

Chapter XIII: Stark-Laycock-Lamb

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Both Abraham and Sarah Stark have now been traced back to their common grandparents, the father and mother of both Daniel and Christopher Stark. This couple was **JONATHAN STARK** and **SARAH {LAYCOCK} STARK**. Jonathan was born on December 10, 1712, in Groton, Connecticut. (Groton was part of New London until 1705, and the two locations will be cited jointly unless the applicable sector is known.) Sarah was probably born about 1720,¹ but we know little for certain about her and her family. She is mentioned in the 1760 will of her father, **JOSEPH LAYCOCK**, but the name of her mother does not appear in the records.² In view of the fragmentary information we have about our Laycock family, we will examine it before returning to the Starks.

Joseph Laycock may have been part of a sizable Quaker Laycock family from Lancashire, England, that came to America around the time Sarah was born. Joseph thus was born in England, probably during the period between 1680 and 1690; there is nothing to indicate who Joseph's parents were. Numerous members of the Laycocks who came to America lived along the Delaware River, perhaps first in Chester (now Delaware)

¹ One source says Sarah {Laycock} Stark's year of birth was 1731, but this is too late: she had a son born in 1741.

² One source states that Sarah's mother was Sarah {Moore} Laycock, daughter of Alexander and Nancy Moore, and that she was born in Trenton, New Jersey, about 1698. I have seen no documentary evidence to support this statement. This source also states that Joseph Laycock was born in Trenton about 1696, but I think the evidence is stronger that he was born in Lancashire, England, instead. The site of Trenton, at the falls of the Delaware River, was a settlement of Quaker immigrants from Yorkshire, England, referred to before 1679 as "the Yorkshire Tenth."

County and in Bucks County, Pennsylvania (where we first see them referred to in 1734), and then in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. On the other hand, some evidence suggests that Joseph Laycock could have been in various locations in New Jersey as early as the decade from 1711 to 1720, or perhaps even in 1708; in Burlington County by 1708 or 1711; in Woodbridge Township, Middlesex County, by 1714; and in Newtown by 1720. Thus we cannot be more precise about Joseph Laycock's own arrival owing to vague and possibly conflicting evidence.³

New Jersey is presumably where the Laycocks and the Starks became acquainted. