

**ROBERT HARRIS AND HIS
DESCENDANTS. WITH
NOTICES OF THE MOREY
AND METCALF FAMILIES**

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Robert Harris and His Descendants. With Notices of the Morey and Metcalf Families by
Luther M. Harris

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LUTHER M. HARRIS

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MOREY AND METCALF FAMILIES.

COMPILED BY

LUTHER M. HARRIS, M. D.



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PREFACE.

THE Compiler of the following pages has devoted no inconsiderable portion of time, since his retirement from the active duties of his profession—some fifteen years ago—to collecting the facts contained in this publication. He has examined original town and county records wherever there seemed a possibility of obtaining any materials, and has had the cooperation of various of his kindred, descendants of the emigrant ROBERT HARRIS. A series of important papers from the time of the emigrant's settlement, fortunately preserved in the family, has been of essential service; the copies of any such, herein printed, may be relied upon as preserving word, letter, and punctuation.

Although scattering notices of individuals of the name of Harris in England have been collected, as well as of persons in this country, it does not seem worth while to insert any not identified as belonging to this family; as several other Harris families exist, which cannot be shown to be allied with that of Robert Harris, although some connection may possibly exist. Some of these are mentioned in the Appendix.

Several things ought to be noted concerning the contents of these pages:—

I. Dates have been left unchanged, as to Old and New Style, and may be considered as Old or New, according to their period.

II. Each generation is kept by itself, except that the few children numbered in the eighth, are mentioned in connection with their parents.

III. Towns specified without reference to any State, are in Massachusetts.

IV. The children of daughters of any Harris are inserted and numbered, but no further descendants are traced.

V. The arrangement used is almost exactly the one recommended by that thorough antiquarian and genealogist, Samuel G. Drake, Esq., of Boston; it is easily understood by the following explanations:

Robert Harris and his descendants are numbered in regular order from the beginning to the end; this "general number" is the Arabic figure prefixed to each name. The order of children in each family is denoted by the *Roman* numerals. Thus—"(53) IV. John," (page 20), denotes that this John is the fifty-third in the *general* numbering, and the fourth child in his father's family.

The small, elevated figure at the *right* of any name, denotes the generation. Thus—"(53) IV. John,⁴" denotes that John was of the fourth generation. Robert,¹ the emigrant, being the first.

The Arabic figure *following* the name of a *child*, denotes that this child had a family, and the figure represents the "general" number of his first child. Thus—"(53) IV. John⁴ (131)," on page 20, denotes that John had a family, which commences with the "general" number 131 as on page 26.

The Arabic figure following the name of the *head of a family*, denotes his number in the "general" list. Thus—"John⁴ (53)," on page 26, denotes that John's "general" number was 53, and his birth is found at that number, (as on page 20,) from which his pedigree is easily traced.

That the genealogy is incomplete, is to be expected, but it is seldom so in the earlier generations; in the later, the names of children, born since information was procured of some branches, will not be found. That errors will be occasionally discovered, notwithstanding all care, is a matter of course. But the infirmities of advancing years admonish the writer that the hope of greater completeness must not be allowed to delay publication.

Luther M. Harris.

JAMAICA PLAIN, IN WEST ROXBURY, MS.

MAY 7, 1861.

ROBERT HARRIS

AND HIS DESCENDANTS.

No research has yet been able to discover either the place from which, or the time when, ROBERT HARRIS removed to America. A uniform family tradition has given Gloucestershire as the county of his residence in England, but nothing is known, either for or against the accuracy of this tradition. Family papers were indeed brought to this country by Robert Harris, containing a pedigree and other documents of family value, which were in existence in the youth of John^s Harris, which his son, the father of the writer of these pages, heard him describe to some extent; but in their transfer between different families they were lost, and probably irrecoverably.

Nor have any of the investigations carried on by persons of the same patronymic, among which those of the late Rev. Thaddeus M. Harris, D. D., of Dorchester, may be particularly mentioned, shown any connection between Robert Harris and the other emigrants of the name, whose families are noticed in the voluminous pages of Savage's Genealogical Dictionary.* The first authoritative record regarding the emigrant whose descendants these pages will record, is found in the registry of Roxbury, Massachusetts, which reads,—

"Robert Harris and Elizabeth Boffee [Boughey] married Jan. 24, 1642-3."

