

Harris Family Genealogy

- The extended Harris family was well-represented through New England and though they were not quite wealthy, they were generally shrewd and well-off with larger-than-usual amounts of money and land.
- There seem to have been some tendencies towards narcissism, bipolar disorder, depression and/or something else, based on the erratic behavior of Martin, his brother, some of their sons, and the descriptions that survive about members of this family.

Martin Harris

About Martin

Born: May 18, 1783 in Easton, New York

Married: Lucy Harris (1792-1836) on March 27, 1808 in Palmyra, New York, then Caroline Young (1816-1888) on November 1, 1836.

Children with Lucy Harris:

- Lucy Harris (1809-1841)
- Henry William (1810- at least 1833...)
- George B. Harris (1813-1864)
- Elizabeth L. Harris (1820-1855)

Children with Caroline Young :

- Martin Harris jr. (1838-1913)
- *Caroline Harris (1839-1850)*
- Julia Lacothe Harris (1842-1869)
- John Wheeler Harris (1845-1916)
- *Sarah Harris (1849-1856)*
- Solomon Webster Harris (1854-1919)
- Ida May Harris (1856-1918)

Died: July 10, 1875

Buried in Cache County, Utah

Memorable Details:

Martin's parents with Nathan Harris and Rhoda Lapham. Rhoda Lapham was a descendant of John Lapham I, the same progenitor of Fayette Lapham who later offered the important historical recollection of a 1829 interview with Joseph Smith Sr.

Martin had 7 siblings and 2 of his brothers also show up in his remembrance about the origins of the book of Mormon. His brother Preserved Harris is credited by Martin as first telling him about the hidden gold Bible story. His brother Emer was interested very early and is said to be the person to whom Martin first handed a finished copy of the book of Mormon. Emer was one of the early members of the Church and contributed substantial time and labor to all of the building

projects, temples, and other initiatives Joseph came up with. Emer followed the Mormons to Utah before Martin did and lived polygamously there.

Martin had 150 acres of his father's 600 acres, which was a substantial estate, was considered a shrewd manager of his assets until he got involved with Joseph Smith jr.

Was a religious eccentric who was raised Quaker, but experimented with many religions. He was public about being an "unchurched man" and a Restorationist waiting for the New Testament Church to reestablish itself.

Married his first cousin Lucy Harris in 1808 and was physically abusive with her. She survived many years with him and had 4 children. They separated in 1830 due to Martin's insistence on mortgaging his property to pay for the book of Mormon. Lucy had some property put into her name and they were effectively divorced from then on, though it was never legalized. Lucy died in 1836 of illness at just 44 years old. She insisted her innocence against the claim that she had stolen the 116 pages until her death. Martin remarried a few months later.

Met Joseph Smith jr around 1824-1826, became convinced of Joseph's peeping abilities with his stone 1826, when Joseph found his toothpick.

Paid Joseph's debts in Palmyra so that he could go to Emma's family in Harmony, Pennsylvania.

Scribed for Joseph in 1828, resulting in 116 pages which he took back to Palmyra but lost. He did limited scribe-work after that, but continued to fund Joseph Smith and eventually mortgaged his farm to pay for the book of Mormon printing.

Accompanied Joseph, David Whitmer, and Oliver Cowdery into the woods to witness the gold plates in person. The men prayed in the woods for a viewing and eventually, Martin left the group, feeling that he was somehow messing it up with his presence. Joseph continued with the other two men until they felt spiritually satisfied enough to say that they had witness something, then Joseph followed Martin and helped him feel it too. Martin would hesitate to describe this experience later, but eventually admitted that it was an interlude in which he saw "with spiritual eyes" the gold plates. Because of this experience, he signed or allowed his name to be signed to the Witness statement prepared by Oliver Cowdery prior to the publishing of the Book of Mormon. David Whitmer and Martin Harris would both go on to later be key Witnesses of the Strangite movement.

