

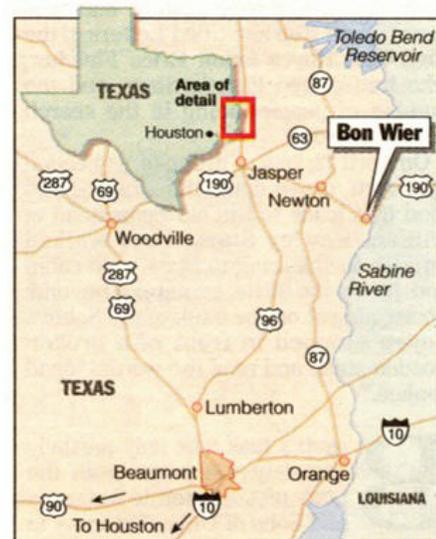
**The Newton County, Texas Stark Families
Book 1: Our Early Connecticut Ancestors**



Newton County, Texas Courthouse



William Hawley Stark & Martha C. Whitman



Bon Wier, Newton County, Texas

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About The Authors



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Descendant of Prudence Jane Stark who married William "Bill" Herrin. They had a son named Edward Herrin who married Georgian Zachary. Their daughter was Maude Mae Herrin who married Oakdale, Louisiana Pentecostal Pastor, Rev. Robert L. LaFleur. Their son was Clovice LaFleur, Sr. who married Eva May Russell who were the parents of Clovis LaFleur.



Pauline Stark Moore

Descendant of Asa Lafitte Stark who married Matilda Donaho. They had a son named John Lawhorn Stark who married Mary Martha Zachary. Their son was Oliver Eugene Stark who married Cynthia Melinda Marlow. Their son was Clarence M. Stark who married Bertha Mae Hunter who were the parents of Pauline Eugenia (Stark) Moore.

Acknowledgements

There are many researchers, past and present, who contributed to the family histories compiled for this publication. Contributors to the Colonial Years in Connecticut were Gwen Boyer Bjorkman, Donn Neal, Neal Lowe, and Mary Stark. Sharon Reck, Gwen Boyer Bjorkman, and Donn Neal supplied much of the information which proved Asahel Stark of Indiana was the son of Christopher Stark (Junior); born in Groton, New London County, Connecticut in 1728.

And one must give credit to past Stark Family researchers like Charles R. Stark and Helen Stark. Their early research into the Aaron Stark Families of America were the starting point for most of our research and provided us with data and material which enhanced our understanding of the times and places where our ancestors lived. Their early research is truly remarkable when one considers the complexity of compiling their family stories 100 years ago.

Without the research of Neal Lowe, we would not know today that Daniel R. Stark — *resident of West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana who died in 1820* — was the father of our four Newton County, Texas siblings and further proved Daniel was the son of the above Asahel Stark.

Contributors to our research in Newton County were the Newton County Historical Commission, Stark Family Association of Texas, Mary Stark, Bonnie Smith, Gladys Zachary Skinner, Floyd Boyett, Ruby Burkett, Lena Hughes, and many others. Finally, we are sure we have overlooked other major contributors to this publication for which we sincerely apologize.

Clovis L. La Fleur & Pauline Stark Moore

November 4, 2003



Charles Rathbone Stark



Asahel "Asa" Lafitte Stark

Dedication

This publication is dedicated to the memory of Charles Rathbone Stark, whose 1927 publication entitled "The Aaron Stark Family, Seven Generations", was the beginning of this journey into the past. His compilation of the descendants of Aaron Stark — *an ambitious undertaking for 1927* — was instrumental to our genealogical research, and contributed to much of the material to be presented about our early ancestors who lived in Connecticut.

While there were several inaccurate placements of the ancestors of our four Newton County siblings, his publications contributed to the Colonial Years material presented in our book. This book is dedicated to him and all of the past and present Stark Family researchers who contributed their time, research material, and family histories.

May future Stark family researchers improve on these pages — *already obsolete as they are being written* — producing research of their own which will surpass these humble efforts to preserve the history of our Newton County, Texas descendants.

Stark Family Association of Texas

These pages are also dedicated to past & present members of this association who contributed much of the genealogical data and family stories presented. Many have passed on while many are still living. By providing the information on these pages, the Association hopes to preserve and make available to the public, all of the many hours of research these dedicated members have contributed to our knowledge of this branch of Aaron Stark's descendants.

In 1981, Mary Burns Stark and Pauline Stark Moore were on a field trip to a cemetery in Franklin, Texas looking for information on their relatives. While there, they met a couple of women visiting the cemetery. During their conversation, Mary and Pauline enquired about the Stark family members they were researching. These women told them there was a one armed man who lived near Hearne, Texas named Otis E. Stark. When Mary and Pauline located him, they found the descendants of David Dewitte Stark (son of Asa Stark and his 2nd wife, Hester Ann Ford). Mary and Pauline were invited to join them in their next family reunion in Hearne. As a result of this reunion held In 1982, the "*Asa Lafitte Stark Family Association of Texas*" was founded and for several years thereafter, the reunions were held at the Fireman's Hall in Hearne. Many reunions were held until 1999. That year, the newsletter was published; but a reunion was not held due to illness and old age of the members.

At about the same time of the cemetery encounter, Pauline and Mary met descendants of William Bennett Stark and met for the first time, Inez Stark Wilson, a resident of Waco, Texas. Inez became the source of considerable information about Asa Lafitte and contributed this photograph of Asa to the Association. Inez died in 1992, just four months short of her 100th birthday.

The organization's original members were descendants of Asa Lafitte Stark. Organized similar to the National Stark Family Association founded in August of 1895 by the descendants of Aaron Stark of Groton, Connecticut, they met for social exchange and discussion of the family history and stories. At a later meeting, the name was

changed to "*The Stark Family Association of Texas*" to distinguish it from the National Stark Family Association.

Asa's brother, William Hawley Stark, who married Elizabeth Zachary, was the first to arrive in Jasper County, Texas around 1836, (In 1846, the area where they settled became part of Newton County after Jasper County was divided.) followed soon after by Asa and then later by his sisters Prudence Jane Stark who married William Herrin and Sarah Mariah Stark who married John Taylor Lewis. In the year 2000, descendants off Asa Lafitte Stark's siblings joined with the Asa Stark Descendants to form the present day Association, all descendants of Daniel R. Stark and Nancy Hawley, arriving in Louisiana about 1816 from New York State.

Research by the Asa Stark descendants discovered Daniel R. Stark was the son of Asahel Stark of New York, who was the son of Christopher Stark, Jr. who was the son of Christopher Stark, Sr. and Joanna Walworth, who was the son of William Stark and Elizabeth, who was the son of Aaron Stark [1608-1685] and Sarah, all of Groton Township, Connecticut. This is but one branch of a large number of descendant branches of Aaron Stark.

Preface

These publications are a compilation of the ancestors and descendants of four siblings with the surname Stark who moved to Texas in 1836 and settled in an area that became Newton County when Texas was admitted to the Union on the 28th day of December 1845. Their names were William Hawley Stark, Sarah Mariah Stark, Prudence Jane Stark, and Asahel “Asa” Lafitte Stark. They were seventh generation descendants of Aaron Stark [1608-1685] of New London County, Connecticut who migrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony from England between 1630 and 1637, and was among the first who settled along the Connecticut River near Hartford, Connecticut in 1636. In 1669, he settled in an area which became known as Groton Township, New London County, Connecticut in 1705.

Two other families with the surname Stark, neither related to Aaron Stark, arrived in America around 1720 to 1725. Aaron was not related to the family of General John Stark of Revolutionary War fame for this family did not arrive in America until around 1720 and settled in New Hampshire. Around 1725, James Stark arrived in Stafford County, Virginia, most likely from Scotland. As the descendants of these three families with the surname Stark began to move west, they settled in the same areas which caused considerable confusion for Stark family researchers. However, it is important for future researchers to know these three American Stark families will have origins in either Connecticut, New Hampshire, or Virginia.

Those who have participated in the Stark Family Y-DNA Project have been found to be descendants of many genetically unrelated families having the surname Stark or one of its derivatives. However, the majority of the participants are descendants of families that settled in New Hampshire, Virginia, and Connecticut. Contrary to the beliefs of some earlier researchers, the Stark Family Y-DNA Project has confirmed the descendants of Aaron Stark are not related to the descendants of the New Hampshire and Virginia families. A known male descendant of Asahel “Asa” Lafitte Stark (Project Member #78078) — *having the surname Stark* — has been genetically confirmed to share Aaron Stark [1608-1685] as a common ancestor with other known descendants of Aaron in the project genetically tested.

The four siblings mentioned were not related to John Thomas Stark, born December 19, 1821 in Preble County, Ohio and who died September 23, 1893 in Orange County, Texas. He was Captain of the Dreadnaughts, Company H, 13th Texas Cavalry and became well known in Newton County as a result of his service in the Civil War. John Thomas moved from Ohio to Missouri with his parents and the family eventually arrived in Texas around 1840. They first settled in San Augustine County, Texas and then moved to Burkeville, Newton County, Texas in 1853, many years after the siblings arrived. Careful research by descendants of John Thomas Stark has proven he was descended from the above James Stark of Virginia.

The great-grandfather of the Newton County Siblings was Christopher Stark, Jr., born September 27, 1728 in New London County, Connecticut, the son of Christopher Stark, Sr. and Joanna Walworth. Christopher, Jr. died between 1781 and 1785 in Albany County, New York. Christopher Stark, Jr. had a son, Asahel Stark, who was the father of Daniel R. Stark. Daniel was the father of the above Newton County, siblings.

Daniel R. Stark and Nancy Hawley moved to Louisiana from Genesee County, New York in 1816 and were married before 1809 in New York. She was the daughter of Samuel Hawley, a veteran of the Revolutionary War from Massachusetts and a descendant of one of the early Hawley families who lived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Their oldest son, William Hawley Stark married first, Elizabeth Zachary, sister of Bennett Hiram Zachary, and second, Martha C. Whitman, daughter of Adam Whitman and Dorothy Richard. Their youngest son, Asahel “Asa” Lafitte Stark, married first, Matilda Donaho, daughter of Daniel Donaho and Nancy Larimore, and married second, Hester Ann “Hettie” Ford, daughter of David Ford and Courtney Caraway.

Their daughter, Sarah Mariah Stark, married John Taylor Lewis, who was the son of Samuel S. Lewis. They were living in Texas as early as 1835 where they were listed in the census that year in the Mexican District of Bevil. They had a daughter named Nancy Jane Lewis who married James Herrin, descendants of this Herrin family being well known in Newton County.

Daniel R. Stark's youngest daughter, Prudence Jane Stark, was the second wife of William “Bill” Herrin and the above James Herrin was William's son from a previous marriage. Prudence had a son named Edward Herrin who married Georgian Zachary, the granddaughter of Bennett Hiram Zachary. Many members of this Herrin family lived into the Devils Pocket region of Newton County until about 1908, and were living in Leesville, Louisiana by 1909. Other notable families to be discussed in these books will be Dougharty, Donoho, Zachary, Inman, Davis/Moore, Whitman and many others who married descendants of the four siblings.

The Authors make no claims all that will appear in this publication is accurate. We have strived to provide reliable sources when available and in many instances have had to rely on information and family histories supplied by others, which may or may not be correct. We hope the reader will recognize when we have speculated where the evidence was insufficient or circumstantial but could lead to the logical conclusions presented.

Clovis LaFleur
&
Pauline Stark Moore
November 4, 2003

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Forward

The Aaron Stark Family

Book 1 is a history of our first three generations who lived in Colonial Connecticut. It begins with the arrival of Aaron Stark [1608-1685] in New England from either England or Scotland between 1630 and 1637. He married a woman named Sarah and they had children named: Aaron Stark (Junior); John Stark; William Stark (Senior); Sarah Stark and Elizabeth Stark. The Stark surname was continued through their sons Aaron Stark (Junior) and William Stark (Senior). John Stark, during his brief life, had two daughters; Sarah Stark married Captain Samuel Fish; and Elizabeth Stark married first, Micah Lambert, and second, Josiah Haines.

Some of the descendants of Aaron Stark (Junior) moved north from New London County, Connecticut, to New Hampshire and Northeastern New York. (These branches would become inextricably confused with the descendants of General John Stark; not related to Aaron and his descendants.) Others moved into New York just before the Revolution, while others moved to New Jersey about 1733 with a group known as the Rogerenes; followers of the religious sect founded by John Rogers of New London County, Connecticut.

Descendants of William Stark (Senior) would also be on the move. His son William Stark (Junior) had a son named Jonathan, who moved to New Jersey with the Rogerenes – the progenitor of a branch which began in New Jersey; removed to Loudoun County, Virginia; then migrated to a region that became Washington County, Pennsylvania where they served in the Revolutionary War. They then moved to Kentucky after the War and many of their descendants had moved to Indiana by 1820. (This branch was often confused with descendants of James Stark of Stafford County, Virginia; not related to Aaron and his descendants.)

Christopher Stark (Senior) – *another son of William Stark (Senior)* – removed to Dutchess County, New York from Connecticut around 1758. About 1772, Christopher (Senior) and several of his sons moved to the Wyoming Valley (located near present day Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania). Two of his sons (Aaron Stark [1734-1778] and Daniel Stark) were killed by Indians in the Wyoming Valley Massacre of July 3, 1778. Christopher Stark (Junior), son of Christopher Stark (Senior), lived in Dutchess County; later moving to Albany County, New York where he participated in the Revolutionary War with his sons Asahel, William, and John. Asahel later moved to Washington County, Indiana where he died in 1821. His son, Daniel R. Stark, the father of the Newton County, Texas Stark Siblings, moved from Genesee County, New York about 1816, settling in West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana along the banks of the Mississippi River.

Other Families With The Surname Stark

There were other families with the surname Stark who lived in the same regions as Aaron's descendants and have been the cause of considerable confusion for Stark family genealogist. James Stark lived in Stafford County, Virginia, arriving from England or Scotland about 1723. Many of his descendants moved to Kentucky and then to Indiana. Archibald Stark became a resident of New Hampshire about 1724; one of his sons was General John Stark of Revolutionary War fame. Archibald's descendants lived in New Hampshire, Vermont, New York and other regions where the descendants of Aaron lived.

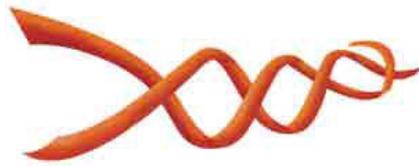
Genealogical research has been inconclusive regarding Aaron Stark's ancestral connection to these Scottish families believed to be descendants of John Muirhead (Alias John Stark). Recent DNA test of living male descendants of Archibald and James Stark with the surname Stark suggest they are related to each other; but results of the DNA test of Aaron Stark's male descendants, and in particular one descendant of Asahel

"Asa" Lafitte Stark, suggests they could not share a common ancestor within thousands of years.

The Stark Family Association Year Books presented the Stark Family Coat of Arms in their annual yearbooks – which cannot be claimed by the descendants of Aaron Stark. According to Alexander Nusbet Gent's 1722 publication entitled, "*A System of Heraldry Speculative and Practical with the True Art of Blazon*," this was the Coat of Arms carried by John Stark of Killermont; a descendant of the before mentioned John Muirhead. Mary Kathryn Harris and Mary Iva Jean Jorgenson compiled several Volumes entitled, "*James Stark of Stafford County, Virginia And His Descendants*." (Privately Printed in Fort Worth, Texas; Copyright 1985.) In Volume 1, on page 1, they had these comments on the origins of this Coat of Arms: "*The family of James Stark of Stafford County, Virginia originated in the vicinity of Glasgow in the Scottish Lowlands. The Highlands and the Lowlands are roughly separated by a line from Glasgow to Aberdeen. The history of this Stark family begins with a legendary event which took place in the late 1400's. The story of this event was first written down in the late 1600's by Sir George MacKenzie.*"

While interesting, the Y-DNA of Asa Lafitte Stark and other known descendants of Aaron Stark has proven we are not descendants of John Muirhead of Scotland, and in fact, most likely descend from one of the Early Germanic Tribes that settled in southern England between 400 AD and 800 AD. Let us now turn to the DNA evaluations that tell us more about our ancient ancestry and suggests Aaron's English and German roots.





Chapter 1 Aaron Stark's (1608-1685) Ancestral Roots; A Theory

Introduction

There has been much speculation about the ancestral roots of Aaron Stark which have not been satisfactorily answered. Part of the problem has been the belief of earlier researchers that Aaron Stark was a descendant of John Muirhead (alias John Stark). The account of John Muirhead saving King James IV from the charge of a bull and given the name Stark as a result of his bravery, was first presented in the 1903 Stark Family Association Yearbook. On page 15 of the Yearbook, there is a poem entitled, "Story of the Origin of The Stark Name." The events depicted in this poem came from an account by Sir George Mackenzie [1636-1691]; which tells the story of how John Muirhead was given the name John Stark by a grateful King James IV of Scotland. On Page 21 of the 1903 Yearbook, there can be no doubt the membership believed they were all descendants of John Muirhead. In the preamble to the Association's Constitution, they stated: "*In order to form a more perfect union and to become more closely identified with each other, We, the descendants of one Muirhead, a Scotchman, to whom King James the Fourth gave the name of Stark (meaning strong) for his great bravery, do hereby adopt the following as the constitution of the Stark Family.*"

The Stark Family Y-DNA Project has found genetic evidence the descendants of Aaron and those most likely to be descendants of John Muirhead, could not have shared a common ancestor within 3,100 to 3,900 years. Because Aaron Stark clearly was not a descendant of John Muirhead (alias John Stark), then, perhaps, after 100 years of looking in Scotland, the time has come to look elsewhere for Aaron's ancestral roots — *the beginnings of this search based on the following evidence to be presented.*

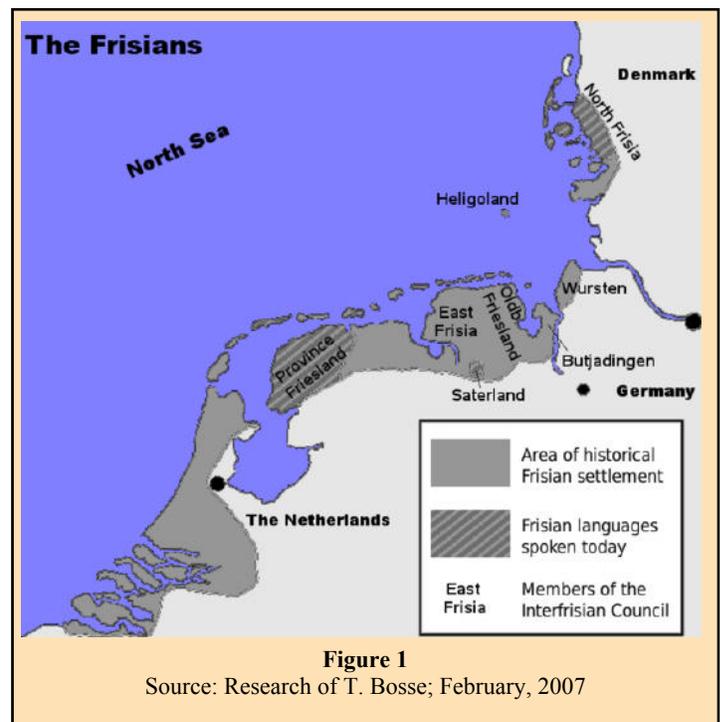
The Old Germanic Tribes

Sometime between the calendar years 1900 BC to 1100 BC, a son was born to a couple, the father transmitting his Y Chromosome to his son. Normally, the Y-Chromosome would be passed without change, the son's Y Chromosome being identical to that of his father; but when this transmission was complete, a rare mutation occurred, which would be passed from father to son for a 100 generations to the present. The Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) mutation would become known as the U106 mutation defining the Haplogroup R1b1a2a1a1a (shorthand notation is R-U106).[1][2] This progenitor of R-U106 could have lived among the early Germanic tribes of 1750 BC, one of which was the Frisian Tribe. From his sons, many independent direct male branches evolved, descendants of these branches living today with many different surnames and having the U106 mutation.

By 1400 BC, these early Germanic tribes expanded their territory into southern Europe and by 800 BC, the original Germanic groups that expanded into southern Europe had split into Western, Eastern, and Northern Germanic groups. By about 700 BC, the expansion of the Western Germanics had reached the coastal areas of northwest Germany. (See Figure 1)

The Western Germanic tribes had divided along religious lines into three tribal groups known as the Inguaeones, Istuaeones and Irminones — *the Frisians best religiously identified with the Inguaeones tribal group.* Between 700 BC and 600 BC the forefathers of the Frisians colonized the coastal clay-districts of the current Dutch provinces of Friesland and Groningen.

Between 400 BC and 200 BC, significant cultural and climate changes took place after the colonization of the clay-district. As Sea levels began to rise causing periodic flooding of their homesteads, the Frisians built earth-mounds known as terps to counter these periods of flooding. The terp mounts first appeared about 500 BC; and reappeared again during a second period of flooding that occurred from 200 BC to 50 BC.



1) Geneticists seem to be in agreement the U106 mutation first appeared 3,100 to 3,900 years ago. Subtracting these years from the calendar Year 2000 results in the Calendar Years presented.

2) Haplogroups are major branches on the Y chromosome tree. ["Haplo" comes from the Greek word for "single".] All Haplogroups ultimately descend from a single Y chromosome that was carried by a male that lived in the distant past. As this Y chromosome was passed from father to son, mutations accumulated along different lineages giving rise to a tree-like branching pattern. Geneticists can reconstruct this Y chromosome tree by discovering and typing mutations in different male human populations.

In 200 BC, a distinctly Frisian culture can be found between the River Ems (Germany) and Wijk-bij-Duurstede (Netherlands). Julius Caesar conquered Celtic Galicia about 54 BC (these are the current countries of France and Belgium), moving the Roman border to the Rhine River. The Frisians were located north of the river. In 12 BC, the Frisians negotiated a truce by which the Frisians had to regularly pay taxes in the form of cowhides. After additional periods of turmoil and boundary disputes from 28 AD to 47 AD, an agreement was made stipulating a mutual understanding that the Rhine was to be the border that both parties had to respect. As part of the agreement, Friesland would fall within the Roman sphere of influence; but it would no longer be occupied by Roman soldiers.

In 250 AD, the sea levels again rose accompanied by severe storms, causing widespread flooding so dramatic that almost all of the Frisians abandoned the coastal Clay Districts for the next 150 years. By 300 AD, other smaller West Germanics had formed larger tribal groups known as: Allemandes, Saxons, Thuringers, and Bayerns. A Chaukian tribe disappeared altogether; having been assimilated into the Frisian and Saxon tribes. With the collapse of the Roman Empire about 350 AD, the Germanic migration period began all over Western Europe, new tribes being formed as the newly regions were conquered.

Around 450 AD, the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and a Frisian fraction crossed the North Sea and established what became the Anglo-Saxon empire in present day England. Migration to Britain from what is now northern Germany, the northern part of the Netherlands and southern Scandinavia was well underway by 400 AD and continued into 600 AD. While the intruding population had traditionally been divided into Angles, Saxons, and Jutes — *many historians believe their composition may have also included Frisians and Franks*. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle contains text that may be the first recorded indications of the movement of these Germanic tribes to Britain. Their tribal distributions in England by 600 AD are illustrated in Figure 2. Considering the tribes were Saxon and Frisian, this was most likely when males with the U106 mutation arrived in England.

Various Saxon Kingdoms were created from 800 AD to 900 AD, the most important being the Kingdom of Wessex; from which emerged the first King to achieve direct rule over what was to become "England." These old Saxon Kingdoms were located south and east of present day London. For a time, there was considerable turmoil as a result of each Kingdom attempting to gain control. This all came to a halt in 1066 when the Norman Conquest established Anglo-Norman Rule over England.

English Kingdoms and Scottish Kingdoms ruled their respective regions separately; the Germanic Tribes continuing to live in the southern regions of England they had originally conquered.

Rannulf Stark is considered the first recorded of the Stark surname; entered in the Pipe Rolls of Suffolk, in 1222 during the reign of King Henry III. In 1314, William Stark appeared in the Fine Court Rolls of Essex as a witness. These were early surnames records of the nobility that began in about 1200. In England, commoners were required to have surnames throughout England soon after the 1377 Poll Tax was introduced and were most likely fully established by 1400. Because Aaron Stark was not of the nobility, Aaron's male ancestor most likely took the surname "Stark" during this transition period.

Two present day descendants of Aaron Stark have been confirmed to be members of Haplogroup R-U106 — *this result predicting all of the descendants of Aaron genetically tested will be members of the same Haplogroup*. Aaron would have also been positive for the U106 mutation, as is our descendant of Asa Lafitte Stark genetically proven to be a descendant of Aaron. In the next section, a combination of geographical information and genetic comparisons to others with the U106 mutation will be analyzed in an attempt to determine Aaron's ancestral roots.



Figure 2
 Peoples of Britain circa 600
 (#s are British Isles R-U106 matches to ASMH)
 Source: People locations from "The Historical Atlas,"
 by William R. Shepherd, 1926 edition

Historical Background Suggesting Aaron's Old World Home

From their first arrival aboard the Mayflower in 1620, until 1629, only about 300 Puritans had survived in New England, scattered in small and isolated settlements. In 1630, their population was significantly increased when the ship Mary and John arrived in New England carrying 140 passengers from the English West Country counties of Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall. It was the first of the ships later called the Winthrop Fleet to land in Massachusetts. From 1630 through 1640 approximately 20,000 colonists came to New England during the Great Migration period. The immigrants to New England came from every English county except Westmoreland, nearly half from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex.

While the Mary and John passenger list is not well documented, we know the immigrants founded the First Parish Church of Dorchester in 1631, the place name of their new community taken from Dorchester, Devon County, England. In the 17th century this English town was at the center of the Puritan emigration to America, and the local rector, Rev. John White, was instrumental in organizing the voyage and supported the settlement of Dorchester, Massachusetts. For his efforts on behalf of Puritan dissenters, White has been called one of the unheralded founders of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

In 1633, the Plymouth Trading Company established the first Connecticut settlement, a trading post at what would later become Dorchester, Connecticut in territory the Dutch claimed and in which they maintained a fort and trading post about seven miles downriver from present day Hartford, Connecticut. In 1635, Puritan and Congregationalist members of Reverend Warham's and Reverend Maverick's congregation, including, John Mason, Roger Ludlow, Henry Wolcott, and others, all prominent settlers in the new community, became dissatisfied with the rate of Anglican reforms. They sought permission from the Massachusetts General Court to establish a new ecclesiastical society subject to their own rules and regulations. About 60 individuals, totaling 23 heads of households, undertook a two-week's journey about 100 miles to the west. They founded a new town they initially also named Dorchester. Later, on February 21, 1636, the Connecticut General Count changed the name of the settlement from Dorchester to Windsor, believed to be named after the city of Windsor, England located on the River Thames. The new town was the first English settlement in the now state of Connecticut.

All of the above suggests Aaron could have been one of these immigrants arriving in New England during this early historical period. Therefore, it would seem reasonable to begin a search for Aaron's old world home in the southern part of England between 1608 to 1637 and his parents in the region before 1608. The above, therefore, suggests the following:

Hypothesis 1: Aaron Stark came to New England from the region in or around Devon County, England either with members of Rev. John Warham's Congregational Church newly formed in Exeter, Devon, England; or, more likely, as part of the Great Migration to New England that came after the voyage of the Mary and John.

Origins of the Stark Surname

One source describes the surname as follows: [1]

"This name derives from the Medieval English "Stark" itself coming from the Olde English pre 7th Century "stearc" meaning "firm and unyielding". The name was originally given as a nickname to a strong determined person and is first recorded in the early half of the 13th Century, (see below). One, William Stark appears in the 1314, Fine Court Rolls of Essex as a witness. The surname is well recorded in Scotland from the late 14th Century onwards. In "Ancient Charters of the earldom of Morten" the leasing of Estirbalbretane lands to Richard Starke is recorded (1376). William Stark, tenant in Castalstaris, appears in the "Rental Book of Glasgow diocese" (1540). The name, with its variant forms Starkie and Starkey, is in Ireland since the 14th Century. The first recorded spelling of the family name is shown to be that of Rannulf Stark, which was dated 1222, in the Pipe Rolls of Suffolk, during the reign of King Henry III, known as the Frenchman (1216 - 1272)."

Another author's definition and origin of the German/English word "stark" states: "stark adj.; related to stark "strong": stiff, rigid, standing out, bleak, desolate, barren, sheer, utter, downright, hard, harsh, severe, strong, powerful [Middle English starc < Anglo-Saxon stearc]. Stark doesn't come from Modern German but rather from Middle English and Anglo-Saxon and therefore has common roots with Modern German." [2]

Hypothesis 2: If Hypothesis 1 is true, could Aaron Stark's ancestral roots be that of one of the early Western Germanic Tribes that began migrating about 400 AD into the southern regions of England from what is now northern Germany, the northern part of the Netherlands and southern Scandinavia? The intruding population has traditionally been divided by historians into the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, but their composition may also have included Frisians and Franks.

1) [The Internet Surname Database](#)
2) [German English Words](#)

The Aaron Stark Modal Haplotype

A number of descendants of Aaron Stark were perfect genetic matches to each other over the 37 DYS Markers tested on the Y chromosome, which includes the descendant of Asa Lafitte Stark.[1] These marker matches define a Modal Haplotype composed of the most common Allele values observed at each marker over a specific Haplotype. [See Notes 2 thru 5]

Suppose Aaron was a descendant of one of the Frisian tribes that migrated from the European Continent to southern England. Because Aaron's descendants belong to Haplogroup R-U106 — *it is a given Aaron also had the U106 mutation*. The progenitor of the U106 mutation could have been born between the calendar years 1900BC and 1100BC. Assuming the time span of Aaron's ancestral generations consistently averaged 34 years, it is also a given that there were approximately 81 to 104 direct male ancestors from Aaron back to the U106 progenitor; all of whom would have tested positive for the mutation.[6]

An Infinite Alleles statistical probability model for estimating Time to the Most Recent Common Ancestor (TMRCA) was introduced in a publication by Bruce Walsh in 2001.[7] On page 898 of this article, equation 3 introduced the "likelihood for the time (t) back to the MRCA given that we observe (k) out of (n) matches." [(n) equals total # DYS Markers compared; (k) equals total number of allele matches over the DYS markers compared; and (t) equals number of generations to TMRCA.]

For example, when compared over 37 DYS markers, if there is a match at 19 markers and a mismatch at 18 markers, the match ratio would be 19/37. The amount of difference in alleles values is not considered; only a mismatch in value at a specific marker is considered. For the genetic DYS Marker comparison's, an online calculator using the infinite alleles model was used to determine: "*the two individuals genetically compared most likely shared a common paternal ancestor x number of generations ago.*"[8] (x) in generations from this calculator will correspond to the peak posterior distribution (Likelihood in %) that occurs given the total number of Markers (n), the total number of marker matches (k), and the mutation rate (the value .003). From the peak likelihood values calculated, those likelihood values that are $\pm .95$ the peak likelihood value — *provide a range of likely generations within which a Most Recent Common Ancestor may have lived given the number of Marker Matches (k)*.

Aaron's 37 DYS Marker Modal Haplotype (shortened to ASMH for the remainder of this discussion) will now be compared to others with the U106 mutation tested over the same DYS markers. Those chosen to be compared to the ASMH have genealogical research suggesting where in England or Western Europe their earliest ancestor lived.

Discussion: R-U106 Genetic Comparisons to ASMH

Figure 2 illustrates the approximate locations in England of the various Germanic Tribe populations that had migrated from Western Europe by 600 AD. The RED numbers on this map are the number of matches (k) in a 37 marker comparison. For example, the value 25 corresponds to a 25/37 match ratio. Its location on the map corresponds to the resident location of the earliest known ancestor of a selected person compared to the ASMH.

There are three clusters in this illustration. One is somewhat scattered south of the River Thames; another is in present day Suffolk County (beneath East Angles on the map); and a third centers in present day Lancashire County (Northeastern England). The comparisons to ASMH south of the Thames River ranged from a low of 19/37 to a high of 33/37; in Suffolk County, the range was from a low of 22/37 to a high of 29/37; and in Lancashire, the range was 24/37 to 33/37.

- 1) Direct Line Lineage to Asa L. Stark {W.⁵ T. Stark, Father⁴-Private, William³ Oscar Stark, John² Lawhorn Stark, Asa¹ Lafitte Stark}
- 2) **Allele Value:** A DNA sequence that repeats at a certain locus or place. The allele value is the number of times the sequence repeats. (Pronounced uh-LEEL)
- 3) **DYS Marker :** The "name" of a marker on the Y chromosome. It is assigned based on a nomenclature system controlled by the HUGO Gene Nomenclature Committee, which assigns DYS numbers to newly discovered markers. DYS markers have "allele values" which are observed from DNA samples supplied to a laboratory by the Program Members.
- 4) **Haplotype:** Collection of two or more DYS markers. Presentation of DYS Markers 1-12 will be Panel 1 (P1); DYS Markers 13-25 will be Panel 2 (P2); and DYS Markers 26-37 will be Panel 3 (P3). Each of these Panels represents a Haplotype. All three panels have been combined to create the 37 DYS marker Haplotype being discussed.
- 5) **Modal Haplotype:** Haplotype defined as the most common allele value at each DYS marker for a Group of Individuals; in this case descendants of Aaron Stark tested over the same 37 DYS markers.
- 6) Observations of all of Aaron Stark descendants Genealogical Lineage suggests on average the time interval of a generation from the birth of a father to the birth of son is 34 years. Aaron was born in 1608; on ten generations earlier than those his descendants genetically tested. For example, we know Aaron was born in 1608; then the average calendar year of birth of his 10th generation descendants would be: the calendar year 1608 + (34 Years X 10 generations) = the calendar year 1948. Therefore, on average, members of the 10th generation were more likely to have been born in 1948 \pm 17 years; or within the 1931 to 1965 time span. While not a precise measurement, for the discussion that follows — as a result of this genealogical observation of Aaron's descendants — the time span of a generation will be 34 years \pm 17 years.
- 7) Walsh, Bruce, 2001. "Estimating the Time to the Most Recent Common Ancestor for the Y chromosome or Mitochondrial DNA for a Pair of Individuals," Genetics, 158(2):897-912). Article available online as a PDF file at URL: <http://www.genetics.org/cgi/reprint/158/2/897.pdf>
- 8) Online Infinite Alleles Model Calculator available at URL: <http://www.dnacalculator.org/tmrcaCalculator.php>.

South of the Thames River, there were four comparisons with matches ranging in value from 30/37 to 33/37. The comparison resulting in 33/37 would most likely share a common ancestor with Aaron's descendants born between 1166 AD and 1404 AD. The peak likelihood year of birth within this time interval would be the year 1302 AD.[10]

Thomas Land, born in 1618, was the earliest ancestor of the person compared, reported by his descendant to have been a resident of Westminster, London County, England. The common ancestor of Aaron and Thomas Land could have been anyone of Aaron's 7 direct male ancestors born within this time interval. However, Aaron and Thomas have different surnames in the years 1608 and 1618 — *suggesting their common ancestor most likely was born in a year nearer to 1166 AD than 1404 AD; this allowing time for surnames to become established and these separate surname descendant lines to evolve.*

It would seem reasonable to suggest these theoretical ancestors of Aaron's descendants — *genetically shared with those persons compared to ASMH* — represent the beginnings of many separate surname descendant lines, one of which was Aaron's first ancestor with the surname Stark. It's not inconceivable Aaron changed his surname when he arrived in New England, for his 1639 appearance before the Particular Court of Connecticut is the first record we have of the surname Stark. Although our knowledge of Aaron's early years is limited, it is obvious he was a commoner and most likely his ancestors were Commoners (perhaps even Serfs for example). Therefore, it would seem unlikely Aaron could have inherited his surname from Rannulf or William Stark, suggesting they were not Aaron's ancestors. He may have inherited his surname from an ancestor living on the land of Nobility with the surname Stark; or Aaron's ancestor came by the name due to some physical or behavioral trait.