The name, however, occurs in another place. In a list of "Emigrants to Virginia," copied by Horatio G. Somerby, Esq., from "records in custody of the Master of the Rolls,"† appears "Robt. Harris, 20." The heading of this list reads thus:

"July 27, 1635. Thes under written names are to be transported to Virginea imbarqued in the Primrose Captan Douglass Mr. p. Certificate under ye Ministers hand of Gravesend, being examined by him touching their Conformitie to the church discipline of England. The Men have taken the oath of Allegiance & Supremacie"

* Vol. II., pp. 360-6.

† N. E. Hist.-Gen. Register, IV., 189.

Mr. Somerby well observes in reference to a similar list,—“Although the passengers here given went to Virginia, their names are not the less important to the student in New England history, for it is well known that great numbers came to New England from there.” Whether, however, the “Robert Harris” in the list mentioned was the “Robert Harris” of the Roxbury records, is a matter of mere conjecture. The only circumstance bearing upon the question is the fact that other names upon the same list are afterwards found in New England, and one at least, that of Robert Sharp, in the same town with Robert Harris.

It is thought, though it is hardly more than conjecture, that Robert Harris was early in the employ of William Hibbins, and in care of lands granted to that individual, and also that he lived at or near the present village in Brookline. One letter still extant was addressed to Mr. Hibbins's care, for Mrs. Harris; and it seems that very soon after Mr. Hibbins's death, Mr. Harris purchased lands elsewhere in Brookline, a stone's throw only beyond the present West Roxbury line. As already seen, he was married at Roxbury. He became also a member of the First Church there, 8 August, 1647, on which day his first two children were baptized. His wife became a member of the same church 5 April, 1663. He was admitted freeman 22 May, 1650. There is also a record, 10 Dec. 1641, “Robt. Harris is released by the Court.” “Goodman Harris,” the Boston records call him in 1669. He was also a constable in 1676.

But whichever side of the line he may have been prior to 1655, about that time he unquestionably appears in the southerly part of Brookline, where he made purchases of property at various dates, and where he entered upon the beautiful grounds on which he passed the remainder of his life, and which remained in the unbroken possession of his descendants until 1828.

Of these purchases, the original deeds of ten are in the possession of the writer, and are in a good state of preservation. They are as follows:

From John Smith of Boston, tailor, three acres at Muddy River, 26 April, 1655.

From Ralph Mason of Boston, joiner, seven and one half acres at Muddy River, 23 May, 1655.

From James Olliver of Boston, merchant, forty-five acres in “Boston Commons,” Muddy River, 9 Feb. 1659.

From Samuel Finch of Roxbury, husbandman, ten acres of meadow in Roxbury, 16 Dec. 1660.

From William Gary, William Lyon, John Mayes, and John Bridge, all of Roxbury, fifteen acres in Roxbury, 6 Dec. 1661.

From John Kendrick, Cambridge Village, now Newton, husbandman, ten acres of meadow in Newton, 10 Dec. 1666.

From Richard Chamberlain of Roxbury, three fourths of an acre in

Roxbury, "a narrow poynte or slipe of land abutting upon the lands of the sayd Robert Harris upon the line between Boston and Roxbury," 23 Jan. 1667.

From Richard Chamberlain of Roxbury, half an acre in Roxbury, to Robert Harris and Mary Griffin, (probably more of the aforesaid "poynte or slipe,") 23 Jan. 1667.

From John Ruggles of Roxbury, half an acre in Roxbury, 18 May, 1674.

From Jane Davis of Roxbury, ten acres at Muddy River, 15 June, 1691.

On the Boston records, 25, 11 mo., 1655, there also appears,—

"Robert Harris of Muddy River, in consideration of two highways taken out of his land, hath 4 acres of land granted him out of the Town's waste ground most convenient for him; and Mr. Peter Oliver is ordered to lay it out."

There is also preserved a lease of ten acres of land for five years, from Joseph Griffin, dated 20 April, 1681, at the yearly rent of £3. This land was described as lying "bounded upon Roxbury line estward and upon Mrs. bouins farm west and upon the said Robert HARRISES land south and upon the widdow child's north." The five receipts for rent were carefully preserved, of one of which the following is a copy:

"Resaiued of robart harris of muddy riuer the full sum of three pounds in munny which was due upon demand for the rent of ten acors of land that robart harris hiereth of me the said land lieth in muddy riuer and aioyneth to the said robart harris his land I say all paid from the beginning of the world to this day this being the second day of april 1683 I say resaiued by me the full sum of 3 pounds by me
JOSEPH GRIFFIN."

