



In-Depth First Settler Profile:
William Harris (1650) /
Edith (unknown surname) Harris

Name: William Harris

Birth: About 1620, near Hatherup, Gloucestershire, England (GMB, TAG)

Emigration: From Bristol, England on the ship "Lion" of the Winthrop fleet to Boston, Mass. 1630. He came with both parents, four brothers, and one sister. Removed to Salem, Mass., then Rowley, Mass. by 1643. (*Ancestry of Bethia Harris/Davis*, 1934) To Middletown before November 1652. (FFS)

Death: 1717 (SAV). Before Nov. 7, 1719, Middletown, Conn. (*Ancestry of Bethia Harris/Davis*, 1934). Before May 17, 1714 (TAG, MAN).

Occupation & Public Service: Townsman, grand levy man, rate make, packer, & constable. (FFS)

Marriage: m.(1) Edith (unknown surname) about 1644, Rowley, Mass. (GMB) (b. England; d. August 5, 1685, Middletown, Conn.) (MVR); m.(2) Lydia (Wright) Smith, by 1687. (*Ancestry of Bethia Harris/Davis*, 1934) (TAG)

Parents: Thomas Harris (1590-before 1634) & Elizabeth (unknown surname) Harris (1578-1670) of Hatherup, Gloucestershire, England and Boston (Charlestown), Mass. (*Ancestry of Bethia Harris/Davis*, 1934)

Children (SAV)(MVR), Land Records, vol. 1, page 2; BCVR):

(1) Mary Harris, b. July 1, 1645, Rowley, Mass.; d. before August 30, 1721, Middletown, Conn; m.(1) John Ward, April 18, 1664, Middletown, Conn. (6 children); m.(2) Josiah Gilbert, 1687-8 (one child).

(2) Martha Harris, b. 1647, Rowley, Mass.; d. July 14, 1713, New London, Conn.; m. Joseph Coit, July 13, 1667, New London, Conn. (SAV) (6 children)

(3) Elizabeth Harris, b. 1648-49, Rowley, Mass.; d. October 7, 1684, Middletown, Conn.; m. Edward Foster, June 20, 1670, Middletown, Conn. (7 children)

(4) Patience Harris, b. 1650, Rowley, Mass.; d. March 19, 1732, Middletown, Conn.; m. Daniel Markham, January 21, 1677, Middletown, Conn. (3 children)

(5) Hannah Harris, b. 1652, Rowley, Mass. or Middletown, Conn.; d. August 3, 1722; m. Francis Whitmore, February 8, 1674, Middletown, Conn. (10 children)

Residence/Property: When the inventory of his estate was made, his 1328 acres of land was valued at 1000 pounds. (The *Ancestry of Bethia Harris/Davis*, 1934) The land inventory in his will shows that 624 acres were "lying westward from the town," while 442 acres were in "the northwest quarter." (*Digest of Conn. Probate Records/Manwaring*, 1902)

Will: Vol. 2, p. 396 (MAN). (Estate inventory - land, November 7, 1719: 1328 acres, 1182 pounds)

Abbreviation code used in SMFSD
biographical sketches and in-depth profiles:

(MVR) Middletown Vital Records (originals at Middletown City Hall, Middletown, Conn.; also available on microfilm at Russell Library, Middletown, Conn.)

(BCVR) *The Barbour Collection of Connecticut Town Vital Records* (original index at Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Conn.; printed index available from Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Md.; digitized index available on CD-Rom as part of *The Ricker Compilation of Vital Records of Early Connecticut*, Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Md.)

(MLR) *Middletown Land Records* (originals at Middletown City Hall, Middletown, Conn.; also available on microfilm at Russell Library, Middletown, Conn.)

(MAN) *Digest of Connecticut Probate Records*, Hartford District (Manwaring, Charles William. *A Digest of the Early Connecticut Probate Records*. Originally published 1904-1906; reprinted 1995. Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1995.)

(CBRMC) *Commemorative Biographical Record of Middlesex County, Connecticut, Containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens, and Many of the Early Settled Families*. Chicago, Ill.: J.H. Beers & Co., 1903.

(MUH) *Middletown Upper Houses* (Adams, Charles C. *Middletown Upper Houses, A History of the North Society of Middletown, Connecticut from 1650 to 1800 with Genealogical and Biographical Chapters on Early Families*. New York, N.Y.: The Grafton Press, 1908.)

(FFS) Frank Farnsworth Starr ("The Settlers of Mattabesec 1650-1660," *Middletown Penny Press*, Oct. 11, 1900; also published in the *Middletown Tribune* 250th Anniversary supplement.)

(CAF) *Centennial Address of Rev. David Field*. (Field, David D. *Centennial Address: With Historical Sketches of Cromwell, Portland, Chatham, Middle Haddam, Middletown, and its Parishes*. Middletown, Conn.: W.B. Casey, 1853.)

