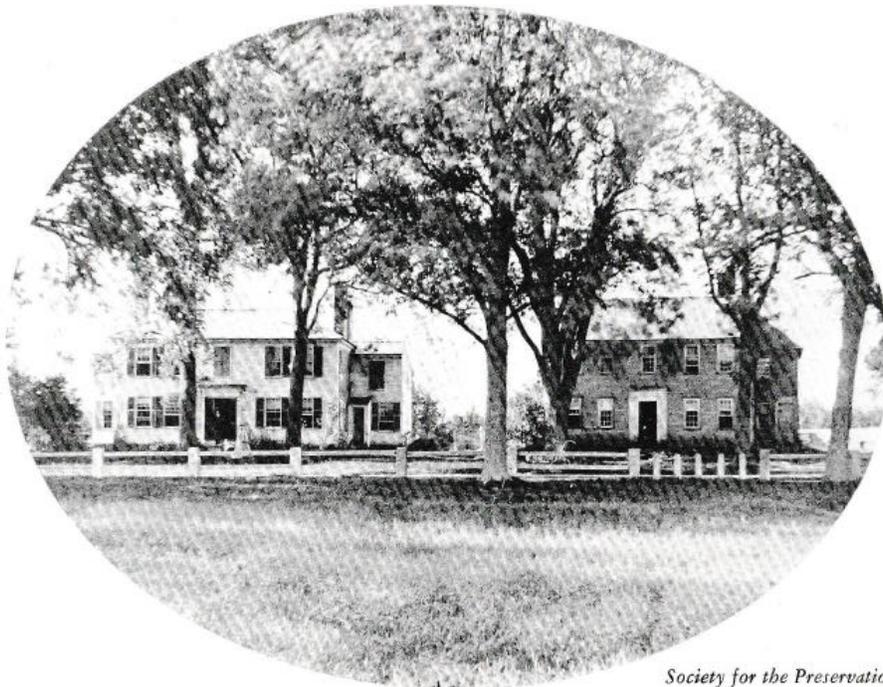


Daniel Harrington
A Brief Biography
By Bill Poole

Daniel Harrington was the Clerk of the Lexington Militia Company. Daniel was one of the eight children of Robert and Abigail Mason Harrington and was born in Lexington on March 26, 1739. He was thus just a month shy of his 36th birthday on April 19, 1775.¹ Robert, the father, had been an ensign in the militia company, elected selectman in 1752, chairman of the board for over a dozen years, deputy to the General Court for four years and served as a magistrate.²

Daniel married Anna Munroe in Lexington on May 8, 1760, daughter of Robert and Anna Stone Munroe. His father-in-law, Robert, was an ensign in the Lexington militia company. By April of 1775 Daniel and Anna had become the parents of six children: 1. **Levi**, born November 9, 1760; 2. **Nathan**, born April 29, 1762; 3. **Daniel**, born June 10, 1764, died young on August 23, 1767; 4. **Anna**, born February 8, 1767; 5. **Daniel**, born June 10, 1768; 6. **Grace**, born March 10, 1770; 7. **Betty**, born February 1, 1772; and 8. **Eusebia**, born January 20, 1774 and who would die young on October 5, 1775. They would then go on to have three more children for a total of eleven: 9. **Eusebia**, born February 13, 1776; 10. **Hannah**, born January 29, 1779 and 11. **Lydia**, baptized December 10, 1780.³ The practice of honoring children who had died young by using their names again was common at that time.

The family home was across from the west side of Lexington Common on a narrow dirt road that would first be known as Elm Street and then later the Harrington Street of today. Daniel was a blacksmith by trade and his shop was located near the home.



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THE HARRINGTON HOUSES IN 1867

These homes on Harrington Road were built by members of the Harrington family. The Levi Harrington house on the left was not built until after the Revolutionary War, although young Levi was an eyewitness to the battle. The house on

the right was built by Daniel Harrington, who was the clerk for Captain Parker's Company in 1775. This house was offered to the town in 1875, but the offer was declined and it was demolished before the end of that year.

From: *Lexington A Century of Photographs*, published by Lexington Historical Society 1980, p. 44

The photo below was taken in 1875 during the centennial celebration. It shows that the condition of the home had become sadly deteriorated, and it was demolished later in the year.



Banner reads "Home of Daniel Harrington Clerk of Parker's Company April 19, 1775."
Photo taken in 1875

April 18, 1775

Living as he did so close to the Common, the Meeting House, Buckman's Tavern and the road to Concord, Daniel would have been instantly made aware of all that was happening in the area. When a mounted patrol of Regulars passed through town about 7 o'clock in the evening of April 18, heading, it was thought, toward Concord, Daniel would have either seen them in person or soon be notified of their passing. He was probably one of a number of militiamen who immediately gathered at Buckman's Tavern to discuss the event. There, Sergeant William Munroe gathered a squad and proceeded to Reverend Jonas Clarke's parsonage to warn John Hancock and Samuel Adams, the Patriot leaders, that the Regulars were out and that they should take refuge at some distance.

