

# John Harrington

## A Brief Biography

### By Bill Poole

John Harrington was a member of the extensive Harrington family of Lexington all descended from Robert Harrington — the first of the Harringtons to come to Massachusetts. Robert settled in Watertown in 1642 where he married Susanna George on October 1, 1649. Susanna predeceased George on July 6, 1694, and he died May 17, 1707.<sup>1</sup> Their gravestones can be seen in the Old Burying Ground in Watertown.<sup>2</sup> Robert and Susanna had thirteen children, the second of whom was John, born August 24, 1631.<sup>3</sup> He married Hannah Winter at Watertown on November 17, 1681. She died July 17, 1741 and he followed on August 24, 1741.<sup>4</sup> They lived in that part of Watertown that became Waltham and are buried in Grove Hill Cemetery in Waltham.<sup>5</sup> They had twelve children, the second of whom was John, born October, 1684, died November 29, 1749-50.<sup>6</sup> He married Elizabeth Cutter on April 12, 1705. Elizabeth was born March 5, 1680-81 and died February 8, 1749-50.<sup>7</sup> Their burial site is unknown. John and Elizabeth had nine children the fourth of whom was Henry born January 8, 1711-12, died December 25, 1791.<sup>8</sup> Henry married Sarah Laughton in Lexington on June 4, 1735.<sup>8</sup> He and Sarah had eleven children. Their third child was John, born in Bedford, MA on March 1, 1739.<sup>9</sup>

John married in Lexington, on December 3, 1761, Mary Wooten, born in 1741, probably in Boston, died date and place unknown, daughter of Captain John and Rebecca Winship Wooten.<sup>10</sup> Mary's father was Captain John Wooten who it is said made twenty-two voyages too Surinam, Dutch Guiana.\* He married in Boston, Rebecca Winship who was born August 22, 1709. Captain John died in Lexington of April 5, 1779 and Elizabeth on July 20, 1775.<sup>11</sup> Hudson states that "The Wooten homestead was on the Lowell Turnpike, corner of Maple St. recently the home of Nathan Fessenden."<sup>12</sup> The brothers, Nathan and Thomas Fessenden, were members of the militia, and Thomas was a spectator and witness to what took place on Lexington Common on April 19<sup>th</sup>.<sup>13</sup>

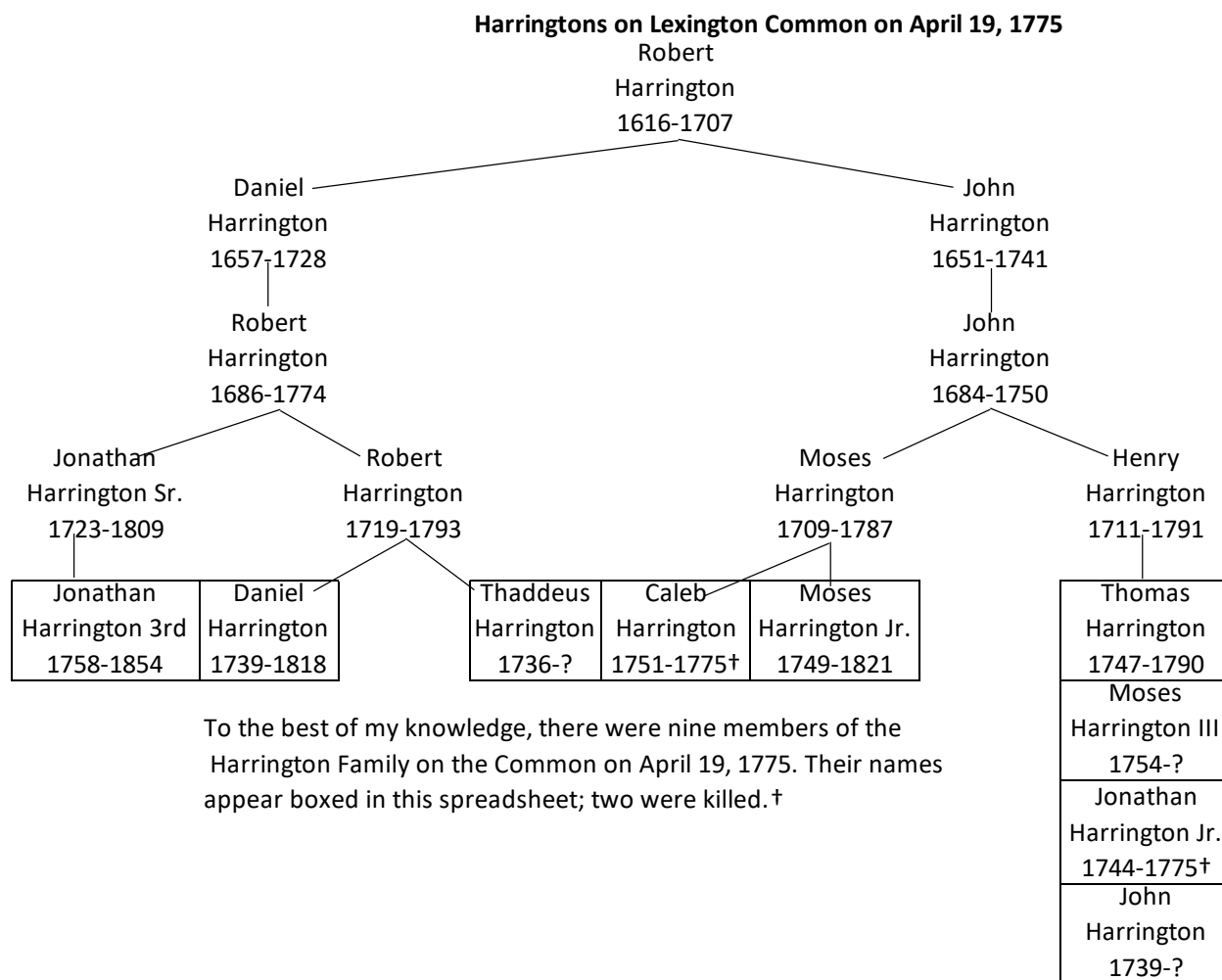
John and Mary Wooten Harrington had six children, all born in Lexington: 1. Sarah, born February 17, 1766; 2. Abigail, born March 8, 1868; 3. John, born February 1, 1770; 4. Stephen, born November 22, 1774; William, born November 21, 1779; and Rebekah, born May 3, 1781.<sup>14</sup> The 1774 tax assessment reveals that John was ranked 93<sup>rd</sup> in wealth out of a total of 194 taxpayers, in the 5<sup>th</sup> of ten deciles and a little below half of the property owners.