Served several Mormon missions to sell books of Mormon and to proselyte. He attempted to recoup the debt on his farm. It did not succeed. He eventually sold the farm and moved to Ohio to follow Joseph. Unlike his brother Emer and other Saints, though, Martin remained in Kirtland with Caroline.

After Joseph's death in 1844, Martin followed several variants of Mormonism including William E. McLellin's movement in 1847 and William Smith's movement in 1855. He also became a formal Witness to the truthfulness of Mormon Breakoff James Strang's religion.

In 1870, he migrated to Utah and was rebaptized. He died in Clarkston, Cache County in 1875.

Links:

Analyzing Mormonism: <https://www.analyzingmormonism.com/martin-harris/>

Joseph Smith Papers: <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/martin-harris>

Family Search: <https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/KWJY-S1F/martin-harris-1783-1875>

Wikitree: <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Harris-11016>

Find a Grave: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/3464/martin-harris>

Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Harris_\(Latter_Day_Saints\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Harris_(Latter_Day_Saints))

James Strang and the Strangites on Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Strang

BYU Article "Martin Harris Will Be Here In Time" by Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1470&context=jbms>

Lucy Harris

About Lucy

Born: May 1, 1791

Married: her first cousin Martin Harris, on March 27, 1808 in Palmyra New York when she was 15 years old.

4 Children:

- Lucy Harris (1809-1841)
- Henry William (1810-?)
- George B. Harris (1813-1864)
- Elizabeth L. Harris (1820-1855)

Died: 1836

Buried in Palmyra Cemetery

Memorable Details:

Lucy was part of the large extended Harris family that was around New England. Her branch of the family was from Rhode Island. She had 10 siblings. Her brother Peter and his wife Abigail lived close enough to visit regularly and to independently know the Smith family. Abigail records her own testimony of hearing the gold Bible story and interacting with Lucy Mack Smith regarding the project.

Was married very young, left alone to raise children repeatedly while Martin went to war, had an affair, and followed Joseph Smith jr around. She had 4 children (above) that are listed in detail on her gravestone.

Lucy experienced intense and repeated domestic violence from Martin.

Was interested in the gold Bible venture and willing to invest in it if she saw sufficient proof that it was what it claimed to be, but was never convinced.

Quaker by upbringing and by choice, as were most members of the Harris family.

She was probably not the one who stole the 116 pages and she denied this accusation with oaths to stand before God about until her death.

Was partially deaf by 1827.

Separated from Martin Harris in 1830 when he insisted on mortgaging their farm to pay for book of Mormon publication.

Offered a public testimony about her experiences with Martin in 1833 alongside her adult son Henry and her sister-in-law Abigail in *Mormonism Unveiled* (sic) by Eber D. Howe.

Lucy was very sick and weak by 1836, ut died mysteriously on an unknown day *before October*, right as or after Martin visited her for the last time. Lucy was only 44. Martin married a young 20 year old woman and a relative of Brigham Young on November 1st of the same year.

→This strange collection of facts and loose record of her death raises some serious questions—did Martin poison Lucy? This would match later patterns of killings justified by Joseph Smith jr and Brigham Young with their use of the assassins and Danites in Missouri, Illinois, and Utah: when someone was no longer useful to the Church or if influential Church leaders considered them dangerous, the person would be “used up”—that is, stalked, threatened, and/or killed.

Links:

Joseph Smith Papers: <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/lucy-harris-harris>

Family Search:(NOTE: dates for second and third children, Henry William and George B. are inaccurate on Family Search)

<https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/KWJY-BM9/lucy-harris-1792-1836>

Wikitree: <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Harris-20696>

Find a Grave: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/150025857/lucy-harris>

Abigail “Nabbie” Cook & Peter Harris

About Abigail

Born: January 3, 1763

Married: Peter Harris on October 7, 1799 probably in New York.