Following the arrival of Paul Revere and William Dawes to announce that a British expedition had been mounted to seize the military supplies at Concord and that they would be passing through Lexington, the alarm bell was sounded and the militia began gathering on the Common. Undoubtedly, Daniel would have been among the first to arrive.

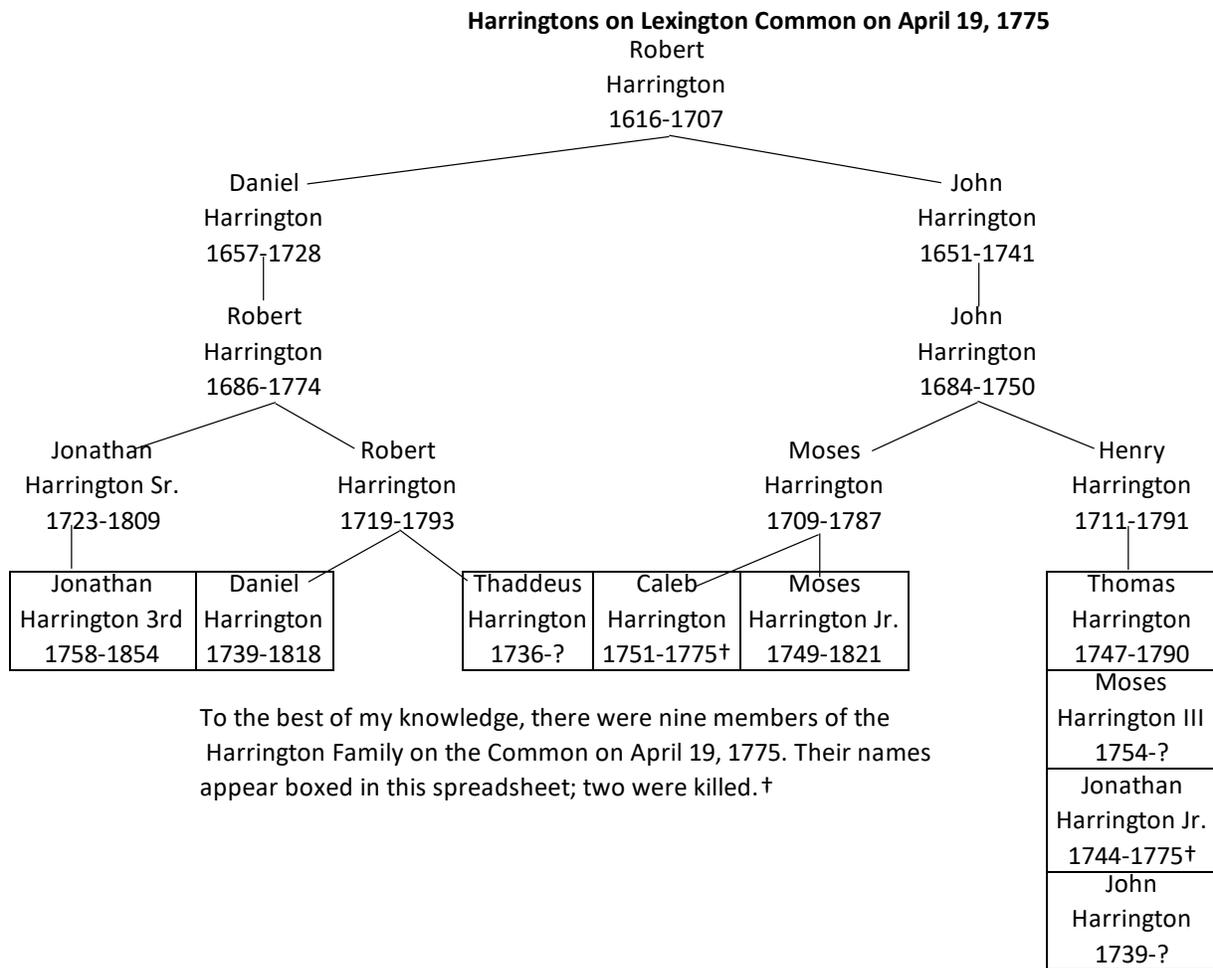
April 19, 1775

Along with 33 other individuals, Daniel would sign a deposition describing the events of April 19th

