

Jonathan Harrington III
A Brief Biography
By Bill Poole

Jonathan Harrington III was descended, as were all the other Harringtons of Lexington, 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 Robert on July 6, 1694, and he died May 17, 1707.¹ Their gravestones can be seen in the Old Burying Ground in Watertown.² Robert and Susanna had thirteen children, all born in Watertown, the fifth of whom was Daniel, born November 1, 1657, died April 19, 1728 in Waltham, MA³ He married in Watertown on October 18, 1681, Sarah Whitney, born March 17, 1653-54, died June 8, 1720.⁴ They lived in that part of Watertown that became Waltham and are buried in Grove Hill Cemetery in Waltham.⁵ Daniel and Sarah had six children, the second of whom was Robert, born Jul 2, 1685, died February 3, 1774.⁶ He married in Watertown on November 15, 1711, Anna Harrington, daughter of Samuel and Grace Livingston Harrington.⁷

Since Anna's father, Samuel, was another son of Robert and Susannah George Harrington, Anna and Robert were thus, first cousins. They removed to Lexington before 1712. He was a blacksmith, which occupation would be carried on by numerous members of the Harrington family for generations. Robert and Anna had six children all born in Lexington.⁸ Their fifth child was Jonathan, known as Sr., born on March 21, 1722-23, died September 14, 1809. He was a Selectman for several years and was on the Committee of Correspondence in 1778.⁹

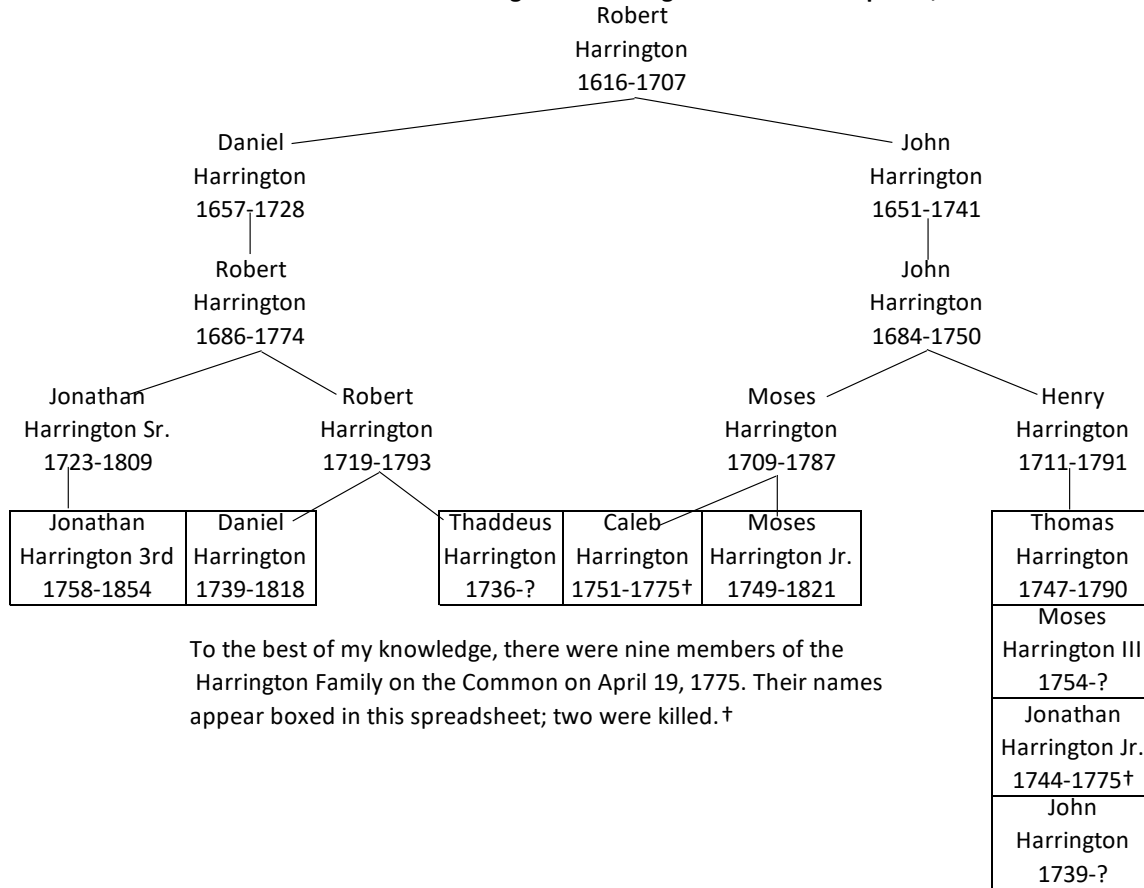
Jonathan Sr. married Abigail Moore Dunster, widow of Henry Dunster of Cambridge, born ?, died in Lexington on June 20, 1776.¹⁰ Jonathan would then marry Lydia Stone Mulliken, widow of Nathaniel Mulliken Sr. They were the parents of Nathaniel Mulliken, member of Captain Parker's company and whose biography appears on this site.¹¹ Jonathan Sr. and Abigail had eight children, all born in Lexington. Their fourth child was Jonathan, the subject of this biography born July 8, 1758 and known as Jonathan III behind his father and 3rd Cousin Jonathan Jr. whose biography also appears on this site.