Children:

- Nancy Harris (1810-1895)

Died: August 9, 1840, age 77

Buried in Palmyra, New York

Memorable Details:

Abigail's husband Peter Harris was Lucy Harris' older brother.

Abigail may have struggled with infertility, since she and Peter Harris had only one child--a very unusual occurrence at this time.

Abigail offered her own view of the Smith family, particularly Lucy Mack Smith in a statement in 1833. As one of the few women who volunteered a statement about the gold Bible and the Smith family in Palmyra and the only woman who bore no direct relation to the family, her statements are especially unique.

Abigail and Peter were both residents of Palmyra, New York and were buried there.

Links:

Family Search: <https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/GQR1-VDN/abigail-cook-1763-1840>

Wikitree: n/a

Find a Grave: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/109520759/abigail-harris>

Emer Harris & Roxanna Peas, Deborah Lott

About Emer

Born: May 29, 1781

Married: Roxanna Peas (1781-1854) in 1802 and divorced in 1818, Deborah Lott (1794-1825) in 1819 but she died not long afterwards, Parna Chapell (1792-1857) in 1826, then polygamously married Polly Chamberlin (1812-1849) between 1846-1849, and polygamously Martha "Patty" Allen (1803-1860) in 1855.

Children with Roxanna Peas:

- Elethan Harris (1805-1853)
- Alvira Harris (1807-1891)

Children with Deborah Lott:

- Martin Henderson Harris (1820-1889)
- Harriest Fox harris (1822-1910)
- Dennison Lot Harris (1824-1885)

Children with Parna Chapell:

- Fannie Melvina Harris (1827-1841)
- Joseph Mormon Harris (1830-1909)
- Alma Harris (1832-1900)
- Charles Harris (1834-1916)

Children with Polly Chamberlin (POLYGAMOUS):

- Rebecca Harris Yates (1844-1929) (oops! This baby seems to have been burnout of wedlock...)

Died: November 28, 1869

Buried in Logan City Cemetery, Logan, Utah

Memorable Details:

Older brother to Martin Harris, only member of Martin Harris' family to convert to Mormonism

Emer married Roxanna Peas in 1802, they had 2 children, Elethan and Alvira, then divorced in 1818—Roxanna went on to remarry.

Emer married Deborah Lott in 1819, but Emer was having an affair with her before he divorced Roxanna. With Deborah Lott, he had 3 children: Martin, Harriet, and Denison. Deborah died in 1825.

Emer married Parna Chapell in 1826. They had 4 children: Fannie, Joseph Mormon, Alma, and Charles. Their son Joseph Mormon was born in 1830 as the book of Mormon was being published, suggesting that this son was named after Joseph Smith jr and the book. Alma is a name used in the book of Mormon as well. Interestingly, after these two Mormon-based names, the last child of Emer and Parna was named "Charles." Parna migrated West to Utah and was eventually buried in Provo.

Emer's first polygamous marriage may have begun in secret in 1844—Polly Chamberlin had a daughter Rebecca that year. Polly Chamberlin died in 1849, apparently on the way to Utah. His second polygamous marriage, Martha Allen had come from 3 other marriages including one other Mormon polygamous marriage that didn't stick.

"Family tradition purports that "Emer walked twenty-five miles to hear more about the new 'golden Bible' from his brother" in Harmony, Pennsylvania."

Is said to have been the first person to receive a book of Mormon as it came off the press in 1830.

Baptized a Mormon by Newel Knight on February 10, 1831

Made a scribe for Joseph Smith jr. October 27, 1831

Received a personal revelation about proselytizing Mormonism in what is now known as Doctrine and Covenants 75.

Worked on the Kirtland Temple 1835 with his skills as carpenter and blacksmith and was described by Newel Knight as a " who proved to be a useful laborer in the vineyard"

Migrated to Missouri 1838

Worked on the Nauvoo Temple around 1841

Marched with the Nauvoo Legion

Migrated to Utah territory with Brigham Young, settled in Ogden then Provo, then Logan, Utah where he died.

