lowered by some 60 feet. The top of Sentry Hill, one might jest, now is underneath North Station. The Tontine Crescent –the first townhouse development in America– was constructed on Franklin Street between Hawley Street and Devonshire Street in Boston by Charles Bulfinch.<sup>6</sup> [Jean Thoreau](#) bought out [Jane “Jennie” Burns Thoreau](#)’s aunts Ann Orrok and Hannah Orrok to become sole owner of the house at Number 57 in [Prince Street](#).



**HENRY'S  
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6. This was torn down in 1858, but you can still see the 1795 arch over a way that led to Summer Street, at today's Arch Street.



## JEAN THOREAU

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October 1856: Father remembers his father used to breakfast before the family at one time, and he with him, on account of his business. His father used to eat the undercrusts of biscuits, and the boy the upper.

JEAN THOREAU



There is a small, dilapidated wooden house, with gambrel roof, on Prince Street (No. 57), which has been spared, as if by special indulgence, to the present time [1887]. A side view of it is given here because of its antiquity, and because it was the home of the Thoreau family. In 1727 it belonged to Richard Sherwin, who sold it to John Adams. Nathaniel Loring afterwards owned it, and then David Orrok, from whom it descended to the Thoreau sisters, Elizabeth, Jane, and Sarah, who sold it in 1825 to Isaac Dupee for one thousand dollars.

The estate next above this (51-53) was William Copp's in 1728, and at a later period it became the residence of John Thoreau; but it has undergone so many changes that it would be difficult to recognize it. The old end on the street has now an entirely different facing, and the original angle of the roof has disappeared. The only external feature remaining as it was is the great west wall of brick, laid in the promiscuous bond, reaching far up the yard, and crowned by four chimneys, two of which belonged to the house in the rear, once owned by Captain Peter Papillon, whose entrance, like that of the Thoreaus, was on the narrow passage-way now called Bennett Avenue.

John Thoreau, the grandfather of Henry the writer, came to Boston about 1773 from the island of Jersey, and established himself in business on Long Wharf. After his marriage he bought this house of the Orrok family, relatives of his wife, and lived in it until he removed to Concord in 1800. here Henry's grandmother died in 1796, and here his father, John Thoreau, Jr., spent his boyhood. The estate remained in the family till quite recently. Miss Maria, the last of the Thoreaus, died at Bangor in 1881.

Previous to 1708 Prince Street was called Black Horse Lane, from a prominent tavern near Hanover Street bearing the sign of the Black Horse. This locality is filled with old tenements of every size and shape, some of them showing traces of eminent respectability in their ornamental wood-work about the doors and cornices. Occasionally carved banisters and mantel-pieces of superior workmanship are seen in houses which no one would think of exploring for such treasures. This part of Prince Street is largely given up to shops for the sale of second-hand furniture. The itinerant vendors of fish and fruit are ever present, and appear to monopolize the trade of the North End, if one can judge from their frequent sales and persistent vociferations, which, from morning till night, seem never to die out on the streets.



**JEAN THOREAU**

**JEAN THOREAU**

**1796**

The Boston Directory listed [Jean Thoreau](#) as “grocer, No. 43 Long Wharf, house Bridge’s Lane.” In Richmond Street, between Salem and Hanover Streets, on the left hand going from Hanover Street, in the North End of Boston, in this year [Jane “Jennie” Burns Thoreau](#) gave birth to [Maria Thoreau](#), and in this year she died at age 42, leaving Jean as a 42-year-old widower businessman with eight children to rear, among them the 9-year-old [John Thoreau](#).

(Jean would take a 2d wife, Rebecca Hurd Kettell, who would die in 1814.)



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

1797

June 6, Tuesday: An elaborate ["parhelion"](#) was observed from the port of St. Malo in Normandy:

**Three Suns and an Inverted Rainbow.**  
The following is taken literally word for word from a rare copy of the Brighton (England) Advertiser of June 6, 1797: "A rare phenomenon is reported from St. Malo. Recently during the afternoon, between the hours of 4 and 5, three perfect suns were seen all in a row above the western horizon. The sky was very clear at the time, and there was no one who saw the unusual sight that believes it to have been a mirage or other atmospheric illusion. The central seemed more brilliant than his two luminous attendants, and between the three there seemed to be a communication in the shape of waves of light composed of all the prismatic colors. At about the same time a rainbow made its appearance at a short distance above the central sun, upside down—that is to say, the two ends pointed toward the zenith and the bow's neck toward the horizon."

Three glorious suns, each one a perfect sun;  
Not separated with the racking clouds,  
But sever'd in a pale clear-shining sky.  
See, see! they join, embrace, and seem to kiss,  
As if they vow'd some league inviolable:  
Now are they but one lamp, one light, one sun.  
In this the heaven figures some event.