Persons selected for comparisons reporting their earliest known ancestor was a resident of Suffolk County and having 28/37 and 29/37 match ratios, most likely share a common ancestor with Aaron born between 180 AD and 724 AD, possibly born during and after the Germanic migration period to England. Persons reporting their earliest known ancestor was a resident of Suffolk County and having 22/37 and 25/37 match ratios would share a common ancestor born between 1248 BC and 466 BC; born well before the migration to England. These common ancestors most likely lived in one of the Figure 1 Frisian Settlements, many of their descendants joining the later migration to England. However, It is certain none of these persons compared to ASMH could share a common ancestor with Aaron born in England.

The cluster centering in and around Lancashire County most likely share common ancestors with Aaron's 10th generation descendants who lived in Northwestern Europe before the migration to England. The 24/37 and 25/37 match ratios suggests the common ancestors were born between 738 BC and 58 BC, the later date approximately 400 years before the Germanic migration to England. Aaron's descendants and the descendants of these persons most likely do not share a common ancestor born in England. The earliest known ancestor of the 33/37 match ratio in Lancashire could have migrated from southern England.

The other comparisons south of the Thames River suggests common ancestors that could have been born as early as 466 BC and as late as 1098 AD. Common ancestors of the 29/37, 30/37 and 31/37 match ratios could have been born as early as 384 AD and as late as 1098 AD. Between 800 AD and 900 AD, the Kingdom of Wessex produced the first King to achieve direct rule over what is considered "England." This Kingdom was located south of the Thames River. It would not seem unreasonable to suggest some movement of the Suffolk families towards places of power could have occurred and the earliest known ancestor of those compared to ASMH were their descendants.

Comparisons to those reporting their earliest known ancestor lived in Western Europe had match ratios ranging from a minimum of 19/37 to a maximum of 28/37. It would seem reasonable the ancestors of those selected for comparison were descendants of members of the Germanic Tribes that did not migrate to England. The common ancestor of those compared lived between 180 AD and 554 AD. The historical comments for this time span are:

"The Germanic migration period lasted from 350 AD to 500 AD. Germanic tribes migrated all over Western Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire, forming new tribes in the newly conquered areas. Around 450 AD, the Angles, Saxons, Jutes and a Frisian fraction crossed the North Sea and establish the Anglo-Saxon empire (currently known as England). The Frisians colonized the county of Kent in southeast England. Around 480 AD, KING Clovis established the Frankish Empire (currently known as France), originating from the Chaukian and Frisian Germanic Tribes."

Therefore, it is reasonable to expect most match ratios will be 19/37 to 29/37 in the Western European genetic comparisons to ASMH.

Conclusions

Observations presented in the above discussion certainly would appear to provide credible evidence Aaron Stark could have been born south of the Thames River in England. Based on the above, we (the authors) would suggest the genealogical research for Aaron's ancestral home be directed into these regions, attempting to find links to others living in the region with the surname Stark at the time of Aaron's birth. Other derivations (Starks, Starke) of the surname should also be pursued. Aaron's deep ancestral roots are certainly connected to the Germanic Tribes discussed because he was positive for the U106 mutation. It now remains to search for his English Ancestors.

1) The peak likelihood in this comparison was 19 generations; 95% of the peak to a lesser generation value resulted in 16 generations; 95% of the peak to a greater generation resulted in 23 generations. Aaron's descendants tested were born on average in 1948. For the peak likelihood, 19 generations was multiplied by 34 years resulting in 646 years. This value was then subtracted from the calendar year 1948 resulting in the calendar year 1302 ± 17 years as the peak likelihood year of birth time span. For 19 generations, the calendar year calculated was 1404 ± 17 years; for 23 generations the calendar year 1166 ± 17 years. This suggests a genetic comparison resulting in a 33/37 match ratio will share a common ancestor born between the calendar years 1166 (±17) to 1404 (±17) with the most likely birth year being the calendar year 1302 ± 17 years.

England & Wales 1891 Census

The England and Wales 1891 census reported 1,982 Stark families distributed over the Counties presented in the map in Figure 3. The largest concentration of families in the northern Counties were: Northumberland (87); Durham (181); North, East, West, & South Yorkshire (204); Lancashire (152); and Lincolnshire (87). Concentrations in the southern Counties were: Hampshire (262); London (320); Cornwall (24); Devon (112); Somerset (106); Dorset (21); Wiltshire (7); West & East Sussex (17); Surrey (25); Kent (25); Berkshire (17); and Essex (54). While there could have been considerable migration of descendants of Stark families by 1891; this distribution of the Stark surname may not be an accurate guide to where Aaron's family originated. However, this distribution is very similar to the Match Ratio comparisons presented in Figure 2 and cannot be overlooked as having relevance to Aaron's ancestry. Let us now turn to the Life & Times of our Connecticut ancestors in New England.

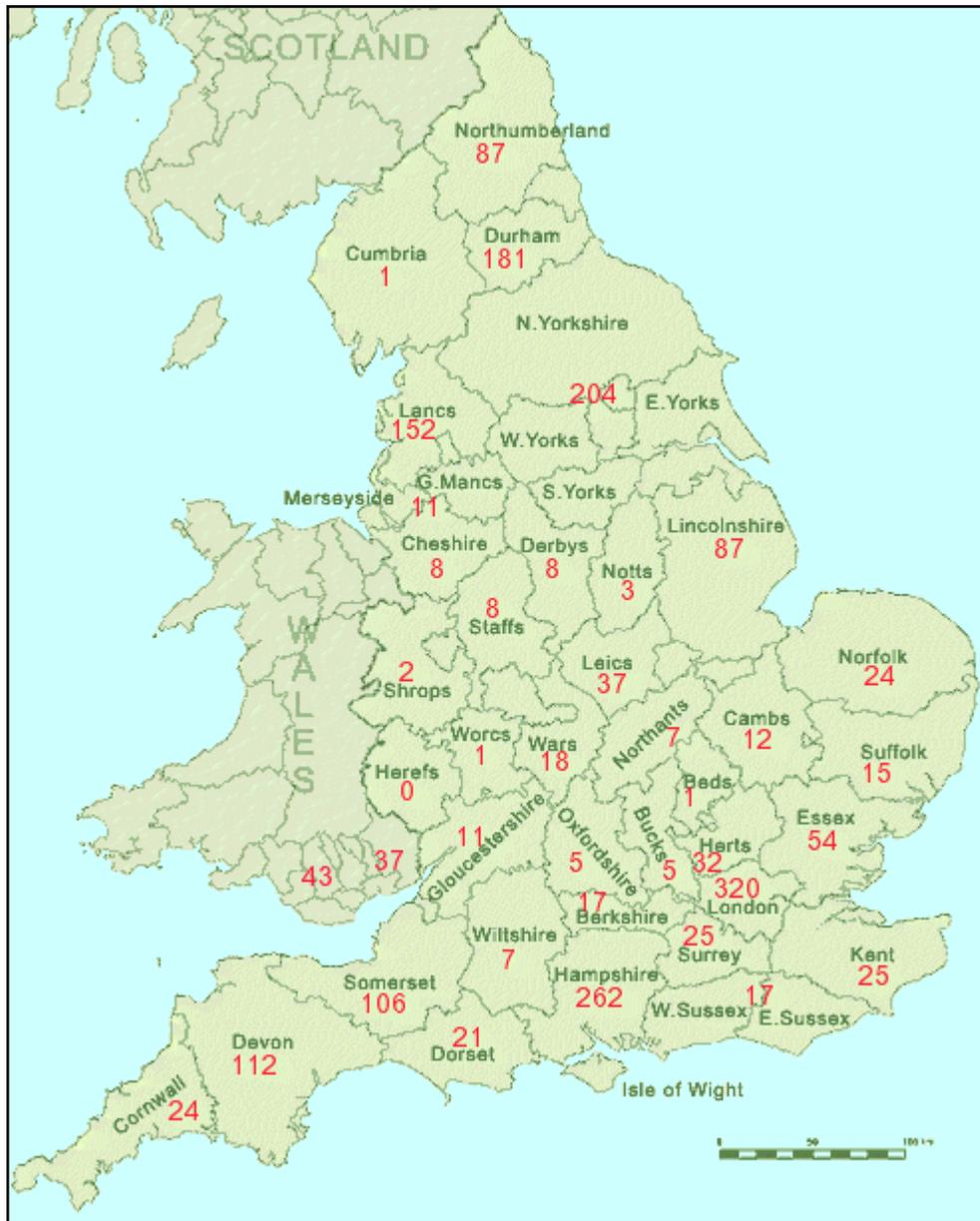


Figure 3: Present Day England
 (# Stark Families based on 1891 County Boundaries)

County Abbreviation Keys

Beds = Bedfordshire | Bucks = Buckinghamshire | Cambs = Cambridgeshire | Derbys = Derbyshire | Herefs = Herefordshire
 Herts = Hertfordshire | Lancs = Lancashire | Leics = Leicestershire | Mancs = Manchester
 Northants = Northamptonshire | Notts = Nottinghamshire | Shrops = Shropshire | Staffs = Staffordshire
 Wars = Warwickshire | Worcs = Worcestershire | Yorks = Yorkshire

Chapter 2: Historical Introduction

By Charles Rathbone Stark, 1922

Authors Comment: In 1922, Charles R. Stark self-published a book entitled Groton, Conn. 1705-1905. Palmer Press of Stonington, Connecticut printed 300 copies. The following quoted material comes from Chapter 1, pages 1 through 10. This was transcribed by Clovis LaFleur in September of 2006 from Copy #145. Footnotes in the following are those provided by Mr. Stark.

When the crowned heads of Europe in conjunction with the Pope of Rome proceeded to parcel out the New World among its discoverers, New England was allotted to Great Britain, by virtue of having first been seen by Sebastian Cabot in 1498. The account of his voyage is quite vague, though in the year above mentioned he is believed to have sailed from Labrador to Cape Hatteras.

His claim to the discovery was disputed, however, by France, who laid claim to the country by virtue of its discovery by Verazzano in 1524.[1] Verazzano was a Florentine navigator, who made several voyages to America in the employ of the King of France, and on one of these voyages, in 1524, he sailed from the Bay of New York, skirting Long Island, passing Block Island and entering Narragansett Bay. It is probable that on one or the other of these voyages Europeans for the first time looked upon the fair shores of Groton. Adrian Block, the Dutch navigator, explored the coast of Connecticut in 1614, and has left a map showing his explorations, which is to this day a fair outline of its coast.

The natural appearance of the land was not greatly different from what it is today. The same hills were crowned with forests, the same streams found their way to the sea through the same valleys, and the same mighty granite ledges gave a rock-ribbed appearance to the land, and protruded into the sea itself. Here and there could be found a clearing, made perhaps by some fierce forest fire, which had swept unchecked through the trees, leaving a place where the rude savage planted his wigwam and cultivated his maize. The low lands along the river banks were also probably bare of trees, and abounded with sea fowl, which, with fist and clams, comprised no small part of the diet of the natives. It is not known what tribe inhabited this region when it was first discovered, but at the time of the English occupation the Pequots held sway.

They were a fierce and warlike race, an offshoot from the Mohegans, that not long before had fought their way from beyond the Hudson, across the southern part of the present State of Massachusetts, until striking the fertile valley of the Connecticut they turned southward towards the coast, thrusting themselves like a wedge through the tribe of Niantics, and established their headquarters in what is now the town of Groton. The Niantics were divided, a part being beyond the Pawcatuck in Rhode Island, and a part beyond the Niantic in Connecticut.

The Dutch made the first settlement in Connecticut, at the mouth of the river of that name, in 1632. The English at Boston and Plymouth had been invited the previous year to come and settle on the Connecticut river, so it is quite probable that the Dutch came by invitation of the natives. In June 1633 Governor Van Twiller of New Netherlands sent a party up the river as far as the site of the present city of Hartford, where they purchased land of Wapyquart, or Wapigwooit, the grand sachem of the Pequots, styled in the treaty Chief of Sicknames (Mystic) River, and owner of the Connecticut. It was not long before the Pequots quarreled with the Dutch, and the latter killed Wapyquart or Wapigwooit, and his son Sassacus became a sachem in his stead. In October 1633 William Holmes of Plymouth sailed up the Connecticut, and defying the Dutch at Hartford sailed past their fort and landing at Windsor erected a trading house, thus beginning the first English settlement in Connecticut. The land on which this trading house was erected had been purchased of the sachems of the River Indians, whom the English considered its rightful owners, and "thus, on the very first settlement of English in Connecticut, they offered a distinct, though perhaps an unintentional insult and injury to the most powerful tribe in the country. The Pequots had conquered this portion of the Connecticut valley, and had obliged its original owners to submit to their authority: "Their claim had been acknowledged by the Dutch: it was confirmed by the immemorial Indian custom: and it was at least as just as that by which some civilized and christianized nations hold large portions of the globe." [2]

The Pequots were too busy with their war with the Dutch to make open protest to this slight, though it must have rankled within, and we cannot tell how much it may have had to do with the final outbreak. During the summer of 1633 had occurred the murder of Captains Stone and Norton by the Pequots and their tributaries the Western Niantics. These men were English traders from Virginia, who had entered the Connecticut River for the purpose of trading with the Indians. A number of the Pequots were allowed on board the vessel and were hospitably entertained. While the crew were asleep they were cruelly murdered and the vessel was plundered. When called to account for the crime by the English, Sassacus pleaded that he thought the men were Dutch and made other excuses which were not acceptable.

The Pequots proved themselves to be skillful diplomats, and for more than two years succeeded in deferring settlement. They sent an embassy to Boston, seeking to convince the authorities that the murdered men were the aggressors and justifying the Indians in their action, winding up with the proffer of a present of "otter-skin coats and beaver and skeins of Wampum" – their olive branch of peace. The English were suspicious of their motives, and while accepting the present did not cease their demands for the surrender of the murderers. In the fall of 1635, John Winthrop, Jr., acting under a grant from Lord Say and Sele and Lord Brook and other patentees of Connecticut, with a party of twenty men from Boston, effected a settlement at Saybrook, thus securing control of the Connecticut River and its adjacent territory.

They were just in time to forestall similar action on the part of the Dutch, who had designs on the fertile valley of the Connecticut. Lion Gardiner was the engineer in command under Winthrop, and he spent the winter of 1635-6 in the erection of a fort and of houses for the colonists. He seemed to take a more favorable view of the Indian character and course of action than did the people of Massachusetts Bay, and cultivated friendly relations with them.

1) "*A Half Century of Conflict*," Parkman, pp. 47 and 49. {Francis Parkman [1823-1893]. Published 1897.}

2) "*History of the Indians of Connecticut*," DeForest, p. 76. {John W. DeForest, History of the Indians of Connecticut. Brighton, Michigan: Native American Book Publishers, 1850.}

Miss Caulkins writes thus: *“Is not to be assumed, however, that the friendship of the Pequots was founded on any higher principle than greediness of gain or desire of obtaining assistance against the Narragansetts. The government of Massachusetts distrusted all their pretensions, and while Winthrop was still at Saybrook sent instructions to him to demand of the Pequots ‘a solemn meeting for conferences’ in which he was to lay before them all the charges that had been brought against them; and if they could not clear themselves, or refused reparation, the present which they sent to Boston (and which was now forwarded to Saybrook) was to be returned to them, and a protest equivalent to a declaration of war was to be proclaimed in their hearing. These instructions were dated at Boston, July 4, 1636, and together with the present were brought to Saybrook by Mr. Fenwick and Mr. Hugh Peters, with whom came Thomas Stanton to act as interpreter. Lieut. Gardiner notes the arrival of Mr. Oldham at the same time, in a pinnace, on a trading voyage. The others came by land. The Pequot sachem was sent for and the present was returned. Lieut. Gardiner, who foresaw that a destructive war would be the consequence, made use of both argument and entreaty to prevent it, but in vain.”*[1]

Just at this time occurred the murder of John Oldham at or near Block Island. He was an English trader of some unsavory notoriety at home, and engaged in trade with the Indians. The true cause of his murder is unknown, but it is thought to have been jealousy of his connections with the Pequots. The Narragansetts and Niantics were suspected of duplicity in this affair, and Canonicus was called to Boston to explain his connection with it, but succeeded in proving his innocence to the satisfaction of the authorities, and fastened the responsibility upon the Indians of Block Island. The action of the colonists was sharp and decisive.

We again quote from Miss Caulkins:[2]

“The murder of Mr. Oldham caused great excitement. Not only all the Indians of Block Island, but many of the Niantic and Narragansett sachems, were accused either of being accessory to the crime, or of protecting the perpetrators. An expedition was forthwith fitted out from Boston for the purpose of ‘doing justice on the Indians’ for this and other acts of hostility and barbarism. Ninety men were raised and distributed to four officers, of whom Capt. John Underhill, who wrote an account of the expedition, was one. The superior command was given to Capt. John Endicott. His orders were stern and vindictive: ‘To put to death the men of Block Island, but to spare the women and children and to bring them away, and to take possession of the island; and from thence to go to the Pequods, to demand the murderers of Capt. Stone and other English, and one thousand of Wampum for damages, etc., and some of their children for hostages, which if they should refuse they were to obtain by force.’ (Winthrop’s Journal, Vol. 1. P. 192). These orders were executed more mercifully than they were conceived. Endicott’s troops did little more than alarm and terrify the natives by sudden invasions, threats, skirmishing and a wanton destruction of their few goods and homely habitations. At Block Island they burned two villages containing about sixty wigwams, with all their mats and corn, and destroyed seven canoes. Capt. Underhill says that they also ‘slew some four Indians and maimed others.’ From thence they proceeded to Saybrook to refresh themselves, and obtaining from Lieut. Gardiner a reinforcement of twenty men in two shallops, they sailed for Pequot Harbor, in order to demand satisfaction for the murder of Captains Stone and Norton in 1633..... The next morning the English vessels proceeded into the harbor. From the east side, now Groton, the natives flocked to the shore to meet the strange armament, apparently unconscious of offence. And now a canoe puts off from the land with an ambassador: ‘A grave senior, a man of good understanding, portly carriage, grave and majestically in his expressions:’ who demands of the English why they come among them? The latter reply:

“The Governors of the Bay sent us to demand the heads of those persons that have slain Capt. Norton and Capt. Stone, and the rest of their company; it is not the custom of the English to suffer murderers to live.”

“The discreet ambassador, instead of an immediate answer to this demand, endeavored to palliate the charge. Capt. Stone, he said, had beguiled their sachem to come on board his vessel, and then slew him; whereupon the sachem’s son slew Capt. Stone, and an affray succeeding, the English set fire to the power, blew up the vessel and destroyed themselves. Moreover, he said, they had taken them for Dutchmen; the Indians were friendly to the English, but not to the Dutch, yet they were not able always to distinguish between them. These excuses were not satisfactory: the English captain repeats his demand: ‘We must have the heads of these men who have slain ours, or else we will fight. We would speak with your sachem.’ ‘But our sachem is absent,’ they reply: ‘Sassacus is gone to Long Island.’ ‘Then,’ said the commander, ‘go and tell the other sachem. Bring him to us that we may speak with him, or else we will beat up the drum, and march through the country and spoil your corn.’ Hereupon the messenger takes leave, promising to find the sachem: his canoe returns swiftly to the shore and the English speedily follow. ‘Our men landed with much danger, if the Indians had made use of their advantage, for all the shore was high with tagged rocks.’ But they met with no opposition, and having made good their landing, the Indian ambassador entreated them to go no further, but remain on the shore, till he could return with an answer to his demands. But the English, imagining there was craft in this proposal, refused. We were ‘not willing to be at their direction,’ says Underhill, but ‘having set our men in battalia, marched up the ascent.’ From the data here given, it may be conclusively inferred that they landed opposite the present town of New London and marched up some part of that fair highland ridge which now hallowed with the ruins of Fort Griswold and over shadowed by the Groton Monument.

“To the summit of this hill, then in a wild and unobstructed condition, the English troops toiled and clambered, still maintaining their martial array. At length they reach a level, where a wide region of hill and dale, dotted with the wigwams and corn-fields of the natives, spreads before them. And here a messenger appears, entreating them to stop, for the sachem is found and will soon come before them. They halt, and the wondering natives come flocking about them unarmed.

1) *“History of New London,”* page 28. {Caulkins, Frances Manwaring, History of New London, Connecticut. From the First Survey of the Coast in 1612 to 1860. Published in 1895.}

2) *Ibid,* page 29.

“In a short time some three hundred had assembled, and four hours were spent in parley. Kutshamkin, a Massachusetts sachem, who had accompanied the English, acted as interpreter, passing to and fro between the parties, with demands from one and excuses from the other, which indicate a reluctance on the part of Endicott to come to extremities, and great timidity and distrust on the side on the Indians. The object of the latter was evidently to gain time for the removal of their women and children, and the concealment of their choicest goods, which having been in great part effected, the warriors also began to withdraw. At this point the English Commander hastily put an end to the conference, bade them take care of themselves, for they had dared the English to come and fight with them, and now they had come for that purpose. Upon this the drums beat for battle, and the Indians fled with rapidity, shooting their harmless arrows from behind the screen of rocks and thickets. The troops marched after them, entered their town and burnt all their wigwams and mats. Underhill says, ‘We suddenly set upon our march, and gave fire to as many as we could come near, firing their wigwams, spoiling their corn, and many other necessaries that they had buried in the ground we raked up, which the soldiers had for booty. Thus we spent the day burning and spoiling the country. Towards night embarked our selves.’”

This expedition resulted only in confirming the enmity of the Pequots. Lion Gardiner had said to Endicott at Saybrook, *“You have come to raise a nest of wasps about our ears and then you will flee away,”* and vainly endeavored to dissuade him from carrying out his object. Open warfare was carried on during the winter of 1636-7. Sassacus was the possessor of that foresight which is one of the marks of greatness, and he seems to have realized the danger confronting the red man — *to have seen the impossibility of the two forms of civilization dwelling side by side.* Waiving his pride and haughty arrogance he sent messengers to the Narragansetts trying to engage them in an alliance against the English. The dangers confronting the Indians were portrayed in glowing colors: the difficulties of war with the colonists were not overlooked but the policy ever afterwards pursued by the Indians was out lined, viz., to torture and kill individuals, outrage women and children, rob and destroy houses, crops and cattle, and so to make it impossible for the white men to live in the country, in hope that they would be forced to return to the land from whence they had come. What the outcome of these negotiations might have been but for the intervention of one man is problematical. Hearing of the efforts of the Pequots to enlist the Narragansetts the authorities at Boston begged the services of Roger Williams. He tells of his efforts in a letter to Major Mason, June 22, 1670.[1] *“When the next year after my banishment the Lord drew the bow of the Pequod war against the country, in which, Sir, the Lord made yourself, with others, a blessed instrument of peace to all New England, I had my share of service to the whole land, in that Pequot business, inferior to very few that acted, for*

- 1) Upon letters received from the Governor and Council at Boston, requesting me to use my utmost and speediest endeavor to break and hinder the league labored for by the Pequods against the Mohegans and Pequods against the English (excusing the not sending of company and supplies by the haste of the business) the Lord helped me immediately to put my life into my hand, and, scarce acquainting my wife, to ship myself, all alone, in a poor canoe, and to cut through a stormy wind, with great seas, every minute in hazard of life, to the Sachem’s house.*
- 2) Three days and nights my business forced me to lodge and mix with the Pequod ambassadors, whose hands and arms, methought, ‘wreaked’ with the blood of my countrymen, murdered and massacred by them on Connecticut River, and from whom I could not but nightly look for their bloody knives at my throat also.*
- 3) When god so wondrously preserved me, and helped me to break to pieces the Pequods’ negotiation and design, and to make and promote and finish, by many travels and charges the English league with the Narragansetts, and Mohegans against the Pequods, I gladly entertained at my house in Providence, the General Stoughton and his officers, and used my utmost care that all the officers and soldiers should be well accommodated with us,” etc.*

The scale, for a time evenly balanced, was finally turned in favor of the English and a treaty was entered into, which was never broken during the lifetime of Canonicus. The disappointed and enraged Pequots at once commenced war upon the English and during the fall of 1636 several skirmishes and ambuscades around Saybrook resulted in loss of life. In April 1637 the Pequots made a raid upon Wethersfield, killing eight men and women, carrying away two girls as captives, besides destroying much property. These affairs roused the colonists to action and on May 1 a court convened at Hartford, at which for the first time all the towns were represented by committees. After considering the whole matter it was voted:[2] *“that there shalbe an offensive war agt the Pequoitt, and that there shalbe 90 men levied out of the 3 Plantacons, Harteford, Wethersfield & Windsor (vizt) out of Harteford, 42, Windsor 30, Wethersfield 18: under the Commande of Captaine Jo. Mason & in cae of death or sickness under the comand of Rob’t Seely Leift & the ‘ldest srieant or military officer surviving, if both these miscarry.”* No time was lost in recruiting, and on the 10th of May, 1637, the company of ninety men, accompanied by seventy Mohegan Indians under the command of Uncas, embarked for Saybrook. Massachusetts had voted to raise two hundred men and Plymouth forty, but Capt. Mason determined not to wait for their arrival, but to proceed at once to the task in hand. In our next chapter, by permission of the Massachusetts Historical Society, we shall give Capt. John Mason’s account of the battle.

1) Letters of Roger Williams 1632-1682. Bartlett page 338.

2) Colonial Records of Conn. Vol. 1, p. 9.

Chapter 3 The Life & Times of Aaron Stark [1608-1685]

Introduction

Aaron Stark's name was first documented in New England on April 11, 1639, when he appeared before the Particular Court of Connecticut accused, along with two other men, of "unclean practices." He subsequently appeared before the court twice more; in July of 1640 when he was accused of bestiality; and in April of 1643 (the accusation not reported in the court record). The charges brought by the court against Aaron on these three occasions have not reflected well on his character; indeed, they have been a source of embarrassment for many past and present Stark family genealogists. But other aspects of his life also need to be taken into account, for they provide a more complete and positive picture of this man who was the progenitor of so many American Starks. The work to follow will seek to present a full and balanced account of Aaron Stark and his times.

These charges prompted many early researchers to register some harsh judgments. James Savage, in his 1860 book on genealogy in New England before 1700, described Aaron as an "unpromising youth." R. R. Hinman, in his Catalogue of Names of the First Puritan Settlers, compiled and published in 1848, reported; "Starke, Aaron, Hartford, 1639 - (This case is inserted to show the extreme severity of their punishment for bastardy)..." Hinman quotes the charges and

the punishment Aaron received in his first appearance before the court. Even worse, the reference to "bestiality" and the embarrassment it engendered caused Stark family researchers to suppress altogether Aaron's second appearance before the court: all we knew was that when the court met in April of 1643, it ordered Aaron to serve Captain Mason "during ye pleasure of ye Court."

Was young Aaron Stark a mean, unprincipled, or even dishonest man? Was he truly or wrongly accused? We know he was not an educated man, was not a Puritan, couldn't write his own name, and had no known skills (other than Indian fighting, perhaps). Despite his early troubles and these handicaps, he survived to the age of 77 in a hostile environment, became a land owner and farmer, became a husband and father, and earned the trust and respect of his neighbors and mentor, John Mason. Aaron may not have been a saint and possibly did have serious character flaws, but he certainly deserves to be known for more than these early records. Perhaps his spirit still roams Connecticut looking to gain understanding and respect, and perhaps our study will help him to do so.

The factual part of Aaron's life will be drawn from surviving documentation. Other aspects of his life will be based on reasoned speculation and what we can learn about the activities of other individuals with whom he no doubt associated. Most of the factual records to be presented in this narrative have been gleaned from the research of Pauline Stark Moore, Carolyn Smith, Donn Neal, and Gwen Boyer Bjorkman, all of whom also shared their own interpretations of Aaron Stark with me.



Map Revealing location of Pequot Fort, Mason Land Grant, and approximate boundaries of Aaron Stark's Homestead in Groton Township, New London County, Connecticut. Source: Connecticut, from actual survey / made in 1811 by and under the direction of Moses Warren and George Gillet, and by them compiled ; engraved by Abner Reed.

Clovis LaFleur

January 2006

Aaron's Early Years

We know almost nothing about Aaron's early years, for there are no records to tell us where he was born, what he was doing during his early years, and where he was living before the 1630s. On June 11, 1673, Aaron gave a deposition recorded in the Stonington Town Records, which gave his age as sixty-five "or thereabouts" providing us with the clue that his year of birth was about 1608.[1] As there is no documented evidence of Aaron's arrival in New England, we cannot state with absolute certainty when he came to America, although some earlier researchers speculate his migration to have been as early as 1627 or 1629.[2]

There is no definite information about the parents and origins of Aaron Stark [1608-1685]. (Some researchers have mistakenly concluded that he was the son of an earlier Aaron Stark and Mary Holt, but the facts do not support this.) In addition, an early (1848) publication sparked speculation that Aaron's father might be a Henry Stark who willed a clock to the church in Hartford in 1640, but an analysis of the records of that period seems to indicate that this man was actually named Henry Packs or Park.

In England or Scotland, his apparent homeland, Aaron may have been expelled for political, religious, or criminal reasons; alternatively, he might have paid for his passage to New England by becoming an indentured or bonded servant. Based on what we know about Aaron's military activities in Connecticut, it seems more likely that he was a Scottish mercenary soldier who came to New England with John Mason, who some historians contend, served in the Netherlands alongside Sir Thomas Fairfax under Sir Horace Vere at the decisive siege of Bois-le-Duc from April to August of 1630.[3]

Mason's arrival in New England also is not certain, but he is documented as the Lieutenant Mason who served under John Gallop in December of 1632. Gallop was commissioned by the Governor and Magistrates of Massachusetts to search for the pirate called Dixy Bull.[4] Perhaps Mason was engaged by the Massachusetts Bay Colony to come to New England to protect the colony's interests. Because Aaron had a very close relationship with Mason in Connecticut, it's conceivable Aaron, being young and adventurous, had volunteered to serve in the Netherlands and subsequently came to New England with Mason after the siege at Bois-le-Duc: we know that some of these troops became mercenaries after Horace Vere returned to England in 1632.

By March of 1635, Mason was the representative from Dorchester to the Massachusetts General Court. Later in that year or early in the next year, he moved to the settlement which became known as Windsor, Connecticut, and was a member of Rev. John Warham's congregation in Dorchester.[4] Warham, a minister at Exeter, Devon, England, with Rev. John Maverick, had sailed from Plymouth, England on March 20, 1630, aboard the Mary and John with about 60 members of his newly formed Congregational Church. In addition to the two ministers, the passengers selected for passage were two magistrates of the Massachusetts Bay Company, several older men with adult families, and a group of single or just married men, some chosen for their military experience. It seems possible, at least, that Aaron Stark was among these single men.

The Mary and John arrived at Nantasket on May 30, 1630, after seventy days at sea. After some exploration of the region, the company settled at Dorchester. After thriving as a community for 5 years, news arrived of the fertile lands in the Connecticut River Valley and half of the families living in Dorchester, weary of working the rocky fields around their first settlement, sold their property to recent arrivals from England. With Warham as their leader, they left Plymouth, sailed up the Connecticut River, and established their new settlement at the confluence of the Farmington and Connecticut Rivers. They named their new home Dorchester (changed to Windsor by the Connecticut General Court on February 21, 1636). Although not known with certainty, Aaron Stark has been listed by some publications as an early settler of Windsor along with John Warham and John Mason."[5]

- 1) The deposition, dated June 11, 1673 states: "The Testimony of Aron Starke Aged Sixtie five yeares or thereabouts..." From this statement we can estimate Aaron was born in about the year 1608 but the exact year of birth is not known with certainty. {Stonington, New London County, Connecticut Deeds 1664-1714, Book 2, page 280, June 11, 1673. LDS Microfilm Film #5593, transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman.}
- 2) Source 1: In a historical sketch of the late Hon. Benjamin Stark, published in the "Ships and Engine Magazine," the statement is made that his ancestor, Aaron Stark, landed at Salem, Mass., in 1627, and that he joined up with the Rev. Joseph Hooker and journeyed to Wethersfield, Conn." {Ackley, Hattie Stark, 1937 Stark Family Yearbook publication, Historian's Report, page 31.} Source 2: The Old Northwest Genealogical Quarterly, Volume XII, No. 4, October, 1909, page 195, "Stark Descendant Family Lines," states that Aaron arrived in 1629.
- 3) The earliest known source of this statement came from Rev. Thomas Prince in his introduction to John Mason's narrative, "*A Brief History of the Pequot War*," which was published in 1736. Prince wrote: "Major Mason having been trained up in the Netherlands War under Sir Thomas Fairfax; when the Struggle arose in England between K. Charles I. and the Parliament about the Royal Powers and the National Liberties; that Famous General had such an esteem for the Major's Conduct and Bravery, that he wrote to the Major to come over and help Him." Later historians added this phrase to John Mason's biography, but a footnote on page 8 of the pamphlet points out that "Fairfax went to the Netherlands in April of 1630, and though but eighteen, was a volunteer in the army and was with Sir Horace Vere at the siege of Bois-le-Duc, which surrendered in July of that year. Young Fairfax was then ordered by his grandfather to leave camp and travel in France; and there he remained for about eighteen months, returning to England in February of 1632. Since the total service of Fairfax in the Low Countries extended over but four months, and was somewhat in the nature of a youthful adventure, it can hardly be said that Mason was 'trained up' under him though the story has been repeated by nearly every biographer since Prince. He may, however, have been a companion in arms with Fairfax, though of this there is no direct proof." {A Brief History of the Pequot War: Especially of the Taking of their Fort at Mistick in Connecticut in 1637. Written by Major John Mason, a prince, and then chief Captain and Commander of Connecticut Forces. With an Introduction and some Explanatory Notes by the Reverend Mr. Thomas Prince. Boston: Printed and sold by S. Kneeland & T. Green in Queen Street, 1736.}
- 4) Caulkins, Frances Manwaring, *History of New London, Connecticut, From the First Survey of the Coast in 1612 to 1860*. Published in 1895, 696 pp., 2 vols.
- 5) Web Page: <[Connecticut State Library --- Founders of Windsor](#)> (Source also dated 1996. Contributed by Del Rickel). While some may dispute Aaron Stark was a founder, Aaron's appearances before the Particular Court of Connecticut suggests he was a resident in 1639 and 1640. His residency before 1639 is not known with certainty.

