

Front  
**HARRIS**

**Nathan Harris**

**Born**

**23 March 1758**

**Smithfield, Rhode Island**

**Died**

**17 November 1835**

**Mentor, Ohio**

**Married**

**1780**

**Rhoda Lapham**

**Born**

**27 April 1759**

**Glocester, Rhode Island**

**Died**

**11 October 1849**

**Mentor, Ohio**

## Right Side

This Harris family's American story began with Thomas Harris, great-great-grandfather of Nathan Harris, who emigrated from England in the mid-1630s. Driven by a quest for religious freedom, Thomas was among the first settlers of Providence Plantations, laying the foundation for later generations to establish the United States and its Constitution.

Nathan Harris was born on March 23, 1758, in Smithfield, Rhode Island, to Preserved Harris and Martha Mowry. In May 1777, Nathan enlisted as a patriot soldier in the American Revolutionary War. His three-year service included enduring the harsh winter at Valley Forge and participating in three significant battles and several active defenses. Nathan returned home and married Rhoda Lapham in the Spring of 1780. Rhoda, born April 27, 1759, in Glocester, Rhode Island, was the daughter of Solomon and Silvia Lapham. Her Lapham ancestors were Quakers and had thrived for generations in Rhode Island's climate of religious tolerance.

Amidst a period of religious revival and American expansion, Nathan and Rhoda joined relatives and friends in moving westward from Rhode Island, seeking new opportunities on unsettled land. They established a farm near Cambridge, New York, where five sons were born: Emer, Martin, Preserved, Solomon, and Seville.

In 1791, the family moved again, this time to the Western frontier of New York, acquiring 600 acres in what is now Palmyra. Here, three daughters were born: Sophia, Lydia, and Naomi.

Nathan Harris, known for his exuberance, became a central figure in community gatherings. He stayed active well into his advanced years, participating in recreational activities with youthful enthusiasm, and was celebrated for his hunting and fishing skills. Rhoda, meanwhile, provided spiritual guidance and stability to their eight children, earning admiration for her energy and longevity.

The Harris family's legacy extended beyond their immediate community. In 1829, their son Martin Harris played a pivotal role in American religious history by financing the printing of the Book of Mormon.

After 40 years in Palmyra, Nathan and Rhoda relocated to Ohio in 1831 along with their three eldest sons and their families. They resided with Preserved and his wife, Nancy, on their 75-acre farm in Mentor.

Nathan Harris passed away on November 17, 1835, at the age of 77. Rhoda lived another 14 years, remaining active in her family and community. Even in her eighties, people said she could complete a full day's work of spinning. She died at the age of 90 on October 11, 1849, and was buried beside Nathan on the Mentor farm.

Nathan and Rhoda raised eight children and had ~58 grandchildren—a testament to their enduring legacy.

[Left Side](#)

## The Harris Children

Emer

New York, 1781 – Utah, 1869

Martin

New York, 1783 – Utah, 1875

Preserved

New York, 1785 – Ohio, 1867

Solomon

New York, 1787 – New York, 1828

Seville

New York, ~1790 – Michigan, ~1835

Sophia

New York, 1792 – New York, 1827

Lydia

New York, ~1797 – Ohio, ~1832

Naomi

New York, 1800 – Utah, 1884

*Back Side*

American Revolutionary War Soldier

## Nathan Harris

Served three years in the  
2nd Rhode Island Battalion Regiment  
May 1777 – May 1780



### Battles

Red Bank, New Jersey: 22 October 1777

Monmouth, New Jersey: 28 June 1778

Newport, Rhode Island: 29 August 1778

### Active Defenses

Hudson River Valley, New York: June 1777 – October 1777

Fort Mifflin, Pennsylvania: October 1777 – November 1777

Fort Mercer, New Jersey: November 1777 – December 1777

Rhode Island: August 1778 – August 1779

### Winter Encampments

Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: December 1777 – June 1778

Warren, Rhode Island: December 1778 – June 1779

Morristown, New Jersey: December 1779 – May 1780

Erected by

The Harris Family Organization

2026

*Families are the primary link to our past, our current legacy,  
and the foundation for our future.*