# JEAN THOREAU

# JEAN THOREAU



After the death of [Jean Thoreau](#)'s first wife [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau](#) in the previous year, Papa Jean had eight children to rear the oldest of whom, at that point, [John Thoreau](#), would have been but 10 years of age. He got married a 2d time, the Reverend Ezra Ripley presiding, to a another parent who had minor children to rear, Rebecca Hurd Kettell the widow of a Mr. Kettell

## Marriages

Spouses	Marriage Date	Marriage Place
<a href="#">THOREAU, John &amp; Rebecca Kettell</a>	<a href="#">Jun, 1797</a>	<a href="#">Concord</a>
<a href="#">THOREAU, John &amp; Cynthia Dunbar</a>	<a href="#">May, 1812</a>	<a href="#">Concord</a>

She was a relative of Concord's physician, Dr. Isaac Hurd. Her brother Joseph Hurd, a merchant in Charlestown, would become executor of Jean's will and, eventually, guardian of the children, at a salary of \$200.<sup>00</sup> per year. (Over and above this, legal fees relating to the Thoreau estate would amount to between \$50.<sup>00</sup> and \$100.<sup>00</sup> per annum. This 2d wife, when widowed a 2d time, would receive \$850.<sup>00</sup> per year to enable her to care for the children in Concord: Henry's father John and siblings [Sarah Thoreau](#), [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#), [Nancy Thoreau](#), [Jane Thoreau](#), and [Maria Thoreau](#).) The Thoreau family, thus constituted, came to the crossroads town of [Concord](#) to live. And, as [Henry Thoreau](#) would later report in his journal about [Cynthia Dunbar](#), "Mother first came to Concord about the same age that father did, but a little before him."

Mr. Thoreau lost his health, moved to Concord, ...

## HENRY'S RELATIVES

In the [Concord Antiquarian Museum](#), a donation by Russell H. Kettell under accession number M-332, is a *Memento Mori* or "Posy" consisting of two facing pages with the names "Rebecca" at the bottom of the left sheet and "Kettell." at the bottom of the right. On the left sheet a male figure is depicted in period formal attire, who is pointing dramatically toward something high and is wearing a hat from which seem to be growing two flowers or vines. On the right sheet is the figure of a band major with sheathed sword and bandstaff. His bandstaff has a decorative tassel hanging from its bulbous top. The text of this composition reads, at top



## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

left:

Now Ive Escap'd the eagles Claws  
And am from Danger free  
I'll fet my Heart To gather gold  
Turn Down this Leaf and See

On the left inside the bottom is found:

an Heart here is opprest with care  
What Salve can cure the Same  
Under this leaf You'll find, a cure  
Lift Up and See how Plain

The composition continues inside the top left:

A purse With gold & silver store  
Has Cur'd my Heart I'm sick no more  
But I'm from Care & Danger's free  
No Worldly Care Shall trouble me

The composition resumes at the top right:

Now I have Gold and Silver store  
Bribes from ye Rich pawns from the poor  
What Worldly Cares shall trouble me  
Turn Down This Leaf & then You'll See

The composition begins to deliver its moral punch at the top right:

Sickness is come & death draws Nigh  
Help Gold & Silver, ere I Die  
It will not Do, it is But Dross  
Turn Up & See Mans End at Last  
V.B.

Inside the right bottom we find:

O Man Now See thou art but dust  
Thy Gold & Silver is but rust  
Thy time is come thy glass is spent  
What Worldly care can death prevent

In this composition, I fail to understand the presence of the initials "V.B." Would this be *verba bene*, or perhaps an attribution to the Venerable Bede?

MRS. REBECCA KETTELL THOREAU

1799

Jean Thoreau of Boston purchased a house next door to the building in Concord in which the town stored its explosives.<sup>7</sup>



January 23, Saturday, 1858: ... Mrs. William Monroe told Sophia last evening that she remembered her (Sophia's) grandfather very well, that he was taller than Father, and used to ride out to their house—she was a Stone and lived where she and her husband did afterward, now Darius Merriam's—when they made cheeses, to drink the whey, being in consumption. She said that she remembered Grandmother too, Jennie Burns, how she came to the schoolroom (in Middle Street (?), Boston) once, leading her little daughter Elizabeth, the latter so small that she could not tell her name distinctly, but spoke thick and lispingly,—“Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau.”<sup>8</sup>

JANE “JENNIE” BURNS THOREAU  
JEAN THOREAU  
CONSUMPTION

One should not forbear to mention that it would not have taken much to be “taller than Father” John Thoreau, who was a remarkably short man, and that thus this passage in the journal in no way implied that Jean Thoreau had been tall:

7.This house is now the north end of the Colonial Inn, the building to the right, and to the best of any guest's knowledge no explosives are being stored next door.