The Pequot Nation, Connecticut's principal community of Native Americans, became increasingly hostile towards the new settlers from the north. On May 1, 1637, after several attacks by the Pequot, the 9th Session of the General Court of Connecticut decided to undertake an offensive war against them. The court appointed Captain Mason commander of a force of ninety men, drawn from the settlements of Wethersfield (18 men), Windsor (30 men), and Hartford (42 men). We know from later records that Aaron Stark was a participant in this war, and also that he had a close relationship with Mason, so it seems very likely that he was one of the soldiers recruited from one of these three towns. Mason later wrote *A Brief History of the Pequot War*, which was published in 1736. This narrative corroborates the statements in Aaron Stark's 1673 deposition, which asserts that he participated in Mason's attack on the Pequot camp, and is our primary source for the events of the Pequot War, to which we turn next.[1,2]

Author's Introduction to the Pequot War

Was our ancestor, Aaron Stark, a participant in the Pequot War? The following personal testimony, given in 1673, would suggest that he was:

"The Testimony of Aron Starke Aged Sixtie five yeares or there Abouts testifieth and sayth that we being souldiers under Capt: John Mason with many more when wee went Agaynst the Pequitts Indeans wee being Landed in the Naragansett Country where many of the Naragansetts Came Armed and tendered themselves to goe with us in that Cervise Agaynst the Pequitts wherein they was Redily Accepted And marched with us through part of the Naragansett Country until they Came within four or five miles of Pawcatuck River where wee made A halt: where Nenecraft And Miantinomye with many others did declare unto our Commanders that wee were come into the Pequitt Country And therefore did Advise them to bee verie Carefull of themselves Least they Should be destroyed. Aron Stark And Jacob Waterhouse Appeared this 11th of June 1673 and made oath to what is Above written before me John Allyn Justice. The Above written deposition was entered in Stonington Records April the 25: 1699 Pr me John Stanton Town Clarke." {Stonington, New London County, Connecticut Deeds 1664-1714, Book 2, page 280, June 11, 1673. LDS Microfilm Film #5593, transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman.}

John Mason's account, *A Brief History of the Pequot War*, describes several events that would seem to bear on this issue.

- 1) Mason reports that the men who participated were recruited from the settlements of Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield. We will later learn that Aaron may have been a resident of Windsor in 1639 and 1640, though his place of residence at the time of his recruitment in 1637 is not known with certainty. We can only establish he was in New England before May of 1637 and that he was most likely living in one of the three communities Mason names when the hostilities began.
- 2) When Captain Underhill joined the expedition with twenty additional men, all of whom lived at Saybrook Fort, 20 of those originally recruited from Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield returned home. Aaron's testimony suggests he could not have been one of the 20 men who returned, for his testimony describes events that occurred after Mason and his men left Saybrook Fort for the Narragansett Country. Aaron's testimony further indicates he and Jacob Waterhouse were "souldiers under Capt.: John Mason;" suggesting that they were not men in Captain Underhill's detachment. Aaron and Jacob were most likely not residents of Saybrook Fort when the hostilities began.
- 3) Aaron's testimony concludes when the expedition was about to enter into the Pequot Country. We can only surmise that Aaron probably continued the march on to the Pequot Fort and participated in its destruction, but because his testimony is silent on this aspect of the war we cannot go further than that.
- 4) Mason does not report that any men under his command turned back once the expedition reached the Pequot country, so if Aaron left Saybrook with Mason he most likely did participate in the attack on the fort.

John Mason's publication represents the best contemporary account of the Pequot War. Increase Mather's 1677 manuscript gave credit to John Allyn, as the author of *A Brief History of the Pequot War*. However, as reported in Reverend Thomas Prince's introduction, the author was actually John Mason. John Allyn was the same justice who in 1673 heard the testimony of Aaron Stark and Jacob Waterhouse. Therefore, through John Mason's account of his participation in the Pequot War, we are able to observe the events witnessed by our ancestor first hand. Only those passages in John Mason's publication relevant to Aaron's testimony have been included here.

Mason's assault on the fort occurred on Friday, May 26, 1637. The English casualties were two dead and about 20 wounded. Mason later learned that about 150 warriors from the further fort had come to join in the festivities of the previous night and had perished in the battle. (Date and casualties reported in Mason's publication.) In all, according to the Pequot's, six to seven hundred of their number were killed, with fourteen taken captive (of whom seven would later escape).

This attack was the decisive battle in the Pequot campaign, which ultimately led to victory for the colonists and the abandonment by the Pequot's of all of the lands between the present-day border of Connecticut and Rhode Island and the Connecticut River. This event thus opened this key region to later settlers who would name the region New London County. Assuming that Aaron Stark was indeed a member of Mason's force, which would seem to be a fair reading of the extant evidence, he participated in one of the turning points in 17th Century American history.

Clovis LaFleur

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1) The deposition, dated June 11, 1673 states: "The Testimony of Aron Starke Aged Sixtie five yeares or there abouts..." From this statement we can estimate Aaron was born in about the year 1608 but the exact year of birth is not known with certainty. {Stonington, New London County, Connecticut Deeds 1664-1714, Book 2, page 280, June 11, 1673. LDS Microfilm Film #5593, transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman.}

2) *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, Prior to the Union With New Haven Colony*, by J. Hammond Trumbell, 1850. Volume 1, page 9.

3) *A Brief History of the Pequot War*; Introduction by the Reverend Mr. Thomas Prince; Boston: Printed by S. Kneeland and T. Green in Queen Street, Boston, 1736. Online Source: <http://bc.barnard.columbia.edu/~rmccaugh/earlyAC/readings/pequot/pequot.pdf>

Excerpt from Reverend Mr. Thomas Prince's Introduction dated December 23, 1735 in Boston: *"I have only now to observe, that in The Relation of the Troubles which happened to New England by the Indians from 1614 to 1675, Published by the then Mr. Increase Mather in 1677, I find a copy of the following Narrative, but without the prefaces, had been communicated to him by Mr. John Allyn then the Secretary of Connecticut Colony; which that Rev. Author took for Mr. Allyn's and calls it his. But we must inform the Reader, that the Narrative was originally drawn by Major Mason. And as his Eldest Grandson Capt. John Mason now of New London has put it into my Hands; I have been more than usually careful in Correcting the Press according to the Original; as the most authentic Account of the Pequot, and as a standing Monument both of the extraordinary Dangers and Courage of our pious Fathers, and of the eminent Appearance of Heaven to save them."*

Excerpt from A Brief History of the Pequot War, by Major John Mason

In the Beginning of May 1637 there were sent out by Connecticut Colony Ninety Men under the Command of Capt. John Mason against the Pequots, with Onkos an Indian Sachem living at Mohegan,[1] who was newly revolted from the Pequots; being Shipped in one Pink, one Pinnace, and one Shallop; who sailing down the river of Connecticut fell several times a ground, the Water being very low; the Indians not being wonted to such Things with their small Canoes, and also being impatient of Delays, desired they might be set on Shoar, promising that they would met us at Saybrook; which we granted: They hastening to their Quarters, fell upon Thirty or forty of the Enemy near Saybrook Fort, and killed seven of them out right;[2] Having one of their's wounded, who was sent back to Connecticut in a Skiff: Capt. John Underhill also coming with him, who informed us what was performed by Onkos and his Men; which we looked at as a special Providence; for before we were somewhat doubtful of his Fidelity: Capt. Underhill then offered his Service with Nineteen Men to go with us, if Lieutenant Gardner would allow of it, who was Chief Commander at Saybrook Fort; which was readily approved of by Lieutenant Gardner and accepted by us; In lieu of them we sent back twenty of our Soldiers to Connecticut.

Upon a Wednesday we arrived at Saybrook, where we lay Windbound until Friday; often consulting how and in what manner we should proceed in our Enterprize, being altogether ignorant of the Country. At length we concluded, God assisting us, for Narragansett, and so to March through their Country, which Bordered upon the Enemy; where lived a great People, it being about fifteen Leagues beyond Pequot: the Grounds and Reasons of our so Acting you shall presently understand: First, the Pequots our Enemies, kept a continual Guard upon the river Night and Day; Secondly, their Numbers far exceeded ours; having sixteen Guns with Power and Shot, as we were informed by the two Captives forementioned (Where we declared the Grounds of this War) who were taken by the Dutch and restored to us at Saybrook; which indeed was a very friendly Office and not to be forgotten; Thirdly, they were on Land, and being swift of Foot, might much impede our Landing, and possibly dishearten our Men; we being expected only by Land, there being no other Place to go on Shoar but in that River, nearer than Narragansett; Fourthly, by Narragansett we should come upon their Backs and possibly might surprise them unawares, at worst we should be on firm Land as well as they. All which proved very successful as the Sequel may evidently demonstrate.

But yet for all this our Counsel, all of them except the Captain, were at a stand and could not judge it meet to sail to Narragansett: And indeed there was a very strong Ground for it; our Commission limiting us to land our Men in Pequot River; we had also the same Order by Letter of Instruction sent us to Saybrook.

But Capt. Mason apprehending an exceeding great Hazard in so doing, for the Reasons forementioned, as also some other which I shall forbear to trouble you with, did therefore earnestly desire Mr. Stone that he would commend our Condition to the Lord, that Night, to direct how and in shat manner we should demean ourselves in that Respect: He being our Chaplin and lying aboard our Pink, the Captain on Shoar. In the Morning very early Mr. Stone came ashoar to the Captain's Chamber, and told him, he had done as he had desired, and was fully satisfied to sail for Narragansett. Our Council was then called, and the several Reasons alleged: In fine we all agreed with one accord to sail for Narragansett, which the next Morning we put in Execution.

I declare not this encourage any Soldiers to Act beyond their Commission, or contrary to it; for in so doing they run double Hazard. There was a great Commander in Belgia who did the States great service in taking a City; but by going beyond his Commission lost his Life: His name was Grubbendunk. But if a War be Managed duly by Judgment and Discretion as is requisite, the Shews are many times contrary to what they seem to pursue: Wherefore the more an Enterprise is dissembled and kept secret, the more facil to put in Execution; as the Proverb, The farthest way about is sometimes the nearest way home. I shall make bold to present this as my present Thoughts in this Case; in Matters of War, those who are both able and faithful should be improved; and then bind them not up into too narrow a Compass: for it is not possible for the wisest and ablest Senator to foresee all Accidents and Occurrents that fall out in the Management and Pursuit of a War: Nay although possibly he might be trained up in Military Affaires; and truly much less can have any great Knowledge who hath had but little Experience therein. What shall I say? God led his People through many difficulties and Turnings; yet by more than an ordinary Hand of Providence he brought them to Canaan at last.

On Friday Morning we set Sail for Narragansett Bay, and on Saturday towards Evening we arrived at our desired Port, there we kept the Sabbath.

1) Onkos, usually called Uncas, the Great Sachem of the Moheags.

2) Mr. Increase Mather, in his History of the Pequot War, says this was on May 15.

On the Monday the Wind Blew so hard at North-West that we could not go on Shoar; as also on the Tuesday until Sun set; at which time Capt. Mason landed and Marched up to the Place of the Chief Sachem's Residence; who told the Sachem, "That we had not an opportunity to acquaint him with our coming Armed in his Country sooner; yet not doubting but it would be well accepted by him, there being Love betwixt himself and us, well knowing also that the Pequots and themselves were Enemies, and that he could not be unacquainted with those intolerable Wrongs and Injuries these Pequots had lately done unto the English; and that we were now come, God assisting, to Avenge our selves upon them; and that we did only desire free Passage through his Country." Who returned this answer, "That he did accept of our coming, and did also approve of our Design; only he thought our Numbers were to weak to deal with the Enemy, who were (as he said) very great Captains and Men skilful in War." thus he spake somewhat slighting of us.

On the Wednesday Morning, we Marched from thence to a Place called Nayanticke, it being about eighteen or twenty mils distant, where another of those Narragansett Sachems lived in a Fort; it being a Frontier to the Pequots. They carrying very proudly towards us; not permitting any of us to come into their Fort.

We beholding their Carriage and the Falsehood of Indians, and fearing least they might discover us to the Enemy, especially they having many times some of their near Relations among their greatest Foes; we therefore caused a strong Guard to be set about their Fort, giving Charge that no Indian should be suffered to pass in or out: We also informed the Indians, that none of them should stir out of the Fort upon peril of their Lives: so as they would not suffer any of us to come into their Fort.

There we quartered that Night, the Indians not offering to stir out all the while.

In the Morning there came to us several of Miantamo^[1] his Men, who told us, they were come to assist us in our Expedition, which encouraged divers Indians of that Place to Engage also; who suddenly gathering into a Ring, one by one, making solemn Protestations how gallantly they would demean themselves, and how many Men they would Kill.

On the Thursday about eight of the Clock in the Morning, we Marched thence towards Pequot, with about five hundred Indians: But through the Heat of the Weather and want of Provisions some of our Men fainted: and having Marched about twelve Miles, we came to Pawcatuck River, at a Ford where our Indians told us the Pequots did usually Fish; there making an Alta, we stayed some small time: The Narragansett Indians manifesting great Fear, in so much that many of them returned, although they had frequently despised us, saying, That we durst not look upon a Pequot, but themselves would perform great Things; though we had often told them that we came on purpose and were resolved, God assisting, to see the Pequots, and to fight with them, before we returned, though we perished. I then enquired of Onkos, what he thought the Indians would do? Who said, The Narragansetts would all leave us, but as for Himself He would never leave us: and so it proved: For which Expressions and some other Speeches of his, O shall never forget him. Indeed he was a great Friend, and did great Service.

And after we had refreshed our selves with our mean Commons, we Marched about three Miles, and came to a Field which had lately been planted with Indian Corn: There we made another Alt, and called our Council, supposing we drew near to the Enemy; and being informed by the Indians that the Enemy had two Forts almost impregnable; but we were not at all Discouraged, but rather Animated, in so much that we were resolved to Assault both their Forts at once. But understanding that one of them was so remote that we could not come up with it before Midnight, though we Marched hard; whereat we were grieved, chiefly because the greatest and bloodiest Sachem there resided, whose name was Sassacous: We were then constrained, being exceedingly spent in our March with extream Heat and want of Necessaries, to accept of the nearest.

We then Marching on in a silent Manner, the Indians that remained fell all into the Rear, who formerly kept the Van; (being possessed with great Fear) we continued our March till about one Hour in the Night; and coming to a little Swamp between two Hills, there we pitched our little Camp; much wearied with hard Travel, keeping great Silence, supposing we were very near the Fort; as our Indians informed us; which proved otherwise: The Rocks were our Pillows; yet Rest was pleasant: The Night proved Comfortable, being clear and Moon Light: We appointed our Guards and placed our Sentinels at some distance; who heard the Enemy singing at the Fort, who continued that Strain until Midnight, with great Insulting and Rejoycing, as we were afterwards informed: They seeing our Pinnaces sail by them some Days before, concluded we were afraid of them and durst not come near them; the Burthen of their Song tending to that purpose.

In the Morning, we awaking and seeing it very light, supposing it had been day, and so we might have lost our Opportunity, having purposed to make our Assault before Day; rowed the Men with all expedition, and briefly commended ourselves and Design to God, thinking immediately to go to the Assault; the Indians shewing us a Path, told us that it led directly to the Fort. We held on our March about two Miles, wondering hat we came not to the Fort, and fearing we might be deluded: But seeing Corn newly planted at the Foot of a great Hill, supposing the Fort was not far off, a Champion Country being round about us; then making a stand, gave the Word for some of the Indians to come up: At length Onkos and one Waquash appeared: We demanded of them, Where were the Rest of the Indians?

1) He was usually called Miantonimo, the Great Sachem of the Narragansett Indians.

They answered, Behind, exceedingly afraid: We wished them to tell the rest of their Fellows, That they should by no means Fly, but stand at what distance they pleased, and see whether English Men would now Fight or not. Then Capt. Underhill came up, who Marched in the Rear; and commending our selves to God, divided our Men: There being two Entrances into the Fort, intending to enter both at once: Captain Mason leading up to that on the North East Side; who approaching within one Rod, heard a Dog bark and an Indian crying Owanux! Owanux! Which is Englishmen! Englishmen! We called up our Forces with all expedition, gave Fire upon them through the Pallizado; the Indians being in a dead indeed their last Sleep: Then we wheeling off fell upon the main Entrance which was blocked up with Bushes about Breast high, over which the Captain passed, intending to make good the Entrance, encouraging the rest to follow. Lieutenant Seeley endeavored to enter; but being somewhat cumbred, stepped back and pulled out the Bushes and so entered, and with him about sixteen Men: We had formerly concluded to destroy them by Sword and save the Plunder.

Whereupon Captain Mason seeing no Indians, entered a Wigwam; where he was beset with many Indians, waiting all opportunities to lay Hands on him, but could not prevail. At length William Heydon espying the Breach in the Wigwam, supposing some English might be there, entered; but in his Entrance fell over a dead Indian; but speedily recovering himself, the Indians some fled, others crept under their Beds: The Captain going out of the Wigwam saw many Indians in the Lane or Street; he making towards them, they fled, were pursued to the End of the Lane, where they were met by Edward Pattison, Thomas Barber, with some others; where seven of them were Slain, as they said. The Captain facing about, Marched a slow Pace up the Lane he came down, perceiving himself very much out of Breath; and coming to the other End near the Place where he first entered, saw two Soldiers standing close to the Pallizado with their Swords pointed to the Ground: The Captain told them that We should never kill them after that manner: The Captain also said, We must Burn them; and immediately stepping into the Wigwam where he had been before, brought out a Fire-Brand, and putting it into the Matts with which they were covered, set the Wigwam on Fire. Lieutenant Thomas Bull and Nicholas Omsted beholding, came up; and when it was thoroughly kindled, the Indians ran as Men most dreadfully Amazed.

And Indeed such a dreadful Terror did the Almighty let fall upon their Spirits, that they would fly from us and run into the very Flames, where many of them perished. And when the Fort was thoroughly Fired, Command was given, that all should fall off and surround the Fort: which was readily attended by all; only one Arthur Smith being so wounded that he could not move out of the Place, who was happily espied by Lieutenant Bull, and by him rescued.

The Fire was kindled on the North East Side to windward; which did swiftly over-run the Fort, to the extream Amazement of the Enemy, and great Rejoycing of our selves. Some of them climbing to the Top of the Pallizado; others of them running into the very Flames; many of them gathering to windward, lay pelting at us with their Arrows; and we repayed them with our small Shot: Others of the Stoutest issued forth, as we did guess, to the Number of Forty, who perished by the Sword.

What I have formerly said, is according to my own Knowledge, there being sufficient living Testimony to every Particular.

But in reference to Captain Underhill and his Parties acting in this Assault, I can only intimate as we were informed by some of themselves immediately after the Fight, thus They Marching up to the Entrance on the South West Side, there made some Pause; a valiant, resolute Gentleman, one Mr. Hedge, stepping towards the Gate, saying, If we may not Enter, wherefore came we here; and immediately endeavored to Enter; but was opposed by a sturdy Indian being slain by himself and Sergeant Davis, Mr. Hedge Entered the Fort with some others; but the Fort being on Fire, The Smoak and Flames were so violent that they were constrained to desert the Fort.

Thus were they now at their Wits End, who not many Hours before exalted themselves in their great Pride, threatning and resolving the utter Ruin and Destruction of all English, Exulting and Rejoycing with Songs and Dances: But God was above them, who laughed his Enemies and the Enemies of his People to Scorn, making them as a fiery Oven: Thus were the Stout Hearted spoiled, having slept their last Sleep, and none of their Men could find their Hands: Thus did the Lord judge among the Heathen, filling the Place with dead Bodies!

And here we may see the just Judgment of God, in sending even the very Night before this Assault, One hundred and fifty Men from their other Fort, to join with them of that Place, who were designed as some of themselves reported to go forth against the English, at that very Instant when this heavy Stroak came upon them, where they perished with their Fellows. So that the Mischief they intended to us, came upon their own Pate: They were taken in their own Snare, and we through Mercy escaped.[1]

Of the English, there were two Slain out right, and about twenty Wounded: Some Fainted by reason of the sharpness of the Weather, it being a cool Morning, and the want of such Comforts and Necessaries as were needful in such a Case; especially our Chyrurgeon was much wanting, whom we left with our Barks in Narragansett Bay, who had Order there to remain until the Night before our intended Assault.

1) The Place at the Fort being called Mistick, this Fight was called Mistick Fight: And Mr. Increase Mather, from a Manuscript He met with, tells us; It was Friday, May 26, 1637, a memorable Day.

Appearances before the Particular Court of Connecticut

The first official document that shows Aaron Stark was living in New England, and within the jurisdiction of the Particular Court of Connecticut, was dated April 11, 1639. From this and two later documents we discover why Aaron's character was later described by James Savage as "an unpromising youth, appearing before the court and punished by being whipped," for when Aaron appeared before the Particular Court on this date, he was accused of and convicted for engaging in certain "unclean practices." [1]

The record in question has five sentences, as follows:[2]

- 1) *Jn. Edmunds, Aaron Stark, and Jn. Williams were censured for vncleane practises as foll.*
- 2) *Jn. [Edmunds] Williams to be whipt att a Carts arse vppon a lecture day att Hartford.*
- 3) *Jn. Williams to stand vppon the pillory from the ringing of the first bell to the end of the lecture then to be whipt att a Carts arse and to be whipt in like maner att Windsore within 8 dayes following.*
- 4) *Aaron Starke to Stand vppon the pillory and be whipt as Williams and to haue the letter R burnt vppon his cheeke and in regard of the wrong done to Mary Holt to pay her parents 10L and in defect of such to the Common Wealth and when both are fit for that Condition to marry her;*
- 5) *It is the mind of the Court that Mr. Ludlow and Mr. Phelps see some publike punishment inflicted vppon the girle for Concealing it soe long.*

After the first sentence named Aaron Stark as one of three men "censured for vncleane practises," the remaining four sentences that follow specified the punishment the court ordered for each of the three men. Let us examine and analyze each of these four sentences in turn and see what the document tells us — and what it does not. According to the second sentence of the transcription, John Edmunds was to receive the punishment described therein. A note in the 1928 publication in which this transcription is found states, however, that in the original document the name Edmunds had been struck through by the recorder, who presumably also wrote in above the name Williams. (This leads to some confusion, because the third sentence also describes punishment for John Williams. Assuming John Edmunds was in fact accused, as stated in the first sentence, he either received no physical punishment or the second sentence actually describes the punishment John Edmunds was to receive. This point, while interesting, is not central to the matter of Aaron's punishment.)

The punishment John Williams was to receive included standing upon the pillory all day, being pulled and whipped behind a cart through the settlement of Hartford, and, within eight days, being similarly pulled and whipped behind a cart through the settlement of Windsor.

The fourth sentence states that Aaron's punishment was to be identical to that of John Williams; that is, Aaron was to be chastised in the manner, and in the same settlements, as prescribed in the third sentence. But sentence four goes on to mention additional punishment for Aaron. He was also to have a "R" burned into his cheek, and "in regard of the wrong done to Mary Holt" he was ordered to pay the substantial sum of 10 pounds to her parents and to marry the young woman.

Although Mary Holt had not been censured in the first sentence, the last sentence of the court's judgment did direct that she was to receive a public punishment "for Concealing it soe long." The implication of the sequence of punishments, and the wording of this last phrase, leads us to believe that Mary Holt was pregnant with Aaron's child at the time the court met and that Aaron was held responsible for the pregnancy, although the absence of any reference to other women also suggests that all three men had transgressed with Mary.

We turn now to the punishments inflicted and what we can learn from them. The first issue is what they may tell us about Aaron's place of residence. The fourth sentence ordered him to "Stand vppon the pillory and be whipt as Williams." Williams was to be whipped first in Hartford and then again (within eight days) at Windsor. This phrase can be read in different ways, though. It could mean that Williams was to be whipped not only in the colony's capital, Hartford, but in Windsor (his home?) as well, while Aaron was to be punished in his own town, whether Hartford, Windsor, or some other place. But the use of the words "whipt as Williams" makes it more likely that both men were to be whipped not only in the seat of the court but a second town in which both men lived: Windsor. Thus we have a clue — though not proof — that Aaron Stark might have been a resident of Windsor in 1639.

Why was Aaron branded on the cheek with the letter "R"? Could it be because he was regarded as a rapist (in contemporary language, a "ravisher")? We see how serious an offense this was from the General Lawes adopted in December, 1641, by the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Bay, which stated the following in Article 15 of its Capital Laws: "*If any man shal RAVISH any maid or single womā, cōmitting carnal copulation with her by force, against her own will; that is above the age of ten years he shal be punished either with death, or with some other grievous punishment according to circumstances as the Judges, or General court shal determin.*"

1) 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. Originally published in Boston, 1860-1862. "STARKE, or START, ARRON, Hartford 1639, or Windsor 1643, an unpromis. youth, subject. by sentence of Court to whip. rem. to New London 1655, near Stonington, freem. 1669; d. as, 1685, leav. s. Aaron, John, William, and had ds. wh. m. John Fish and Josiah Haynes."

2) Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, 1639-1663. Published by the Connecticut Historical Society and the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Connecticut, Hartford, 1928, page 3.

This would have been a serious offense, though we do not know that the new colony of Connecticut had such a law of its own. In any case, the existence of a law cannot convict a man: the court's record shows only that Aaron and the others were charged with "vncleane practises," not with raping Mary Holt. An alternative explanation is that Aaron was being branded as a "rogue," a designation, according to some authorities, Puritans reserved for those in the community deemed as having "acted out" in a "lude and lascivious" way. In being so branded, they were "culled out, or removed, from the other specimens (i.e. the "normal" men of mankind)." At this distance of time and cultural change, we can only speculate exactly why Aaron was branded, for the record does not provide us with additional information, though we can be sure that his offense was regarded as a serious one.

Did Aaron Stark marry Mary Holt? Despite the court's order that the couple wed, there is no evidence that they did so, and neither is there any evidence a child was ever born to Mary. Furthermore, four months after this April court appearance, on August 1, 1639, the Particular Court took up another matter involving Mary Holt. In its decision, it stated that: "*In Bennett & Mary Holt were both censured to be whipt for unclean practises and the girls Mr. is injoynd to send her out of this Jurisdiction before the last of the next month.*"[1] This court record would seem to verify that Aaron did not marry Mary Holt, at least not between April 11, 1639 and August 1, 1639, for if she were the wife of Aaron Stark on August 1 the records would have referred to her as Mary Stark. And if Mary Holt was the wife of Aaron in August, wouldn't she — and Bennett — have been accused of adultery rather than unclean practices? Instead, the court record suggests that Mary Holt and John Bennett were single persons at that time, which leads us to believe that Mary and Aaron Stark had not married by August 1, 1639.

Then who was the Mr. "injoynd to send her out of this Jurisdiction before the last of the next month"? Had Mary Holt been the wife of Aaron Stark at the time of the August 1639 court session, then most certainly the "Mr." could have been Aaron Stark. Had Mary Holt been an indentured servant, on the other hand, the "Mr." would have been the man who owned her contract, who probably would have been ordered to remove her from the court's jurisdiction. Since (as we have seen) the court record suggests that Aaron and Mary were not a married couple on August 1, 1639, and since the April court specifically and clearly ordered Aaron Stark to pay the parents of Mary Holt 10 pounds, is it not more likely that the "Mr." was Mary Holt's father?

However, after reviewing these comments, John Choate contributed the following regarding the identification of the "Mr." who was to remove Mary Holt from the community: "*Mr. was an abbreviation for "Minister" not just a random designation of a male. The minister was elected by the congregation, and was literate, and a preacher. At this time, probably also schooled and educated as an ordained minister. He had a flock, and this was a theocracy (i.e. the church was the government).*" Having the "Minister" remove a member of his congregation from the jurisdiction of the Church (and the community) would have been more likely in that day and time.

Thus we should not accept the April court record in itself as proof of a marriage between Mary Holt and Aaron Stark, for other evidence argues persuasively to the contrary. There is one more intriguing aspect of this matter, however. The last sentence in the April document stated that Mary Holt was to be punished "for concealing it soe long," which certainly seems to suggest Mary Holt may have been in a fairly advanced state of pregnancy that spring. How does this bear upon a possible marriage between her and Aaron? It could be that Aaron did not follow through and marry Mary because she was never pregnant at all, which in the eyes of the community would have released him from any obligation he might have felt.

Lastly, let us ask ourselves this: was Aaron an innocent? Certainly not, and neither was Mary. But this one incident, unpleasant as it was, is hardly enough to convict Aaron of a life of debauchery, although there is much we do not know about the kind of life he did lead during these years. Unfortunately, however, Aaron got into trouble again the next year, 1640, and this time the infraction was worse — so bad, in fact, that the earliest Stark family researchers seem to have ignored or even suppressed the facts, for reasons that are understandable.

On July 2, 1640, the Particular Court directed that: [2]

- *Nicholas Senthion for not appearing to witness agaynst Aron Starke is ffyned to pay ffyne pownd to the Country.*
- *John Porter one of the Constables of Wyndsor is to keepe the said Aron Starke with locke and Chaine and hold him to hard labour & course dyet vntil he be cauled to bring him forth vppon the next somons.*
- *The said Aron being accused of buggery with a heifer, confesseth that he leaned crosse over the heifers fflanke, though at the first he denied that he came neere her, lastly he acknowledgeth that he had twice comitted the acte with the heifer but that shee was to narrowe.*

Here again we do not know whether this was a crime yet in Connecticut, as it became in Massachusetts a little more than a year later: "*If any man or woman shall LYE WITH ANY BEAST, or bruit creature, by carnall copulation; they shall surely be put to death and the beast shall be slain, & buried, and not eaten. Lev. 20, 15. 16.*"

1) *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, 1639-1663.* Published by the Connecticut Historical Society and the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Connecticut, Hartford, 1928, page 4. Has the passage about Mary Holt and John Bennett.

2) *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, 1639-1663.* Published by the Connecticut Historical Society and the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Connecticut, Hartford, 1928, Page 13. Has the July 2, 1640 appearance before the court.

A modern researcher, John M. Murrin, has interpreted Aaron's two court appearances in a manner that gives us food for thought.[1] He writes:

"In July 1640 Aaron Starke of Windsor was accused of bugging a heifer. A year earlier he had been whipped and fined, and the letter R was burned upon his cheek (for attempted rape?), for 'the wrong done to Mary Holt . . . and when both are fit for that Condition to marry her.' Instead, a month or two later she was whipped and banished for 'uncleane practises' with John Bennett. Starke was still single when accused of bestiality. He 'confesseth that he leaned crosse over the heifers Flanke, though at the first he denied that he came neere her, lastly he acknowledgeth that he had twice committed the acte wth the heifer but that shee was to narrowe.' The court ordered a constable to keep him 'wth locke and Chaine and hold him to hard labour & course diet' until summoned to trial. Nicholas Sension, the lifelong homosexual, was fined for not appearing to testify at this trial. One has to wonder how intimate the relationship was between these two men. The records of the next several courts have not survived, but Stark was not executed. Connecticut had not yet declared bestiality a capital crime, and the court may also have concluded that his confession amounted to no more than admission of the attempt, not the act. [Note 20]"

Since (as Murrin points out) Aaron's action, while distasteful to consider, was not yet a capital offense in Connecticut in 1640, his treatment by the Particular Court was measured and moderate, though we do not know exactly what it was. An interesting dimension of this matter is that Nicholas Senthion (Sension) was fined five pounds for not appearing as a witness. Murrin provides one possible explanation, which may or may not be correct. Although the text of the court record implies the accusation against Aaron was based on the act being witnessed by Nicholas Sension, we know nothing of his motives, and we do not know if Sension's testimony was voluntary or forced. It was not uncommon for false accusations to be made against persons by those with a vindictive spirit, especially individuals lower in station in the community than themselves. Perhaps, either because Aaron had rejected his advances or in order to preserve his own reputation, Sension falsely accused Aaron and later decided not to testify because he knew that Aaron was innocent. Perhaps Sension's testimony had been obtained by coercion and he later declined to testify, despite the penalty.

Whatever the facts of the matter, this case closed in an uncertain manner, but the very subject matter of the accusation led to its virtual disappearance from the Stark family history.

On April 6, 1643, though, Aaron was back before the Court. This time the court record states: "Aron Starke is aiudged to be whiped at Winsor tomorrow, & then to serve Captaine Mason during ye pleasure of ye Court." [2] The record also shows that Mason was present in court that day. By now, Aaron was at risk of being banished altogether. Circumstantial evidence suggests that Mason, acquainted with Stark and held responsible for the safety of the Connecticut settlements, intervened in Aaron's behalf — *probably because he could not afford the loss of a single fighting man, and perhaps because he saw some redeeming qualities in Stark*. It may be that Mason (or one of the members of the court) suggested that Aaron be directed to serve the Captain for an indefinite period of time. The gamble paid off, and this remedy ensured that Aaron's days of getting into trouble would come to an end.

Thus this brief period in Aaron's life, with its three court appearances — *all of them for actions that do not reflect positively upon his character and moral behavior, helps to explain why so many researchers over the years depicted him in a negative manner*. He may well have been an unsavory person, though there is hardly enough evidence to establish that point, but there is another way to look at what we have seen. The later behavior of Mary Holt and Nicholas Sension suggests that Aaron could have been guilty of associating with the wrong people, who led him astray until he found a strong and moral mentor in John Mason. It does seem noteworthy that after the last of these three appearances before the Particular Court, Aaron had no further charges brought against him, either because he realized the errors of his way or because Mason straightened him out. As we will learn, he became a trustworthy servant of John Mason and a solid citizen, and in the end this fact seems more significant than these youthful indiscretions that blackened his reputation for so many years.[3]

1) John M. Murrin, "*Things Fearful to Name: Bestiality in Colonial America*." Published in the quarterly journal, *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* (Volume 65, Number 5, Special Supplement Issue, 1998, pages 8-43). {Mullins Source for note 20: Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, 1639-1663 (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, 1928), pages 3, 4, 13, 20.}

2) *Records of the Particular Court of Connecticut, 1639-1663*, Pages 19 & 20. Reveals John Mason was present at the April 6, 1643 appearance before the court and reports the court order for Aaron Stark to serve Mason.

3) **Author's Comment:** As we have seen, Captain John Mason [ca.1600-1672] of Connecticut was a key figure in the life of Aaron Stark. There were two men by that name and rank who were prominent in New England history, and it is important not to confuse the Captain John Mason [1585-1635] of New Hampshire fame with the man we are discussing here. For more information on the New Hampshire Mason, see Peter Wilson Coldham's "*The Complete Book of Emigrants, 1607-1660*." Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc. Baltimore, Maryland, 1987.

Aaron Stark, Tenant Farmer on the John Mason Stonington Land Grant

Aaron's first two court appearances mentioned the settlement of Windsor, Connecticut, which suggests that he may have been a resident there in the years 1639 and 1640. [We can say with certainty only that he was a resident of one of the three communities from which Captain John Mason's soldiers in the Pequot War were recruited, and one of those towns was Windsor.] But when the court ordered Aaron to "*serve Captaine Mason during ye pleasure of ye Court,*" we can be quite confident that he had become a resident of Windsor, for this was where Mason lived at the time.

During the years between 1643 and 1653 there are no records of Aaron's own activities. We assume that he must have been serving Mason, principally as a tenant or caretaker for Mason's property but perhaps in other capacities as well. By examining what Mason was doing at that time, where he was living, and also the historical context in Connecticut, we get a sense of what was happening around Aaron Stark during this silent decade before he reappears in the surviving records in 1653. We can also speculate about where Aaron was living at various times.

For background on what Mason was doing at that time, we turn to Frances Manwaring Caulkins' History of Norwich, which states:[1]

"With the residence of Capt. Mason at Windsor, all the stirring scenes of the Pequot war are connected ... {description of Mason's exploits during the Pequot war}... The skill, prudence, firmness and active courage displayed by Mason in this exploit, were such as to gain him a high standing among military commanders. From this period he became renowned as an Indian fighter, and stood forth a buckler of defense to the exposed colonists, but a trembling and a terror to the wild people of the wilderness.