(GMB) *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England 1620-1633* (Anderson, Robert Charles, FASG. *The Great Migration Begins: Immigrants to New England, 1620-1633, Vol. I-III*. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1996.)

(SAV) *Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England* (Savage, James. *A Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England, Showing Three Generations of Those Who Came Before May, 1692, on the Basis of Farmer's Register*. Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown & Co., 1860-1862.)

(GFHC) *Genealogical & Family History of the State of Connecticut* (Cutter, William Richard. *Genealogical and Family History of the State of Connecticut: A Record of the Achievements of Her People in the Making of a Commonwealth and the Founding of a Nation*. New York, N.Y.: Lewis Publishing Co., 1911.)

(HMC) *The History of Middlesex County* (Henry Whittemore, ed. *The History of Middlesex County 1635-1885*. New York, N.Y.: J.H. Beers & Co., 1884)

(RPCC) *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, 1639-1663* (Adams, Arthur W., ed. *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut 1639-1663*. Hartford, Conn.: Connecticut Historical Society, 1928.)

(HCCM) *Hartford County Court Minutes, 1663-1687* (Ullmann, Helen Schatvet, CG, FASG., ed. *Hartford County, Conn., County Court Minutes, Vol. 3 & 4, 1663-1687, 1697*. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2005.)

(NEHGSR) *NEHGS Register (New England Historical and Genealogical Register*. Boston, Mass.: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1847-2007.) (Online database available at NewEnglandAncestors.org)

(TAG) *The American Genealogist* (articles by Donald Lines Jacobus, ed., 1922-1971) (*The American Genealogist*. New Haven, Conn.: D.L. Jacobus, 1922-1971)



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Page 2-2-2*

Burial Location: Unknown, but most likely in Riverside Cemetery, Middletown, Conn., where many of the earliest grave markers do not survive.

Notes:

(CAF): “William and Daniel Harris came to Middletown from Rowley, Mass.” (Field, pg. 146)

(SAV): “WILLIAM, Charlestown 1642, br. of Anthony, and prob. brot. by his mo. the wid. Elizabeth in youth, rem. to Rowley, thence to Charlestown again, and in few yrs. to Middletown; by w. Edith had Hannah, b. prob. at Charlestown; Mary, b. 1 Mar. 1646 at R.; Martha; Elizabeth; and Patience; of wh. Martha who m. 13 July 1667, Joseph Coit of New London, was b. prob. at C. may have been the others. Hannah m. 8 Feb. 1675, Francis Whitmore; Mary, m. John Ward 18 Apr. 1664, and a. 1684, Josiah Gilbert; Elizabeth m. Edward Foster; and Patience m. Daniel Markham; all of M. sooner or later. His w. d. 5 Aug. 1685, and he m. Lydia, wid. of Joseph Smith; but he liv. to 1717.”

(The Ancestry of Bethia Harris, by Walter Goodwin Davis, Portland, Maine, Southworth Press, 1934): “WILLIAM; m. (1) about 1644 Edith (unknown surname) who d. in Middletown, Conn., Aug. 5, 1685; m. (2) Lydia (Wright) Smith, daughter of Thomas Wright of Wethersfield, Conn.,

and widow of Joseph Smith of Middletown; owned a house-lot in Rowley next to that of his brother John in 1643 and settled there; moved to Middletown about 1652; d. before Nov. 7, 1719, when the inventory of his estate was made, his 1328 acres of land being valued at œ1000; his grandson, Solomon Coit of New London, Conn., petitioned that administration be granted to some suitable person, but his daughters Mary Gilbert, Hannah Whitmore and Patience Markham appeared in opposition; final distribution made Aug. 3 and 4, 1722, to daughters Hannah Whitmore and Patience Markham and the heirs of three deceased daughters, Mary Gilbert, Martha Coit and Elizabeth Foster.”

(Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut 1639-1663): “A Court of magistrates in Hartford 13th October 1654: ... This court fines William Harris of middletowne for the breach of an Order by Intermeddling to the Intangling of the Affectyones of Thomas Ossmores Daughter 40 pounds.”

For further reading:

The Ancestry of Bethia Harris, by Walter Goodwin Davis, Portland, Maine, Southworth Press, 1934.

History and Genealogy of the Harris Family, by William K. Harris, unpublished manuscript compiled by William K. Harris and Winifred (Thomson) (Argersinger) Gonseth. (William K. Harris, 65 East State Street, Gloversville, NY 12078; Renee M. Zamora, American Fork, UT 84003.)

Jacobus, Donald Lines. “Early Harris Families of Western Connecticut.” *The American Genealogist*, Vol. 23, No. 3, January 1947, pg. 153-162.

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