Father of Denison Lott Harris, who claimed to have heard the “last charge” of Joseph Smith to apostles before his murder.

Links:

Joseph Smith Papers: <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/emer-harris>

Family Search:

Wikitree:

Find a Grave: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/30454729/emer-harris>

Caroline Young

About Caroline, also “Carolyn”

Born: May 17, 1816

Married: Martin Harris November 1, 1836, then John Catley Davis on January 16, 1860 in Salt Lake City, Utah + sealed on March 1, 1860

Children:

- Martin Harris jr. (1838-1913)
- *Caroline Harris (1839-1850)*
- Julia Lacothe Harris (1842-1869)
- John Wheeler Harris (1845-1916)
- *Sarah Harris (1849-1856)*
- Solomon Webster Harris (1854-1919)
- Ida May Harris (1856-1918)

- *Joseph Harris Davis (1860-1860)*

Died: January 17, 1888, age 71

Buried in Lewisville Cemetery, Lewisville, Idaho

Memorable Details:

Caroline was the niece of Brigham Young.

Caroline was not baptized Mormon until 9 years after her wedding to Martin Harris. (She was baptized January 7, 1846. Why she didn't wait for a warmer month to be baptized after waiting so long already will always be a mystery.)

Many Mormon missionaries were coming back to Kirtland for decades to try and reconvert the Harrises and convince them to travel West with the rest of the Saints. Overall, they were unsuccessful.

Caroline's children were all born in Kirtland, Ohio, except for Ida May who was born in Pottawatomie, Iowa. This suggests that Caroline and Martin parted ways at the end of 1855 and that Caroline began moving West to join her parents, siblings and other family members, but had to stop while she birthed Ida May and came back to full strength.

Caroline emigrated as a single mother to Utah in 1858 and 1859 with her children. They traveled in the Horton D. Haight/Frederick Kesler Freight Wagon Train. The youngest, Ida May was 2 years old.

Caroline married John Catley Davis on Jan 16, 1860 in Salt Lake City. On that same day, John Catley Davis' son Elijah married Caroline's daughter Julia. Carolie and John Davis were sealed 2 ½ months later. Caroline never divorced Martin Harris, but their separation seems to have been understood by both of them to be final. Interestingly, even after the marriage with John Catley Davis ended and Martin Harris was residing in Utah, she did not return to him.

Caroline and John Catley Davis had one child with the middle name Harris. Often, women would include their maiden name as a child's middle name. Caroline's inclusion of Harris rather than Young as a middle name for this child suggests that she had come to fully identify herself with that surname.

Martin Harris emigrated to Utah in 1860, but Caroline stayed with John Catley Davis until 1867, when Brigham Young and John Catley Davis had a fight about land rights. The dispute split the family and Caroline left John Catley, moving north to Idaho to live out the rest of her life near her son, Martin Harris jr. In Idaho, she was again known as Caroline Harris.

Caroline is buried in Idaho, surrounded by graves of her children.

Links:

Family Search: <https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/KWJY-S1X/caroline-young-1816-1888>

Wikitree: <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Young-10735>

Find a Grave: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/7644006/caroline-harris>

BYU Article "Martin Harris Will Be Here In Time" by Susan Easton Black and Larry C. Porter: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1470&context=jbms>

Lucy Harris & Isaiah Flanders Dike

About Lucy

Born: 1809 in Palmyra Wayne County, New York

Married: Flanders Dike or Dyke on May 18, 1828 in Palmyra New York

Children

- William Harris Dyke (1829-1913)
- Sarah Jane Dyke (1835-1889)

- Lucy Caroline Dyke (1836-1922)
- Charles M. Dyke (1838-1871)

Died: May 26, 1841 in Kirtland, Ohio

Buried in unknown place

Memorable Details:

Was married to a local reprobate named Flanders Dike (or Dyke). Martin may have stayed behind to arrange for this wedding before he left to scribe for Joseph in 1828, but he did not attend the wedding which took place in May 1828.