"We . . . all inhabitants of Lexington in the County of Middlesex, and Colony of Massachusetts Bay, in New England, do testify and declare, that on the nineteenth of April instant, about one or two o'clock in the morning, being informed that several officers of the Regulars had, the evening before, been riding up and down the road, and had detained and insulted the inhabitants passing the same; and also understanding that a body of Regulars were marching from Boston towards Concord, with intent (so it was supposed) to take the stores belonging to the Colony in that Town, we were alarmed; and having

met at the place of our company's parade, were dismissed by our Captain, John Parker, for the present, with orders to be ready to attend at the beat of the drum. We further testify and declare, that about five o'clock in the morning, hearing the drum beat, we proceeded towards the parade, and soon found that a large body of troops were marching towards us. Some of our troops were coming up to the parade, and others had reached it; at which time the Company began to disperse. Whilst our backs were turned on the troops we were fired on by them, and a number of our men were instantly killed and wounded. Not a gun was fired by any person in our Company on the Regulars, to our knowledge, before they fired on us, and they continued firing until we had all made our escape."⁴

Daniel's father-in-law, Robert Munroe was killed on the Common that morning, and like so many of the militia company, Daniel returned to find family members dead, dying or suffering from wounds. Of the eight father and son combinations on the Common that morning, five were broken by death. A distant cousin, Caleb Harrington also died that morning. He had been in the meeting house attempting to obtain powder stored there. Finding the building surrounded by British soldiers he attempted to escape, but was shot and killed. Jonathan Harrington, another cousin, was killed within sight of his home on the west side of the common and a later tradition arose that he crawled to his doorstep where he died in his wife's arms. [See essay on Jonathan Harrington Jr. on this website.]



We do not know if Daniel was among that portion of the Lexington militia company that marched in pursuit of the Regulars later that morning and met them at the location within Minute Man National Historical Park now called Parker's Revenge, but he did perform active service shortly after the events of April 19th. From May 11-15, he served under Captain John Bridge at Cambridge, MA during the siege of Boston. On March 27, 1776, he was commissioned a First Lieutenant in Captain Francis Brown's 8th Company in the Third Middlesex County Regiment of Massachusetts

Militia. In that rank, he served in 1776 three months at Boston and one at Dorchester, MA and in Captain George Minot's Company, Colonel Samuel Ballard's Regiment from August 14 to October 17, 1777 in the Northern Department marching to Bennington, VT during the Ticonderoga campaign. He was commissioned captain on March 26, 1778 and commanded a company in Colonel Jonathan Reed's regiment of guards at Cambridge three months from April 2 to July 3, 1778.⁵

He not only performed military service, but also, like his father, served the Town of Lexington in several capacities. He was a member of the Committee of Correspondence and Safety; he was chosen as Selectman in March, 1777; he was Assessor in 1778 and then Selectman again from 1779 to 1886. An interesting task he assumed was when "In November 1781, the church voted to dispense with the reading of the hymns line by line in public worship, and Captain Daniel Harrington was chosen to lead the singing." Anna Munroe died on October 26, 1811 and Daniel on September 27, 1818. They were buried in Lexington's Old Burying Ground.⁶

Grave marker of Daniel Harrington in Lexington's Old Burying Ground



IN
memory of

TON

Capt. DANIEL HARRING
Who Died Sept. 27, 1818
Aet. 79.

*Quick flies the shadow man!
Whose days are but a span:
O reader be prepared be,
Thy God and King soon to see.*

Through a touching act of Nature, Anna's stone leans toward Daniel's as she did toward him in life.



ERECTED
In memory of DANIEL
MRS. ANNA HARRINGTON
wife of
Capt. Daniel Harrington
who died
Oct. 26, 1811
Aged 74 years

Footnotes

¹Hudson, Charles, *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. 276. *Vital Records of Lexington, MA to the end of the Year 1897*, at <https://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Lexington/>, hereinafter *Lexington Vital Records*.

²Hudson, p. 276.

³Hudson, p. 279; *Lexington Vital Records*.

⁴Kehoe, Vincent J.R., Compiler, *We were There, April 19, 1775 The American Rebels*, Self-published, Chelmsford, MA, 1973, p. 87.

⁵Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War, A compilation from the Archives Prepared and Published by the Secretary of the Commonwealth in Accordance with Chapter 100, Resolves of 1891, Boston, Wright & Potter, 1896-1908, Volume 7, p. 321.

⁶*Lexington Vital Records*; Brown, Francis M. M.D., *Lexington Epitaphs, A Copy of Epitaphs in the Old Burying Ground of Lexington, Massachusetts*, The Lexington Historical Society, 1905, pp. 45 and 46.