Name	Personal shilling	Personal pence	Real shilling	Real pence	Total shilling	Total pence	<b>Decile</b>	Age	Father
Harrington, John	1	3	1	8	2	11	<b>5</b>	35	Henry sr-1711-1791

On April 19, 1775 John was joined on Lexington Common by eight other Harringtons — two first cousins, three third cousins, and three brothers [ See flowchart on page two]. We do not know if the brothers stood side-by-side on the Common where they experienced the devastating volleys of the British Regulars. If they did, they would have seen their Brother, Jonathan, Jr, receive a fatal wound.

Perhaps they did not see him fall, and returned with the other dazed militiamen to find his body lying not far from his home where his wife and son might have seen their husband and father dying before their eyes [See the Jonathan Harrington Jr. Biography on this site]. We can only imagine their emotions as they gazed at the body of their beloved brother. They would also have seen Jonathan, Jr. placed in a hastily built, rough-hewn, wooden coffin and then hurriedly buried at the rear of the Old Burying

Ground in a common grave shared with the other victims of the morning's violence. Perhaps they joined in cutting and placing branches over the grave to conceal it for fear that the returning Regulars might desecrate the bodies.<sup>15</sup>



John does not appear to have performed any other military service and is said that he later moved to Deering, NH, but I have not found any information to confirm this.

\*Captain John Wooten is an interesting character. The name is not often encountered in New England, and is more prevalent in Virginia, but originated in Kent, England and has spread throughout that country. Trade with Surinam was an important aspect of the Colonial American economy. The willingness of Surinam to trade with other areas of the world allowed for the evasion of both British and Dutch trade restrictions. Fish, other food provisions, lumber and alcohol were the most valued trade items for the Dutch colony, and in return New England ship captains would load their vessels for the return trip with sugar and molasses.

### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>Charles Hudson, *History of the Town of Lexington, Middlesex County, Massachusetts from Its First Settlement to 1868, Revised and Continued to 1912*, Two Volumes, Lexington Historical Society, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York, 1913, Volume II, *Genealogy*, pp. 275-6; Henry Bond, *Genealogies of the Families and Descendants of the Early Settlers of Watertown, Massachusetts, Including Waltham and Weston: To Which is Appended the Early History of the Town, With Illustrations, Maps and Notes*, New England Historic-Genealogical Society, Boston, 1860, pp. 272-3.

<sup>2</sup>Photos of their gravestones can be seen at:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/20992100/susanna-harrington>

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/20992084/robert-harrington>

<sup>3</sup>Bond, p. 273

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 273-4, Hudson, *Genealogies*, p. 272-3.

<sup>5</sup>A photo of their gravestone can be found at

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/34308448/john-harrington>

<sup>6</sup>Bond, p. 273; Hudson, *Genealogies*, pp. 272-73.

<sup>7</sup>Hudson, *Genealogies*, pp. 273-4.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 275-6.

<sup>9</sup>*Vital Records of Bedford, MA to the End of the Year 1850*, at <https://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Bedford/aBirthsH.shtml>

<sup>10</sup>Hudson, p. 278; p. 780.

<sup>11</sup>Hudson, *Genealogies*, p.780.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Kehoe, Vincent J.R., *We Were There, April 19<sup>th</sup> 1775, The American Rebels*, Self-published, Chelmsford, MA, 1973, p. 94.

<sup>14</sup>Hudson, *Genealogies*, p. 278.

<sup>15</sup> Letter of Elizabeth Clarke, daughter of Reverend Jonas Clarke, written to her niece, Lucy Ware Allen on April 20, 1835, describing the events of April 19, 1775 and the burial of the victims, collection of the Lexington Historical Society.