→ This wedding seems odd to me. Marrying off their daughter to a man known by the community as a scoundrel and a thief was a strange choice. Flanders Dike seems to have been one of the Palmyra treasure-diggers meaning that he may have been involved in the gold Bible Company that was meeting regularly in the 1820s. Arranging a marriage between his daughter and a colleague from this group could have been a strategic choice for Martin. Maybe he hoped that the marriage would create a familial obligation from Flanders to himself or maybe he hoped that it would simply divert Flanders from hounding him and Joseph and the plates. This could also explain why Flanders may have swiped the 116 pages as soon as Martin got back from translating.

Lucy Mack Smith suspected Flanders Dike as a suspect in the case of the missing 116 pages, since he was a known thief as well. Lucy Mack Smith thought that he and Lucy Harris may have conspired together. Lucy Harris denied the charge to her death and even Martin's suspicion quieted when he saw her swear before God at the threshold of death that she was innocent.

Younger Lucy Harris and her husband moved to Kirtland, Ohio, at some point. Maybe they were occupying some of Martin's abandoned land there? Younger Lucy died there in 1841. After that, many of her family members continued filtering West. Her husband Flanders remarried in about 1848, and he and two of their children died in Wisconsin.

Links:

Family Search: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/232607080/lucy-dyke>

Wikitree: <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Harris-58952>

Find a Grave: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/232607080/lucy-dyke>

Henry William Harris & Eleanor Austin

About Henry

Born: 1810

Married: Eleanor Austin in ?

Children: ?

Died: ?

Buried in ?

Memorable Details:

Gave a detailed affidavit regarding witnessing his father Martin Harris' involvement in the "gold Bible company" in 1833, alongside the testimonies of his aunt Nabbie and his mother. For a son and heir to speak out so openly and critically of his father at this time was unusual, indicating very high levels of aggravation in this relationship. As one of the older children, Henry would have witnessed the domestic violence against his mother and probably experienced domestic violence from his father as well.

Incongruencies in the Genealogy records:

On Lucy's grave stone, Henry William is listed as being born in 1810.

Mysteriously, the details on Family Search and Wikitree (a site owned by MyHeritage) about Henry William are skewed or missing. Family Search lists a "William Harris" being born in 1815 and then dying in 1819 at 4 years old. This is **clearly not the Harris son Henry William** who gave an affidavit for publication in 1833. Moreover, it would have been extremely strange to have a living son whose name was Henry William and then to birth another son and call him William. In the 19th century, when families repeated named among their children it was usually because the previous child of that same name had died.

To make things even more confusing, there was another Henry William Harris who converted to Mormonism in England and left descendents in the Brigham City area. As far as I have been able to tell, this family is not closely related to the Martin Harris family.

On wikitree, Henry William is not listed as a child to Martin and Lucy at all.

I don't know why these sites have not corrected this error, but Henry William Harris, the oldest son of Lucy and Martin Harris is well documented through his own statements as well as statements by his parents.

I did find one grave for a Henry William Harris living from 1821-1869 that is within a hundred miles of Palmyra, New York. However, this Henry William Harris is not listed in connection to any parents nor is he listed as being connected to an Eleanor Austin. A birth date in 1821 would have made Henry William 6 years old at the time that Martin Harris recalls sending him in the carriage to drive Lucy Mack Smith home, when she solicits a meeting with him and Joseph jr. That sounds too young to me, but perhaps there is some connection between these two William Henry Harrises?

Links:

Joseph Smith Papers: n/a

Family Search: n/a

Wikitree: n/a

Find a Grave: RELATED? <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/95782257/henry-william-harris>

George B Harris & Mary Jane Thompson

About George

Born: 1813?

