

Jacob Harsen

by

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Jacob Harsen was born in February 1738. He was the son of Albany residents [Bernardus](#) and [Catharina Pruyn](#) Harsen.

In 1759, he was named constable in the second ward. The next year, he served as firemaster. As a young man, he was identified as a gunsmith who kept a home and shop at Niagara where he was a client of Sir [William Johnson](#). He was known on the frontier as a smith and trader whose principal clients were Indians.

In June 1764, he married Albany native [Alida Groesbeck](#) at the Albany [Dutch church](#). Two years later, he took charge of a pew in the church that formerly had belonged to his father. The marriage produced at least seven children. But only the first born was baptized in Albany.

In 1767, he was listed on the Albany assessment roll under his mother's second ward home. Sometime afterward, he moved his large family to the far West where he became a silversmith and one of the pioneer settlers of what became Michigan. By 1778, he had [settled](#) on an island in the St. Clair River in Michigan. At different times, he also lived in Detroit.

Jacob Harsen [died](#) on Harsen's Island in the spring of 1802. He was one of a number of early Albany tradesmen who settled near Lake Michigan before the American Revolution. His children became prominent residents of the region.



notes



Sources: The life of Jacob Harsen is CAP [biography number](#) 8350. This [sketch](#) is derived chiefly from [family](#) and [community-based resources](#). Material on this wide ranging character can be found on the [Internet](#).

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