8. Vide February 7th.



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

Table of Altitudes

Yoda	2' 0"
Lavinia Warren	2' 8"
Tom Thumb, Jr.	3' 4"
Lucy (Australopithecus Afarensis)	3' 8"
Hervé Villechaize ("Fantasy Island")	3' 11"
Charles Proteus Steinmetz	4' 0"
<a href="#">Mary Moody Emerson</a> per FBS (1)	4' 3"
Alexander Pope	4' 6"
Benjamin Lay	4' 7"
Gary Coleman ("Arnold Jackson")	4' 8"
Queen Victoria with osteoporosis	4' 8"
Queen Victoria as adult	4' 10"
Margaret Mitchell	4' 10"
length of newer military musket	4' 10"
Charlotte Brontë	4' 10-11"
Harriet Beecher Stowe	4' 11"
Laura Ingalls Wilder	4' 11"
a rather tall adult Pygmy male	4' 11"
<a href="#">John Keats</a>	5' 0"
Clara Barton	5' 0"
Isambard Kingdom Brunel	5' 0"
Andrew Carnegie	5' 0"
Thomas de Quincey	5' 0"
Stephen A. Douglas	5' 0"
Danny DeVito	5' 0"
Immanuel Kant	5' 0"
William Wilberforce	5' 0"
Mae West	5' 0"
Mother Teresa	5' 0"
Deng Xiaoping	5' 0"
Dred Scott	5' 0" (±)
Captain William Bligh of HMS <i>Bounty</i>	5' 0" (±)
<a href="#">Harriet Tubman</a>	5' 0" (±)
<a href="#">Mary Moody Emerson</a> per FBS (2)	5' 0" (±)
<a href="#">John Brown of Providence, Rhode Island</a>	5' 0" (+)



## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

Bette Midler	5' 1"
Jemmy Button	5' 2"
Margaret Mead	5' 2"
R. Buckminster "Bucky" Fuller	5' 2"
Yuri Gagarin the astronaut	5' 2"
William Walker	5' 2"
<a href="#">Horatio Alger, Jr.</a>	5' 2"
length of older military musket	5' 2"
the artist formerly known as Prince	5' 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
typical female of Thoreau's period	5' 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
Francis of Assisi	5' 3"
Voltaire	5' 3"
Mohandas Gandhi	5' 3"
Sammy Davis, Jr.	5' 3"
Kahlil Gibran	5' 3"
Friend Daniel Ricketson	5' 3"
The Reverend <a href="#">Gilbert White</a>	5' 3"
Nikita Khrushchev	5' 3"
Sammy Davis, Jr.	5' 3"
Truman Capote	5' 3"
Kim Jong Il (North Korea)	5' 3"
Stephen A. "Little Giant" Douglas	5' 4"
Francisco Franco	5' 4"
President <a href="#">James Madison</a>	5' 4"
<a href="#">Iosef Vissarionovich Dzugashvili "Stalin"</a>	5' 4"
Alan Ladd	5' 4"
Pablo Picasso	5' 4"
Truman Capote	5' 4"
Queen Elizabeth	5' 4"
<a href="#">Ludwig van Beethoven</a>	5' 4"
Typical Homo Erectus	5' 4"
typical Neanderthal adult male	5' 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
Alan Ladd	5' 4 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<i>comte de Buffon</i>	5' 5" (-)
Captain Nathaniel Gordon	5' 5"
Charles Manson	5' 5"
Audie Murphy	5' 5"
Harry Houdini	5' 5"



## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

Hung Hsiu-ch'üan 洪秀全	5' 5"
Marilyn Monroe	5' 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
T.E. Lawrence "of Arabia"	5' 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
average runaway male American slave	5' 5-6"
President Benjamin Harrison	5' 6"
President Martin Van Buren	5' 6"
James Smithson	5' 6"
<u>Louisa May Alcott</u>	5' 6"
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe	5' 6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
Napoleon Bonaparte	5' 6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
Emily Brontë	5' 6-7"
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	5' ?"
average height, seaman of 1812	5' 6.85"
Oliver Reed Smoot, Jr.	5' 7"
minimum height, British soldier	5' 7"
President John Adams	5' 7"
President John Quincy Adams	5' 7"
President William McKinley	5' 7"
"Charley" Parkhurst (a female)	5' 7"
Henry Thoreau	5' 7"
the average male of Thoreau's period	5' 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
Edgar Allan Poe	5' 8"
President Ulysses S. Grant	5' 8"
President William H. Harrison	5' 8"
President James Polk	5' 8"
President Zachary Taylor	5' 8"
average height, soldier of 1812	5' 8.35"
President Rutherford B. Hayes	5' 8 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
President Millard Fillmore	5' 9"
President Harry S Truman	5' 9"
President Jimmy Carter	5' 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
Herman Melville	5' 9 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "
Calvin Coolidge	5' 10"
Andrew Johnson	5' 10"
Theodore Roosevelt	5' 10"
Thomas Paine	5' 10"
Franklin Pierce	5' 10"
Abby May Alcott	5' 10"



## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

Reverend <a href="#">Henry C. Wright</a>	5' 10"
<a href="#">Nathaniel Hawthorne</a>	5' 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
Louis "Deerfoot" Bennett	5' 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
Friend John Greenleaf Whittier	5' 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
President Dwight D. Eisenhower	5' 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
Sojourner Truth	5' 11"
President Grover Cleveland	5' 11"
President Herbert Hoover	5' 11"
President Woodrow Wilson	5' 11"
President Jefferson Davis	5' 11"
President Richard M. Nixon	5' 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
Robert Voorhis the hermit of Rhode Island	< 6'
Frederick Douglass	6' (-)
Anthony Burns	6' 0"
<a href="#">Waldo Emerson</a>	6' 0"
Joseph Smith	6' 0"
David Walker	6' 0"
Sarah F. Wakefield	6' 0"
Thomas Wentworth Higginson	6' 0"
President James Buchanan	6' 0"
President Gerald R. Ford	6' 0"
President James Garfield	6' 0"
President Warren Harding	6' 0"
President John F. Kennedy	6' 0"
President James Monroe	6' 0"
President William H. Taft	6' 0"
President John Tyler	6' 0"
John Brown	6' 0 (+)"
President Andrew Jackson	6' 1"
Alfred Russel Wallace	6' 1"
President Ronald Reagan	6' 1"
Venture Smith	6' 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<a href="#">John Camel Heenan</a>	6' 2"
Crispus Attucks	6' 2"
President Chester A. Arthur	6' 2"
President George Bush, Senior	6' 2"
<a href="#">President Franklin D. Roosevelt</a>	6' 2"
President George Washington	6' 2"



## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

Gabriel Prosser	6 ' 2 "
Dangerfield Newby	6 ' 2 "
Charles Augustus Lindbergh	6 ' 2 "
President Bill Clinton	6 ' 2 1/2 "
President <a href="#">Thomas Jefferson</a>	6 ' 2 1/2 "
President Lyndon B. Johnson	6 ' 3 "
Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.	6 ' 3 "
Richard "King Dick" Seaver	6 ' 3 1/4 "
President Abraham Lincoln	6 ' 4 "
Marion Morrison (AKA John Wayne)	6 ' 4 "
Elisha Reynolds Potter, Senior	6 ' 4 "
Thomas Cholmondeley	6 ' 4 " (?)
Franklin Benjamin Sanborn	6 ' 5 "
Peter the Great of Russia	6 ' 7 "
<a href="#">Giovanni Battista Belzoni</a>	6 ' 7 "
<a href="#">Thomas Jefferson</a> (the statue)	7 ' 6 "
Jefferson Davis (the statue)	7 ' 7 "
Martin Van Buren Bates	7 ' 11 1/2 "
M. Bihin, a Belgian exhibited in Boston in 1840	8 ' "
Anna Haining Swan	8 ' 1 "

[John Thoreau](#)'s sister [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#), was reared, like him and the other six children, in the Thoreau home in Concord after the death of their mother [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau](#) in 1896, by [Jean Thoreau](#)'s second wife, the widow [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#).

Eventually [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#) married and went to live in Maine. So: what was her husband's name, Thatcher or Lowell? Where did they live? Did Henry visit them on his trips to Maine?

JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

October 30, Wednesday: As [Henry Thoreau](#) would later record in his journal, “Mother first came to Concord about the same age that father did, but a little before him.” Deacon [John White](#)’s cousin [Ammi White](#) sold [Jean Thoreau](#) some land and the home with added shed that eventually would become the East House of [Concord](#)’s Colonial Inn. This was the house next door to where the town stored its explosives — so it must have been available at a considerable discount.<sup>9</sup> Deacon White’s wife Esther, a neighbor, was the sister of Jean’s 2nd wife in



Concord, [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#) (the brothers of Esther and Rebecca ran the bakery in Wright Tavern).

Mr. Thoreau lost his health, moved to Concord, . . .



January 23, Saturday, 1858: ... Mrs. William Monroe told Sophia last evening that she remembered her (Sophia’s) grandfather very well, that he was taller than Father, and used to ride out to their house—she was a Stone and lived where she and her husband did afterward, now Darius Merriam’s—when they made cheeses, to drink the whey, being in consumption. She said that she remembered Grandmother too, Jennie Burns, how she came to the schoolroom (in Middle Street (?), Boston) once, leading her little daughter Elizabeth, the latter so small that she could not tell her name distinctly, but spoke thick and lispingly,— “Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau.”<sup>10</sup>

JANE “JENNIE” BURNS THOREAU  
 JEAN THOREAU  
 CONSUMPTION

9. This house is now the north end of the Colonial Inn, the building to the right in the drawing by John Downes,



and to the best of any guest’s knowledge no explosives are presently being stored next door.