Married: Mary A, and then Mary Jane Thompson on December 28, 1858 then divorced on February 21, 1862

Children

- Alma Martin Harris (1860-1940)
- Henry A. Harris (1862-?)

Died: October 1, 1864

Buried in Virginia

Memorable Details:

George's birth year is contradicted. On Lucy's gravestone, it lists him as being born in 1813, but his military record records in 1864 identified him as being age 46, which would put his birth year at 1819. I don't know which one is accurate, but I notice that if he was born in 1813, then his age at the time of marriage in 1858 was 45. That would be old for a first marriage in the 19th century. If he were born around 1820, then he would have been 38. In 1852, he was listed on a roster of citizens as being 32 years old, which would place his birth in 1820. Could he have been a twin with Elizabeth L. Harris (below)? It seems strange that Lucy Harris' gravestone would be wrong about something as central as the birth of her children, but the current gravestone for Lucy was reprinted by a modern family member and it is possible they mixed up the date that was printed for George B.

George B. may have had a previous marriage to "Mary A." There are two women listed as his spouse on Lucy Harris' gravestone. I could not find reference to Mary A. or their possible children anywhere else, however.

In 1860, George was living in Kirtland, Ohio, under the occupation laborer. He was living with his wife, Mary Jane and his father, Martin Harris.

George had his first son in 1860, then divorced Mary Jane Thompson early in the same year that his second son was born in 1862. This erratic behavior combined with the fact that his son was hospitalized for manic-depressive episodes and his father was described as having "mad fits of temper," suggest that George may also have suffered (and caused his family to suffer) from severe untreated mental illness.

George died fighting for the Union in the American Civil War in Virginia in 1864.

One of George's sons, Alma Martin Harris was born in Ohio about 1860. He migrated West to Idaho and married his father's half-sister Ida May Harris (the youngest child of Martin Harris and Caroline Young, see above). The fact that this child was named Alma and living in Ohio suggests that George B Harris may have been partially converted to Mormonism by 1860, but

the fact that George stayed in the East suggests that he didn't fully embrace the leadership of the Church. George's son Alma Harris was eventually hospitalized in Idaho for manic depressive fits in 1911. For a time and place that was so ill-equipped to treat or recognize mental illness, this indicates a very intense neurosis that was probably also violent, thus necessitating the hospitalization. This could have been an inherited disease from Alma's grandfather, Martin Harris, since his grandmother Lucy Harris described Martin as being prone to "mad fits of temper." Alma Harris continued living in the Asylum for at least 10 years. He eventually died in 1940. Ida May Crockett, however, died in 1918 (7 years after his hospitalization) and was buried next to her mother, Caroline Young Harris (see above).

Links:

Family Search: NOTE! The Family Search Profile for George B does not match the gravestones.

<https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/KWRK-KR5/george-b.-harris-1819-1864>

Wikitree: <https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Harris-58948>

Find a Grave: https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/232668547/george_b-harris

Elizabeth L. Harris & Amos Adams

About Elizabeth or "Betsey"

Born: Aug 22, 1820

Married: Amos H. Adams (1812-1895) on June 27, 1837

Children:

- Mary Amanda Adams (1842-1897)
- Catharine Lucy Adams (1844-1925)
- Adaline M. "Addie" Adams (1847-1917)
- *Phebe Adams (1854-1859)*

Died: December 29, 1854, age 34, possibly from complications in childbirth

Buried in the Old Baptist Cemetery in Wayland, Iowa

Memorable Details:

Much of Betsey's family filtered west, many of them dying in Nebraska.

Apparently, Betsey converted to the Baptist faith or maybe her husband was Baptist, since they are both buried in the Baptist Cemetery.

Links:

Family Search: <https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/K2Q9-2YV/elizabeth-l.-harris-1820-1855>

Wikitree: n/a

Find a Grave: https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/167734663/elizabeth_l-adams