*In 1637, he was appointed by the General Court the chief military officer of the colony, his duty being "to train the military men" of the several plantations ten days in every year: salary, forty pounds per annum. * ["The saide Capt. Mason shall have liberty to traine the saide military men in every plantation ten days in every yeare, see as it be not in June or July." Conn. Col. Rec., 1, 15.] At the later period, (1654), he was authorized to assemble all the train-bands of the colony one in two years for a general review. The office was equivalent to that of Major-General. He retained it through the remainder of his life, thirty-five years, and during that time appears to have been the only person in the colony with the rank and title of Major. When the Fort at Saybrook was transferred by Col. Fenwick to the jurisdiction of the colony, Mason was appointed to receive the investment, and at the special request of the inhabitants he removed to that place and was made commander of the station. Here he had his home for the next twelve years.*

The people of New Haven were not entirely satisfied with their location, and formed a design of removing to a tract of land which they had purchased on the Delaware River. In 1651 they proposed this matter to Capt. Mason, urgently requesting him to remove with them and take the management of the company. This invitation is a proof of the high opinion his contemporaries had formed both of his civil and military talents. The offers they made him were liberal, and he was on the point of accepting, when the Legislature of Connecticut interfered, entreating him not to leave the colony, and declaring that they could by no means consent to his removal. Finding that his presence was considered essential to the safety of Connecticut, he declined the offers of New Haven. If he went there was no one left who could make his place good; neither had New Haven any person in reserve who could fill the station designed for him, and therefore the projected settlement never took place. The active disposition of MASON, however, never lacked employment. There was scarcely a year in which he was not obliged to go on some expedition among the Indian tribes to negotiate, or to fight, or to pacify their mutual quarrels. At one time his faithful friend Uncas was in danger from a powerful league of the other tribes, but the seasonable preparations of MASON for his relief frightened the foe into peace and submission. At another time he was sent with arms and men to the assistance of the Long Island Indians against Ninigrate, the powerful sachem of the Nahanticks, who threatened them with extirpation. This service he gallantly performed, but only two years afterwards was compelled to appear again on that island with a band of soldiers, in order to chastise the very Indians, mischievous and ungrateful, whom he had before relieved."

Without documentary evidence we cannot prove that Aaron was himself involved in any of Mason's activities during these years, but because he was sentenced to serve Mason personally – *and because we know Aaron was a soldier in the Pequot War* – we are probably correct in drawing two conclusions. The first is he would have remained physically close to Mason, moving when and where his master and/or landlord did. The second is that Aaron most likely would have been a member of any fighting force that Mason collected and employed during the decade from 1643 to 1653. Further discussion of Mason's movements and activities are thus relevant here.

According to Caulkins, Mason's first three children (Priscilla, Samuel, and John) were born in Windsor, where Aaron was serving. Caulkins described John Mason as "stern and unrelenting in the execution of justice, and as a magistrate and commander, dictatorial and self-reliant." [15] About 1646, Saybrook Fort was transferred to the control of Connecticut and, as Caulkins stated, Mason moved to Saybrook, where he remained for the next twelve years. The Particular Court of Connecticut ordered Mason to take command of Saybrook Fort June 2, 1647:[2]

"It was then further Ordered, that Capten Mason should for the peace, safty and good asurance of this Comon welth, haue the comaund of all soulders and inhabitants of Seabrooke, and in case of alarum or daynger by approch of an enimy, to drawe forth or put the said soulders & inhabitants in such posture for the defence of the place, as to him shall seeme best.... Whereas Capten Mason, at the spetiall instance and request of the inhabitation of Seabrooke, together wth the good likeing of this Comon welth, did leaue his habitio in the riur and repaire thither, to exercise a place of trust."

1) Caulkins, Frances Manwaring, "[History of Norwich, Connecticut](#)" Pages 141&142.

2) J. Hammond Trumbell, "[The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut](#)." Volume 1, pages 155&156.

Additional Mason children (Rachel, Anne, Daniel, and Elizabeth) were born in Saybrook.[1] Because Aaron was still in the service of Mason, one would suppose he also moved to Saybrook.

John Mason received his two land grants east of the Mystic River from the town of Pequot on March 16, 1650/51, and on November 15, 1651. By granting these properties, the townsmen of Pequot had ensured that Mason would acquire a personal interest in the welfare of this region. A more practical motive may have been the court's desire to monitor and, if necessary, check the activities of a recent immigrant from Massachusetts named William Chesebrough, who they suspected might be engaged in trading with or even stirring up the Indians. This interpretation is strengthened by the following phrase, found in Mason's second land grant: "*The Townsmen of Pequet having considered of the spetiall use they are like to have of there land toward Mistick and Pocatuck for feeding of cattle - doe conceive it very necessary either to remove the Indians from the place by Mistick wch was once allowed to some familis (Expresly nominated) to have to live there the townsmen have agreed forthwith to remove them and have the Captain Mason to yield us what help he can in this pricular who hath promised with our consent to effect wch joyntly wee have consented*"[2]

Soon thereafter, Aaron Stark reappears after ten years in the shadows. First, the New London land records report that on June 1, 1653, he was a witness with Matthew Beckwith to a deed made between William Chesebrough and the Indians.[3] Six months later, Aaron was mentioned for the first time in the diary of Thomas Minor, a resident of what would evolve into the town of Stonington, Connecticut. Minor began this invaluable document early in 1653 and continued it for another three decades. A diary entry on December 8 of that year probably refers to Aaron when it says "*Captin Masons man Came for one yoke of oxen.*"[4] [It is possible that Mason had other servants, but it is a reasonable assumption that the reference is to Aaron because Minor's diary does not mention any other such servants.] Thomas Minor had been appointed military sergeant in the town of Pequot May of 1649. On October 15, 1652, Minor sold his property in Pequot and purchased the property of Cary Latham, which bordered the property laid out for John Mason at the mouth of the Mystic River.

Thus, Thomas Minor would have been Aaron Stark's close neighbor, as the frequent references to Stark in the former's diary would seem to confirm. Minor's loan of oxen was probably made to allow Aaron to start clearing the land for planting in the spring. Since there is no indication that Mason himself moved to the Stonington area, now or later, it would appear that Aaron Stark had now earned the opportunity to work without Mason's close supervision; the financial relationship of Mason and Stark may also have changed at this point, but we can only speculate about this topic.

Aaron may have married in Saybrook before moving to the Mason land grant in 1653. This supposition is based on the probable years of birth of his children, along with the dates of Minor's diary entries. Aaron's two oldest sons (Aaron, Jr., and John) both served in King Phillip's War in 1675, which meant they had to have been born between about 1654 and 1659 for them to have reached the minimum age for militia service (16 years old) that year.

No record of marriage for Aaron Stark, Sr., has been found nor seems likely to be found, but it is thought the name of his bride was Sarah: a Sarah Stark was one of the witnesses to a deed of sale made by Aaron in 1670, the year (as we will learn later) he sold his Stonington land grant to Robert Fleming.[5]

We can only speculate, too, about Sarah's given name and her family. Since she bore children well into the 1660s, she was evidently considerably younger than Aaron, who was about 45 in 1653. Could she have been the daughter of one of Mason's servants, and was their marriage one of convenience? One can easily imagine that Aaron's reputation (reinforced by his scar) would have made it difficult for him to find in the Connecticut communities a woman who would willingly marry him. Mason, charged with responsibility for Aaron's behavior, could have arranged a marriage with a young woman also in his employ. In Mason's view, such a marriage might help to encourage Aaron's proper behavior while he was living some distance from Mason in Saybrook.

1) Caulkins, Frances Manwaring, "*History of Norwich, Connecticut.*" Page 146.

2) New London Town Records, 1651-1660; page 7.

3) Stark, Helen. Article prepared in 1937 entitled, "*Known Facts & Authorities*". Her source was the New London Land Records.

4) Original publishers of the Diaries: Sidney H. Minor and George D. Stanton, publishers of Thomas' Diary in 1899; and Frank Denison Minor and Hannah Minor, publishers of Manasseh's Diary in 1915. (LDS microfilm number 1036221.) Page 6. "1653; The tenth month desember .31. days thursday the first, thursday the .8. and wensday the .14. Captin masons man Came for one yoke of oxen and thursday the .15. & thursday the .22. I had plowed two days crosse the (la)nd and this same day I begun to (torn) timber at the mill broocke"; **Translation:** 1653, The Tenth month, December, which has 31 days. Thursday was the first day of the month. The 8th. was on Thursday. Wednesday was the 14th. Captain Mason's man came for one yoke of oxen on Thursday the 15th. On Thursday the 22nd I had plowed two days across the land and on this day I then began to ?cut/chop? timber at the mill brook. [**Author's comments:** Why was December the tenth month? Because the English New Year started March 25th. The rest of Europe started the New Year on January 1st.] (Contributor: Gwen Boyer Bjorkman)

5) Church of Latter-day Saints of Jesus Christ Microfilm Film #5593, Stonington, New London County, Connecticut. Deeds: 1664-1714, Book 1, page 123; September 26, 1670.

We turn now to other Stark-related entries in Minor's diary, many of which document the normal relationships of rural neighbors. On Monday, January 2, 1653/54, Minor delivered oxen to "Aron Starke" for the use of Major Mason.[1] The next year, on March 15 (1654/55) and again on June 5 (1655), Aaron lent his oxen to Thomas for plowing. Thomas bought a hat from Aaron and paid him in part with a calf but still owed 9 more shillings to complete the payment for services rendered. During January of 1657/58, Thomas appears to have been building a house, for he writes he received his "ribs" for the house (probably rafters for the roof) on Friday, January 15. One week later, he worked with Aaron Stark, which likely means that Stark came to work on Minor's house. (The term "wrought" used by Thomas could mean work, or if the intended word were "wrought" it could mean "hammered.")[2]

On March 2, 1660/61, Thomas requested that Aaron meet with him nine days later to establish the boundary between his property and John Mason's property. Aaron replied he could not do this until Major Mason was available, which underscores the fact that Stark was the hired hand of an absentee master or landlord. In January 1661/62, Thomas and others apparently "fetched" a heifer from Aaron's place for "Sam and Hanna," which may mean that the heifer had wandered on to the Mason property and that Aaron had claimed ownership – presumably for Mason.[2]

The next entry in March 1661/1662 was significant because it is the first one in which Minor refers to Aaron as "Goodman Starts." Minor calls many individuals "Goodman" but does not use the term for others. Could his use of "Goodman" for Aaron here hint at his having achieved a higher status within the church or community, or does it only show that Minor had warmed to his neighbor after several years in close proximity? Also in this entry, Minor reports that Aaron's Indian came to visit on Friday, March 7. Who could this Indian have been – another servant of Mason, or perhaps an Indian informer Aaron had been supervising for the Captain? Later, on Tuesday, March 11, Minor reports the framing of Aaron's house was completed. Since Aaron had helped Minor with the building of his own house, it may be that Minor had returned that favor.[2]

On October 15, 1663, Sarah apparently gave birth to a child who died on this day, as Minor recorded the child's death.[3] Since neither the name nor sex of the child was given, we presume this child was an infant who was never named. On May 13, 1664, Thomas Minor reports in his diary that a beech tree that marked a boundary between the Minor and Mason properties had been destroyed by fire, perhaps by a lightning strike.[3] Minor, Robert Hempstead, and Captain Denison had been witnesses to the setting of this mark when the property was originally laid out for Mason. Minor called upon Aaron Stark, Sr., and John Gallop, Sr., to go with him as witnesses that the tree had been destroyed and to assist in resetting the boundary with another mark. This entry concludes those in Minor's diary that mention Aaron's specific activities, but several more in 1663 and 1664, though difficult to comprehend, may reflect the fact that Aaron's position in the community was changing.

On July 6, 1663, a Captain Morrice was reported to be a "prisoner at Aaron's," which suggests that Aaron had been given some official responsibility involving enforcement of the laws. In August, the diary has another entry, which has been transcribed as follows: "*On August 21st, Aron Stark told us that about five weeks before, Captain Denison said it (??) did not matter, all though I (Thomas Minor) did argue I might do what I could for Tagwouncke (Minor's name for his property). I (Thomas) could not tolerate it for it was the Coledges land. It was about the 15th or 16th of July this was spoken of to Jo Fish and Aron Stark at the Morgans.*" Whatever "it" is in this passage, clearly Minor and Stark are now more like equals than they were before, when the latter was merely Mason's servant. Evidently the matter was unsettling to Minor, for he seems to feel uneasy about either the outcome or perhaps some event that happened in July.[3] Then, in 1664, exact date unknown, Minor writes another unclear entry, which would seem to read as follows: "*The choice was made before Goodman Cheesebrough challeged Mr. Stanton to make good his promise to go with him ?while? another showed it afterward and Aron foretold it 7 days earlier.*"[3] The general topic evidently was the dispute over jurisdiction of the region east of the Mystic River, but the reference to Aaron's having "foretold it" puzzles Stark researchers: did Aaron make a prediction about the matter, or did he have some advance word about the outcome and tip off his friends?

- 1) Minor, John A., The Minor Diaries, Page 6; "1653 (The) Eleventh month Januarie .31 (days saba)th day the first (mo)nday (torn) (deliver)ed .2. oxen to Aron Starke for the yuse of major masson satterday the (torn) there was a greate snow" **Translation:** 1653, The Eleventh month, January, which has 31 days. ??? was the first Monday ????. Delivered on the 2nd oxen to Aron Starke for the use of Major Mason. Saturday, the ?probably day? there was a great snow. [Author's comment: It would appear Thomas Minor took his oxen to Aaron Stark, living on the Mason property, on the 2nd day of January.]
- 2) Ibid. {Page 13: 1654/5 - The first month is march and hath .31. days being the yeare 1655. Thursday the first and thursday the .15. that weeke I had Arons oxen to plow and thursday .22. I was at mill.} {Page 14: 1655 - The fourth month is June and hath .30. days friday the first and satterday the .2. We had the wooll from goodwife shaw and tusday the .5. I had a calfe of Aron Starke in parte of pay for my hat and 9 shillings still is due and Friday the .8. the Indeans begun to play. (Author's Comment: This could also be interpreted to mean Aaron paid Thomas for a hat or Thomas paid Aaron for a hat. The term "I had a Calfe of Aron Starke in parte of pay for my hat" is confusing as to who was paying who for the hat.);} {Page 27: 1657 - The Leventh month is Januarie . & friday the .15 I had got ribs for the house and friday the .22 I wrought wt Aron Stark I agreed with herman garek about my canoow the .29;} {Page 43: 1660 - The second of march I sent to Aron Start to com the .11. of march and renew the bounds between us and he sent me word he would not till the major did com.} {Page 48: 1661 - The eleventh month is Januarie .31. days . the .13. day being monday we fetched sam & hanah ther heighfer from Arons & wensday the 22. mr Brigden was at poquatucke.} {Page 49: 1661/2 - The first month march & hath 31 days . tusday Thomas was at new London Friday the 7th Goodman starts Indian came to him saterday the .8 tusday the 11th we made an end of framing at starts our whit calvfe died saterday the 15 I was ill in my head the 16. day I took phisicke}
- 3) Ibid. {Page 58: 1663 - The fife month is July & hath .31. days wensday the first monday the 6th I came whome from Coneticut Captaine morrice was a prisoner at Arons wensday the .8. Samuell Cheesbrough brought The Execution.} {Pages 59&60: 1663 - The eight moneth is october & have .31. days Thursday the first Thursday the .8. I was at the generall Court Thursday the 15 I came whome The same day Aron starts Childe died & Thursday .22. Clement was heare} {Pages 189&190: The 21. of August 1663 Aron start tould us that about yt day .5. weeks before the Captayne Denison said it was no matter though I did build I might do what I would at tagwouncke I should never enjoy it for it was the Coledges land it was about the 15 or 16. of July this was spoken: Jo: fish: Aron stark: at morgans.} {Pages 192-193: The 13. of may 1664. the originall Bound Tree marked in a litell swamp: on the west side of the Creek between the major mason and Carie latham being a great Beech tree marked by Thomas minor and Robert hempstead being appointed thereunto: and Captaine denison a witness with us: was burned downe and Aron start senior and John gallop senior did both goe with me and see it did say in my hearing that washam did it the 6 day of the week.} {Page 201: 1664: The Choyce was made before: for goodman Cheesbrough Challeged mr stanton to make good his p mise to goe with him another owned it afterward and Aron fore-tould it 7 days}

This dispute came about because the General Court of Connecticut claimed jurisdiction to the Pawcatuck River (present day border with Rhode Island). Massachusetts questioned this claim, which was then referred to the Commissioners of the United Colonies for a decision. While awaiting the decision, the planters in the region were advised "to carry themselves & order their affaires peaceably, and by common agreement." On June 30, 1658, a local government was formed and a constitution was prepared titled "The Association of Poquatuck People." Those signing the document were: William Chesebrough and his three sons, Samuel, Nathaniel, and Elisha; Thomas Stanton and his son Thomas; Walter Palmer (father-in-law of Thomas Minor) and his two sons, Elihu and Moses; George Denison; and Thomas Shaw.

Three months later the Commissioners of the United Colonies decided that the territory in dispute belonged to Massachusetts, and the General Court of that colony named it "Southertown" and placed it under the jurisdiction of Suffolk County. It remained a township of Massachusetts until the Charter of Connecticut issued by King Charles II (dated April 25, 1662) fixed the eastern boundary of Connecticut at the Pawcatuck River. The return of the region to the jurisdiction of Connecticut was not acceptable to some of the planters, who were unwilling to acknowledge the change in jurisdiction. In 1664, however, they united in choosing William Chesebrough as their first representative to the General Court of Connecticut. With much effort and considerable delay, he was successful in resolving the disturbed relations between the plantations east of the Mystic and the court. In 1665, the name of Southertown was changed to that of Mystic, and in the year following to Stonington.

Perhaps the passage in the Minor diary was related to these events. On October 13, 1664, the court record reported the reconciliation and acceptance of Connecticut's jurisdiction by the plantations east of the Mystic River:[25] "*Mistick & Pawcatuck haueing by Mr. Cheesbrook petitioned this Court for their fauoure to pass by their offences, the Court haueing considered the same doe hereby declare that what irregularities or abusiuue practices haue proceeded from them, whereby they haue seemed to offer contempt to the authority here established, it shall be forgiuen and baryed in perpetuall obliuion and forgetfulness, and this to extend it selfe to all ye members of the aforesaid plantation, Captain Denison onely excepted, whoe hath neglected or refused to submitt himself peaceably to the order of the Councill of this Colony.*"

That same day, October 13, 1664, the General Court of Connecticut acted in a way that would have a profound impact on Aaron Stark's future when it ruled:[1] "*Whereas, Mr. Wm. Thomson of New London, is remoueing himself from thence to Virginia, and is indebted by Bills the sume of Twenty nine pounds, seven shillings and fower pence, which Bill is in the hands of John Packer, This Court orders the Constable of New London to secure so much of the estate of Mr. Thomson in his hands, as it shall be apprized by indifferent men, and the sayd Constable is to keep it in his hands, till he hath order from this Court or the Court of Magistrates, to dispose of it to the right owner which is according to Mr. Thomsons tender to the Court of Magistrates, October 11, 1664.*" About a month later, on November 5, 1664, Aaron Stark purchased the property of Rev. William Thompson, located in New London at the head of the Mystic on the west side of the river.[2]

Aaron Becomes a Property Owner & Freeman

The records show, however, that on March 22, 1663/64, Aaron had been granted 150 acres by the Townsmen of "Southertown":[3] "*.....on the 22 of March 1664 (?March 22, 1663/64?), by the order of the town was Layed out one hundred and fiftie Acres of Land unto Aaron Stark of Southertown, as followeth The Length of it east & be South The cross line south & be west with a freshit running through it, with the medow belonging thereunto this sayd Land lieth near the head of Thomas Parkes Land...*"

Presuming this date to be correct, then Aaron received this land grant – from the township of "Southertown," it should be noted, a place that did not acknowledge the jurisdiction of Connecticut – *about seven months before he purchased the Thompson property (a topic that will be discussed in more detail later)*. Did this reflect the fact that the earlier grant was ultimately considered invalid, or did Aaron simply pursue a better opportunity that came along afterwards?

Thompson had an interesting role in colonial Connecticut as a missionary to the Pequots. Charles R. Stark, in his publication entitled "Groton, Conn. 1705-1905," quoted Rev. Frederick Denison as follows:[4] "*At an early day a missionary was chosen to labor among them (the Indians). By invitation, we infer, from Capt. George Denison, the Rev. William Thompson, son of the Rev. William Thompson was engaged in 1657 by the court of commissioners, acting as agents for the; 'Society for Propagating the Gospel in New England,' and received a salary of ten pounds per annum for the first two years and twenty pounds per annum for the next two, after which the stipend was withheld for alleged 'neglect.' His residence was usually in New London but he ministered to the Pequots at Mystic and Pawcatuck...Owning to the intractable character of the Pequots and his own feeble health, Mr. Thompson left them and removed to Surrey County, Virginia, in 1663...*"

Again, according to C. R. Stark: "*Rev. William Thompson was appointed missionary to the Pequots. He was the owner of a farm in Groton which he sold to Aaron Starke between 1666 and 1669. Probably he never resided upon this farm, though his missionary labors were confined to the Indians of Mystic and Pawcatuck.*"

1) J. Hammond Trumbell, "*The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut.*" Volume 1, pages 433&434.

2) New London Town Records 1647-1666 (Extracted by Eva Butler, Historian), page 123.

3) Church of Latter-day Saints of Jesus Christ Microfilm Film #5593 Stonington, New London County, Connecticut. Deeds: 1664-1714; Book 1, page 58 (Transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman).

4) Charles R. Stark, Groton, Conn. 1705-1905. Pages 51&72. Self-published a book. Palmer Press of Stonington, Connecticut. Printed 300 copies.

Aaron may have purchased 500 acres or more from Thompson, so by the end of 1664 he had 150 acres in Stonington and the Thompson property in New London – quite a bit of land. The deed (to be quoted later) only states: "*Know all men by these presents That I William Thomson Late of New London in the Jurisdiction of Conecticot Minister upon serious Good and vulluable consideration sell Alienate pass and make over unto Aaron Starke of Mistick these following parcellls of upland and meadows.*"[1] Where did Aaron get the money to purchase the Thompson property, which must have cost at least 29£ if its sale was to pay off Thompson's debt? It may be that Mason assisted Aaron with his purchase, for he was present at the October court.

Aaron and Sarah continued to live on the Mason grant. Later records reveal they did not live on the land grant in Stonington, and neither did they move to the Thompson property until between 1667 and 1668. Sarah Stark, their oldest daughter, was born about 1660 on the Mason land grant, and their youngest son, William Stark, Sr., was born there in 1664.

Aaron was granted fifty-acres located on the Pachaug River (Near Norwich) in October of 1670. In the public record will be found a May 8, 1679 court entry mentioning this land grant:[2] "*This Court appoints Mr. Tho: Tracy and Mr. Tho: Lefingwell to lay out to Mr. Amos Riches on a former grant of land to him according to his grant and to Aron Start and to James Rogers or their assignest their grants of land according to their respective grants.*"

Aaron's fifty-acres and the fifty-acres granted to James Rogers, apparently adjacent to Aaron's property, were laid out in one piece for Thomas Parke (Senior) May 28, 1679.[2] The surveys must have been ordered in preparation for the sale of these two fifty-acre tracts to Thomas Parke. These grants were located within the boundary of New London County and Aaron's was probably awarded to him by the County (his place of residence in October of 1670). This was Aaron Stark's last known property transaction.

On May 10, 1666, the Connecticut Court announced their approval of men who were to become freemen. The record states: "*And to these of Stonington (approved to become freemen); — Nehe: Palmer, Tho: Shaw, Thomas Stanton Junr, John Stanton, Moses Palmer, Benjam: Palmer, Gershom Palmer, Ephraim Minor, Joseph Minor, Aaron Start, James York Senr, Mr. Noice, Nathll Chesborough, Elisha Chesborough. Mr. Thomas Stanton is to administer the fremns oath to those, and ye oath of Fidelity to such in Stonington as haue not taken it.*"[3]

Why had it taken so long for Aaron to become a freeman? Sydney E. Ahlstrom, in discussing the experience of a group of Connecticut settlers, points out that "Once established, the Connecticut colony did not categorically require freemen to be church members." [4] The Connecticut Colony did have certain other requirements, though. At its March 9, 1658/59, meeting, the Connecticut court ordered: "that for the future it shalbe presented to be made freemen in this Jurisdiction, or haue the priuillidge of freedome conferd vpon them, vntil they haue fulfilled the age of twenty one years and haue 30£. Of personal estate, or haue borne office in the Como wealth; such persons qualified as before, and being men of an honest and peaceable conversation, shalbe presented in an orderly way at the General Court in October, yearly, to prevent tumult and trouble at the Court Election." [5]

At this time, we know Aaron did not own real property and most likely did not have a personal estate valued at 30£, so he would not have been eligible to become a freeman. On October 9, 1662, however, the court modified the requirements as follows: "*This assembly doth order, that for ye future, such as desire to be admitted freeman of this Corporation shal present themselues with a certificate vnder ye maior part [170] of the Townesmen where they liue, that they are prsons of civill, peaceable and honest conversation, and that they attained the age of twenty one yeares and haue 20£. Estate, besides their person, in the List of estate; and that such persons, soe qualified to ye Courts approbation, shalbe presented at October Court yearly, or some adjourned Court, and admitted after ye Election at ye Assembly in May. And in case any freeman shal walke scandalously or commit any scandalous offence, and be legally convicted thereof, he shalbe disfranchised by any of or civill Courts.*" [6] But in 1662, Aaron still did not meet the property value of 20£.

Three years later, on April 20, 1665, the court made yet another revision to the requirements, which was presented to them as a proposition from "*his Majesties Honourable Comrs,*" Sir Robert Carr, Colonel George Cartwright, and Samuel Maverick: "*2d. Propos: That all men of competent estates and of ciuill conversation, though of different judgments, may be admitted to be freemen, and haue liberty to chuse or to be chosen officers, both military and civill. To the 2d, our order for admission of freemen is consonant with that proposition.*" Proposition 1 required all inhabitant households to take the oath of allegiance in the name of the King and Proposition 3 stated: "*That all persons of civill liues freely injoy the liberty of their consciences, and the worship of God in that way which they thinks best, provided that this liberty tend not to the disturbance of the publique, or to the hindrance of the mayntenance of ministers regularly chosen in each respective parish or township.*" [7]

By the date of this third change, Aaron Stark owned not only the 150 acres in Stonington but the Thompson property, which by itself was most likely worth more than the required 20£. Based on the procedure the 1662 revision laid out, Aaron Stark's certificate of approval from the townsmen of Stonington must have been presented to the court at its meeting in October 1665, because he was officially designated a Freeman of Connecticut at its meeting on May 10, 1666. Hence, because a majority of the townsmen of Stonington considered Aaron worthy of becoming a freeman, he had finally earned the respect of his community and was considered to be one of the "prsons of civill, peaceable and honest conversation..."

1) New London Town Records 1647-1666 (Extracted by Eva Butler, Historian), page 123.

2) J. Hammond Trumbell, "*The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut.*" Volume 3, page 29. Foot note at the bottom of this page states: "*50 Acres granted to Aaron Start, Oct. 1670, and 50 acres granted to James Rogers, Oct. 1678, laid out, in one piece, May 28, 1679, on Pachaug river, for Thomas Parke Sen.*" Trumbell's source was reported to be "Col. Rec. Lands I. 455.

3) Ibid. Volume 2, page 32.

4) Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "*A Religious History of the American People.*" Published 1973 by Yale University. Page 152.

5) J. Hammond Trumbell, "*The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut.*" Volume 1, page 331.

6) Ibid. Volume 1, page 389.

7) Ibid. Volume 1, page 439.

Minor's diary had two more entries about Aaron before he moved to the Thompson property. One of them, in March 1665/66, states: "*The tenth moneth is December ... Thursday the 13 day mr Richerson came to my house to swear Aron Start.*"[1]

Not long before Aaron was to become a freeman, he was involved in a brawl with Thomas Parke and John Gallop. Minor reports he was informed of this fight when he returned from a town meeting in New London on March 8, 1665/66, and that a hearing on the matter was scheduled for March 15. The swearing of Aaron presumably was connected with his providing testimony about the matter. Whatever the outcome of the incident, it did not interfere with Aaron's elevation to freeman. The other entry is dated one year later, March 19, 1666/67. It mentions several persons, including Captain Denison, Aaron Stark, and "the Constable," then goes on to say that Minor delivered the "*Warrant for the rate*" The rest of the entry is not known, but it suggests again that Aaron had attained some sort of official position, perhaps having to do with tax collection.[2]

Soon after Aaron became a freeman, Aaron and Sarah evidently moved to the Thompson property, within the jurisdiction of New London, for Aaron is on the minister's tax list at New London on December 2, 1667.[3] On October 14, 1669, he was accepted as a freeman in New London.[4] Aaron had not been on the New London minister's tax list in 1664, which supports the conclusion that he moved to New London from Stonington only after May 10, 1666, when the court approved his petition to become a freeman. Henceforth, he would reside in New London, and our next section will discuss his life there.

Aaron and Sarah's New London Homestead

At the time Aaron and Sarah moved to New London, they still owned a land grant in Stonington; however, Aaron had not recorded its boundaries as originally laid out. On March 1, 1669/70, therefore, the Stonington town surveyors, Thomas Stanton and John Gallop, surveyed the property and entered the description in the town records. This was most likely done in anticipation of Aaron's sale of the property to Robert Fleming of Stonington on September 26, 1670, in a transaction that was witnessed by Sarah Stark, presumably the wife of Aaron. The town records tell us that:[5]

(page 118) ... upon the 22 of March 1664 Land Layed out for Aron Stark as Followeth beginning att a Black Oake in a Swamppie pond and so runeing east south east neerest in line Score? Rod to a stooping white oake and ? runeing south southeast nearest a hundred rod to a tree... out blacke Oake nohirh? was dead marked on ffouer sides and so runeing west north west norwest five ??? score? rod to a greate white oake tree marked on ffouer sides, and so winding north north east nearest a hundred rod to the affore said blacke oake in the swamp= pie pond, all nohirh? land above spesiffied amounteting to A hundred and fittie Ackers, highways excepted;Tho. Stanton, John Gallop, Towne Sirvayors .

For as much as Aron Start hath bin remis in not recording his paper of the boundaries of this land above mentioned, we have veiwed his bound markes and reained? them Exactly as they were then layed out and have recorded them againe for him as you may goe above only the day then if not layd out we cannot remember but re?? it to the Towne booke of records: this first of March 1669/70 the day ?hen this was first Layd out is as above written the 22 of March 1664: as apeares in the second leafe of the Towne booke Tho. Stanton John Gallop his wart of land above written was Recorded the 13th of July 1670 Pr me Thomas Minor Recorder.

With this survey in place, Aaron could then sell the property, as the following deed documents:[5]

"(Page 123) Know all men by these presents that I Aron Starke of New London heare by sell ----- Allinate pass away and make over unto Robert Flemen of Stoneington my whole right in my tract of Land in Stoneington ----- tract of Land being one hundred and fifty ackers as according to grant and bounded as in the Records in the booke of Records in Stoneington the said Tract of Land with all Privledges appurtenances belongeing there unto and binde my selfe, heiers, & Excutors, Administrators, assignes that the sayd Robert Flemen he his heiers Executors, Administrators, Assigns shall quietly and peaceably Improve, poses and Injoy the sayd bargained premises with out molestation from me or any other maner of person or persons whatsoever as Desposting Title unto whith deed of sale & sett to my hand and subscribe in the day and yeare as followeth September the 26 1670. Signed: The marke of Aron A Starke. Witness: John Fish, Sarah Starke S her marke

This deed was owned and delivered by these (to) Mr. Thomas Minor Comr. (Commissioner) 21 November 1670. Sealed and delivered In the Prsense of the witnesses. A testing This deed above written was Recorded the 22: Day of November: 1670: Pr me Thomas Minor, Recorder."

The New London property Aaron purchased from Reverend William Thompson was located west of present day Old Mystic, Connecticut. The transaction transferred four parcels of land from Thompson to Aaron. The first parcel contained 200 acres; the second, well-described in the deed, was 100 acres; the third consisted of meadow, extent undetermined, but perhaps also 200 acres; and the fourth parcel was 10 acres. The first three of these were apparently adjacent to each other.

1) Minor, John A., The Minor Diaries, Page 76.

2) Minor, John A., The Minor Diaries, {Page 67: 1665 - The first moneth is march . I was warned to a towne meeting the 2 day to chuse officers I was at london for malasses and paid Richard dart I was informed by Edward Fanings of the broyle between Aron & Tho parke and John gallop wensday The 8. heare should have been a courte and wensday 15.} {Page 73: 1666 - The first moneth is march . Thursday the 15. I was at lams my wheeles came from Tagwoncke monday 19 day hanah Averie was heare & Captain Denison John Gallop Aron start & the Constable I delivered the warrant for the rate.}

3) Stark, Helen. Article prepared in 1937 titled, "*Known Facts & Authorities*". Her source for Ministers list was the New London Town Records.

4) J. Hammond Trumbell, "*The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut.*" Volume 2, page 116.

5) Church of Latter-day Saints of Jesus Christ Microfilm Film #5593 Stonington, New London Co, CT Deeds 1664-1714, Book 1, pages 118&123. (Transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman.)

The deed conveying the land to Aaron Stark reads as follows:[1]

Know all men by these preasents That I William Thomson Late of New London in the Jurisdiction of Conecticot Minister upon serious Good and valluable consideration sell Alienate pass and make over unto Aaron Starke of Mistick these following parcellls of upland and meadows as in this Deed exprest. Viz

Two hundred ackers of upland upon the westward of Culvers Land and upon the westward of Mistick River toward the head of it as given me and bounded out by the measurers and as it is upon record.

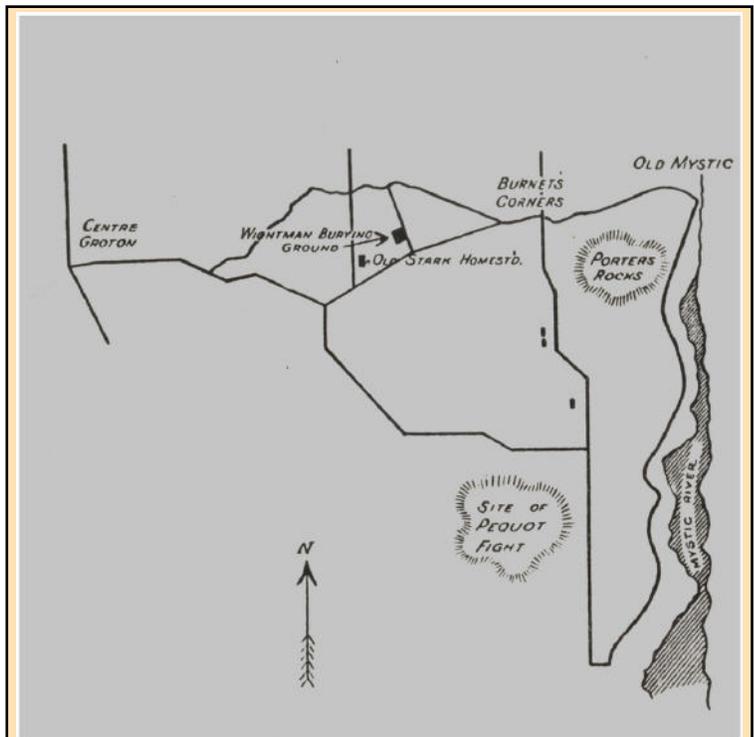
Also on the great hill towardes Mistick one hundred Ackers of upland more or less on the north of Land Laide out to Mr. Thomson two hundred rod from a marked oake in a bottom at the head of a parcell of meadowe laid out to James Avery to a Chestnut tree marked on the east side of the hill and from the eastward marked tree westward to a small marked oake by a small rock with a stone upon it, more or less eighty rod for the breadth and at the other end on the same Lyne from the oak aforesaid to a Chestnut tree on the side of a ledg of rocks in sight of the aforesaid meadowe the same breadth, Also a parcell of meadowe that I bought of James Avery commonly called by the name of the pond, being a pond and a run of water in the midst of it this parcell be it more or less, Also Ten Ackers of meadow if it be to be had that was given me by the Towne of New London neere to my farme not hindring former Grants, And for a more full confermation heareof I the aforesaid William Thomson, doe, for myselfe my Heires Executors Administrators and Assignes Covenant promise and Grant to and with the aforesaid Aron Starke his Heires Executors Administrators and Assignes to have and to hould all the aforesaid upland and meadowe according to the foregoing premises with all the priviledges and Appurtenances thereto belonging formerly and also to us Dispose Improve possess and Injoy the same without let hindrance trouble molestation or obligation of me the said William Thomson or of any other person or psons whatsoever by from or through any meanes of me or my me or any under us for performance heareof I set to my hand the 5th of November 1664;

Witness: Obadiah Bruen, William Thomson, James Morgan his marke;

Know all men by these preasents that I William Thomson Doe give full powre unto James Morgan to give unto Aaron Starke full posesion of yt land and meadowe above mentioned and what he doth shall be eavery way as sufficient as if I myselfe had Done it as witness my hand this 5th November 1664; Signed William Thomson ; All above is Drawne out according to the Deed returned per me Obadiah Bruen Recorder.