In reference to this, as well as to the purchases mentioned, it is to be remembered that Brookline was then a part of Boston, and that Roxbury then included the present town of West Roxbury, although the line between the two may not have been very exactly defined so far from the centres. Robert Harris erected, at first, a small building for a home. But not many years after, he built one more commodious. This house was in its construction a garrison house. It stood until after the death of John Harris, grandfather to Dr. L. M. Harris. Although that person lived in another house near by, his love for the old home kept it standing, even after it came into the hands of his son. But John dying in 1796, his son removed the decaying building within a few months, and, a few years after, erected a new house on the site, which, known as the "Loker House," was destroyed by fire in 1854. The exact site is on the right hand of the "Putterham road," which runs from Jamaica Plain southwesterly to one part of Newton,—a mile or more from the Plain, and some eight or ten rods from the West Roxbury line, in the town of Brookline.

Of the wife of Robert Harris nothing is known except the name and facts already mentioned, save that items are to be had from the following letters sent to her, the original of which are still preserved:

The first, from Katherine Thorpe, superscribed "To my much esteemed friend Mr. William Hibbins att Boston in New England ffor Elizabeth Harris These"

Most deare Sister

My vnfeigned love and respects to yo^a and to yo^r husband [and] children with my prayers to the God of Heaven & Earth for to endue you with all blessings both spirituall and temporall my father remembreth his love to yo^a in the Lord Jesu and his seruice and respects to his christian and dearly beloved friend M^r William Hibbins, and acquainte him that my father saith praised be the Lord he doth remember him in his prayers, you shall receive by M^r Oulton m^r of the Good shipp the John's aduature 10 yards of Kersy as a token of his vnfeigned love to you, desiring he may heare from you of the Receipt of it by the next shipping and (God willing) we shall then otherwise send to yo^a, and then myselfe shall remember yo^a wth a Token My ffather is intending (God willing) by the next September or the Spring, to send you some more [of] these therefore faile not to send to him I have not els But the lord God blesse and Protect you.

I am yo^r most really affectionate
sister

Katherine Thorpe.

London, May 7th, 1654

you may direct yo^r letter to my house in vineyard over against the back side of the Charterhouse in Aldersgate Street.

May the 9th, 1654.

Reced aboard the Johns adventure M^r Oulten Comander one small bundell assigned to M^r Hibbins in bostowne reced by me

THOMAS DEA.

The second, from Bold Boughey, is superscribed "For my Deare Sistr^r M^{rs} Elizabeth Harris att Wroxbury These in New England."

Dear Sistr.

my love in the Lord Jesu to yo^a: y^r: husband & Children premised, I have rec^d yo^a from Roxbury dated Jan: 27th 61 and am hartly Glad to heare of yo^r healths the Lord in mercy continue it to yo^a, yo^a and us all. In answers to the p^ticulars of yo^r letter as followeth, I know Coll: Crowne, and did receive a former letter from yo^a, but whether by his meanes or not I cannot tell, however, I am glad he proves yo^r friend, for w^{ch} when I haue an opportunity, I shall, god willing, give him thanks; next all our Brothers, Brothers in Laws and Sisters hereafter menconed, prayed bee our good god, are in good health for the most parte; our youngest Bro^r Timothy is Chaplaine to the Kings Rigim^t of Guards in Dunkirke, Thomas Employed by me in business, our sister Katherine, whom yo^a Know, is married to one M^r Thorpe in London hath her health Indifferently well; and lives comfortably, our Sistr^r Hannah is married to one M^r Wilding, and lives in Shrewsbury, Mary is married to M^r Roe, who hath an Employ^mt under me in London, and lives well, Priscilla is married to an honest minister one M^r Bruce, and at p^sent Lives in London, is Chaplaine to mee, at the ffeete. Our Sisters Except Katherine are all mothers of Children, I doubt not but our good god will continue his good hand of p^rvidence over us all, and [I] hartly pray that wee may walke worthy of the Least of his mercys, and in all humilytie truly thankfull for what Ever hee in his divine wisdoms thinks fitt to bestow, or Lay vpon us; my hartly prayers to the Lord for yo^a and yo^a are that if not in this world w^{ch} is full of Sins and Misery, yett hereafter wee may meete with Comfort, Where Jesus Christ the Saviour is gone before, etc. I was married but it pleased god to remove my wife by