

# George Harlan, Warren County, Ohio's First Sheriff

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By an act of the Ohio General Assembly, Warren County was created on March 24, 1803 from Hamilton County nearly three weeks after Ohio became a state. The act took effect on May 1, 1803. It was one of the first twelve counties formed in the state and was named for General Joseph Warren, who was a physician and Major General during the American Revolution.

At the first county election on June 7, 1803, George Harlan was elected the first Sheriff of Warren County. He served from 1803 until 1805, when Ephraim Hathaway replaced him. His election reflects both his standing in the community and the trust placed in him by fellow settlers.

In 1803, the county Sheriff was responsible for law enforcement, preservation of the peace, execution of court orders and legal process, court security and attendance, custody and transport of prisoners, tax collection, election oversight, and various

public administration duties.

Harlan was born September 1, 1767, in Chatham County, North Carolina, the son of George Hope Harlan (1737–1821) and Margery Baker Harlan (1743–1821). As a young man, he relocated to Fayette County, Kentucky, where he married Esther Eulass on November 10, 1796.

Later in 1796, George and Esther crossed into the Northwest Territory, first stopping in Columbia, in what was then Hamilton County, and then moving further into the territory that would become Warren County.

Not only was Harlan the first Sheriff, but he was also one of the earlier county commissioners, a Justice of the Peace, an Associate Judge of the Common Pleas Court, and a member of the General Assembly of Ohio from 1807-1809. It is highly unlikely that Harlan had any military service during the Revolutionary War, as he was a strict Quaker and pacifist.

George Harlan died December 21, 1846, in Warren County. He is buried in the Friends Burial Ground in Waynesville, Ohio, alongside his wife, Esther, who died in 1858.