From Thompson's earlier acquisitions we learn more about what would become Aaron's home for the remainder of his life. Thompson had been granted two hundred acres in December 1658, and this was the first parcel of land the 1664 deed mentions. It was described as being westward of Culver's land, which placed it west of the Mystic River and near the head waters of that river:[2] *"200 ackers of upland upon the westward of Culvers land wch is upon the westward of Mistick river towardes the head of it, bounded wth and to runn from a tree marked upon a ledg of rockes west and by nore the breadth of the land to a Chesnut tree marked by great rock and from thence south and by west to a black oacke marked by a swomp side, and from theance to runn east and by south to another tree marked and from thence to runn north and by east to the first bound marke runing also upon this north and by east lyne to the river wch river west and by nore boundes the bredth of the land"*

The second parcel of land, which had been given to Thompson, was briefly described in the New London Town Records in December 1658, as follows:[2] *"Mr. Thomson as under Mr. Tinkers hand Hath given him on the Great hill toward Mistick one hundred acker of upland on the norward of (large space) runing the full length of his land more or less 200 (small space) from a marked oake in a bottom at the (small space) out to James Avery to a marked chesnut tree (large space) the east side of the hill and from the east etc."*



Aaron Stark Homestead in New London
Source: Stark Family Association Yearbook, 1908, page 21.

1) New London Town Records 1647-1666, page 123. (Transcribed by Eva Butler, Historian. Contributor: Carolyn Smith)
2) New London Town Records 1647-1666, Page 14, Dec. 1658.

In the Thompson-to-Stark deed there is a more complete description of this parcel:[1,2]

- The southeast corner of this 100 acres is marked by a oak tree in a bottom at the head of a parcel of meadow laid out to James Avery.
- The line runs north from an oak 200 rods (1,100 yds.) to a chestnut tree, marked, on the east side of the hill. This would be the northeast corner of this 100 acres.
- The line runs westward from the chestnut tree 80 rods (440 yds.) to small oak, marked, located by a small rock with a stone on it. This would be the northwest corner of this 100 acres.
- The line runs west, 80 rods (440 yds.), from the oak tree in (a), the southeast corner of the property, to a chestnut tree growing on the side of a ledge of rocks in sight of James Avery's meadow. This includes the area commonly called by the name of "The Pond," being a pond with a stream running through it. This is the southwest corner of the 100 acres. The ledge of rocks described in this deed could be the same ledge mentioned in the earlier deed for 200 acres, but could actually be a different ledge located east of this property.

Thompson also purchased from Avery the third parcel of land, then subsequently sold it to Aaron Stark. The relevant deed, found in the New London land records and dated November 1, 1664, states:[43] *"James Avery to Mr. Will. Thomson a parcel of meadow commonly knowne by the name of the pond, being a pond and a run of water in the midst of it--bound on the east wth land wch the Towne gave James Rogers within two myles of Mistick and on the north wth great Rocky hills, on the west wth the Common, south wth the common. Nov. 1, 1664."*

These three parcels of land came to more than 300 acres in all, but there was a fourth parcel of land that Thompson sold to Aaron at the same time. This consisted of 10 acres that Thompson had received as a gift from Richard Blinman on April 11, 1659. The location of this property relative to the first three parcels of land is not known. The deed for this small parcel, found in the New London Land Records, Book Reversed, states:[3] *"Loveing freind Mr. Tomson I was told by brother Parker formerly to tender a small gift to you viz, a peece of swomp wch was given mee for a woodlot; lying towardes the west of Will Comstocks hills wch if you please to accept of as a token of my love, I doe hereby give, and confirme it to you, and yor Heires forever, to have hold use, and enjoy, without any let or molestation from me or myne and if you please let it be recorded in the Towne booke, John Stibben is to have away through it to his land ther; you will see the boundes of it in the Towne booke, and John Stibbens can shew them. New Haven Your loving freind, April 11th 1659, Richard Blinman."*

On today's map, this property was located between Old Mystic and Centre Groton. Present day Highway 184 would have been within the northern boundary with the greater portion of the property being south of the highway.

Aaron and Sarah's second daughter, Elizabeth Stark, was probably born on this New London property between 1667 and 1673. (The latest year of her birth would have been about 1673, based on her marriage to Micah Lambert on April 19, 1688.) Anna Stark, probably Aaron and Sarah's youngest daughter, married William Read on May 4, 1699, in Norwich, Connecticut, and she too would have been born on this land.[4] We get another perspective on Aaron Stark's land from Caulkins's *"History of New London, Connecticut,"* which states:[5] *"The swamps around New London were infested to an unusual degree with these perilous animals (wolves). After 1667, the bounty was sixteen shillings... In 1673, this bounty was claimed by ... Aaron STARKE, two; making nineteen howling tenants of the forest destroyed within the limits of the town that year. The havoc made by wild beasts was a great drawback on the wool-growing interest which was then of more importance to the farmers than at the present day."*

Our final two glimpses of the living Aaron Stark come again from the diary of Thomas Minor. On June 16, 1675, Minor attended the marriage of the Widow Cheesebrough at Aaron's home in New London. A bit more than a year later, on November 27, 1676, Minor noted in his diary that Aaron Stark, Jr. and Mehitabel Shaw had been married.[6]

1) New London Town Records 1647-1666, page 123. (Transcribed by Eva Butler, Historian. Contributor: Carolyn Smith)

2) There are several units of measure used in these deeds that should be defined if the reader is not familiar with them. One "Chain" equals 66 feet equals 22yards. One "Rod" equals 16.5 feet equals 5.5 yards. One square "Rod" equals 30.25 square yards. One acre equals 4,840 square yards. In the above 100 acres, the property is described as a rectangle 200 rods by 80 rods to the side. From the above this is equal to 1,100 yards by 440 yards which is 484,000 square yards. Since 4,840 square yards equals one acre, then 484,000 yards divided by 4,840 yards equals 100 acres, the number of acres the deed says Aaron was to receive.

3) New London Land Records, Vol. 3, page 182, dated November 1, 1664.

4) If Anna was as young as 15 years old when she married, her latest year of birth would have been 1684, one year before the death of Aaron Stark, Sr. Thus it is not known with certainty that Anna was the daughter of Aaron Stark, Sr.: she may have been, instead, the daughter of Aaron Stark, Jr. Because there were no other Stark families in the area, one has to presume she was a member of the Stark family we are discussing. (To be discussed in a later Chapter.)

5) Caulkins, Frances Manwaring, *History of New London, Connecticut. From the First Survey of the Coast in 1612 to 1860.* Published in 1895, 696 pp., 2 vols.

6) Minor, John A., *The Minor Diaries.* {Page 130: 1675 - "The fourerth moneth is June ... 16. day I was at Arons the widow Cheesbrough was married."} {Page 138: 1676 - "The Ninth moneth is November ... monday the .27. Aron Start Junior and mehitabel shaw were married..."}

More Indian Troubles

Although the Pequot War had been a major victory for the settlers, problems between the Indians and settlers did not disappear. For many years, though, mutual helpfulness and trade were fostered by both the early Massachusetts colonists and the Indian leader Massasoit, Grand Sachem of the Wampanoags. But by the 1660's, the settlers had outgrown their dependence on the Indians for wilderness survival techniques and had substituted fishing and commerce for the earlier lucrative fur trade. The "Great Migration" of new settlers that occurred from 1630 to 1640 had brought new waves of land-hungry settlers, who had begun to encroach upon Indian territories in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

Rather than be pushed from their homelands, the Indians began to attack them; in turn, the settlers counterattacked. In the ensuing (mostly small-scale) clashes, nearly all able-bodied colonial males, whatever their ages, were called upon to assist in defending the settlers. Thus we can expect that Aaron most likely was involved in this pattern of attacks and counterattacks, as were virtually all of the men over sixteen years of age. These bloody clashes resulted in the deaths of many men, women, and children on both sides, but an even larger conflict was yet to come.

In 1661, Massasoit died and was succeeded by his second son, King Philip (Indian name Metacom). He vowed to resist further expansion of the English settlers and won the support of almost all of the other tribes in New England. During the years between 1661 and 1675, the small-scale raids continued and even intensified. Then, in June 1675, three Wampanoags were executed for the murder of an informer named John Sassamon. King Philip could no longer hold his warriors in check, and the war that bears his name began. Ruthless Indian attacks erupted against settlements from the Connecticut River into Massachusetts and Narragansett Bay. These were followed by equally ruthless assaults on Indian villages by the militia of these colonies. The Indians maintained the advantage until their crops were destroyed in the spring of 1676 and the settlers began to use "*Praying Indians*" (Indians converted to Christianity) as scouts. In August 1676, King Philip died and all Indian resistance collapsed, ending the war.

Records show that Aaron Stark's sons, Aaron Stark, Jr., and John Stark served in the militia during King Philip's War, for which they were rewarded with tracts of land in Voluntown, Connecticut in July of 1701. Some researchers say they were under the command of John Mason, but the introduction to that man's published account of the Pequot War makes it clear that: "... he [John Mason] removed thence to Norwich; where he died in 1672 or 1673, in the 73rd. year of his age leaving three sons, viz. Samuel, John, and Daniel, to imitate their Fathers example and inherit his virtues."

His son, John Mason, Jr. did participate in the war and in fact was killed during the conflict. It is possible that the Stark brothers served under the younger man. Some researchers contend that Aaron Stark [1608-1685] also fought in King Philip's War. Because others his age did participate, it seems probable that Aaron did so, but we have no evidence of this. In this connection, some researchers believe that the Aaron Stark, deceased, who was approved July 2, 1701 to receive a tract of land in Voluntown for his participation in this conflict was Aaron Stark (Senior), but closer examination of these later records suggests it was his son of the same name, who probably died between 1698 and 1701.[1]

Edmund Randolph, an agent for the crown, estimated that 600 settlers and 3,000 Indians were killed in the almost two-year war; more than half of the 90 settlements in the region were attacked, and a dozen of them were destroyed; whole Indian villages were massacred and entire tribes lost many of their members; and most of those Indians who survived fled westward and northward. Except for the northern part of the Connecticut Valley, the villages of Connecticut were spared from the Indian attacks — although their men did participate with the other colonies in the war effort. Thereafter, the settlers were free to expand without fear into the former Indian lands all across southern New England. Aaron Stark would not see that expansion. An entry in the New London County records for June 3, 1685, informs us that:[2] "*The inventory of the Estate of Aaron Stark, deceased, being exhibited in Court was proved and ordered to be recorded. The last will and testament of Aaron Stark, being exhibited in Court, was proved, approved and ordered to be recorded. Aron Stark, John Stark, and William Stark, sons to Aron Stark, Sr., deceased, appearing in Court and did declare and desire Capt. Samuel Mason might divide the lands left there by their father, and bound the same between them.*"

Thus we know that Aaron Stark died sometime before June 2, 1685. His New London property was divided among his three sons, Aaron (Junior), John, and William. Another son of John Mason, Capt. Samuel Mason, was asked to assist in the division of Aaron's estate. William Stark later (1716) sold a portion of his inheritance to the First Baptist Church of Groton, Connecticut. A portion of it measuring one and one-half acres was set aside for a family burying ground — which was probably already in use before 1716. Here William would later be buried, along with many other members of the Stark family. The many unmarked grave sites in this cemetery may include Aaron's resting place, and perhaps Sarah's as well.



Entrance to Wightman Burying Grounds, Groton, New London Co., CT
Most likely burial place of Aaron Stark and numerous descendants.

1) Bodge, George M., "*Soldiers in King Phillip's War*," Boston, 1906.

"Narragansett Township Granted to Connecticut Volunteers in the Narragansett War, now Voluntown, Connecticut." Pages 441-442.

2) Helen Stark, Aaron Stark Family, *Known Facts & Authorities* (1937, unpublished). Archived Connecticut State Library, Hartford. (?S. 2664a, Miss Helen Stark) The source and its location was given by Miss Stark as "County Court Records (?New London County?), formerly at Norwich, now in State Library at Hartford." (Contributor: Pauline Stark Moore.)

Sarah: Some Theories on Her Life & Origins

As we have seen, Sarah Stark evidently survived Aaron. What happened to her? Did she remarry? She would have been in her 40s when Aaron died leaving her with two underage daughters. Elizabeth and Anna later married and settled in Lisbon and Preston in the area around Norwich where John Mason lived during his later years. Perhaps Sarah moved to that region to be near her family, for they may have still been part of Mason's household or followed Mason to Norwich. Because there is no evidence informing us what happened to Sarah, we are left with speculation. In the 1937 Stark Family Association Yearbook, Helen Stark wrote an article entitled "More Theories and Some Questions." On the subject of Sarah, she had this to say:

1. Who was "widow" Stark? January 27, 1696-7 Widow Stark owned land in present Groton, Conn., bounded east by that of Peter Crary, south by that of Joseph Rogers, and west by that of William Stark, formerly William Thompson. (Private Controversies, at State Library, Hartford.) In 1708 Samuel Rogers sold this land to his son-in-law Theophilus Stanton. It was still bounded east by Crary, south by heirs of Joseph Rogers, west by William Stark, his northwest corner being Stark's northeast one. Where did Samuel Rogers get this land during this eleven-year period? I found no widow or any other Stark recorded as selling it and I examined every Stark sale till about 1775. Was the sale simply not recorded, or did Rogers inherit it from Widow Stark? [Mehitable Shaw, the wife of Aaron Stark, Jr.] Or what seems more probable, did the widow remarry and sell the land under her new name or have her new husband do so? It should not be difficult to trace back from Rogers for that short period and if we can find the one who obtained it immediately after January 27, 1696-7, and from whom, it may be the key to the identity of this widow. Whose widow was she? No grandchildren of Aaron¹ could have had a widow so early. [Aaron Stark, Sr.] Of his sons, William was living, John dead, but his widow had married John Weeks and had at least two Weeks children by that date. [William Stark, Sr. and Elizabeth Packer, widow of John Stark who then married John Weeks.] And especially since John Weeks was also a Groton man she would hardly be called "Widow Stark," then that leaves Aaron¹ or Aaron². We don't know when Aaron² died, so she may have been his widow, but supposedly the bounds between the property inherited from their father by Aaron² and William are on record (Groton Deeds) and the Aaron² property lay to the southeast of William's. I should not suppose from the description that it went any where near his northeast corner. If this widow is widow of Aaron¹ any information about her is of the greatest importance to all of the Aaron Stark line surely, while if she is Mehitable (Shaw) Stark it is very important too. (Groton Deeds)

From later research, it appears Aaron Stark (Junior) died before 1701. He may have been deceased before January 27, 1696/97, but this is not known with certainty. The author has not seen an abstract or copy of this deed but believes Helen Stark was aware of such a document in 1937. The high probability that Aaron Stark (Junior) lived in Groton before his death would further suggest that "Widow Stark" could have been his wife (Mehitable Shaw). Until further proof can be found, the "Widow Stark" will remain a mystery, and so will the fate of Aaron's widow, Sarah.

Conclusion

This mystery is, as we have seen, only one of many that Aaron Stark left behind. There are limits to what we can say with assurance. That Aaron was a soldier before 1637 may be disputed, but we do know that he was one in the Pequot War and probably afterwards. We cannot fix in time when he arrived in New England, nor with whom he came, and we can only guess at what Aaron was doing before the Pequot War. On the other hand, Minor's diary and other documents do give us invaluable glimpses of Aaron over the space of many years — including some through the eyes of a person who knew him well, and that is quite rare.

Some historians have treated Aaron's character harshly, based on the three cases that came before the Particular Court of Connecticut. We cannot say with certainty that Aaron was innocent of any wrongdoing, but we can reasonably question the circumstances of those events and balance them against what we know about the later stages of his life. That balance actually seems to favor Aaron Stark:

- ✓ Because he soon took responsibility for Mason's Stonington land grants in 1653, we know he had become, and remained, a trusted servant of the Major.
- ✓ Aaron married, became a father, successfully raised children who went on to lead responsible lives, and survived to the age of 77 — in itself quite an achievement in such a hostile environment.
- ✓ While looking after Mason's interest in Stonington, Aaron earned the respect of his neighbors, the majority of whom signed a certificate in October of 1665 recommending he become a freeman of that township — an action the Connecticut General Court took on May 10, 1666.
- ✓ When Aaron moved to New London Township in 1669, he was accepted there as a freeman.
- ✓ Aaron was awarded land grants by both Stonington Township (1664) and New London Township (1670) — presumably in recognition of his contributions to those communities and to Connecticut.
- ✓ All of these things occurred despite Aaron's having a scar that could not help but remind his neighbors and acquaintances of his youthful lack of discretion and choice of companions.

These documented events in Aaron's life certainly suggest Aaron was a man whose behavior and reputation evolved in a positive way. From being regarded as an unpromising youth; he became a man respected by his peers and community. We should give some credit to John Mason and Sarah for having influenced Aaron's behavior, to be sure, but Aaron himself had to have had the will to change, and that requires some strength of character.

With these observations, we leave Aaron and Sarah, the first generation of our Stark Ancestors in the New World. Grateful that he and his family survived a difficult and dangerous time in colonial New England, we turn now to how his children fared during the next era of our country's history.

Chapter 4

The Life & Times of William Stark (Senior) [1664-1730]

Author's Introduction

An entry in the New London County records for June 3, 1685, informs us William Stark was the son of Aaron Stark (Senior):[1]

"The inventory of the Estate of Aaron Stark, deceased, being exhibited in Court was proved and ordered to be recorded. The last will and testament of Aaron Stark, being exhibited in Court, was proved, approved and ordered to be recorded. Aron Stark, John Stark, and William Stark, sons to Aron Stark, Sr., deceased, appearing in Court and did declare and desire Capt. Samuel Mason might divide the lands left there by their father, and bound the same between them."

William was born about 1664, most likely in Stonington Township, New London County, Connecticut.[2] In 1923, Helen Stark wrote this sketch summarizing what we know about William Stark (Senior):[3]

"William Stark was primarily a farmer, but he also ran a sawmill situated on the stream between his land and that of Elder Wightman and in 1698 he was granted license to keep a "hou[s] of Puvlick Entertainment." Throughout his life he held many minor offices in Groton, and he was sergeant of the training band there. He was frequently called "Mr." on the records, showing that he was considered an important citizen, in spite of his break with the established church. Some of the Culvers and Lambs were arrested in 1704 for being absent from church, but the Starks seemed to have escaped this.

In 1698 he bought a large tract of land joining his portion of his father's land estate, and from that time on he bought and sold land frequently, mostly in Groton. At the time of his death, however, he had disposed of most of it, for he deeded farms to all of his children as soon as they were old enough. Christopher [Second son of William] received the homestead with the new house, on the understanding that William should have a room there as long as he lived, and that his 'now wife' should have it as long as she lived as his wife or widow. If, however, she remarried, she was 'to have nothing.' In spite of this provision in the deed, Christopher sold the farm during the lifetime of his father and mother, so it is not clear where they lived during the last years of their lives, but William at least must have remained in Groton.

Since we have so complete a record of him, it seems a pity that we know so little about his wife. Her maiden name is unknown, and there seems to be nothing to even suggest her identity. Her name appeared upon the records just three times; first, when with her husband and two sons she joined the 'Road Church;' secondly, when she signed the Dissenters' petition; and thirdly, when in 1730 she signed a receipt for her share of her husband's estate. In addition to this, William mentions her in the deed referred to above, but not by name, nor does he name the 'dearly beloved wife' mentioned in his will.

William's will was dated February, 1726, and probated at New London, Sept. 21, 1730. He is buried in the old burial ground for which he gave land, but if Elizabeth lies by his side there is no longer a trace of her grave."

With these words as a preamble to the Life and Times of William Stark (Senior), let us examine the surviving records and see what more can be learned about the life of this man and his family.



William Stark (Senior) Headstone

Located in the Wightman Burying Ground west of Old Mystic, New London County, Connecticut. William's tombstone has inscribed upon it "Here lieth the body of William Stark died Sepr. ye 8, 1730 in ye 66 year of his age." This photo has been digitally altered by the Author to enhance the inscription, barely visible in the original photo. After the word "year" could be the word "of" which was not visible in the original. (Contributed by Todd Travis. Dated about 1996-98.)

- 1) Helen Stark, Aaron Stark Family, Known Facts & Authorities, Unpublished typed manuscript dated 1937. Archived Connecticut State Library, Hartford, Connecticut. Call Number 929.2 St. The source and its location was given by Miss Stark as: "County Court Records [?New London County?], formerly at Norwich, now in State Library at Hartford." (Contributor: Pauline Stark Moore.)
- 2) William's tombstone has inscribed upon it "Here lieth the body of William Stark died Sepr. ye 8, 1730 in ye 66 year of his age." If he was 66 years of age in 1730, he was most likely born before September of 1664 and after September of 1663. The place of birth is the known residence of Aaron Stark (Senior) within this time interval. See photograph of tombstone above.
- 3) Stark Family Association 1923 Yearbook. Article by Helen Stark entitled, "William Stark." Pages 19 thru 23. Above quote on pages 22 and 23.

Did William Stark (Senior) have two Wives?

Helen Stark's article spoke of Elizabeth as the "now wife" of William at the time he deeded his homestead to his son Christopher. Could this choice of words indicate that William was married to someone else before Elizabeth? At a later date (1937), Helen presented a hypothesis suggesting that William Stark (Senior) might have been married to two women.[1]

"The first question regarding him [William Stark (Senior)] is whether he had a wife before Elizabeth. He was thirty-three or four in 1698, when his first two children were baptized. Christopher [Christopher Stark], the second, married in 1722, but William [William Stark (Junior)], the first child, married in 1710, and in 1712 was a freeman at Groton, so must have been born by 1791. It was Christopher, not William, who received the homestead, with the obligation of caring for William and Elizabeth, the parents. William had previously received his share of his father's land, the double portion due him, but he almost at once sold this and moved nearer his father-in-law. All this together with 'now wife' had made me wonder if perhaps William might be the child of a former marriage. The only possible clue to his mother, if this is the case, is a deed in 1691 from Ephraim Culver and William Stark, of land in Stonington, to Peter Blatchford, and his brother-in-law, Owen McCarty. I was unable to find where Ephraim Culver and William Stark obtained this land, either jointly or individually, and again I wondered if a possible explanation could be that they had married sisters, who inherited if from their father. Ephraim's wife was Mary ____."

The Groton Town Meeting Records tell us that William Stark (Junior) became a Freeman on May 22, 1712; this indicates he was twenty-one years of age or more in 1712. Therefore, William (Junior) would have been born no later than 1691, as reported in Helen's article.[2] But there is another record, which suggests he could have been born even earlier. In 1710 William Stark (Junior) witnessed a deed between his father, William Stark (Senior) and Isaac Fox. If William (Junior) had to be twenty-one years old to serve as a witness to a deed transaction, then his latest year of birth would have been 1689, two years earlier than reported in Helen's article.[3] Can we establish Christopher's latest year of birth?

Although Christopher Stark was baptized with his parents in October 1698, this would not fix his actual year of birth, for individuals could be baptized at any age; for instance, we know William Stark (Junior), baptized on the same day, was at least nine years old then. On January 31, 1716/17, Christopher Stark (Senior) received – as a gift – property from his father, William Stark (Senior).[4] Because property owners were required to be twenty-one years of age, this document suggests that Christopher Stark was born before January 1695/96. In theory, Christopher could have been six or more years younger than William (Junior). This possible separation in the births of William (Junior) and Christopher cannot by itself be conclusive evidence that they had different mothers, however. Is there any other evidence that supports Helen's theory?

Helen wrote: *"The only possible clue to his [William (Junior)] mother, if this is the case, is a deed in 1691 from Ephraim Culver and William Stark, of land in Stonington, to Peter Blatchford, and his brother-in-law, Owen McCarty."* On October 5, 1691, William Stark (Senior) and Ephraim Culver jointly sold 20 acres to Owen McCarty and Peter Blatchford for 7 pounds.[5]

"Know all men by thes presents that we William Startt and Ephraim Culver of New London in the Colony of Conetticot by our? Joynt consent and upon good and matuer Consideration and in Pticular in considaration of the full and just sum of seavan pounds in cent? ??---?? three poundes to William Startt reseved of Owin Carte and Petar Blachford to my good Satisfaction and four Poundes to Ephraim Culver reseved of Owin Cartte and Petar Blachford to my good Satisfaction... signed our hands and sealls this 5 of Octobar 1691 and moar-I Owin Carty and Petar Blachford do ingage that Wiliam Start and Ephraim Culver shall have the usesall? of the land.Signed: Epharaim Culver, William Startt.

*Signed Sealled and delivered in presents of wittnises: Samuell Packer, Aron Stark***

Mr William Stark and Epharaim Cullver appeared and personally acknoliged the above written deed befoar mee Samuell Mason Asstnt. New London March 23 1698/9.

Entered upon record Febarary 20 1701 by me Nehemiah Palmer Recorder."

[**Assuming the acknowledging took place on March 23, 1698/99, the witness would have been Aaron Stark (the third); if this Aaron Stark witnessed this deed in 1691, then the witness would have been Aaron Stark (Junior).]

On March 23, 1698/99, this deed transaction (which occurred on October 5, 1691) was recorded and acknowledged by both William Stark (Senior) and Ephraim Culver. Why would Ephraim Culver and William Stark (Senior) have had joint ownership of this property in 1691? Could they have been brothers-in-law, with their wives having the same surname? Ephraim Culver most likely was married to a daughter of John Packer and was the brother-in-law of John Stark when he died in 1689 (John's wife has been shown in an Chapter 5 to have been Elizabeth Packer). Evidence that Elizabeth Packer and Ephraim Culver's wife were sisters is most likely suggested in the following deed, dated June 23, 1693:[6] *"John Weeks, Elizabeth Weeks, Ephraim Culver, Sarah Packer and Luke Brumley, all of New London, sold to Samuel Fosdick land lying by the harbour in New London formerly belonging to Mr. John Packer late of New London, deceased - 'belonging to us in Right of our wifs as part of their portion' ; deed dated 24 June 1693, not recorded until 6 May 1728."*

1) Stark Family Association 1937 Yearbook. Article by Helen Stark entitled, *"More Theories and Questions."* Pages 28 & 29.

2) Groton Town Meeting Records, page 34 (Transcribed by Eva Butler).

3) Groton, New London County, Connecticut; First Book of Records, 1705-1723. Church of Latter-day Saints of Jesus Christ. Family History Library Film #4293, pages 86 & 87 (Transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman).

4) Ibid. Pages 333 & 334. *"William Stark of Groton for the love good will and affection which I have unto my well beloved son Christopher Stark ... give ...[???A] ... Isaac Foxes land ...part of his portion to him ... Signed: William Starke. Wit: Joseph Hadsall, Aabel Stark. Ack and Recd 31 Jan 1716/17."* Transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman.

5) Church of Latter-day Saints of Jesus Christ Microfilm Film #5593, Stonington, New London County, Connecticut Deeds 1664-1714. Book 2, page 282.

6) New London County Deed Book 9, page 54.

As an earlier section also reported, John Weeks and Elizabeth Weeks (widow of John Stark) were husband and wife, while Ephraim was most likely the spouse of a daughter of John Packer – her given name not revealed in this document. On April 10, 1716: "Administration of Ephraim Colver's estate was granted to his widow, Mary Colver." [1] This statement would suggest that Mary (Packer) Colver was most likely the daughter of John Packer. Therefore, if William Stark's wife had the surname Packer, her given name was most certainly not Elizabeth or Mary; nor were other daughters of John Packer (well documented in the records) known to have married anyone named Stark. A more likely scenario would be that in October 1691, William was executing this deed transaction on behalf of his sister-in-law, Elizabeth (Packer) Stark, who was most likely a very young widow at that time.

Helen's hypothesis contained these words: "William had previously received his share of his father's land, the double portion due him, but he almost at once sold this and moved nearer his father-in-law. All this together with 'now wife' had made me wonder if perhaps William [William (Junior)] might be the child of a former marriage." Do the records support this theoretical conclusion?

On March 24, 1716/17, William Stark (Senior) deeded his homestead to his son, Christopher, inserting this clause in the deed: [2] "...reserving only that the sd William Starke shall have the premises above mensioned to possess and improve during his natural life & if sd William Starks now wife shall outlive him then she shall have the lower roome in the new house and one third part of sd land for her maintainance during her widowhood but in case she shall marey again to have nothing..."

This deed was the source of the term "now wife" mentioned in the 1923 and 1937 articles by Helen Stark that were cited above. The phrase now wife could be interpreted, literally, as nothing more than a reference to the wife of William (Senior) at the time the deed was signed, without any other implication. Another possibility is that the phrase was intended to release Christopher from the obligation in the deed should William (Senior) remarry at a later date. The reference, though, might give us a clue that William (Senior) was previously married, as Helen's article suggests. Could the manner of distribution of land to William (Junior) by his father reinforce Helen's theory the use of now wife in this deed may indicate that the woman was not the mother of William (Junior)?

Helen Stark stated in her 1923 article: "In 1698 he [William Stark (Senior)] bought a large tract of land joining his portion of his father's estate, and from that time on he bought and sold land frequently, mostly in Groton." On December 21, 1713, William Stark (Junior) received a substantial gift of 500 acres from his father. [3]

*"William Stark Sener of Grotton ... yeoman ... for love good will and affection which I have and do bear towards my well beloved son William Stark Juner of the town and county aforesaid yeoman ... a certain tract of land being in the town of Groton which I purchased of John Plasto ... north east corner tree it being a Chestnut tree marked on four sides with WS and VW standing by a brook then running by the brook till it comes to the main brook near east then running up the main brook till it comes to a maple tree standing in the brook marked on four sides then running near east to a black oak tree by the side of the hill marked on four sides with WL on it then running by the Indian path near north to the first mentioned bounds ... 21 Dec 1713 ... Signed: William Starke. Wit: Valentine Wightman, Isaac Lamb.
Ack and Recd 26 May 1714."*

This was the property William Stark (Senior) had purchased in 1698 from John Plasto; it was north of and adjoining the property William (Senior) had inherited from his father, Aaron Stark [1608-1685]. Certainly, this gift would suggest William Stark (Senior) held his son in the highest regard. But soon after receiving this gift, William (Junior) sold the property. [4]

*"William Stark of Groton yeoman ... I the sayd William Stark Juner for 150L paid by Isaac Lamb of Groton ... 500A adjacent to the land of Valentine Whitman ... Ephraim Collvers land ... Indian path ... the sayd Isaac Lamb his heirs and assigns to his and their own sole and proper use benefit and behoof from hence forth for ever and the sayd William Stark ... 1 Apr 1714 ... Signed: William Stark. Wit: John C Cooke his mark. Huttson X Springer his mark.
William Stark Juner the subscriber personally appeared and ack the above written instrument to be his free act and deed before me 2 Apr 1714. Nehemiah Smith Justice. Recd 2 Apr. 1714."*

On April 10, 1710, William Stark (Junior) married Experience Lamb, the daughter of Isaac Lamb. Within one year, William (Junior) had sold the property he had received as a gift from his father to his new father-in-law. However, this was in fact part of an exchange of property, for on the same day as that sale (April 2, 1714), William (Junior) purchased from his father-in-law 50 acres in a commercially attractive location near the Mystic River. [5]

*"Isaac Lamb of Groton for 170L payd by William Stark Juner of Groton ... 50A ... near Mistick River bounded with Majher Winthrop's land and on the north with land layed out to ----- Springer and towards the west with a brook commonly called Colvers brook and The South with land in the possession of sd Craig ... Major Winthrops land fifty and two Rods together with all such buildings and ... timber fruit trees above and under woods ways rights libertys ... 1 April 1714. Signed: Isaac Lamb.
Wit: John C Cooke his mark. Huttson Springer his X mark.
Ack and recd 2 Apr 1714."*

1) "Colver/Culver Family Genealogy: As Descended from Edward Colver of Groton, Connecticut, to the Thirteen Generations in America," page 692.

2) Groton, New London County, Connecticut; First Book of Records 1705-1723. Book 1, page 385. Transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman.

3) Ibid. Page 225. Transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman.

4) Ibid. Page 385. Transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman.

5) Ibid. Pages 232-233.

One could argue this was an excellent exchange, but how would William Stark (Senior) have taken this news that his son had disposed of the gift this way? Perhaps we learn something from the deed (dated March 3, 1715/16) in which William Stark (Senior) gave William Stark, (Junior) his "second portion" of acreage. This portion was much smaller than the first, but in addition William (Senior) inserted a restrictive clause in the deed.[1] This clause reads as follows: "... and appurtenances to ye same belonging to him the sd William Stark Junr during his naturall life and after his decease to my Granchild Jonathan Stark and his heirs forever..." This clause prevented William Stark (Junior) from selling the land during his lifetime, and upon his death, ownership of it was to pass to the son of William (Junior), Jonathan Stark. This deed would seem to show that William Stark (Senior) was not at all pleased with his son for selling the earlier property, and it is most likely the reason, too, that Christopher Stark appears to be the favorite in the March 24, 1716/17 deed transaction. In both of these deeds, William Stark (Senior) has made it difficult for his sons to sell the property he had given to them as a gift.

While the possibility of William Stark (Junior) and Christopher Stark having different mothers cannot be completely dismissed, there was no factual information in the above analysis supporting Helen Stark's theory. Assuming Elizabeth was the mother of William Stark (Junior), the marriage most likely occurred in 1688 or before. Elizabeth's given name appeared in the records just three times beginning in October of 1698: first, when William Stark (Senior), Elizabeth, William Stark (Junior), and Christopher Stark (Senior) were baptized in the Stonington "Road Church;" second, when she signed the Baptist dissenters petition; and third, when she signed a receipt for her share of her husband's estate in his 1730 probate record.

Author's Comment: Because we cannot say with certainty that William Stark (Senior) had two wives, this article will presume he was married once – to Elizabeth – who for the purposes of this text was the mother of all of the children of William Stark (Senior). Elizabeth's parentage and origins have been much discussed by many past and present researchers. However, after examining the theories and evidence presented, I've seen nothing that would be conclusive enough to offer my own suggestions or opinions. Therefore, I will leave it to others to attempt to resolve this issue.

The First Baptist Church of Connecticut

In May of 1650, the General Court of Connecticut added a provision to the colony's General Laws that made attendance at church on Sundays mandatory:[2] "*...ordered and decreed by this Court and authority thereof, that wheresoever the ministry of the word is established according to the Gospell throughout this Jurisdiction, every person shall Duely reporte and attend thereunto respectively upon the Lords day...*"

Further, everyone in the community was required by law to contribute to the salary of the Congregational Church's regional minister: "*And doe order, that those who are (taught) in the word in the severall plantations, bee (called) together, that every mann voluntarily sett downe what hee is willing to allowe to that end and (use): and if any man refuse to pay a meet proportion, that then hee bee rated by Authority in some (just) and equall way; and if after this any man withhold or delay due payment the Civill power to bee exercised as in other just debts.*"

In March of 1658, the General Court passed the following order:[2]

"This court orders that there shall be no ministry or church administration entertained or attended by the inhabitants of any plantation in this Colony distinct and separate from, and in opposition to that which is openly and publicly observed and dispensed by the settled and approved minister of the place except it be by approbation of the General Court and neighboring churches; provided always that this order shall not hinder any private meeting or godly persons to attend any duties that Christianity or religion call for, as fasts or conference. Nor take place upon such as are hindered by any just impediments on the Sabbath day from the public assemblies by weather or water and the like."

This proclamation by the Connecticut General Court established the Congregational Church as the Church of the Colony of Connecticut. These laws were in force when Groton Township was created in 1705 and were modified somewhat in 1708.

William Stark, his wife Elizabeth, and their children were baptized at the Stonington Congregational Church in October of 1698 by Reverend James Noyes; their daughter, Phebe Stark, was baptized on July 6, 1701.[3] Years earlier, the so-called Half-Way Covenant had gained wide acceptance throughout New England; under it, the baptism of adults and their children was deemed sufficient to enable those baptized to enjoy limited membership in the church. To become full members, the applicants had to testify to their personal experiences with God in the form of autobiographical conversion narratives.[4]

1) Groton, New London County, Connecticut; First Book of Records 1705-1723. Book 1, Pages 341-342. (Transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman)

2) Stark, Charles R., "Groton, Conn. 1705-1905." Printed in Stonington, Connecticut for the Author by The Palmer Press, 1922. Page 109 & 110.

3) Charles R. Stark, "The Aaron Stark Family, Seven Generations of the Descendants of Aaron Stark of Groton, Connecticut." (Wright and Potter, Boston, Massachusetts – 1927). Page 2.

4) <<http://www.wsu.edu/~campbell/amlit/purdef.htm>> See Donna M. Campbell's web page entitled "Puritanism in New England." Puritan churches believed full membership in the church was reserved for the elect. The test of election required applicants to testify to their personal experience of God in the form of autobiographical conversion narratives. Many in the first generation had passed the test of election; but as time passed, full church membership began to decline as the older members began to die and younger members could not pass the test of election. During this period, children of the elect were allowed limited membership for the church believed they would undoubtedly pass the test of election. About 1662, the Half-way Covenant was introduced which granted the same privilege of baptism (but not communion) as had been granted to the children of the elect. This encouraged congregations to baptize adults and their children and awarded them and their children limited membership in the church; but did not admit them to full membership unless they passed the test of election.

There is no surviving baptismal record for William and Elizabeth's son Daniel, who most likely was born between 1702 and 1704. This suggests the parents became Baptists after Phebe was baptized at the Stonington Congregational Church in mid-1701; most likely, they were converted during visits to nearby Rhode Island or as a result of visits by Baptist ministers to Connecticut. Evidence that William and Elizabeth Stark had changed their religious philosophy came when they, along with ten others, signed a petition to be presented to the General Court of Connecticut when it convened in October of 1704.

The petition identified those who had signed it as dissenters; named their ordained minister; and requested permission to hold their own religious meetings – at the home of William and Elizabeth Stark.[1]

"To the Honorable Cort Setting at New Haven These are to signify that we differ from you in Som Poynts of Religion but yett we desier to Live Pesably and quietly with our Neighbours and in order hear unto we Send These to signify That since it has Pleased the Almty God to putt it into the hart of our Gracious Queen to grant us dissenters Proclamated liberty of Consiense which both you and us are greatly favor with and whereas she hath given you Power to surpress Imorality and Vice we humbly submitt our selves to it and to all others that do not prohibitt the liberty of our Consienses and we understanding that your laws Requiers us to Petition to you for the settling of our Meeting we humbly submitt thereto and do beseech of you That you would not deny us hearin, we do desier that our meeting might be stated and held at Will Starks in New London our Sostiaty are chiefly These Underwritten;

Ordained Minister or Teacher Daniel Piearse

Members William Stark, John Seigr Culver, Isaac Lamb, Ephraim Culver, William Chubb, John Hammett

Sisters Marcy Culver, Elizabeth Lamb, Elizabeth Stark, Mary Hadsell, Margett Chubb, Sarah Culver

We have Sent the Articles of our faith with this our Petition by Captain Daniell Witherell That Thereby you may Understand our Prinsiples; October ye 5th 1704."

If other religious practices had been disallowed by the Connecticut General Laws of 1650 and 1658, what had changed to prompt the small group of dissenters to submit this petition?

The "Act of Toleration" was adopted by the English Parliament on May 24, 1689, during the first year of the reign of William and Mary.[2] This act granted freedom of worship to non-conformist protestants – Baptists, Congregationalists, and Quakers – who dissented from the Church of England, but excluded Catholics from this privilege. When Queen Anne ascended the throne in 1702, tolerance of non-conformist protestants continued.

Thus the Starks and their fellow petitioners were most likely referring to the Act of Toleration when they stated: *"That since it has Pleased the Almty God to putt it into the hart of our Gracious Queen to grant us dissenters Proclamated liberty of Consiense which both you and us are greatly favor..."* They Added: *"We have Sent the Articles of our faith with this our Petition by Captain Daniell Witherell That Thereby you may Understand our Prinsiples; October ye 5th 1704"*

As required by the Act of Toleration, the petitioning dissenters had identified themselves; sent their petition requesting permission to hold their own separate religious meetings to the proper authority (the General Court of Connecticut); named their ordained minister; and given the articles of their faith to a representative of the General Court, in the person of Captain Daniel Wetherell – a General Court assistant representing New London County.

By adhering to the prescribed requirements, then, the petitioners were requesting freedom of worship as non-conformist protestants *who dissented from the Congregational Church*. Strictly interpreted, however, the Act of Toleration identified non-conformist protestants as those who dissented from the Church of England. Most likely, the phrase *"which both you and us are greatly favor"* was intended to remind the court that as Congregationalists they were granted freedom of worship as non-conformist protestants who dissented from the Church of England. The petitioners seemed to be implying that this privilege should also apply to protestants who dissented from the Congregational Church. (At the time this petition was signed, the General Court of Connecticut had no freedom of worship provision for dissenters and would not, as we will see, address this issue until 1708.)

The General Court convened on October 12, 1704, in New Haven, and the records from that date report that Captain Daniel Wetherell was present. Nowhere do the official proceedings for that date refer to the petition from the Starks and their coreligionists, which suggests that the petition was acted upon (presumably, rejected) without discussion in open court. Yet, according to Charles R. Stark, the record of this petition had survived to his day (1922): he cites a copy of it that could be found in the Ecclesiastical Records, Book I, at the Connecticut State Library at Hartford.[3] If the document survived into the 20th century, then the General Court must have received and filed it. Why didn't they discuss it? Discussion of how an earlier controversy involving religious dissent in Connecticut was handled may hold the answer.

1) Stark, Charles R., "Groton, Conn. 1705-1905." Page 126 and 127.

2) <<http://www.jacobite.ca/documents/1689toleration.htm>> Toleration Act, 1689. Full text.

3) Stark, Charles R., "*Groton, Conn. 1705-1905*." Page 126. Presumably the petition can still be found at the location referenced by Charles R. Stark. The above was a transcription found in this text and in another Charles R. Stark book published in 1927 entitled "*The Aaron Stark Family, Seven Generations*."

In November of 1691, Reverend Gurdon Saltonstall was ordained as the new minister of the New London Congregational Church, replacing the recently deceased Reverend Bradstreet. Saltonstall came from an aristocratic family of rank and wealth and at the age of twenty-two was rigid and uncompromising in his religious beliefs. As a clergyman of unusual ability, he made many friends both in and out of the colony and established himself as a staunch and talented advocate of Congregational Church rule. Through these friendships, especially among the clergy, Saltonstall acquired considerable influence among officials in the County Courts and at the General Court of Connecticut.[1]

While Bradstreet was minister, the non-conformist protestant group known as the Rogerenes, led by John Rogers, had caused considerable religious disruption within the New London Community. After many years of disagreement, the community and Reverend Bradstreet had settled into an uneasy tolerance of the Rogerenes. However, after a few fresh skirmishes with the Rogerenes, and especially with John Rogers himself, Saltonstall set about finding a way to silence this non-conformist group that was disturbing the Congregational policies Saltonstall so desired to re-establish and have enforced by the authorities. In May of 1695, at a special session of the General Court, Reverend Saltonstall, Daniel Wetherell, and John Christopher accused John Rogers of using words that were presumptuous, absurd, and of a blasphemous nature. The verdict was guilty, and the sentence was an imprisonment that could only end when Rogers agreed to the court's definition of "good behavior." Not surprisingly, Rogers would not accept these terms in exchange for his liberty.[1]

In May of 1697, John Rogers (Junior) was bound by a bond of £40 to appear before the General Court of Connecticut "to answer what may be objected against him for bringing a printed book or pamphlet into this colony which was not licensed by authority, and for selling the same up and down the colony, as also for other misdemeanors." The pamphlet in question was entitled, "Remonstrance in Behalf of Peaceable Dissenters." In summary, this pamphlet charged, that the present actions of the authority (Connecticut) showed that the King has nothing to do with this colony; that making dissenters pay towards the maintenance of a Congregational Minister was contrary to law and therefore rapine and robbery; that the rights of peaceable dissenters had been of late, by permission of the authorities, violated; and that the authority had illegally oppressed them.[1]

This pamphlet, which apparently received widespread circulation within the colony (according to Anna B. Williams), most likely prompted the General Court to beat a retreat, for in the October session it set John Rogers at liberty "in the expectation that he will behave himself civilly and peaceably in the future." [1] The term expectation would appear to be considerably more liberal than the terms stated at the time of sentencing. Considering that the principal figures involved in the incarceration of John Rogers (Saltonstall, Daniel Wetherell, and John Christopher) were the same ones who considered the Baptists' petition in October 1704, we might suppose that the court decided not to risk reviving the earlier controversy by addressing the issue of religious toleration in open court at this time.

Whether or not the General Court actually approved the petition in late 1704, the Baptists forged ahead and established their own church, apparently without restraint. The next year, in 1705 (the year in which the township of Groton was incorporated), the small group of dissenters called a young man from Rhode Island to become their pastor, and under his leadership the church was formally organized. Valentine Wightman was the son of George and Elizabeth (Updike) Wightman, his father being a lineal descendant of Edward Wightman of Burton-on-Trent, the last martyr by fire in England (at Lichfield April 11, 1612). Young Wightman had married Susannah Holmes and was the father of two children at the time of his coming to Groton, on Sept. 6, 1707. William Stark deeded to his pastor a house and twenty acres of land, as the following deed shows:[2] "*William Stark of Groatan ... for the love, good will and affection which I have and doe bear towards my loveing friend Valentine Wightman of Kingston in the Naraganset Countie in the Colony of Rhoad Island ... one house and land ... in the town of Groaton ... 20a ... 1 Sep 1707 ... Signed: William Starke. Wit: John Collver, the mark of Stephen S Starke, Alexander Huling. Ack 15 Jun 1708. Recd 31 July 1708.*"

Thomas Armitage, a Baptist historian, described Elder Wightman as follows:[108]

"This first Baptist pastor of Connecticut was an extremely serene and quiet character, but his amiable soul flashed the fire of a true witness from his eye upon the bigots who would interfere with him. He possessed sound learning, great zeal and deep piety. A certain calm discretion made him symmetrical and consistent, and adapted him to cautious but intrepid leadership in his new and trying position. He was a close student of the Scriptures and a powerful preacher, caring tenderly for the flock of Christ. Then, he brought from his native commonwealth a mild tolerance of spirit for all men, with a love for their salvation which disarmed opposition. Yet no Church could legally exist without permission from the secular power; but it was doubly difficult to secure this tolerance for Baptists. Moreover, Wightman sought not the approbation of the neighboring clergy, for he contended that it was the right of every man to worship God as he pleased. His quiet firmness had much to do with that gradual relaxing of the law which at last permitted a man to show that he was a member in a Baptist Church and paid toward its support, and so could be furnished with a certificate of exemption from liability to distraint or imprisonment for refusing to pay the minister's tax of the State establishment."

1) Anna B. Williams, "The Rogerenes: Part II, History of the Rogerenes." Boston: Stanhope Press, 1904. Page 164, 168, 176, 183, 188, 191. [Anna B. Williams comments on page 191: Could a copy of this pamphlet be found, great light might be thrown upon this stormy period, by revelation of the full circumstances leading up to the desperate entry of John Rogers into the meeting-house in 1694, the plot of Mr. Saltonstall and the "Remonstrance in Behalf of Peaceable Dissenters." That this book, sold "up and down the colony" by John Rogers, Jr., was for the enlightenment of the people at large regarding the cause, and lack of cause, for the long imprisonment and cruel treatment of his father, with representation of the case for the non-conformist, can scarcely be doubted. We can picture this talented and manly youth going from place to place, eagerly seeking and finding those who will listen to his eloquent appeal to buy and read this tale of wrong and woe, in the almost single-handed struggle for religious liberty in Connecticut.]

2) Church of Latter-day Saints Family History Library Film #4293; Groton, New London County, Connecticut; First Book of Records 1705-1723, Book 1, pages 29-30.

3) Thomas Armitage, "History of the Baptists"; New York, NY Bryan, Taylor, 1887.

Wightman did not, in the early years of his ministry in Groton, escape persecution at the hands of the Congregational leadership in Groton. Wightman and his wife were warned by the Magistrate to depart on October 17, 1707. A month later, on November 25, 1707, Wightman was sentenced to pay 20 shillings for not complying. He was warned again in December of 1707, but again he did not comply. After Wightman's second refusal to pay the fine, William Stark posted bond for him.[1]

In May of 1708, Connecticut finally enacted a religious toleration statute, which allowed groups to exercise "sober" religious dissent if they qualified.[2]

"And it is further enacted, for the ease of such as soberly dissent from the way of worship and ministrie established by the antient laws of this government, and still continuing, That if any such persons shall at the countie court of that countie that they belong to, qualifie themselves according to an act made in the first year of the late King William and Queen Mary, granting libertie of worshipping God in a way separate from that which is by law established, they shall enjoy the same libertie and priviledge in any place within this Colonie, without any let, hindrance and molestation whatsoever. Provided always, that nothing herein shall be construed to the prejudice of the rights and privileges of the churches as by law established in this government, or to the excusing any person from paying any such minister or town dues, as are now, or shall hereafter be due from them."

This provision most certainly was enacted to comply with the 1689 Act of Toleration, as the following passage confirms: "...act made in the first year of the late King William and Queen Mary, granting libertie of worshipping God in a way separate from that which is by law established..."

The passages of this act did not, however, save the Baptists from further harassment. On April 20th, 1709, apparently after their failure to comply with the requirements of this act, William Stark, John Culver, Isaac Lamb, Joseph Culver (Junior), Aaron Stark, and Stephen Stark, along with their spouses, were accused by the grand jury of holding unlawful meetings and of assisting Valentine Wightman in settling in the community without the approval of the New London Selectmen.[3] No surviving record makes reference to this matter, which suggests that the issues were resolved. Perhaps the accused reminded the court that the dissenters had complied with the requirements in their 1704 petition, or perhaps they amended their original petition to report the new members of the congregation and the new minister. We can interpret the silence of the records thereafter as evidence that the Baptists were allowed to worship in peace.

On March 24, 1717/18, William Stark deeded one and one-half acres of land to the church membership:[4]

"Know all men by these presents that I, William Stark of the town of Groton, County of New London and Colony of Connecticut, yeoman, for a valuable consideration which is six pounds current money of New England to me in hand received of Valentine Wightman, Isaac Lamb, Joseph Culver, John Stark, Robert Burus, Stephen Stark, Joseph Culver, Jr., Thomas Lamb, Samuel Lamb, Aaron Stark, Mary Walworth, Hannah Burrows, James Culver, David Culver, William Stark, Jr. Abiel Stark, Christopher Stark, Mary Culver, all of Groton in the County and Colony aforesaid the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge myself satisfied and contented have and do by these presents give, grant, bargain sell, alienate and pass over from me the aforesaid William Stark my heirs executors administrators and assigns forever an acre and a half land within the land of the aforesaid William Stark at the burying place and where the meeting house frame standeth etc." "In witness and confirmation of what is above written I the aforesaid William Stark have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this tenth day of March....our Lord one Thousand seven hundred and eighteen. It is to be understood that this is for a burying place and meeting-house and ways to it and from it, and that the aforesaid William Stark doth reserve to himself the convenience of the burying of himself or any of his. Signed: William Stark; Witnesses: Ephraim Culver, Jonathan Culver"

- 1) Eva Butler of Old Mystic, Connecticut, Transcribed some of the New London Court Records. In her records were the following: "*Town of Gro vs. Wightman and wife warned to depart Oct. last now Nov 25, 1707 sentenced to pay 20 s sign a bond with sufficient secure.....;*" In a second document dated in December 1707, "*John Avery. Mr. Starks house. Went to house of Wm Stark formerly, where Whitman had lately moved last (summer?) and warned him...*"
- 2) <<http://www.colonialct.uconn.edu/ViewPageBySequentialID.cfm?v=05&p=56&c=4&StartVolume=1&StartPage=1>> Connecticut (Colony). The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, from April 1636 to October 1776 ... transcribed and published (in accordance with a resolution of the General assembly). Hartford: Brown & Parsons. 1850-1890. Volume 5, page 50.
- 3) Eva Butler transcribed record from New London Court Records. "*William Starke, John Coulver, Isaac Lamb, Joseph Colver Jr., Aron Starke, Stephen Starke and wives all of Groton have and do in a common manner attend upon an unlawful and seprat meeting from that which is Established by law calling & settling Vallantin Whitman....."*
- 4) Church of Latter-day Saints FHL Film #4293; Groton, New London Co, CT First Book of Records 1705-1723, Book 1, pages 374-375.

Charles R. Stark had these comments on the importance of this deed to William Stark and his family:[1] *"From this deed two points are well settled, that the land granted was already used for a burying ground — probably that of the Stark family on whose land it was located — and also the date of the erection of the first Baptist meeting house. The building stood a little to the southeast of the entrance gate of the Wightman Burying Ground, and the original structure served the church from the time of its erection in 1718 until 1790, when it was taken down and another building was erected on the same site."*

Despite these early setbacks, the small church continued to flourish and (albeit at a different site today) celebrated its 300th year of existence in November of 2004.

The Sawmill

By the end of the 17th century, New England's prosperity depended on a trading system that serviced the economy of the West Indies. With the dense forests and high-quality timber to be found in New England, a shipbuilding industry began to emerge. According to Author Alan Taylor:[2] *"Between 1674 and 1714, New England built more than twelve hundred ships, totaling at least 75,000 tons. By 1700, Boston alone had fifteen shipyards, which produced more ships than the rest of the English colonies combined. Indeed, Boston ranked second only to London as a shipbuilding center in the empires."*

In New London County, Thomas Wells was engaged in ship building on the Pawcatuck River as early as 1677 and John Leeds was building ships before 1700. Later, in 1720, master shipbuilder Captain John Jeffery came from Portsmouth, England and established a ship-building facility on the Groton Township bank of the Thames River.[3]

Groton had an abundance of high-quality timber, ideal as material for building superior ships and sloops. What Gordon lacked were sawmills and a transportation network to process and move the harvested trees to the rapidly developing shipbuilding facilities. On July 5, 1709, a country road was laid out running from a ferry at Groton (on the Thames River), maintained by Cary Latham, to another ferry at Mystic, maintained by Robert Burrows. Numerous Groton deed records show this country road partly ran through William Stark's property. With a large number of trees on his property and that of his neighbors, William decided in January of 1711/12 to invest in the construction of a sawmill that would cut the harvested timber into planks. The country road provided a means for his neighbors to bring their harvested trees to the sawmill – *as well as a means of transporting the planks to the ship builders.*

In 1699, William Stark, along with others, had assisted in the repair and rebuilding of the Winthrop Mill, as described by a group of Culver Family Researchers:

"The Winthrops later admitted that the mill was in the wrong place. In 1699 Peter Cary was placed in charge of repairing and rebuilding the mill. He said he asked nothing for his "Diet" nor for that of his son but wanted £7-04-00 for three months of hard 'labour.' George Wheeler framed the mill. Samuel Adams was the millwright. He and his men worked 34 weeks at "4s" a week. James Cornish, Henry Williams, Samuel Coy, Ephraim Colver, James Springer, James Fanning, and Benjamin Burrows all worked on the mill. William Williams, William Stark, Peter Crary, Jr., and Samuel Fish carted timber, with Fish having his oxen on the job four Dayes. Fergus MacDowell furnished the nails. James Dean made the rest of the iron work." [Source: <<http://www.mystic.com/dcd/collver/index.html>>. Home page title: Collver, Culver, Colver. Description: Dedicated to all the Colver, Culver, Colliver and Collver Derivatives. (Note from Author: Their source of the above is not known.)

As suggested earlier, William Stark and Ephraim Culver were friends, and the Stark and Culver families are found on the Baptist Church petition of 1704. The above research suggests that many families associated with William Stark were familiar with mill construction and repair and most likely furnished assistance and labor to enable William to build a sawmill.

Near the country road was a brook (known as Haley's Brook today) running through William Stark's property and that of Valentine Wightman – this being the same property William had given to his minister in September of 1707. Apparently, the ideal place for the erection of a sawmill on Haley's Brook was a portion of the brook running north to south within the boundary of the Wightman property. Therefore, William Stark had two problems to solve: one was obtaining capital for the construction of the sawmill; and the second was obtaining access to the property for building the sawmill.



Entrance to Wightman Burying Ground
[Contributed by Eugene William Stark. Year: 2007]

1) Stark, Charles R., "Groton, Conn. 1705-1905." Pages 127 and 128.

2) Alan Taylor, *"American Colonies: The Settling of North America."* First published by Viking Penguin, a member of Penguin Putnam Inc, 2001. Page 177.

3) Stark, Charles R., *"Groton, Conn. 1705-1905."* Pages 341 and 342.

On January 3, 1711/12, William sold six acres of property to the Groton School Master, John Bernard.[1] *"William Starke Senior of the town of Grotton Yeoman for and in consideration of the sum of 15L ... paid by John Bernard of the said town of Grotton School master ... certain tract of land ... 6a Bounded by Springers brooke and south by the Country highway and by Peter Carary's his land ... 3 Jan 1711. Signed: William Stark. Wit: John Collver, Thomas Parke. Ack 4 Jan 1711/12. Recd 4 Jan 1711/12."*

On the same day, William (Senior) purchased property from Valentine Wightman.[2] *"Valentine Wightman of the town of Grotton ... for 25L received of William Stark of the town ... certain tract of land in Grotton beginning at Ephriham Colvers west corner ... land of Ephrham Coulver ... easterly bounds of the land which I formerly purchased of the above said William Stark ... Signed: Valentine Wightman. Wit: Joseph Coillver, Stephen Starke. Ack 4 Jan 1711/12. Recd. 4 Jan 1711.12."*

The first property was most likely sold to John Bernard for 15£ in order to raise funds to pay Valentine Wightman the purchase price for the above property. William Stark paid his Baptist minister 25£ for that portion of the property which lay to the east of the brook, the brook now becoming the boundary between Wightman and Stark. Although the deed between Wightman and William Stark does not mention a brook, an agreement made between Wightman and Stark on the same date reports: *"...viz I William Stark having purchased all the Land lying on the east side of the brook with the medow of Valentine Wightman..."* (See Below.) By buying back the eastern portion of the property, William Stark was now able to control the east side of Haley's Brook and could build his sawmill there. On the same day William (Senior) purchased this property from Wightman, the two men signed an agreement that allowed a meadow on Wightman's property, located on the west side of the brook, to be flooded from November to May and provided for a *"passable cart way through my land to the commons."* These three transactions were performed for the purpose of allowing William Stark (Senior) to build a sawmill on Haley's Brook for the purpose of cutting timber into planks to be used for building ships.[3]

"Articles of agreement made concluded and fully agreed upon the sixth day of December between William Stark Senior of Groton ... and Valentine Wightman ...viz I William Stark having purchased all the Land lying on the east side of the brook with the medow of Valentine Wightman do therefore agree and promise that I will be at equal charge with the aforesaid Valentine Wightman for the making a dam for the drounding (drowning) or seeing of the medow at the place called the open dam and it is forther agreed that the water being damed shall not be let out till the medow is sufficiently drounded except it be at sum times between the first of November til the first of May only for the driving of a mill or mills that may be erected on the same stream and it is further agreed upon and promised by Valentine Wightman aforesd that William Stark and his assignes shall have a passable cart way through my land to the commons and it is agreed upon further and promised by Valentine Wightman aforesd that William Stark his heirs or assignes shall have full Liberty of making damedes for mill or mills on any part or place of the streem aforesaid and for the due performance hereof we bind ourselves each to the other our heirs and assignes in the penal sum of forty pounds to be well and truly paid by the defective party to the party performing in witness whereof the parties to these presents have set their hands and seals hereunto the Sixth day of December 1711 Signed: Valentine Wightman. Wit: Joseph Collver, Stephen Starke. Ack 4 Jan 1711/12. Recd 4 Jan 1711/12."

The provisions that allowed William to dam the brook during sawmill operations, thus flooding a meadow on the Wightman property, would allow William to direct the full flow of the brook through a water shoot to drive the mill wheel. From the phrasing, the sawmill would apparently be operational from November to May of each year. During the months from May to October, William and the family were probably involved in preparing the fields for planting, sowing seed, cultivating, and harvesting.

This would demonstrate William was quite the entrepreneur. With the introduction of the sawmill, William was able to provide work for his neighbors and family year around.

William Stark's Gifts to his Children

Alan Taylor described the New England Family as follows:[4] *"Diligent and realistic, most New England families sought an 'independent competency.' 'Independence' meant owning enough property – a farm or a shop – to employ a family, without having to work for someone else as a hired hand or servant. A 'competency' meant a sufficiency, but not an abundance, or worldly goods: enough to eat, adequate if simple clothing, a roof over their heads, some consumer goods, and an ability to transmit this standard of living to many children."*

The same can be said for William Stark (Senior) and his family. They seem to have worked as a family unit. As already discussed, William Stark (Senior) deeded 500 acres – adjacent to his property – to his son, William Stark (Junior) as a gift on December 21, 1713. Before this gift was made, William (Junior) had married Experience Lamb. On April 14, 1714, William (Junior) sold the property to his father-in-law, Isaac Lamb. In exchange for the land, William (Junior) purchased 50 acres located near the Mystic River from his father-in-law.

1) Church of Latter-day Saints Family History Library Film #4293, Groton, New London County, Connecticut First Book of Records 1705-1723, Book 1, page 104. Transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman.

2) Ibid. Page 105.

3) Ibid. Page 106.

4) Alan Taylor, *"American Colonies: The Settling of North America."* Page 172.

Although William (Senior) was most likely disappointed by this action, on March 3, 1715/16, he again deeded property (thirty acres) to William (Junior) as a gift – but, this time, with a deed restriction that would not allow William (Junior) to sale the property.[1]

"To all Christian people to whom this present deed of Gift may come William Stark of Groton in ye county of New London in Conecticut Collony in New England Senior sendeth Greeting know ye that I ye abovesd William Stark for ye good will and kinder affection I bear to my son William Stark Junr and my Granchild Jonathan Stark both of Groton in ye County of New London aforesd have fully freely and absolutely given granted aliened ensealled and confirmed unto William Stark Jun aforesd a certain tract of land during his naturall life and then to my grandchild Jonathan Stark aforesd and his heirs forever laying in Groton and Fuffed? & bounded as followeth (viz) adjoining easterly to Thomas Park beginning at a maple tree at a dark swamp running northerly to land adjoining to Joseph Culver and Samuell Lamb by ye brook side to a maple tree then running west and by north east upon the brook to a black oake tree marked on four sides from thence running by a l... of rocks near South about eighty rods the by ye road to the first mentioned tr by ye dark swamp it being thirty acres more or less together with all ye trees wood timber hearbidge? Rivers brooks common...edges and appurtenances to ye same belonging to him the sd William Stark Junr during his naturall life and after his decease to my Granchild Jonathan Stark and his heirs forever to thear only proper use and behooffe and ye sd William Stark aforesd do by these presents declare that he hath a good and lawfull right whereby he doth give and make conveyence of ye sd land unto ye above sd Will Stark and Jonathan Stark and his heirs forever to be unto...estate of inheritance and ...the sd Will Stark doth declare the sd premises are free and clear as clearly ... to any part thereof from by or under him or from or by his heirs executors or administrators to the sd Will Stark and Jonathan Stark aforesd his heirs executors administrators he will warrant and forever defend In witness whereof he hath hereunto sett his hand and seal this third day of March In the second year of our Soveran Lord George King of great Briton and In ye Year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fifteen sixteen. Signed: William Starke. Signed Sealed & delivered in presence of Nehemiah Smith Junr, Hannah Smith.

Mr. William Stark the subscriber personally appeared and acknowledged the above written Instrument to be his free act and deed before me Nehemiah Smith Justice March ye 3the 1715/16. Entered to be recorded March ye 3th 1715/16."

Jonathan Stark was born on December 10, 1712 and was the son of William Stark (Junior) and Experience Lamb. The deed allowed William (Junior) to use and improve the property during his lifetime but prevented him from selling the property. As the deed specified, Jonathan Stark became the owner of the property after William (Junior) was deceased.

On the same day as the above property transfer (March 3, 1715/16), a deed was recorded reporting that William (Senior) paid William (Junior) 125£ for 40 acres of land on January 6, 1715/16 – three months before this gift of property was made. This 40 acres was part of the 50 acres William (Junior) had purchased for 175£ from his father-in-law, Isaac Lamb, on April 1, 1714.[98] We know this from the earlier deed description which mentioned: "with land layed out to ... Springer and towards the west with a brook commonly called Colvers brook..." In this January 6, 1715/16 deed transaction – made almost two years later – was the following description:[2] *"William Stark Senior of Groton ... for 125£ ... unto William Stark Junr ... 40A ... beginning at a bridge called by ye name of Springers bridge ... 6 Jan 1715/17.Signed: William Starke. Wit: Danl. Eldredge. Edward Han Cox. Ack and recd 3 Mar 1715/16."*

This was indeed a generous exchange. William (Junior) received some property as a gift, along with an additional 125£ for 40 of the 50 acres of property he had purchased from Isaac Lamb. It is evident William (Senior) desired his son to have more than the 10 acres of property; the 30 acre gift located near the property of William (Senior).

On January 31, 1716/17, William (Senior) sold this same forty acres to Joseph Hadsall, a resident of Rhode Island.[3] *"William Stark of Groton for 25£ from Joseph Hadsall of Westerly in the Collony of Rode Island ... 40A ... 31 Jan 1716/17. Signed: William Stark. Wit: Aaron Stark, Ephraim Collver. Sergt. William Stark ack. 1 Feb 1716. Recd 1 Feb 1716."*

Although the abstract of this deed is lacking in detail, this may have been the same forty acres William (Senior) purchased from William (Junior) one year earlier. On November 21, 1717, William (Senior) then paid Joseph Hadsall the same compensation (25£) to regain ownership of this property.[4]

On the same day William Stark (Senior) sold forty acres to Joseph Hadsell, Christopher Stark (Senior) received a gift of property from his father:[3] *"William Stark of Groton for the love good will and affection which I have unto my well beloved son Christopher Stark ... give ...[??A] ... Isaac Foxes land ...part of his portion to him ...Signed: William Starke. Wit: Joseph Hadsall, Aabel Stark. Ack and Recd 31 Jan 1716/17."*

Christopher was single at the time he received this gift and would have been twenty-one years of age or older, for men under the age of twenty-one were not allowed to own land. Either one year later, or perhaps three months later, Christopher received a second portion of land.[4]

"William Starke of Groton ... for love & affection for his son Christopher Starke ... give ... north east corner of Isaac Foxes land at a stone marked with WS ... at the countrey roade that goeth from New London to Stonington ... about 100 rods eastward from sd William Starks now dwelling house on the north side of sd roade which bound is William Starks Junr corner tree ... to the corner of his sd sons own land from thence bounded with his own land ... reserving only that the sd William Starke shall have the premises above mensioned to possess and improve during his natural life & if sd William Starks now wife shall outlive him then she shall have the lower roome in the new house and one third part of sd land for her maintainance during her widowhood but in case she shall marey again to have nothing ... 24 Mar 1716. Signed: William Stark. Wit: Ephraim Collver, Jonathan Collver. Sergt William Stark ack and recd 24 Mar 1717/18."

1) Family History Library Film #4293, Groton, New London County, Connecticut First Book of Records 1705-1723, Book 1, pages 341-342.

2) Ibid. Pages 332-333 for January 31, 1716/17 deed. Page 364 for November 21, 1717 deed.

3) Ibid. Pages 333-334.

4) Ibid. Page 385.

The deed transaction signed by William Stark states that the document was executed on "24 Mar 1716." The deed was acknowledged by William "24 Mar 1717/18." Did William acknowledge the deed on the same day? This cannot be determined with complete accuracy from the document. Therefore, this deed transaction either occurred on March 24, 1716/17 and was acknowledged a year later, or the transaction and acknowledgement occurred on the same day.

On March 25, 1729, William Stark (Senior) revoked the requirement placed on Christopher in order to allow William (Senior) and his wife to live on the property until both had died.[1]

"Serjant William Stark of Groton Yeoman for love and affection unto my son Christopher Stark of Groton husbandman and also for the reason of the insufficiency of two deeds of gift from me to Christopher the one baring date 1717 and the other 1718 ... part of my homestead ... 250A ... Daniel Stark's NW corner ... William Stark Junr his SW corner ... Whitman's land ... Mr. Niles NE corner Dated 25 Mar 1729 ... Recd 31 Mar 1729 ...Signed: William Stark ...Wit: Ephraim Collver, Daniel Stark, Mary X Collver her mark."

This was most likely done in anticipation of selling the property, for on August 30, 1729, Christopher deeded the property to James Smith for the sum of 1,500£. On April 28, 1730, the same James Smith sold 121 acres to Christopher Stark for 300£.[2]

"Christopher Stark of Groton for 1500L by John Smith of Groton ... 250A ... there is about one acre and half of land within said bounds where the meeting House stands and the buriing place which sd Stark's Father hath already sold, is excepted ... 5A of salt meadow adjoining to Mistick River toward the head of it ... Daniel Denison and David Collver ... and also a swamp lying within sd Whitman's Land by estimation 4A ... Dated 30 Aug 1729 ... Recd 8 Sep 1729 ...Signed: Christopher Stark. Wit: Luke Perkins, Moses Fish."

"John Smith of Groton husbandman for 15L paid by Christopher Stark of Groton ... neck of the land known by the name of Navayunk Neck containing 2 and ½ acres 48th lot in the second tier of the second division ... Dated 28 Apr 1730 ... Recd 18 May 1730 Signed: John Smith; Wit: Samuel Burrows, Luke Perkins"

Property excluded from this transaction was the one and one-half acres deeded to the Baptist church and the property upon which the sawmill had been erected.

