

HARSIN HAPPENN’N’S FAMILY NEWSLETTER
DESCENDANTS OF GARRET HARSIN BAPT. 6/15/1753

Garret writes a Letter in 1776

The “Garish Harsin letter” Refers to a historical correspondence from February 13th, 1776, written by Garish (Garret) Harsin In New York City to his friend William Radcliffe in Rhinebeck, New York. The letter captures the intense panic and confusion of civilian life in early 1776 as the city braced for its the rival of British regular troops.

Key details from the letter

- The quote: Harsin famously wrote, “It is impossible to describe the confusion the place was in on account of the regulars being come.” [Project Gutenberg]
- The Panic: He described local residents fleeing the city in massive waves “as if it were the last day” after exaggerated rumors spread of an approaching British fleet. [Project Gutenberg]
- Historical Significance: Preserved in historical compilations like *New York City during the American Revolution*, the letter serves as a primary-source snapshot of the civilian panic that preceded the military campaigns of late 1776. [University of Glasgow]

Historical Content & Details

The author: Garnish (Garret G.) Harsin was a New York artisan, soldier, and sailor who wrote this to his cousin, Captain William Radclift, a militia officer residing in Rhinebeck, New York

New York, February 13th, 1776.

Dear cousin;

I take this opportunity to let you know that I am in good health, hoping these few lines may find you and your family in the same. I must inform you of the regularities we have had in the city since last Tuesday. General Lee came into town with about 1200 men, and the same day the Asia-man-of-war came up the river and lay right against the town, and the Mercury and two transports came up also. The town was in great confusion, and the people began to pack up their goods and move out of town and are moving yet. There is not one half of the inhabitants left in the town. They are moving into the country, some to Long Island, some to the Jerseys, and some up the North River.

It is thought that there will be a bombardment in a few days, but we hope for the best. The Continental troops are building fortifications in and about the city, at the Liberty Pole, at the hospital, and on the hills back of the town. We are also building a breastwork at the air-furnace and at the water-works.

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I have no more news to write at present
but remain your loving cousin till death.

Garish Harsin

To Captain William Radclift
At Rhyn Beck

The source of this letter is an ebook
named *The Project of Gutenberg eBook of
the Campaign of 1776 around New York
and Brooklyn, by Henry P/ Johnston*

Title: The Campaign of 1776 around New
York and Brooklyn

Author: Henry P. Jonston

Release Date: July 3, 2007 [EBOOK
#21990]

Language: English

*** Start of This Project Gutenberg Book
Campaign of 1776***

Produced by Suzanne Snell, Linda
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Transcriber's Note: In quoted passages
and in the documents in Part II of this e-
book, hyphenation, and abbreviations
have been retained as they appear in the
original. Printer errors have been
corrected, but archaic spellings (e.g.
"reconoissance" for "reconnaissance")
have been retained.

AI search performed by Joel Harsin on Aug
11, 2026

This article transcribed by Ray Harsin on
Aug 12, 2026

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Update on Wright's Cemetery Cleanup

We visited Wright's Cemetery on Wright's
Ridge Rd in Carroll County, KY on the
morning of the reunion. We found it
inaccessible with a private fence
surrounding it and a posted "No
Trespassing" sign attached. Even if we
were to gain access, the cemetery is grown
up in briars, bushes and trees. It was in
this shape earlier in the 1970s and 1980s.
Then someone cleaned it up. When I
visited the cemetery last 2019, it was
clean. Now it is grown over again. Terry
Peters has come forward with interest in
getting the cemetery clean once again and
is inviting anyone wishing to help.

I have done some research and found the
owner of the property the cemetery is
located on is a sister-in-law to the late
Dennis Harsin that resided on the same
Wright's Ridge. She is part of the Taylor
family that the Harsin family have married
several times over the years.

Date and time are set! We will gather on
Nov 7th at 9AM, local time (EST), at the
cemetery. I plan to work all day on
Saturday with breaks and if needed, most

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of the day on the following day, Sunday the 8th.

Also, I am still looking for volunteers that would like to help with the cleanup.

So far, I have the following in the cleanup group:

Ray Harsin

Ron Harsin

Terry Peters

Pat Harsin Miller

Join Our Facebook Group!!

If you are not yet a member of our private Facebook group for our family, search for the group name, **Garret and Elizabeth Harsin Descendants**, and request to become a member. Or, contact me and I will invite you!

Website Being Rebuilt!

<http://www.harsin.net>

At one time in the past, I had developed a website to share with everyone a collection of what I have researched over the years. I took it down several years ago. I am beginreturn ning to rebuild it. Come llo and save it as a favorite web site in your browser to return often! The website address is at www.harsin.net

Headstone Restoration Project Update



1This photo is what the gravesite looked prior to the stones weathering and being broken.

Garret and Elizabeth (Doughty) Harsin's headstones have broken off and are impossible to read. Pat Harsin Miller and I are chairpersons for restoring this monument.

I have contacted the DAR chapter in nearby Shelbyville, IN, to request a DAR symbol that this grave is one of an American Revolutionary War Veteran. My contact is taking this request to their September meeting and will get back with me on the details of the process. Until this happens, I will not yet have a quote on the final cost of the restoration. Watch future newsletters for updates.

We took a collection at the reunion toward the cost of demolition of the old concrete slab and marker, the new headstone and the placement of a new slab with the headstone resting on it. We raised \$900 at the reunion!! With monies I have

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previously collected, \$1,500, this brings the total thus far collected at \$2,400. Thanks to each one of you who has donated toward this much needed project!!