**JEAN THOREAU**

**JEAN THOREAU**

One should not forbear to mention that it would not have taken much to be “taller than Father” [John Thoreau](#), who was a remarkably short man, and that thus this passage in the journal **in no way** implied that [Jean Thoreau](#) had been tall:



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

Table of Altitudes

Yoda	2' 0"
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Mae West	5' 0"
Mother Teresa	5' 0"
Deng Xiaoping	5' 0"
Dred Scott	5' 0" (±)
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## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

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Harry Houdini	5' 5"



## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

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Marilyn Monroe	5' 5 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
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Charles Dickens	5' 6?"
<a href="#">President Benjamin Harrison</a>	5' 6"
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<a href="#">James Smithson</a>	5' 6"
<a href="#">Louisa May Alcott</a>	5' 6"
<a href="#">Johann Wolfgang von Goethe</a>	5' 6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
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the average male of Thoreau's period	5' 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
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President Ulysses S. Grant	5' 8"
President William H. Harrison	5' 8"
President James Polk	5' 8"
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average height, soldier of 1812	5' 8.35"
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President Millard Fillmore	5' 9"
<a href="#">President Harry S Truman</a>	5' 9"
President Jimmy Carter	5' 9 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<a href="#">Herman Melville</a>	5' 9 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "
Calvin Coolidge	5' 10"
Andrew Johnson	5' 10"
Theodore Roosevelt	5' 10"
Thomas Paine	5' 10"



## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

Franklin Pierce	5' 10"
<a href="#">Abby May Alcott</a>	5' 10"
Reverend <a href="#">Henry C. Wright</a>	5' 10"
<a href="#">Nathaniel Hawthorne</a>	5' 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
Louis "Deerfoot" Bennett	5' 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
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President Dwight D. Eisenhower	5' 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<a href="#">Sojourner Truth</a>	5' 11"
President Grover Cleveland	5' 11"
President Herbert Hoover	5' 11"
President Woodrow Wilson	5' 11"
President Jefferson Davis	5' 11"
President Richard M. Nixon	5' 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<a href="#">Robert Voorhis the hermit of Rhode Island</a>	< 6'
<a href="#">Frederick Douglass</a>	6' (-)
Anthony Burns	6' 0"
<a href="#">Waldo Emerson</a>	6' 0"
<a href="#">Joseph Smith, Jr.</a>	6' 0"
David Walker	6' 0"
Sarah F. Wakefield	6' 0"
Thomas Wentworth Higginson	6' 0"
President James Buchanan	6' 0"
President Gerald R. Ford	6' 0"
President James Garfield	6' 0"
President Warren Harding	6' 0"
President John F. Kennedy	6' 0"
President James Monroe	6' 0"
President William H. Taft	6' 0"
President John Tyler	6' 0"
John Brown	6' 0 (+)"
President Andrew Jackson	6' 1"
<a href="#">Alfred Russel Wallace</a>	6' 1"
President Ronald Reagan	6' 1"
Venture Smith	6' 1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<a href="#">John Camel Heenan</a>	6' 2"
Crispus Attucks	6' 2"
President Chester A. Arthur	6' 2"
President George Bush, Senior	6' 2"



## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

<a href="#">President Franklin D. Roosevelt</a>	6' 2"
President George Washington	6' 2"
Gabriel Prosser	6' 2"
Dangerfield Newby	6' 2"
Charles Augustus Lindbergh	6' 2"
President Bill Clinton	6' 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
President <a href="#">Thomas Jefferson</a>	6' 2 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
President Lyndon B. Johnson	6' 3"
Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.	6' 3"
Richard "King Dick" Seaver	6' 3 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>4</sub> "
President Abraham Lincoln	6' 4"
Marion Morrison (AKA John Wayne)	6' 4"
Elisha Reynolds Potter, Senior	6' 4"
Thomas Cholmondeley	6' 4" (?)
<a href="#">Franklin Benjamin Sanborn</a>	6' 5"
Peter the Great of Russia	6' 7"
<a href="#">Giovanni Battista Belzoni</a>	6' 7"
<a href="#">Thomas Jefferson</a> (the statue)	7' 6"
Jefferson Davis (the statue)	7' 7"
Martin Van Buren Bates	7' 11 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
<a href="#">M. Bihin, a Belgian exhibited in Boston in 1840</a>	8'
Anna Haining Swan	8' 1"

[John Thoreau](#)'s sister [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#), was reared, like him and the other six children, in the Thoreau home in Concord after the death of their mother [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau](#) in 1896, by [Jean Thoreau](#)'s second wife, the widow [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#).

Eventually [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#) married and went to live in Maine. So: what was her husband's name, Thatcher or Lowell? Where did they live? Did Henry visit them on his trips to Maine?



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

1800



The quotation below about Mr. Thoreau is per [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#)'s obituary and appeared in [The Christian Disciple](#) of October 1815, Volume III, No. 10:

Mr. Thoreau lost his health, moved to Concord, and there finished his course like a christian.

After the death of Mr. [Jean Thoreau](#)'s 1st wife [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau](#) in 1797, he had had eight children to rear the oldest of whom, at that point, John, would have been but 10 years of age. He had therefore married a 2d time, to a widow who also had minor children to rear, [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#) the widow of a Mr. Kettell. She was a relative of Concord's physician, Dr. Hurd. Her brother Joseph Hurd, a merchant in Charlestown, would become executor of Jean's will and, eventually, guardian of children, at a salary of \$200.<sup>00</sup> per year. In addition to this, legal fees relating to the Thoreau estate would amount to between \$50.<sup>00</sup> and \$100.<sup>00</sup> per year. This 2d wife, soon to be widowed a 2d time, would receive \$850.<sup>00</sup> per year to enable her to care for the children in Concord, Henry's father [John Thoreau](#) and John's sisters [Sarah Thoreau](#), [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#), [Nancy Thoreau](#), [Jane Thoreau](#), and [Maria Thoreau](#). The Thoreau family, thus constituted, came to [Concord](#) to live. And, as [Henry Thoreau](#) would later report in his journal about [Cynthia Dunbar](#), "Mother first came to Concord about the same age that father did, but a little before him."



# JEAN THOREAU

# JEAN THOREAU

1801

➡ March 7, Saturday: In his home in [Concord](#), [Jean Thoreau](#) died “of consumption” at the age of 47, leaving an



estate of some \$25,000.<sup>00</sup> inclusive of the approximate value of his two homes, plus about \$12,000.<sup>00</sup> in good securities and in cash:

Mr. Thoreau lost his health, moved to Concord, and there finished his course like a christian.<sup>11</sup>

## Thoreau Deaths

Name	Death Date	Age	Buried
<a href="#">John</a>	<a href="#">March 1801</a>	<a href="#">47</a>	<a href="#">Concord</a>
<a href="#">Mary</a>	<a href="#">July 24, 1811</a>	<a href="#">25</a>	<a href="#">Concord</a>
<a href="#">Sarah</a>	<a href="#">August 1829</a>	<a href="#">38</a>	<a href="#">Concord</a>
<a href="#">Miss Betsey</a>	<a href="#">November 1839</a>	<a href="#">60s?</a>	<a href="#">Concord</a>
<a href="#">John</a>	<a href="#">January 1842</a>	<a href="#">27</a>	<a href="#">Concord</a>
<a href="#">Helen L.</a>	<a href="#">June 1849</a>	<a href="#">36</a>	<a href="#">Concord</a>

11. This is per the obituary of [Mrs. Rebecca Kettell Thoreau](#), [Henry Thoreau](#)'s step-grandmother who had reared Henry's father [John Thoreau](#) and his sisters Sarah, [Elizabeth Thoreau](#), Nancy, [Aunt Jane Thoreau](#), and [Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) — who, like his grandfather [Jean Thoreau](#), had already died before Henry was born. It appeared in [The Christian Disciple](#) of October 1815, Volume III, No. 10.

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## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

After Jean's death his widow and children, including 14-year-old [John Thoreau](#), would continue residence in this home that eventually would become the east wing of Concord's present-day Colonial Inn, along with John's two sisters: [Sarah Thoreau](#), a town seamstress, and [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#) (Betsey), who had inherited the house. Soon the orphaned boy John would be working as a clerk in the store of Deacon [John White](#).



If [Henry Thoreau's Aunt Maria Thoreau](#) had been born, as we suppose, in 1796, the years of her mother [Jane "Jennie" Burns Thoreau's](#) death, this would put her at roughly 5 years of age at the date of her father's death.

### THOREAU LIFESPANS

The house at Number 57 in [Prince Street](#) in [Boston](#) passed to the surviving children, [John Thoreau](#), [David Thoreau](#), [Sarah Thoreau](#), [Elizabeth Orrock Thoreau](#), [Maria Thoreau](#), [Jane Thoreau](#), Nancy Thoreau, and ????????? Thoreau (the name of this child does not seem to be anywhere on record), each receiving a one-eighth share.



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

1811

July 24, Wednesday: [Mary Thoreau](#), daughter of the late [Jean Thoreau](#), died in [Concord](#) at the age of 25.

### Thoreau Deaths

Name	Death Date	Age	Buried
<a href="#">John</a>	<a href="#">March 1801</a>	<a href="#">47</a>	<a href="#">Concord</a>
<a href="#">Mary</a>	<a href="#">July 24, 1811</a>	<a href="#">25</a>	<a href="#">Concord</a>
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<a href="#">Helen L.</a>	<a href="#">June 1849</a>	<a href="#">36</a>	<a href="#">Concord</a>

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*4th day 24 of 7 Mo// I have felt comfortable both in body & mind, for which I desire to be thankful, yea humbly thankful, & ascribe unto the Lord all that I receive, as respects my body it seems released from some symptoms that were alarming, but I know not that they have entirely left me. - as respects the mind, I have said it was comfortable, but Alass how destitute I am, & how I long for a fresh descending of the heavenly Manna, yesterdays is all consumed*


*How Oh Lord shall I present myself that thy holy bread may again be afforded, be pleased oh holy father to renew in me a right spirit, & incline me unto thy gentle Calls-*




JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

1817

 August: The ailing 23-year-old paternal uncle, [David Orrok](#), after whom the [Thoreau boy infant](#) would be named, died.<sup>12</sup>

**HENRY'S  
RELATIVES**

 October 12, Sunday: [David Henry Thoreau](#) was christened, by his parents [John Thoreau](#) and [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) in recognition of his paternal uncle [David Orrok](#), son of [Friend David Orrok, Sr.](#) and [Friend Sarah Tillet Orrok](#), who had died in August.<sup>13</sup>



October 12: "I was baptized in old M[eeeting] H[ouse] by Dr. [Ezra] Ripley, when I was three months, and did not cry."

Nobody knows where the family came up with the name "Henry," but such untraditional naming was quite common among Huguenot transplant families of this period as they gradually assimilated to their new context and removed the "markers" by which they could be discriminated. There are some things to be said about [Huguenots](#) naming conventions from this period, that inform us of why little David Henry was not named Barzillai or Ralph or Stephen or whatever. American descendants of Huguenot refugees tended to favor names which existed in some form in French, such as Henry (*Henri*) and John (*Jean*). They also favored Old Testament names over the names of New Testament saints, whom were to them tainted with Catholicism. Hence "David" after King David of the Old Testament and the same as in French — satisfying both naming conventions at once. The ten most favored names were Abraham, Isaac, Daniel, David, Jacob, Salomon, and Samuel.<sup>14</sup>

3d Lieutenant of the Corps of Artillery [James Duncan Graham](#), freshly minted, began to serve at the United States Military Academy, West Point as Adjutant.

Friend [Stephen Wanton Gould](#) wrote in his journal:

*1st day 12 of 10 M / Soon after taking my seat I felt life to arise & circulate among us, & my spirit was comforted with the prospect. — Lydia Almy for the first time in several years appeared in testimony, I thought very sweetly — & Abigail*

12. Professor William E. Cain, in the frontmatter to *A HISTORICAL GUIDE TO HENRY DAVID THOREAU* (NY, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) writes that this uncle David "died in Concord in July." We wonder from whence Professor Cain has derived this information that David had died in Concord, and from whence he has derived this information that David had died in July. He may well be correct. He was asked, by email, whether he has perchance investigated, and discovered the grave of David in what has now become the old section of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, or whether he has perchance managed to obtain a Concord documentary record of this death, but has not responded.

13. Professor William E. Cain, in the frontmatter to *A HISTORICAL GUIDE TO HENRY DAVID THOREAU* (NY, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000) writes that this uncle David "died in Concord in July." We wonder from whence Professor Cain has derived this information that David had died in Concord, and from whence he has derived this information that David had died in July. He may well be correct. He was asked, by email, whether he has perchance investigated, and discovered the grave of David in what has now become the old section of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, or whether he has perchance managed to obtain a Concord documentary record of this death, but has not yet responded.



## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

*Robinson for a great rarity appeared in a testimony of some length - The meeting was large & attended by a considerable number of other societies, as they have been in the forenoon, for some time - In the Afternoon the meeting was again pretty well attended but silent & to me rather a poor time, but not accompanied by that distressing hardness as at sometimes. -After tea took a little walk round the hill with my H set the evening with my Mother. -*

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

14. In the late 16th Century in Rouen, France, for purposes of illustration of these naming traditions, the ten most popular names for Huguenot boys had been, in order of popularity from most popular down, *Jean, Pierre, Jacques, Abraham, Isaac, Daniel, David, Jacob, Salomon, and Samuel*, whereas the ten most popular names for Catholic boys had been, in the same order, *Jean, Guillaume, Pierre, Nicolas, Jacques, Robert, François, Charles, Richard, and Abraham*. We may note that only the name *Abraham* appears on both lists. The influence of tradition presents itself in the fact that there is a 70% match between the list of names from Rouen and the list of names from the US despite the passage of four full generations. Now, it might be objected that the name “David” was assigned on the basis of an uncle named [David Orrok](#) who lay dying at the time, but there is of course a reason why that uncle was named “David,” and besides, it was at least as conventional among Huguenots to perpetuate or recycle names used in previous generations of the family as it was among other ethnic groups. From the 17th through the middle of the 19th centuries, over 60% of the families in Hingham assigned the name of the Huguenot father to a son (as, John Thoreau the father and little John the first son), and over 70% assigned the name of the Huguenot mother to a daughter (in America the Huguenots if you remember tended to outmarry, so [Cynthia Dunbar Thoreau](#) was, of course, not Huguenot, so the Thoreau daughters became Helen and Sophia rather than, perhaps, little Cynthia and, then, perhaps, Naomi). Thus, and this sums up my comment, the very fact that little David Henry was named David Henry speaks to the fact that their Huguenot heritage was a matter of importance in this family.



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

1819



When [Rebecca Hurd Kettell Thoreau](#), 2d wife of [Jean Thoreau](#), had died in 1814, she had left a bequest of \$100.<sup>00</sup> each to her brother and her sisters — but by this point of settlement and distribution, after the trustee had deducted his expenses, the bequest had dwindled to merely \$71.<sup>00</sup> each.



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

1851

July 26, Saturday: [Henry Thoreau](#) went on a trip about which he would write in [CAPE COD](#):



July 26, Saturday: at Cohasset

Called on Capt. Snow who remembered hearing fishermen say that they “fitted out at Thoreau’s” –remembered him. He had commanded a packet bet. Boston or New York & England –spoke of the wave which he sometimes met on the Atlantic coming against the wind & which indicated that the wind was blowing from an opposite quarter at a distance– The undulation travelling faster than the wind. They see Cape Cod loom here– Thought the Bay bet. here & Cape Ann 30 fathom deep –bet here & Cape Cod 60 or 70 fathoms. The “Annual of Sci. Discovery –” for 1851 says quoting a Mr A. G. Findley “waves travel very great distances, and are often raised by distant hurricanes, having been felt simultaneously at [St. Helena](#) & Ascension, though 600 miles apart, and it is probable that ground swells often originate at the Cape of Good Hope, 3000 miles distant.”

Sailors tell of tide-rips Some are thought to be occasioned by earthquakes

The Ocean at Cohasset did not look as if any were ever shipwrecked in it –not a vestige of a wreck left– It was not grand & sublime now but beautiful The water held in the little hollows of the rocks on the receding of the tide is so crystal-pure that you cannot believe it salt. but wish to drink it

The architect of a Minot rock light house might profitably spend a day studying the worn rocks of Cohasset shore & learn the power of the waves– See what kind of sand the sea is using to grind them down.

A fine delicate sea weed which some properly enough call sea-green.– Saw here the stag-horn or velvet sumack *Rhus typhinum* so called from form of young branches –a size larger than the *Rhus glabrum* common with us.– The *Plantago Maritima* or Sea Plantain properly named –I guessed its name before I knew what it was called by botanists. The Am. Sea Rocket –*Bunias edentula* I suppose it was that I saw the succulent plant with much cut leaves & small pinkish? flowers.

JEAN THOREAU



## JEAN THOREAU

## JEAN THOREAU

1856

October: Sometime this month, before the 24th, the leader of the [Eagleswood](#) Colony for Christian socialism of Perth Amboy, [New Jersey](#), Friend [Marcus Spring](#), wrote to [Henry Thoreau](#), offering a job of surveying the properties there.



Father told me about his father the other night, who died in 1801, aged forty-seven. When the Revolutionary war came on, he was apprentice or journeyman to a cooper in Boston, who employed many hands. He called them together and told them that, on account of the war, his business was ruined, and he had no more work for them. So my father thinks he went into privateering. Yet he remembers his telling him of being employed digging at some defences, when a cannon-ball came and sprinkled sand all over them. After the war he went into business as a merchant, commencing with a single hogshead of sugar. His shop was on Long Wharf. He was a short man, a little taller than Father, stout, and very strong for his size. Levi Melcher, a powerful man, who was his clerk or tender, used to tell my father that he did not believe himself so strong a man as Grandfather, who would never give in to him in handling a hogshead of molasses, —setting it on its head, or the like. Father remembers his father used to breakfast before the family at one time, and he with him, on account of his business. His father used to eat the undercrusts of biscuits, and the boy the upper.

[Franklin Benjamin Sanborn](#) has added a footnote to this, to the effect that this strong clerk Levi Melcher was one of his, F.B. Sanborn's, mother's uncles, whom he remembered well, and was of an old New Hampshire family in Rockingham County, and subsequently made his fortune in the same wartime privateering business as [Jean Thoreau](#).

PRIVATEERING

**“MAGISTERIAL HISTORY” IS FANTASIZING: HISTORY IS CHRONOLOGY**



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU



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"It's all now you see. Yesterday won't be over until tomorrow and tomorrow began ten thousand years ago."

- Remark by character "Garin Stevens"  
in William Faulkner's INTRUDER IN THE DUST



Prepared: December 12, 2014



JEAN THOREAU

JEAN THOREAU

# *ARRGH AUTOMATED RESEARCH REPORT*

## *GENERATION HOTLINE*



This stuff presumably looks to you as if it were generated by a human. Such is not the case. Instead, someone has requested that we pull it out of the hat of a pirate who has grown out of the shoulder of our pet parrot "Laura" (as above). What these chronological lists are: they are research reports compiled by ARRGH algorithms out of a database of modules which we term the Kouroo Contexture (this is data mining). To respond to such a request for information we merely push a button.



**JEAN THOREAU**

**JEAN THOREAU**

Commonly, the first output of the algorithm has obvious deficiencies and we need to go back into the modules stored in the contexture and do a minor amount of tweaking, and then we need to punch that button again and recompile the chronology – but there is nothing here that remotely resembles the ordinary “writerly” process you know and love. As the contents of this originating contexture improve, and as the programming improves, and as funding becomes available (to date no funding whatever has been needed in the creation of this facility, the entire operation being run out of pocket change) we expect a diminished need to do such tweaking and recompiling, and we fully expect to achieve a simulation of a generous and untiring robotic research librarian. Onward and upward in this brave new world.

First come first serve. There is no charge.  
Place requests with <Kouroo@kouroo.info>. Arrgh.



**JEAN THOREAU**

**JEAN THOREAU**