On August 26, 1725, William Stark (Senior) gave a lot on Fort Hill to Thomas Walworth:[3] *"William Stark of Groton, Yeoman, for love and good will to his son in law Thomas Wallsworth of Groton, wood lot first division on Fort Hill. Dated 26 Aug 1725. Recd 27 Sep 1726. Signed: by William Stark. Wit: David Collver, Daniel Stark [Brother of Phebe Stark]."*

This deed shows that Thomas Walworth was the son-in-law of William Stark (Senior). Because William (Senior) only had one daughter, Phebe, this transaction was most likely a gift of property to his daughter and son-in-law. This would be the first document suggesting Thomas Walworth was most likely the husband of Phebe Stark. It is also the first appearance of the name Daniel Stark. This was most likely William (Senior)'s son, who would have been twenty-one years of age or older when he witnessed this deed.

Apparently there was a problem with the deed, which was corrected March 8, 1731/32, as follows:[4]

"Whereas through a mistake there was a wood lot or first division laid out to Sergent William Stark late of Groton now Deceased as may appear by a survey bareing date June the 26 1721 on a place called fort hill in sd Groton and was called his right which was a mistake for Some years before the laying out of sd Lot on sd fort hill he the sd Wm. Stark had sold all his right and Title in all the Common undivided land in the Township of Groton aforesd -----as appears on record therefore we the ----- Committee being chosen and Impowered to let the Common and undevided land in Groton according to a voat of sd Town passed April 16, 17?? Have laid out to Thomas Wallsworth of Lebenon one woodlot in first Division that was originally the right of Isaac Fox late of sd Groton now of Norwich and by purchase is now the right of sd Thomas Wallsworth as appears on Record and is laid out on fort hill aforesd on the place where the abovesd lot was laid through mistake as before mentioned is bounded as followeth beginning at a rock marked W S which was South East corner of the Two rod way and adjoining in the four rod highway with the North East End of sd Two rod --- Joyening abovesd and by sd four rod high way on the west side the ... 8 Mar 1731/2. Signed: Joshua Bill, Samuel Lester, Luke Perkins, Comtee. Recd 26 Oct 1732."

Daniel Stark received a gift of property from his father May 6, 1728:[5] *"William Stark of Groton husbandman for love and affection for son Daniel Stark do give part of my homestead south of the Contary [Probably County Road] Road Mr. Niles his orchard.... Thomas Wells... 100A. Dated 6 May 1728. Recd: 28 May 1728. Signed: William Stark. Wit: Ephraim Collver, William Gard"*

Daniel could have possibly married Sarah Culver in this year or soon after – for this may have been a wedding gift to the newly wedded couple. Sarah Culver was most likely the daughter of Joseph Culver (Junior) and Mary Stark, and so Daniel's cousin. Mary Stark was the daughter of Aaron Stark (Junior) and Mehitable Shaw.

1) FHL Film #4294 Groton, New London County, Connecticut Second & Fourth Book of Records , Book 2, pages 529-530.
2) Ibid. Pages 537 and 538. Pages 538 and 529.
3) Ibid. Page 197.
4) FHL Film #4295 Groton, New London County, Connecticut Third Book of Records, page 74.
5) FHL Film #4294, Book 2, pages 376-377.

Boundary Disputes

After Aaron Stark (Senior) died in 1685, his property was divided by Captain Samuel Mason, as requested by the three sons of Aaron (Senior). Most of the boundaries were designated by trees, rocks, brooks, and other natural objects. After many years, these boundary markers often had been moved, destroyed, or changed. As might be expected, descendants of William Stark's brothers, John Stark and Aaron Stark (Junior), had disputes with the boundaries of the property they inherited.

The first of these boundary challenges came when Isaac Fox became the husband of Hannah Stark. According to the Groton Township vital records, Elizabeth Stark married John Newbury on April 5, 1707, and Elizabeth's sister, Hannah Stark, married Isaac Fox a few days later, on April 21, 1707.[1] Both women were daughters of John Stark. A deed dated November 20, 1708, transferred Elizabeth Stark's share of her father's estate to Isaac Fox.[2]

"John Nuberry of Groton, weaver, for a valuable sum of money paid by Isaack Fox of Groton yeoman, sell, one messuage tenement of land, being in the town of Groton lying by and partly on the hill west of William Starks, be the number of acres, more or less which land came to me by the heirship of my wife formerly Elizabeth Stark daughter to John Stark late of New London, deceased, which land lyes undivided between me and my brother Isaack Fox of Groton aforesd that is to say I John Nubery do sell to Isaack Fox ... 20 Nov 1708. Signed: John Newberry, Elizabeth A. Newberry her mark. Wit: Nehemiah Smith Junr, Andrew Davis. Ack: 20 Nov 1708 and recd 5 Jan 1708/9."

The property of William Stark (Senior) shared a boundary with this property and to confirm the accuracy of the boundaries, William and Isaac had the boundary surveyed and recorded on December 20, 1710.[3]

"William Stark and Isaac Fox all of Groton ... that the bounds hereafter in this writing mentioned shall forever ... the bounds of the land of John Starke deceased now in the possession of the said Isaac Fox ... this is our mutuall and finall agreement and determination we have hereunto sett our hands & seals in Groton aforesd this [blank] day of [blank] in the ninth year of her majesties reign anno domini 1710. Signed: William Starke, Isaac Fox. Wit: Valentine Wightman, William Stark Juner. Recd. 20 Dec 1710."

When William's brother, Aaron Stark (Junior), died about 1698, most of the property Aaron (Junior) had inherited in 1685 was passed to his son of the same name, Aaron Stark [the third]. This property also shared a boundary with William Stark (Senior). John Morgan, William Morgan, and Jonathan Williams were appointed by Nehemiah Smith to determine the dividing line. On April 29, 1721, they prepared and signed the following document, which was intended to settle the dispute.[4]

We underwritten free holders of ye town of Groton & Stoningtown being appointed by Nehemiah Smith Esqr. One of his majestie's justices of the peace ... to fix a deviding lane between mr. William Stark of sd Groton and his Cozen Aron Stark son to Aron Stark decd ye brother of ye sd William Stark according to ye last will & testament of Mr. Aron Stark decd. Father to ye above said Brothers ye boundary --- being lost and we being sworn according to that Law page 246 to a faithfull discharge of our duly and having heard ye severall pleas made to them & Evedences given in and informed our selves by Runing dividing lines by ye Surveyors We have fixed and stated the deviding line between ye sd William Stark and his Cozen Aron Stark as follows to say Aron Stark his land on ye west & William Stark's Land on ye East We began on a Ledge of Rock South Westerly from ye now dwelling house of sd William Stark in Sight of his house at an old ---- that by ye brinck of ye Ledge by a Rock wch a heap of stones by itt to --- Living Evedences to be ye north East Corner of ye Land given by sd Will to Aaron stark decd. Thence to Run a South Line two hundred & Twenty Six Rods by marked trees to another stone standing by a whit oak tree markt with ye Leters M MM W wch Line is the Deviding line between the parties as Wittness our hands & sealls this 29th of Aprill anno 1721. Present: John Plumb Surr. Signed: John Morgan, William Morgan, Jno. Williams.

1) FHL Film #4293 Groton, New London County Vital Records, Book 1, page 110 & 117.

2) Ibid. Page 35.

3) Ibid. Pages pages 86-87

4) Ibid. Pages 551 & 552.

However, soon after this dividing line was proposed, Aaron Stark [the third] purchased (on May 9, 1721) the Isaac Fox property mentioned earlier for 400£.[1] Combining Aaron [the third]'s property with Isaac Fox's property most likely reopened the earlier dispute. Both parties apparently returned to the committee with renewed arguments; finally, on June 5, 1721, William (Senior) and Aaron [the third] agreed to the boundaries by signing the following document:[1]

"Whereas there has been a great difference & controversy between Wm. Starke of Groton ... on one part & Aron Stark of Groton aforesd on ye other part about & confirming ye boundary of their land as to settling ye bounds between them according to ye Last will & Testement of Aron Stark late of New London deseased father of ye above sd Aron Stark Be it known to all people whom it may Come in that these articlks of agreement made & finished this fifth day of June in ye year 1721 ... ye abovesd parties have mutually & Loveingly agreed for each of our selves and our heirs after us upon a dividing line & bounds between us to stand good for ever as followith viz beginning att a ----- stone Near a white oak tree standing at ye west end of Thomas Parkes his Land & so running westerly 23 rods to another meet stone att ye west end of a great Swamp & from thence twenty one rods to a meer stone ye east side of a pond so to run westerly throught ye pond sixteen rods to a heap of stones upon ye south west end of a small ledge of rocks & from thence westerly 41 rods to a great ledge of rocks to a meer stone by a great rock wth stones upon it ye ledge being in sight of ye above sd Wm. Starks now dwelling house to ye southward of sd house and from sd rock with stones upon it across ye ledge westerly to a meer stone by and ... devided between Isaac F???? & sd Wm. Stark ... we ye abovesd Wm. Stark & Aron Stark do mutually agee upon ... Wm. Stark doth for my self ... aquit all my right ... land that was my father Aron Starks to ye southward of ye aforesaid dividing line & ye sd Wm. Stark also aquit my right title & interest as aforesd to all ye land said Aron Stark bought of Isaac F??? ... sd Wm. Stark ... sd Aron Stark do by these presents aquit all my right title ... unto land or lands that was my grandfathers Aron Starks which is to ye north of ye aforesaid dividing line and further I the sd Aron Stark do by these presents promise ... Signed: William Stark, Aron Stark. Wit: Nehemiah Smith, Thomas Chipman, James Chipman. Ack and recd 5 Jun 1721."

On November 25, 1721, just five months later, Aaron Stark [the third] sold both properties to Nathaniel Niles (Junior), as stated in the following deed abstract:[2]

Aaron Starke of Groton for 1800£ paid by Nathanael Niles Junr of KingsTown in Rhode Island ... sold ... two tracts of land ... 460A of upland & also of fresh meadow joining to ye same containing 30A ... bounded by lands of ye widow Wallsworth ... Gideon Cobb ... Capt. Samll. Fish ... on ye hill called Wolfpit Hill ... Thomas Wells ... lands of William Starks ... & Margret Starke ye wife of me ye said Aaron Starke doth give all her right of dowry & power of thirds ... 25 Nov 1721. Signed: Aaron Starke, Margret Starke. Wit: Samll Avery, William Starke, John Starke. Ack and recd 25 Nov 1721.

Therefore, by the end of 1721, William Stark (Senior) and his sons still owned portions of the original homestead of Aaron Stark (Senior), but the properties inherited by his other sons, John and Aaron (Junior), had new owners. During 1721, Aaron Stark [the third] appears to have been divesting himself of all of his property in Groton township in anticipation of a move to Colchester Township, Connecticut, for on September 25, 1725, a deed shows that Aaron Stark [the third] was a resident of Colchester.[3]

Other Property Purchases and Sales of Interest

As mentioned earlier, William Stark (Senior) purchased from William Stark (Junior), 40 acres of the 50 acres William (Junior) had obtained from his father-in-law, Isaac Lamb.[4] On January 31, 1716/17, William (Senior) sold this property to Joseph Hadsall for 25£.[5] Mary Hadsell was one of the dissenters reported in the Baptist Church petition to the General Court of Connecticut dated October 4, 1704. The surname Hadsall appearing in these surviving documents was the source of the following speculation by Helen Stark in the 1937 Stark family Association Year Book.[6]

"And who was the wife, Elizabeth? [Referring to the wife of William Stark (Senior)]. I have long felt that the list of petitioners for that first church might be the key to her identity. The Culvers, the Lambs and the Starks were Groton families and we know something at least about them. But who were the teachers, Daniel Pearce, William and Margaret Chubbs, John Hammett, and Mary Hadsall, the other petitioners? Did they, too, live in Groton? Where did they come from? How long did they stay in Groton? I so much want to know what the Groton records tell about each of them. The next list of church records gives none of them. And in wondering about them I discovered that Joseph Hadsall of Westerly bought land from William Stark, though he soon sold it back again. It was land in Groton, sold by William January 31, 1716-17, the same day upon which William first deeded land to his son Christopher, and Joseph Hadsall was a witness to this deed to Christopher. And then I noted further that while William was constantly buying and selling land, Joseph Hadsall is the only Rhode Island man with whom he had any land dealings. Has this any significance?"

Then I looked for any Hadsall family which included a Mary and Elizabeth and a Joseph. I found one at Gloucester, Mass. Joseph Hadsall married Mary Graves. They had Mary, born in 1676, Elizabeth 1679, Joseph 1681, and one other son. Nothing was found about their moving to Westerly or Groton and different ancestries of Joseph of Westerly have been given me, though there seems no certain line for him. Elizabeth, born in 1679, could not possibly have been mother of a child born in 1691, but one born in 1698 would certainly be possible.

All this is too vague to be called a theory, but when there are no real clues one grasps at straws. But I should very much like to have these first church members looked up, and very especially, Mary Hadsall. (Groton and Stonington Deeds, Savage's Genealogical Dictionary)"

1) FHL Film #4293 Groton, New London County Vital Records, Book 1, pages 567 and 568.

2) Ibid. Pages 620 to 624.

3) FHL Film #4294, Groton, New London County Vital Records, Book 2, page 176.

4) FHL Film #4293 Groton, New London County Vital Records, Book 1, pages 232-233.

5) Ibid. Pages 333-334.

6) Stark Family Association 1937 Yearbook. Article by Helen Stark titled, "More Theories and Questions." Pages 28 & 29.

The given names for the Hadsall family mentioned in Helen's theory suggest that Mary Hadsall may have been a widow and Elizabeth's mother; she was most likely living with her daughter in 1704. Joseph Hadsall of the later deeds could have been Elizabeth's brother – the above Joseph Hadsall reported to have been born in 1681. Although this is an interesting theory, the fact that Christopher received his first property from his father on January 31, 1716/1717, suggests that he was born at least twenty-one years earlier (before January 31, 1695/96). If Elizabeth was born in 1679, she would have been about sixteen or seventeen years old by January of 1695/96 – not an impossible age to have given birth to Christopher; but she is unlikely to have been the mother of William Stark (Junior) if he was born before 1688, as suggested earlier. Again, we cannot discount the possibility Elizabeth's surname was Hadsall and William Stark (Senior) was married to two women, but neither theory can be supported by the surviving documents found at the time of this publication.

On November 21, 1717, William (Senior) paid Joseph Hadsall the same compensation of 25 pounds to regain ownership of this property:[1] *"Joseph Hadsall of Westerly in the Collony of Rode Island yeoman for 25L from William Stark of Grotton ... 40A in Grotton ... 21 Nov 1717. Signed Joseph Hadsall. Wit Hannah Fox, John Lambe. Ack and recd 18 Dec 1717."*

On August 19, 1723, there were a series of deed transactions that are a bit baffling. On this date, Christopher Stark (Senior) paid William (Senior) 300£ for a 150-acre tract of land that was apparently part of the original Aaron Stark (Senior) homestead:[2] *"William Stark Senr of Gorton yeoman for 300L by Christopher Stark of same ... 150A ... Christopher Stark's corner, Mr. Nyles land, Thos. Wools' land. Dated 19 Aug 1723 ... Recd 20 Aug 1723. Signed by William Stark ... Wit: Valentine Whighman, David Collver"*

On the same day, William Stark (Senior) then paid Christopher 200£ for a parcel of land in approximately the same region:[2] *"Christopher Stark of Groton yeoman for 200L paid by Sergt. William Stark ... Mr. Nyles corner, land sd Nyles bought of Mr. Aaron Stark ... Mr. Whitman's south line. 19th day, 10th year of his majesties reign 1723. ... Recd 20 Aug 1723. Signed: by Christopher Stark ... Wit: Valentine Wightman, David Culver"*

And then there was this property transaction, also on that date:[2] *"Know all men that I Christopher Stark of the Town of Groton for a valuable consideration paid in hand by my father William Stark ... 4A ... SE corner of land that Whitman bought of my father which was formerly Mr. John Slaters?? Dated 19 Aug 1723 ... Recd 20 Aug 1723. Signed: by Christopher Stark ... Wit: Jonathan Hinckley, John Smith"*

On October 13, 1726, there was this deed of exchange between Christopher and William (Senior):[3] *"Deed of Exchange Christopher Stark of Groton for one certain tract of land ... may appear by a deed passed from the sd Christopher Stark to his father Willm. Stark bearing date 19 Aug 1723 ... 151A ... Dated 13 Oct 1726. Recd 8 Nov 1726 ... Signed: Christopher Stark ... Wit: Ephraim Collver, John Wallsworth "*

The description appears to be the same 150 acres Christopher purchased from William (Senior) on August 19, 1723, for 300£. In exchange, Christopher received the property William (Senior) purchased for 200£, plus the same 4 acres described above.[3] What would have been the purpose of these deed exchanges?

On February 7, 1726/27, just three months after these deed exchanges, William Stark (Senior) prepared and signed his Last Will and Testament, which included the follow statement:[4] *"I give and bequeath unto my son Daniel Starke all my Lands to the South of the County Road bounded as May appear by a Deed of Exchange from Christopher however otherways Bounded on Record and half my husbandray Tools."*

Although William (Senior) had prepared his Will in February of 1726/27, he did not die until September of 1730. On May 6, 1728, most likely about when Daniel Stark married Sarah Culver, William (Senior) deeded 100 acres of this property to Daniel as a wedding gift. A marriage would seem a reasonable presumption, for Daniel was at least 21 years of age on August 26, 1726, when he witnessed the gift of land to Thomas Walworth. William (Senior) most likely retained until his death the remaining 50 acres, which then passed to Daniel as his second portion of land when William (Senior) died in 1730.

Recall that William (Senior) had deeded property to his son-in-law, Thomas Walworth, on August 26, 1726. William (Senior) purchased the property from William Walworth, who we learn from the following was the brother of Thomas Walworth:[5] *"William Wallsworth of Groton yeoman, for 14 sheep and 10L from William Stark of Groton, yeoman, a wood lot, first division "rock marked W.S." ... laid out on Fort Hill by Samll Lester, Nehemiah Smith Esq. & Joshua Bill ... Dated 21 Mar 1724/5 ... Recd 25 Sep 1725 ... Signed: by William Wallsworth. Wit: John Smith, Elizabeth Avery"*

1) FHL Film #4293 Groton, New London County Vital Records, Book 1, page 365.

2) FHL Film #4294, Groton, New London County Vital Records, Book 2, pages 14, 19, and 20.

3) Ibid. Pages 231 and 233.

4) FHL Microfilm Film #1025051, Connecticut; New London County Probate Packets, Year 1730, Packet #5070. Transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman.

5) FHL Film #4294, Groton, New London County Vital Records, Book 2, page 196.

William Stark's Last Years

William Stark (Senior) prepared and signed his Last Will and Testament on February 7th, 1726. William (Senior) may have been in poor health from the time he made his Will until his eventual death September 8, 1730. He appeared to be disposing of his property after making his Will, and Christopher seems to have benefited the most – at least as measured by the numerous gifts of property and deed exchanges with his father. On March 22nd, 1727, for a total of 255 pounds, Christopher purchased 100 additional acres from his father and one right of a share in the after divisions of the commons or undivided land in the township of Groton, along with another tract of land lying in the township.[1]

William named Christopher Stark and Thomas Chipman as executors of his estate. William's wife was to receive 1/3 of his estate during her natural life. Named in the will were his other children: William Stark (Junior), Daniel Stark, and Phebe (Stark) Walsworth.[2] On September 8, 1730, William Stark, Sr., died and was buried in his plot, which had been set aside in the deed with the Baptist Church and which would later be known as the "Wightman Burying Ground."

From all indications, William was a person of means within the community of Groton. Although the community had opposed the founding of the Baptist congregation, William's rather large land holdings and sawmill probably commanded his neighbors' respect. This was most likely one of several factors that enabled the little Baptist Church to survive and prosper in Groton. William was undoubtedly a generous man who gave land to each of his children as gifts when they were old enough; he also contributed to the community of Groton in a like way throughout his life. The community, church, and his children were all benefactors of his generosity.

William Stark, Sr. Probate Records; FHL Microfilm Film #1025051, Connecticut; New London County Probate Packets, Year 1730, Packet #5070. The following was extracted by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman from the original located on the above microfilm. Deposited in Connecticut State Library [printed card]. Items in the packet were 1 Will, 1 Inventory, 2 Accounts of Administration, 17 Receipts, consisting of 21 Total Documents. Transcription of Will follows.

Last Will & Testament of William Stark, Sr. [2]

In the name of God Amen the seventh day of February 1726/7 I William Starke of Groton in the County of New London and Colloney of Connecticut in New England Farmer being of perfect Mind and Memory Thanks be to God. Therefore calling to mind the Mortality of My Body and knowing that it is appointed for all men once to dye do Make and ordain this my last will and testament, that is to say princaply and first of all I recomend My Soul in to the hands of God that gave it and My Body I Recomend to the earth to be buried in Christian Burrell att the Discretion of My Exers nothing doubting but att the generall Resurrection I shall Recive the same by the Mighty power of God and as touching shuch worly estate as it hath pleased God in this Life to Bless me with I give demise and dispose of the same in following maner and forme

Imprimis. I give and bequeath unto [blank] my dearly beloved wife one-third of my Real Estate during her natural Life and one-half of my moveable Estate Except husbandray Tools att her own Dispose for ever

Item. I give and Bequeath unto my son Christopher Starke one-half of my husbandray tools as carts plows hoes and so forth he haveing all Redy had his full portion of my Lands as may appear by Record

Item. I give and bequeath unto my son Daniel Starke all my Lands to the South of the Countey Road bounded as May appear by a Deed of Exchange from Christopher how ever otherways Bounded on Record and half my husbandray Tools

Item. I give and Bequeath unto my Daughter Phebe Wallsworth one-half of my Moveable Estate except husbandray Tools

Item. I Do here by Make ordain and constitute My Loveing son Christopher Starke and my Trusty and beloved friend Thomas Chipman of Groton aforesd My Law full Executors of this My Last Will and Testament Ratifying and confirming this and no other to be My Last Will and Testament in witness here of I have here unto Set my hand and Seal the day and year above written. William Stark (Seal)

Signed Sealed published pronounced and declared by the said William Starke as his Last Will and Testament in the presence of us the Subscribers Ephriam Collver, Jonathan Collver, Timothy Collver

N London Septembr ye 21st 1730. Ephraim Collver & Timothy Colver appeared in a Court of probate & made Solem oath that they Saw Mr. William Starke the Testator Sign & Seal this Instrument and declare the Same to be his Last Will & Testa-ment & that at the doing thereof he was in ther Judgments of Sound mind & memory & that they together wth. Jonathan Colvor Set their hand two as Wittneses in the presentts of the Testator.

Test Richd. Christopher Clerk Recorded in the 6th book of wills for ye County of N. London, Folio #61, Octor. 3d 1730. Pr Richd. Christopher Clerk

The Last will & Testament of William Stark Late of Groton, Decd, Sep. 21. 1730

Oct 3 1730; Recorded Book C page 491

1) FHL Film #4294, Groton, New London County Vital Records, Book 2, pages 373 and 374.

2) FHL Microfilm Film #1025051, Connecticut; New London County Probate Packets, Year 1730, Packet #5070. Transcribed by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman.

Chapter 5 Christopher Stark (Senior)

Christopher Stark, Sr. was most likely born between the years of 1690 to 1695 in New London County, Connecticut.[1] He was the son of William Stark, Sr. and his wife Elizabeth, and the grandson of Aaron Stark, Sr. [1608-1685] and his wife Sarah. William Stark, Sr., his spouse Elizabeth, sons William, Jr., and Christopher were baptized in the Stonington Road Church in October of 1698.[2] Christopher's younger sister, Phebe, born in March of 1700, was baptized in the same Church July 6, 1701[2] while Daniel Stark, the youngest child in this family, was born between July of 1701 and the year 1704, the latest year it is believed Daniel could have been born according to the Groton, New London County, deed records.[3] In 1704, Christopher's father began his relationship with the First Baptist Church of Connecticut.

January 31, 1715/16, William Stark, Sr. deeded Christopher property as a gift which had as one of it's boundaries the property of Isaac Fox.[4] The Isaac Fox property had been the land of William Stark, Sr.'s brother, John Stark, who received the land after Aaron Stark, Sr. died in 1685. John Stark died in 1689 and his spouse, Elizabeth Packer, daughter of John Packer and Elizabeth Friend, then married John Weeks. Elizabeth Packer and John Stark had daughters named Elizabeth Stark and Hannah Stark who inherited the land when they became of age around 1705. Elizabeth married John Newberry, a weaver, while Hannah married Isaac Fox, a yeoman.[5] Isaac Fox purchased Elizabeth's share of this property from her husband, John Newberry, November 20, 1708, the deed signed by John Newberry and Elizabeth A. Newberry.[6] Isaac Fox and Hannah Fox sold the land May 9, 1721 to Aaron Stark, III, son of Aaron Stark, Jr. and a grandson of the above Aaron Stark, Sr. [1608-1685].[7] From the 1708 description, this property was located on the western boundary of William Stark, Sr.'s original property.

On March 24, 1717/18, William Stark, Sr. deeded the rest of his homestead to Christopher, which included the new house at that time where William, Sr. and his wife, Elizabeth lived.[8] However, the deed stipulated these conditions; "reserving only that the sd William Starke shall have the premises above menshoned to possess and improve during his natural life & if sd William Starks now wife shall outlive him then she shall have the lower roome in the new house and one third part of sd land for her maintainance during her widowhood but in case she shall marey again to have nothing." Christopher could not dispose of this property with the new house until both his Mother and Father died. William, Sr. and Elizabeth continued to live on and improve this property while Christopher make a home for himself and his future spouse on the property he received in January of 1715/16. On the same day, March 24, 1717/18, William Stark, Sr. also sold one acre and a half of land to the Baptist Church for 6 pounds. Christopher was one of the Church members participating in this purchase.[9]

Christopher witnessed a deed exchange December 13, 1718 between his brother, William, Jr. and their cousin, Abiel Stark.[10] Abiel was the son of Aaron Stark, Jr. who was the brother of William Stark, Sr. The deed was acknowledged in Lebanon, Connecticut in January of 1719 implying Abiel Stark sold this land in preparation for a move to this township located north of Groton and west of Norwich.

Christopher was reported to be a yeoman in most of these deed documents, indicating he had settled down in the community most likely farming on the property he received as a gift from his father. Christopher married Joanna Walworth April 1, 1722 in Groton who was born on Fisher's Island, New York in the year 1695.[11] She was the daughter of William Walworth and Mary Abigail Seaton, both of whom had immigrated from England in 1689 aboard the same ship and married in 1690 soon after arriving in New England. They first settled on Fishers Island, just off the coast of Connecticut where they managed the farm of Governor Fitzjohn Winthrop of Connecticut. Their first four children were born at this location and around the years 1699 to 1701 they moved to New London County, Connecticut where William became a prominent land owner.

- 1) Groton, New London County, CT Deed Records; Book 1, page 385; Christopher was deeded property from his father, William Stark, Sr. March 24, 1716. To own property, Christopher had to be 21 years old. This would set the latest year of birth for Christopher as 1695. From Book 1, pages 86-87; Christopher had an older brother, William Stark, Jr. who was probably born before or in 1689. William, Jr. was a witness in 1710 to a deed between his father William, Sr. and Isaac Fox. He had to be 21 years old to be a witness. This would set his latest year of birth as 1689. Therefore, Christopher Stark, Sr. probably could not have been born before 1690.
- 2) Stark, Charles R.; Book entitled, "Aaron Stark Family, Seven Generations", page 2; CRS reference was the Records of the First Congregational Church of Stonington, CT.
- 3) Groton, New London County, CT Deed Records; Book 2, page 197; Daniel was a witness in August of 1725 to a property transaction between William Stark, Jr. and his son-in-law, Thomas Walsworth. Daniel had to be 21 to be a witness, hence the latest year of birth being 1704.
- 4) Groton, New London County, CT Deed Records; Book 1, pages 333-334; William Stark of Groton for the love good will and affection which I have unto my well beloved son Christopher Stark ... give ...[??A] ... Isaac Foxes land ...part of his portion to him ... Signed William Starke. Wit Joseph Hadsall, Abiel Stark. Ack and Recd 31 Jan 1716/17.
- 5) Webster's Dictionary; A yeoman in this case would be a small farmer who cultivates his own land.
- 6) Groton, New London County, CT Deed Records; Book 1, page 35; dated 20 November 1708.
- 7) Ibid; Book 1, pages 567-568; dated 9 May 1721.
- 8) Ibid; Book 1, page 385; dated March 24, 1717/18.
- 9) Ibid; Book 1, pages 374-375; dated 24 March 1717/18.
- 10) Ibid; Book 1, pages 469-470; dated 13 December 1718; Acknowledged in Lebanon, Connecticut 2 January 1718/19; Recorded 16 April 1719.
- 11) Stark, Charles R.; Book entitled, "*Aaron Stark Family, Seven Generations*", page 11; CRS source was the Groton, New London County, CT Town Records.

William claimed he was descended from Sir William Walworth of London, England which has not been verified to any degree of certainty. Mary was descended from one of the earliest families of Scotland. She was 20 years old and an only child when, after the death of her father in London, she emigrated to New England on the same ship as William.[1] April 6, 1721, one year before Joanna Walworth married Christopher, she sold her brother, John Walworth, her right to any land she received from her father, the late William Walworth of Groton, deceased, this transaction recorded on pages 738 and 739 in Deed Book 1 for Groton, New London County. February 23, 1723, Zerviah Stark was born to Christopher and Joanna.[2]

In the same year, 1723, Christopher exchanged properties with his father, William Stark, Sr. for on August 19 Christopher sold four acres to his father which had formerly been purchased by William, Sr. from Valentine Wightman February 10, 1710. This four acres had been part of the 20 acres William sold to Wightman in 1708 and same four acres was received by Christopher as part of the gift from his father January 31, 1715/16.[3] On August 20, 1723, Christopher sold 151 acres of his land he received from his father, William, Sr. back to William, Sr. for 200 pounds. In exchange on this same day, Christopher bought 150 acres lying south of the County Road from his father for 300 pounds which he then exchanged with his father on October 13, 1726.[4] On May 6, 1728, William Stark, Sr. later deeded 100 acres of this land lying south of the County Road to his youngest son, Daniel Stark, as a gift.

The reasons for these apparent swaps of land is not apparent but the later transactions occurred at about the same time William Stark, Sr. made his will February 7, 1726. These properties were close by and adjacent to each other and the last exchange could have been made to correct an error in the will. In this will he bequeathed all his lands to Daniel south of the County Road as would appear by deed of exchange from Christopher which clearly belonged to Christopher at the time the will was prepared.[5] However, after these 1726 transactions, Christopher again owned all of the original land he received as a gift from his father, which seems to have been north of the County Road.[6]

April 10, 1725, Christopher was a witness to the Gideon Cobb "quit claim" to property sold to him by William, Sr. in 1718 and September 29, 1725, Christopher sold 20 acres to Nathaniel Nile, Jr. for 30 pounds and on the same day he was a witness to the sale of 40 acres to the same Nathaniel, Jr. by Aaron Stark, now recorded as a resident of Colchester, Connecticut.

On October 1, 1725, Christopher also witnessed the articles of agreement between Aaron Stark and Nathaniel Niles on this property transaction and in 1725, William, Sr. deeded, as a gift, a wood lot to Thomas Walworth, Joanna's brother, who had married Christopher's sister Phebe.[7]

As already mentioned, William Stark, Sr. prepared his will early in 1726 which was probably made because William had suffered an illness or experienced some other calamity. From the time he prepared his will until his death in September of 1730, there was an urgency to the land transactions he made with his children and other relatives. William, Sr. sold 4 to 5 acres to John Stark, son of Aaron Stark, Jr. which was witnessed by Joanna (Walworth) Stark. Several other transactions occurred where William, Sr. sold property to Christopher, deeded property as a gift to his son Daniel as mentioned above and generally seemed to be divesting himself of all of his property. Joanna gave birth to a daughter August 1, 1726 named Phebe and during these years, his son Christopher Stark, Jr. was born September 27, 1728 in Groton and another daughter, Elizabeth, was born December 23, 1730.[8] From 1730 to 1742, Christopher and Joanna settled down to raising a family and tending the farm received as a gift from his father. Children born during these years were Aaron Stark, born March 3, 1732/33, James Stark, born May 22, 1734, and Mary Stark, born February 26, 1738.[8] Christopher and Joanna's last two children, William Stark and Daniel Stark, were born in February of 1745 and probably before 1750, respectively.[9]

1) All information on the Walworth/Walsworth Family was taken from the Book entitled "*Walworth/Walsworth Genealogy, 1689-1962*", Authored by Reginald Wellington Walworth, published by Queen Anne's Publishing Company, Center Ville Maryland in 1962 and the "*Dictionary of First Settlers of New England*, Volume 4, Chapter 5, by James Savage.

2) Stark, Charles R.; Book entitled, "*Aaron Stark Family, Seven Generations*", page 11; CRS source was the Groton, New London County, CT Town Records.

3) Groton, New London County, CT Deed Records; Book 1, page 72; "Vallintine Waitman of Groton ... for valuable consideration to me payed in hand by William Starke of the above said ... 4a ... beginning at the corner which I the said Whitman bought of William Starke formerly John Plaisters ... 10 Feb 1710 ... Signed Valentine Wightman. Wit Aaron Stark, Aabel Stark. Ack 8 Mar 1709/10. Recd 8 Mar 1709/10." Book 2, pages 19, 20; "Know all men that I Christopher Stark of the Town of Groton for a valuable consideration paid in hand by my father William Stark ... 4A ... SE corner of land that Whitman bought of my father which was formerly Mr. John Slater's?? Dated 19 Aug 1723 ... Recd 20 Aug 1723 signed by Christopher Stark ... wit Jonathan Hinckley, John Smith."

4) Groton, New London County, CT Deed Records; Book 2, page 14; "William Stark Senr of Groton yeoman for 300L by Christopher Stark of same ... 150A ... Christopher Stark's corner, Mr. Nyles land, Thos. Wools' land. Dated 19 Aug 1723 ... Recd 20 Aug 1723 signed by William Stark ... wit Valentine Whighman, David Collver." Book 2, page 19; "Christopher Stark of Groton yeoman for 200L paid by Sergt. William Stark ... Mr. Nyles corner, land sd Nyles bought of Mr. Aaron Stark ... Mr. Whitman's south line. 19th day, 10th year of his majesties reign 1723. ... Recd 20 Aug 1723 signed by Christopher Stark ... wit Valentine Wightman, David Culver (Note: From Book 2, page 231, this property is described as being 150 acres)." Book 2, page 231; "Deed of exchange ... Willm. Stark of Groton certain tract bounded Mrs. Niles his line ... Thomas Wells ... 150A ... exchange William Stark unto my Son Christopher Stark ... Mr. Niles Corner ... Mr. Wightmans south line ... and by deed passed from sd Christopher Stark to Wm. Stark aforesd bearing date 19 Aug 1723 ... 4A ... Dated 13 Oct 1726 ... Recd 8 Nov 1726 ... Signed William Stark ... Wit Abiel Stark, Ephraim Collver, John Wallsworth." Book 2, page 233; "Deed of Exchange Christopher Stark of Groton for one certain tract of land ... may appear by a deed passed from the sd Christopher Stark to his father Willm. Stark bearing date 19 Aug 1723 ... 151A ... Dated 13 Oct 1726 ... Recd 8 Nov 1726 ... Signed Christopher Stark ... Wit Ephraim Collver, John Wallsworth."

5) Stark, Charles R.; Book entitled, "*Aaron Stark Family, Seven Generations*", page 5.

6) Groton, New London County, CT Deed Records; Book 2, pages 376-377; "William Stark of Groton husbandman for love and affection for son Daniel Stark do give part of my homestead south of the County Road Mr. Niles his orchard ... Thomas Wells ... 100A ... Dated 6 May 1728 ... Recd 28 May 1728 ... Signed William Stark ... wit Ephraim Collver, William Gard."