Jonathan III was just sixteen on April 19, 1775 and was the fifer of Captain Parker's company. He was with the company on that morning, and tradition has it that he later accompanied Captain Parker and a portion of the company in pursuit of the Regulars toward Concord, an action that has been called the bravest moment of their day.

Author, Arthur Bernon Tourtellot described it this way:

Later on the morning of April nineteenth, Captain Parker reassembled his Lexington minutemen, to march toward Concord. Some of the wounded, now bandaged, formed in awkward but determined lines. . . . William Diamond beat his drum again. The little company marched off toward Concord, the beat of the drum and the thin music of the fife echoing briefly after them. And this was Lexington's saddest and most triumphant moment of that whole day—the sun now high in the sky, the smell of British gunpowder still in the air, their dead brothers lying on the Common behind, and the company of minutemen, knowing now what they faced, marching off to meet the enemy again.¹²

Harringtons on Lexington Common on April 19, 1775



To the best of my knowledge, there were nine members of the Harrington Family on the Common on April 19, 1775. Their names appear boxed in this spreadsheet; two were killed. †

Following Lexington, Jonathan III had limited additional service in the military. He was the fifer in a detachment from the Lexington militia company commanded by John Bridge; service 5 days; detachment reported on command at Cambridge from May 11 to May 15, 1775 by order of the Committee of Safety; *also*, list of men who guarded the cannon at Lexington and thence to Cambridge; warrant for pay allowed in Council April 26, 1776.¹³

His first service was during the siege of Boston and the second was probably in early January, 1776, guarding the train of artillery brought from Fort Ticonderoga to outside Boston by Colonel (later General) Henry Knox.

Jonathan lived until he was age 95, seventy-nine years after the engagement on Lexington Common. He died on March 26, 1854 as the last survivor of the battle. An article published in the Boston *Liberator* newspaper on April 7, 1854, page 3, reported that his funeral was attended by Governor Emory Washburn of Massachusetts along with a number of other dignitaries. There were eighteen military companies escorting the casket, fielding “more soldiers than took part in the battles of Lexington and Concord.”¹⁴



Drawing of Jonathan Harrington III
by Benjamin J. Lossing, 1848



Photo of Jonathan Harrington III
late in life

Footnotes

¹Charles 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.

²Photos of their gravestones can be seen at:

<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=20992084>

³Bond, p. 274; Hudson, *Genealogies*, p. 272; Vital Records of Waltham, MA to the End of 1850 at <https://ma-vitalrecords.org/MA/Middlesex/Waltham/aDeathsH.shtml>

⁴Hudson, *Genealogies*, p. 273

⁵Photos of their graves can be seen at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/27288147/daniel-harrington> and <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/28365009/sarah-harrington>

⁶Bond, p. 274; Vital Records of Waltham, MA to the End of 1850.

⁷Bond, p. 274; Hudson, *Genealogies*, p. 274.

⁸Hudson, *Genealogies*, p. 274.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹²Tourtellot, Arthur Bernon, *William Diamond's Drum, The Beginning of the War of the American Revolution*, 1959, Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, New York. P. 143.

¹³ Massachusetts 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. 328.

¹⁴The Boston *Liberator*, was published by the noted Abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison from 1831 to 1865.