When the new stone is placed, we will plan a memorial date. The local chapter of the DAR will most likely do a military style memorial as well that day.

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Harsin Happen'n'ngs
Site under construction
Come back soon!

On the way home from the reunion, I drove by the cemetery. Anytime I am in the area, I usually stop. I place two USA flags on the grave each time. This time, when I arrived at about noontime, there were already two flags and a wreath of flowers on a small stand. It was nice that someone came to leave tokens of love and appreciation for the two of them, Garret and Elizabeth Harsin. I would be interested in knowing



2 Where Garret's headstone broke off at the slab.

who did this. If you are the one or know who is if you did not leave them, please let me know. 😊

This photo was taken July 25th, 2026.



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It is not too late to help with donations toward this project! Here are a few ways you can donate:

1. By credit card at a Go Fund Me page that has been created. The web address <https://gofund.me/a81bf0084> is
2. Send a check or money order to
 - a. Ray Harsin
205 Winchester Pl
Fairview Heights, IL 62208
 - b. Pat Miller
105 DRIVE 59
Tupelo, MS 38801
3. Send by Venmo to me at @Ray-Harsin

The Harsin family from 1666 to 1753

According to the U.S. and Canada, Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1500s-1900s and the Biographical pieces on Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish immigrants who settled in New York book and ship rosters, the Harsin family came to New Amsterdam (modern day New York City) in 1666. Two men came from Harsin, Belgium, on a ship that sailed from the port at Amsterdam, Holland. These two men were Rev. Wanardus Hassing and son, Bernardus Hassing. You may have just noticed the last names are not spelled as Harsin. We must imagine the rosters that were hand written by immigrants from various regions

of western Europe and Northern Europe were listening to many folks with different dialects of language and writing down in their own language what they heard. Many immigrants did not have literacy skills, as well. Most records of our Harsin family in these beginning years are found in the records of the reformed Dutch Church of New York City and the Reformed Dutch Church of Brooklyn. These records were also hand written and the same difficulty transcribing the written text into typed text caused various spellings of the last name between the years of 1666 and 1753. For example, here are the names found for the same gentleman, Bernardus, found in these church records:

Bornzaedus Haffing

[Bernhardus Lassing]

[Bornzaedus Hassing]

[Bernardus Hassing]

[Bernhardus Lassing]

[Bernardus Hassing]

[Bornzaedus Hassing]

[Bernardus Hassing]

Reference: U.S., Dutch Reformed Church Records in Selected States, 1639-1989.

The ship roster at the port of New Amsterdam shows only Bernardus coming off the ship. We may assume that Rev

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Warnardus Hassing died, as many did, along the way to the new America and was possibly buried at sea.

Thus, we begin our heritage in America with Bernardus.

From the NETHERLANDS GENEALGL ONLINE TREES INDEX 1000-2015, Bernardus was born in 6136 in Bereuklen, Utecht, Netherlands and died 7/29/1701. His father's name was recorded as Wanard Hassing.

I am sure you recall from US History classes you had in elementary and secondary school, that the Dutch were among the first to arrive in what is now Long Island, Brooklyn and New York City. Back when they began arriving in the 1620s, the area became known as New Amsterdam. It remained New Amsterdam until The English came and overtook the government and called the city New York. Our family were among the first Dutch to arrive. However, they actually came from a village named Harsin that was located east and south of Amsterdam, in what is the Luxembourg province of Belgium. This area once belonged to the Netherlands until wars pushed boundaries of the Netherlands northward and the creation of the country of Belgium took place. This area is sometimes referred to as the "Low Dutch" area of western Europe. The village burned to the ground in 1666 and many of the people, including our Bernardus,

traveled to Amsterdam to travel on a ship to the new America.

Story continued in the next newsletter!

Lee (Leila) Svendsen Celebration of Life

Lee passed away this past June 17th. She was the last great great grandchild of Garret (bap 1753) and Elizabeth Harsin living. There will be a life celebration for Lee. I have planned to attend and invite you as well!



RSVP Geo 206.472.9268

We hope you can come!

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Photos Wanted of Reunions

My photographer I had secured to take photos through the day and of the attendees could not attend the reunion at Carrollton. I am searching for any photos attendees took at this reunion. I will post them on the private Facebook page for our group, Garret and Elizabeth Harsin Descendants.

Also, I am searching for any photos taken at the Harsin Family Reunion for Gilbert Edward Harsin descendants in Iowa held on July 18th, this year.

Photos can be posted on the facebook group or sent to me by email at rayharsin@gmail.com.

Next Year's Harsin Family History Talks and Reunions to be Scheduled

I am planning to schedule events at the following locations for next year. Please stay tuned in to this newsletter and our private Facebook group for more information as they get scheduled.

Indianapolis, IN	Seattle, WA
Tupelo, Mississippi	TBD, Nebraska
Enterprise, Oregon	TBD, California
Pomona, Missouri	TBD, Arizona

Flash Drives Available Soon!

I am putting final touches on a flash drive with all my data I have collected over time. Watch future newsletters to see how you can get yours!

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Email: **rayharsin@gmail.com**

Facebook and Messenger: **Ray E Harsin**



Family is important for many reasons! I feel that it is socially needed to keep a family together. Do more events with your loved ones!