7) Groton, New London County, CT Deed Records; Book 2, pages 173, 174, 175, 176, 197, and 200.

8) Stark, Charles R.; Book entitled, "*Aaron Stark Family, Seven Generations*", page 11; CRS reference are the Records of the First Congregational Church of Stonington, CT. CRS source was the Groton, New London County, CT Town Records.

9) Ibid; page 11.

In 1729, William, Sr. prepared a deed where he relinquished control of the property he had originally given to Christopher under condition William and his wife could continue to live there until William and his wife died. The deed stated, "Serjant William Stark of Groton Yeoman for love and affection unto my son Christopher Stark of Groton husbandman and also for the reason of the insufficiency of two deeds of gift from me to Christopher the one baring date 1717 and the other 1718..."[1] This deed allowed Christopher to sell this property consisting of 250 acres to John Smith for 1,500 pounds on August 30, 1729 one year before William Stark, Sr. died September 8, 1730.[2] In 1742, Christopher purchased a total of 60 acres from April to November for a total amount of 638 pounds from the heirs of John Fanning as fourths of their share of the property. December 2 of the same year, Christopher sold forty-three and one-half acres to Nathan Niles for 790 pounds. January 27, 1758, the above 60 acres was also sold to Nathan Niles.[3]

By 1750, many of the descendants of the early Connecticut settlers began to look to the west for more fertile farm land at cheaper prices. The region around present day Wilkes-Barre, lying in Northeast Pennsylvania on the Susquehanna River, became the focus of considerable interest. However, because early maps of America were very poor at the time charters were made for this region, King Charles II had granted the area to both Connecticut and Pennsylvania which both claimed and began to send settlers to the region which would lead to ownership conflicts between the competing colonist. On March 29, 1753, a petition for the formation of the Susquehanna Company was presented to the Connecticut Assembly, asking that the petitioners be allowed to build settlements on the Susquehanna River which they believed was under the jurisdiction of Connecticut. On July 18, 1753, the Susquehanna Company was formed in Windham County, Connecticut by several hundred individuals with the avowed purpose of establishing a settlement along the banks of the Susquehanna River. Christopher and his brother-in-law, Thomas Walworth, were not signers of this original petition, but on May 7, 1754, they along with many of their neighbors paid five pounds for a full share in the company. With this money, the land along the banks of the Susquehanna River were purchased July 11, 1754 from the Iroquois Indians in Albany, New York.[4]

This geographical area, later to be known as the Wyoming Valley, had been settled earlier by families from Dutchess County, New York. Abraham Utter and his family resided in Dutchess County, New York until 1750 and his occupation was tenant farmer. Because all of the land in the area was owned by landlords, he could not hope to purchase property and in 1749 the family, along with several of his neighbors, decided to move to live the Susquehanna River in the Wyoming Valley. They organized an association consisting of eleven families and after encountering many difficulties and making numerous sacrifices, the families organized seventeen trains made up of oxen and forty-four cows.

Proceeding from Dutchess County, New York to the Wyoming Valley of Pennsylvania, the trains started their journey on April 5, 1750. The distance was not so great, but their route lay through dense forest and after surmounting many obstacles, reached their destination on April 14, 1750.[5]

King George's War, which lasted from 1744 to 1748, had ended by 1750 and most settlers believed the territorial claims of England and France in North America had been settled. However, all this war had accomplished was to set the stage for the last of four wars, called the French & Indian War [1757-1764] by the colonists. As French and English settlements expanded, conflicts between the settlers and the two countries began to escalate. The French at this time held most of settled America including much of Canada as well as land West of the Allegheny Mountains and along the Mississippi River down to New Orleans. In 1749, a group of Virginia businessmen secured a grant of 500,000 acres of Ohio Valley land for the purpose of building settlements, despite French to the same land. While the French had sent explorers and fur traders to the region first, the English were sending settlers from the colonies who intended to stay and till the land, which the Iroquois Indian Confederacy was permitting, despite the claims of the French. The French, fearing the loss of the Ohio fur trade, built a chain of forts in 1753 at the Eastern end of the Ohio Valley on land claimed by the British. In retaliation, the British attempted to build a fort on a site which would later become Pittsburgh, but were driven off by a French flotilla. The French then built a larger fort on the site which they named Fort Duquesne.

Virginia Governor Dinwiddie sent 22-year-old Lieutenant Colonel George Washington to secure the British Fort, which they believed had been built, but instead, found the French in command of the Fort. Washington established a base to wait for reinforcements before trying to capture the fort. Near Great Meadows, located south of the Fort, Washington surrounded and attacked a party of 33 Frenchmen. Ten French were killed, and some 22 were captured. The French sent out 900 men to avenge this slaughter and Washington, upon hearing of the advance, built a crude stockade which was named Fort Necessity. The French badly beat Washington and he signed a document, prepared in French, that he thought stated that he attacked the party at Great Meadows, when in fact, the documents he signed stated he assassinated the party. The disclosure of the attack set off a world war beginning in 1756. This action has been credited as having started the "Seven Year's War" and was the first action in the North American French & Indian War. With the start of hostilities, the Susquehanna Company was forced to delay it's plans to settle the Wyoming Valley, which would be an area of conflict between the two warring nations.

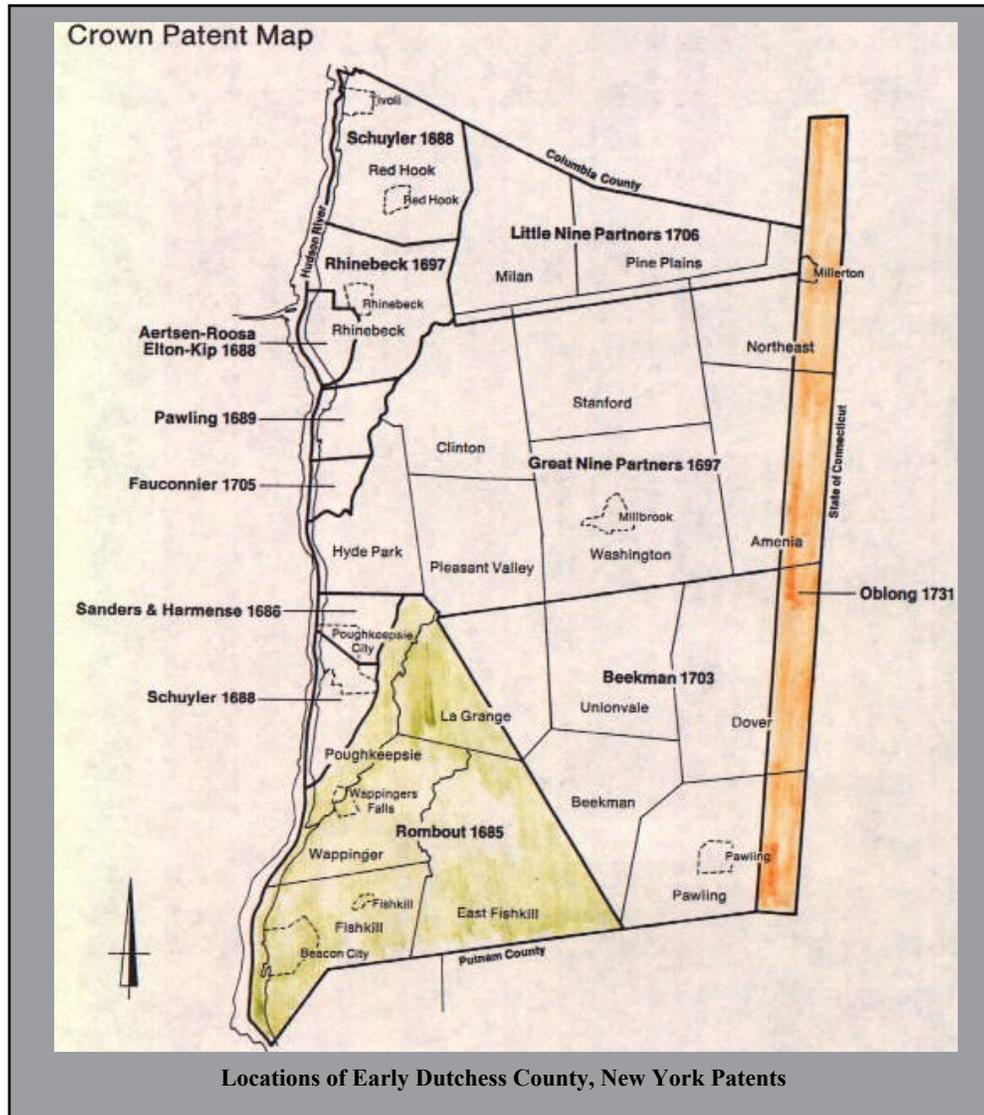
1) Groton, New London County, CT Deed Records; Book 2, pages 529-30; "*Serjant William Stark of Groton Yeoman for love and affection unto my son Christopher Stark of Groton husbandman and also for the reason of the insufficiency of two deeds of gift from me to Christopher the one baring date 1717 and the other 1718 ... part of my homestead ... 250A ... Daniel Stark's NW corner ... William Stark Junr his SW corner ... Whitman's land ... Mr. Niles NE corner Dated 25 Mar 1729 ... Recd 31 Mar 1729 ... Signed William Stark ... wit Ephraim Collver, Daniel Stark, Mary X Collver her mark*"

2) Ibid; Book 2, pages 537-538.

3) Ibid; Book 4, pages 156, 157, 158, 162

4) Stark, Helen; Article in Stark Family Association Newsletter, 1927, entitled "*Christopher Stark's Migration to New York and Pennsylvania.*"

5) Pattison, Thomas, "The Wyoming Valley Massacre of 1757", written circa 1862 by 80 year-old Thomas Pattison, a son of Sarah (Utter) Pattison, (whose kidnapping by Indians in 1757 during the French and Indian War after the massacre of her mother and siblings is the chief subject of this text) [Author's comment: This Wyoming Valley Massacre is not to be confused with the Revolutionary War Massacre of the same name occurring July 3, 1778.]



Locations of Early Dutchess County, New York Patents

Abraham Utter's family did not fair very well during this period for in 1757 their home was attacked by marauding Indians, who were allies of the French, with many members of the family killed and taken prisoner. Although Abraham survived because he was not home at the time of the attack, he would never recover from the horror of finding his mutilated family when he returned home. Two of his younger daughters survived the attack, living with the Indians for one year before being released to their families who had returned to New York State after the massacre.[1]

By 1758, we know Christopher, Sr. had divested himself of most of his property in Connecticut. January 27, 1758, he sold the land east of Fort Hill to Nathan Niles and was probably selling all of his remaining property in Groton as preparations were being made to move to the Wyoming Valley. When the French & Indian War started, Christopher, Sr. and his family made a decision sometime between the years 1756 and 1758 to make a temporary move to Dutchess County, New York until the war ended. On July 12, 1758, Robert Millard of Beekman, Dutchess County, New York, sold to "Christopher Starks, formerly of Groton, County of New London, Colony of Connecticut in New England, yeoman, now of Dutchess County, 150 acres beginning on the line of lots 3 and 4, SW corner of Ralph Woolman, deceased." Witnesses were Charity Baker and Henry Cary. The property was bordered on the north by the mountain called Purgatory. Henry Cary would have been the same Henry Cary who sold the Beekman Lease to another Christopher Stark May 1, 1759 and was the father of Elizabeth Cary who married Christopher, Sr.'s son, James Stark, in 1758. The above property bought by Christopher, Sr. in July of 1758 was later sold to Nathaniel Howland on Oct. 12, 1762 and this sale offers proof this property was owned by Christopher Stark, Sr., for the deed is signed by "Christopher Stark" and "Johannah Stark", his spouse.

Christopher Stark, Sr.'s son, Christopher, Jr. was most likely the Christopher Stark who received a lease in the Beekman Patent May 1, 1759 in Lot #4 consisting of 341 acres, which was the sixth farm in Lot #4, located Northeast of Pawling. The original lease, dated May 1, 1740, belonged to William Cooper along with William Price, John Price and Sarah Price.

1) Pattison, Thomas, "The Wyoming Valley Massacre of 1757", written circa 1862 by 80 year-old Thomas Pattison, a son of Sarah (Utter) Pattison, (whose kidnapping by Indians in 1757 during the French and Indian War after the massacre of her mother and siblings is the chief subject of this text) [Author's comment: This Wyoming Valley Massacre is not to be confused with the Revolutionary War Massacre of the same name occurring July 3, 1778.]

By 1758, we know Christopher, Sr. had divested himself of most of his property in Connecticut. January 27, 1758, he sold the land east of Fort Hill to Nathan Niles and was probably selling all of his remaining property in Groton as preparations were being made to move to the Wyoming Valley. When the French & Indian War started, Christopher, Sr. and his family made a decision sometime between the years 1756 and 1758 to make a temporary move to Dutchess County, New York until the war ended. On July 12, 1758, Robert Millard of Beekman, Dutchess County, New York, sold to "*Christopher Starks, formerly of Groton, County of New London, Colony of Connecticut in New England, yeoman, now of Dutchess County, 150 acres beginning on the line of lots 3 and 4, SW corner of Ralph Woolman, deceased.*" Witnesses were Charity Baker and Henry Cary. The property was bordered on the north by the mountain called Purgatory. Henry Cary would have been the same Henry Cary who sold the Beekman Lease to another Christopher Stark May 1, 1759 and was the father of Elizabeth Cary who married Christopher, Sr.'s son, James Stark, in 1758. The above property bought by Christopher, Sr. in July of 1758 was later sold to Nathaniel Howland on Oct. 12, 1762 and this sale offers proof this property was owned by Christopher Stark, Sr., for the deed is signed by "Christopher Stark" and "Johannah Stark", his spouse.

Christopher Stark, Sr.'s son, Christopher, Jr. was most likely the Christopher Stark who received a lease in the Beekman Patent May 1, 1759 in Lot #4 consisting of 341 acres, which was the sixth farm in Lot #4, located Northeast of Pawling. The original lease, dated May 1, 1740, belonged to William Cooper along with William Price, John Price and Sarah Price.

William Price then assigned the lease to Henry Cary for 120 pounds March 30, 1751 who then assigned it to Christopher, Jr. for 200 pounds on the above date.[1] Named on the lease with Christopher Stark, Jr. was William Stark and Azell Stark. The landlord usually rented the land to an individual and two others in the same family, sometimes a wife and son or daughter, sometimes to brothers but almost always for "three lives." William may have been Christopher Stark, Jr.'s younger brother who would have been about fourteen years old at that time. From the Manlius, Onondaga County, New York census records of 1800, the name "Asel" Stark is recorded, his age reported to be over 45 years old. This would suggest he would have been at least four to five years old in 1759 if he was born before 1755 and could be the "Azell" named in Christopher, Jr.'s Beekman lease. There will be more later to prove a link of this "Asel" to Christopher Stark, Jr

No efforts were made by the Susquehanna Company to settle the Wyoming Valley in Pennsylvania until 1761 when the shareholders held a meeting in Windham County, Connecticut. Due to changes in the Company shareholders over the intervening years, there were now 588 holding a "whole share" and 165 that held half shares. In August of 1762, a group of ninety-three men, representing those owning shares, started from Windham on horseback to form a settlement along the Susquehanna River.[2] This first settlement was made at Mill Creek north of present day Wilkes-Barre. There were no children in this first group, but in May, 1763 more settlers arrived with their families. On May 15, 1763, this first settlement was destroyed when Captain Bull and his Delaware Indians massacred some twenty of the inhabitants.[3] Despite this set back, the settlement continued to slowly grow.

From 1759 to 1769, the name Christopher Stark appears on the Beekman Tax List and as a lessee on the Beekman lease in Dutchess County. October 14, 1762, Christopher, Sr. and his son James appear as witnesses on a deed executed at Beekman's Precinct.[1&2] January 25th of 1768, Christopher, Sr. conveyed his Susquehanna right to his sons, Aaron, James, and William. This deed was made in Beekman Precinct, Dutchess County, New York and was witnessed by Joanna Stark and Christopher Stark, Jr. December 20, 1769, Christopher Stark, Sr. conveyed his right in the Groton Baptist Church meeting house to Elder Wightman. Witnesses to this exchange were his sons James Stark and Daniel Stark. From this deed, we can say the latest year of birth for Daniel Stark was probably 1748, twenty-one years before this event.[4]

November 5, 1768, the British government signed the Fort Stanwich Treaty, which established a diagonal line across Pennsylvania and opened up territory east of the line for settlement which included the Wyoming Valley. On the same day, the representatives of the "Six Indian Nations" deeded all of the land in the province to Thomas and Richard Penn, which, they interpreted, included the Wyoming Valley. The Susquehanna Company was determined to occupy the region and sent forty men with shares in the Company who would receive additional shares for agreeing to make the trip before May of 1768. They arrived February 6, 1769 and were promptly arrested for trespass by Sheriff Jenning of Northampton County, Pennsylvania and Captain Amos Ogden, who had established a trading post at Mill Creek. They were placed in the Easton jail, but some escaped while the rest were released on bail.

In June of 1769, Thomas Walsworth, the brother-in-law of Christopher, Sr., was among two hundred and sixty men to arrive with Major John Durkee. They erected Fort Durkee on the eastern bank of the Susquehanna and named their town Wilkes-Barre. A Pennsylvania force led by Colonel Turbutt Francis invaded the Wyoming Valley in July with considerable fanfare demanding the surrender of Fort Durkee, but The Connecticut Yankees declined the Colonel's courteous offer and the he returned to Pennsylvania, having not accomplished his mission. September 12, 1769, the brothers Christopher, Jr., Aaron, James, and William Stark arrived at the Fort which was soon after captured by Sheriff Jennings and Captain Ogden by a large force of Pennsylvanians who then drove the Connecticut Yankees from the valley by destroying their settlement.

1) Reck, Sharon, Article entitled, "*Descendants of Christopher Stark*". <Reck37719@aol.com>

2) Stark, Helen; Article in Stark Family Association Newsletter, 1927, entitled, "*Christopher Stark's Migration to New York and Pennsylvania.*"

3) Irby, Richard E., Jr. Article entitled, "*The State of Westmoreland and the Pennamite - Yankee Wars.*"

4) Stark, Charles R. Publication entitled, "*The Aaron Stark Family, Seven Generations*"; page 12; Source of CRS is Westmoreland Records & Perhaps Groton Deed Records.

Members of the Susquehanna Company and the Stark family regrouped in Dutchess County to plan their next move. Captain Zebulon Butler assumed command of the group in January of 1770 and recruited Lazarus Steward and the Paxtang Rangers to the Yankee cause with the promise of land grants in Hanover Township. The Paxtang Rangers had been declared outlaws by Pennsylvania and had prices on their heads for having openly defied Pennsylvania authority for years. This new military force arrived in the Valley in February of 1770 and successfully drove the Pennamites [Pennsylvania Settlers] from the Valley. With this new success, Christopher Stark, Jr. and his brother Aaron returned to the Valley again in June of 1770 to again take possession of the families shares of land. Construction then began on the celebrated Forty Fort in Kingston Township west of the Susquehanna but was recaptured by Captain Ogden in the fall with a large force. After this change of fortunes in the settlement, Christopher Stark, Jr. returned to Dutchess County and the Beekman Patent and made no further attempts to settle in the Wyoming Valley. Hostilities prevailed until the Connecticut Yankees laid siege to and captured Fort Wyoming in July which ended the First Yankee-Pennamite War on August 20, 1771.

In September of 1771, James Stark wrote from Pawling Precinct (Pawling was set-off from Beekman's Precinct in 1768) to Captain Zebulon Butler, commanding the Yankee forces in the Valley, "*I have hired the bearer thereof, Timothy Pearce, to go on the same right for two months. At the end of two months, I will come and take possession of it myself.*" On October 23, Aaron Stark arrived to claim his share and October 31, James Stark arrived to claim his share. Early in 1772, James returned to Dutchess County to collect his family, brother Daniel, father Christopher, Sr. and mother Joanna, returning to the Valley in the early spring of 1772. Pawling Precinct deed records show William Stark sold 200 acres (Half share in the Susquehanna Company) to his father-in-law, Henry Carey, May 20, 1773. In June of 1773, William Stark and his family along with his in-laws had moved to the Valley. By the end of 1773, the families of William Stark, Aaron Stark and James Stark had taken up residence in the Wyoming Valley along with their brother Daniel, father Christopher Stark, Sr. and mother Joanna Walworth.[1]

After fifteen years of blood letting, destruction and rebuilding of settlements, Indian massacres, and exodus and return, the Yankees of Connecticut were finally in control of the region. They now turned their attention to clearing the land and building small farms, new forts, and strengthening old ones and began to create communities and fit places for people to live. Little by little, the settlers began to venture further from the stockades believing the questions between them and Pennsylvania had been permanently resolved.

From 1772 to 1774 the settlers lived in relative peace, not being a part of Connecticut or Pennsylvania. The Connecticut authorities, having not supported the Susquehanna Company settlers during the final three years of conflict between the Yankees and Pennamites, now concluded the people had proved their ability to hold the Wyoming Valley and backed them in their ownership of the valley. Connecticut passed an act in January, 1774, which created the town of Westmoreland, which extended from the 41st degree of North Latitude to the New York line and from the Delaware River to fifteen miles west of the Susquehanna River which was then annexed to Litchfield County, Connecticut. Within this town, the districts of Wilkes-Barre, Hanover, Plymouth, Kingston, Pittston, North, Lackaway, and East were created. In 1774, the total inhabitants of Westmoreland were counted at 1,922 men, women, and children and considered large enough to become a separate county. It subsequently became the county of Westmoreland, Connecticut defined as embracing 60 x 120 miles.

The four years of peace was broken, in December 1775, when Colonel Plunkett invaded Westmoreland with six hundred Pennsylvania militia. Colonel Zebulon Butler posted his regiment behind a natural rampart of rocks above Nanticoke Falls on the west side of the river while the Paxtang Rangers occupied the east side and protected the Yankee flank. Plunkett advanced on the morning of December 25 and thus began the Battle of Rampart Rocks. The battle raged all Christmas day with the Pennamites suffering severe casualties and late in the evening fled after inflicting minor losses on the Yankee forces. The Revolutionary War had started previous to this encounter with the battle of Lexington taking place in August and Bunker Hill having occurred in June. These violent differences between Connecticut and Pennsylvania were temporarily put aside but would resume again after the war.

For those researching the Christopher Stark, Sr. family, it is important to understand participants in the Revolutionary War recruited and serving in the Westmoreland County Militia were considered to be residents of Connecticut. While the Wyoming Valley is today within the bounds of the State of Pennsylvania, many members of Christopher, Sr.'s family will show on the rolls of the Connecticut Militia, not the Pennsylvania Militia.

The Valley settlements were becoming alarmed, for they had received word the British, under Col. John Butler (his command was mostly Canadians and Indians) were at Oswego, and the people of the valley were convinced the Indians had established an alliance with the British. On August 23, 1776, the United States Congress, at the urgent request of Col. Zebulon Butler, resolved to station two companies at Westmoreland for the defense of the inhabitants. Robert Durkee and Samuel Ransom were elected Captains of these companies and given the authority to recruit soldiers from Westmoreland County. James Stark joined Captain Samuel Ransom's company September 17, 1776.

However, as history tells us, Washington was retreating after the British General Howe captured New York. Washington's 3,000 men were forced to keep moving through New Jersey and crossed the Delaware River December 8th causing Congress to immediately take measures to move from Philadelphia to Baltimore. Before moving however, the Congress "resolved" on December 12, that the two companies raised in the town of Westmoreland, be ordered to join George Washington, with all possible expedition. Ransom and Durkee promptly obeyed and were with Washington by the end of 1776, leaving Westmoreland defenseless. These companies were placed under the command of General Dickinson and first saw battle January 27, 1777, at the battle of Millstone. July 20, 1777, James Stark died in camp from a small pox epidemic which struck the command. His body was returned to Westmoreland and he was buried at the Upper Wilkes-Barre Township in the old burying ground.[2]

1) Stark, Helen; Article in Stark Family Association Newsletter, 1927, entitled, "*Christopher Stark's Migration to New York and Pennsylvania.*"

2) Stark, Charles R. publication, *Aaron Stark Family, Seven Generations*, page 22.

Christopher Stark, Sr. died of natural causes in 1777. His will provided for his son, James, to receive his homestead with the proviso that he should take care of his mother and grandmother.[1] James had an oldest son named James, Jr. born December 12, 1760. Could this be the James named in the will and he is to provide for his mother, Elizabeth Carey, and grandmother, Joanna Walworth? It is related by Carey descendants that James, Jr.'s grandmother Carey was deceased several years prior to 1777. Because James, Sr. and Christopher, Sr. died so close in time, this is perhaps the James mentioned in the will.

Signs of an invasion from the North into the Valley became apparent and Congress, on March 17, 1778, authorized Westmoreland County, Connecticut to raise another company for the defense of the town. Aaron Stark, his son Aaron, Jr., William, and Daniel, were recruited and by May, the settlements were frantic and appealed to Congress to return their men to the defense of the valley which was denied by the authorities.

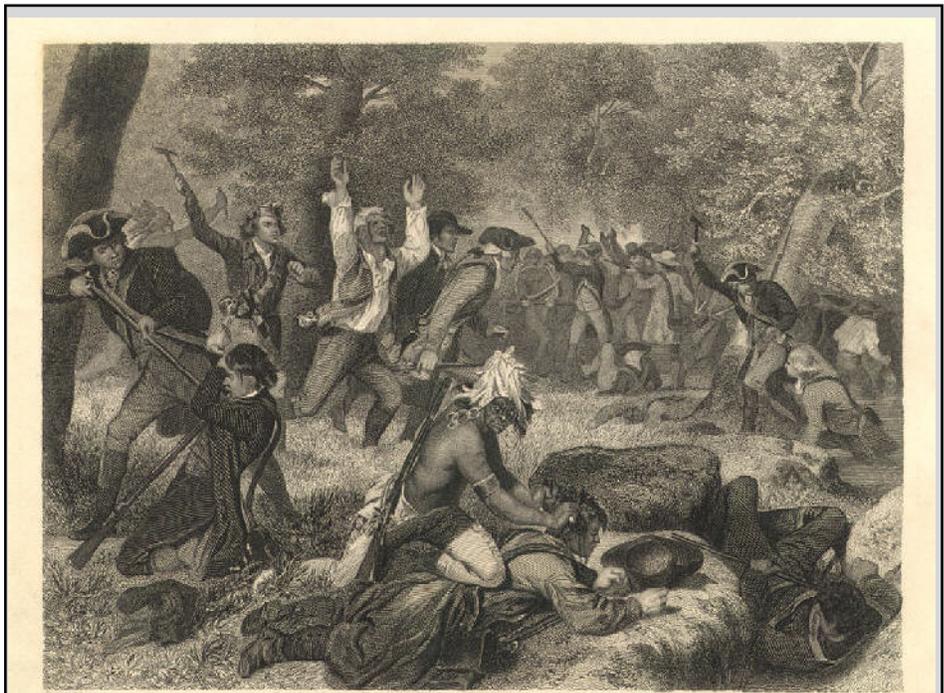
Col. Zebulon Butler assumed command of the Westmoreland defenders at Forty Fort June 29, after British Col. John Butler invaded the Valley on that day. The British troops, consisting of about 250 of Butler's Rangers and an equal number of Indians quickly captured Fort Jenkins and then Fort Wintermoot. Under the command of Col. Zebulon Butler at Forty Fort were 230 enrolled men, seventy old people, boys, civil magistrates, and other volunteers, the bulk of able bodied fighting men having been sent to reinforce General Washington. Among the defenders at Forty Fort were Aaron Stark, son of Christopher Stark, Sr., his son of the same name, Daniel Stark, the youngest son of Christopher, Sr., and James Stark, Jr. oldest son of James Stark, Sr. and Elizabeth Carey.

Early on the morning of July 3, Col. John Butler sent messengers to Forty Fort demanding their surrender. Col. Zebulon Butler immediately called a council of war and asked if he should parley with the enemy for delay until reinforcements should arrive but many believed they could execute a surprise attack on the British troops who had bivouacked at Fort Wintermoot. The latter strategy prevailed which would prove to be a fatal error in judgment.

The forces of Brant and Col. John Butler were at Wintermoot's Fort, opposite Pittston. The little band, on the afternoon of July 3rd, numbering about 350 of the sturdiest remaining settlers, under the command of Colonel Zebulon Butler, left the fort amid the prayers of dear and devoted kindred. Old men, whose hands were tremulous and unsteady marched by the side of young ones, unskilled in years and war to the place of conflict. Among the 350 were Aaron Stark, Sr. his son Aaron Stark, Jr. and Daniel Stark. None remained in the fort save the women and children.

Moving rapidly up the west bank of the river, the Yankee Colonel Z. Butler cautiously led his forces within half a mile of Wintermoot's. Here he halted for a few minutes and sent forward two volunteers to reconnoiter the position and strength of the enemy. They were promptly fired upon by the British for their Indian Scouts had already apprised them of the Yankees departure from Forty Fort. The British Colonel J. Butler began to form his forces into line of battle; the Provincials and Tories being placed in front toward the river, while to his right was concealed a large number of Indians.

About four in the afternoon the battle began when Col. Z. Butler ordered his men to fire, and at each discharge to advance a step. As the Yankees advanced, pouring in their platoon fires with great vivacity, the British line gave way drawing the Yankee forces into the trap laid by the British Commander. When the trap was set, the hidden Indians engaged the Connecticut Troops from their left flank. For half an hour the battle raged with each side giving and taking fire from the other. However, it became apparent the Connecticut force was not only out numbered, but out flanked. Orders were given by the Connecticut forces for one Company to wheel back, so as to form an angle with the main line, and thus present their front instead of flank to the Indians on their left.



MASSACRE OF WYOMING.

Wyoming Valley Massacre was painted in 1857 by Alonzo Chappell.

Comment: Much of this history of the Wyoming Valley Massacre uses excerpts from, "History: Local Part III - Luzerne County, PA; Lackawanna County, PA; Wyoming County, PA." The Stark Family participation in the Wyoming Valley settlement and subsequent massacre comes from, "The Aaron Stark Family, Seven Generations", by Charles R. Stark, published in 1927 and the Helen Stark Article in the Stark Family Association Newsletter, 1927, entitled, "Christopher Stark's Migration to New York and Pennsylvania."

1) Stark, Helen; Article in Stark Family Association Newsletter, 1927, entitled, "*Christopher Stark's Migration to New York and Pennsylvania.*"

On the attempt the savages rushed in with horrid yells and utter confusion prevailed on the left flank of the Connecticut force. Seeing the disorder, and his own men beginning to give way, Col. Z. Butler threw himself between the fires of the opposing ranks and rode up and down the line in the most reckless exposure. "*Don't leave me, my children, and the victory is ours.*" But it was too late. When it was seen that defeat had come, the confusion became general. Some fought bravely in the hopeless conflict while others fled in wild disorder down the valley toward Forty Fort or Wilkes-Barre without their guns, pursued by Indians whose belts were soon reeking with warm scalps. Another group of Indians moved in behind the fleeing forces, cutting off their retreat to Forty Fort. All was lost and the fleeing Connecticut men were forced to run for the river, in hopes of reaching Wilke-Barre Fort on the other side.

A group of men including Aaron, Sr., Aaron, Jr. and Daniel, ran for their lives and hid in driftwood along the banks of the river. The Indians searched and towards night fall, found Aaron, Sr. and Daniel. They were tomahawked and scalped before the eyes of Aaron, Jr. who remained concealed and was not detected by the Indians. Aaron, Jr. then fled to the home of his grandfather, Christopher Stark, Sr. before eventually escaping the battle and making it back to Dutchess County.

Aaron, Sr.'s wife had taken refuge at Forty Fort. After the Fort was taken by the British, she along with some other women and children were allowed to leave unmolested and they made their way back to Dutchess County, she with five of her children. On the night of July 3rd, William Stark and his family made their way to Wilkes-Barre Fort from which they along with others, started for the Delaware River and then made the long trek back to Dutchess County.

James Stark's widow, Elizabeth Carey, on hearing about the massacre, took her small children with her into the corn fields and hid. After the Indians had passed she made her way back to her home to find all of the buildings destroyed. She gathered what belongings she could find and made her way on foot to Dutchess County. When she arrived at her sister's home, she was a picture of misery and destitution. She never rallied from the death of her husband a year earlier and then the massacre which destroyed her home. She passed away August 12, 1778, probably her spirit broken, another belated victim of the massacre. Elizabeth Carey's oldest son James was serving in Captain Simon Spalding's Company and received a musket ball in one of his legs and was one of the last to leave the Valley, eventually arriving safely in Dutchess County.

The massacre had finally dislodged the Christopher Stark, Sr. family from the Wyoming Valley. After so many attempts to settle, the painful memories and horrors of that day were too much for this family to attempt to return to the Valley. Only William and his family would return for awhile, but then leave by 1790 and return to Orange County, New York. Most surviving members of the family would settle in or near Dutchess County until the end of the Revolutionary War.

Christopher Stark, Jr. and his family were probably living in Albany County, New York at the time of the Wyoming Valley Massacre. By 1778, Asahel Stark had married Sarah Dark and probably had one small child. His brother, William would have now been 18 years old and his youngest brother John was perhaps 14 to 16 years old. They would have heard the stories from the survivors and joined to fight the British who they felt were responsible for the slaughter that took place on that day. Military records show Lieutenant Christopher Stark and Ashel Stark were on the payroll of Capt. William Shepard's Company, Col. Cornelius Douty's Regiment, in a Regiment of Foot, of the State of Vermont, from the 1st day of August to the 4th day of August, 1781, in the alarm at Saratoga. They were, most probably, a company from Albany County, New York assigned to Vermont for 4 days during this crisis.

Children of Christopher Stark and Joanna Walworth

- 1) Zerviah Stark was born February 23, 1722/23 in Groton, New London County, Connecticut.
- 2) Phebe Stark was born August 01, 1726. She married Increase Billings who was born February 15, 1724/25 in Stonington, Connecticut and died Abt. 1808.]
- 3) Christopher Stark, Jr. was born September 27, 1728 in Groton, New London, Connecticut. He died between 1781 and 1785 in Albany County, New York. He married Susanna Perhaps Price before 1755.
- 4) Elizabeth Stark was born December 23, 1730 in Groton, New London County, Connecticut and died September 19, 1772. She married Samuel Treat6 who was Baptized July 12, 1712 and died September 16, 1773.
- 5) James Stark, Sr. was born May 22, 1734 in Groton, New London County, Connecticut and died July 20, 1777 in Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania. He married Elizabeth Cary in 1758 in Beekman, Dutchess County, New York. She was born August 18, 1739 in Berkley, Bristol County, Massachusetts and died August 12, 1778 in Beekman, Dutchess County, New York. James was buried in Upper Wilkes-Barre Township, Pennsylvania and Elizabeth was buried in Pawling, Dutchess County, New York.
- 6) Aaron Stark was born March 03, 1733/34 in Groton, New London County, Connecticut and died July 03, 1778 in Wyoming Valley Massacre in present day Pennsylvania. He married Margaret Unknown who died 1814 in Dutchess County, New York.
- 7) Mary Stark born February 26, 1737/38.
- 8) William Stark was born February 1744/45 in Groton, New London County, Connecticut and died in 1795 in Orange County, New York. He married Mary Polly Carey, daughter of Nathan and Mary Carey. William and Mary are both buried at Goshen, New York.
- 9) Daniel Stark was born before 1749 in Probably Groton, New London County, Connecticut and died July 03, 1778 in Wyoming Valley Massacre in present day Pennsylvania.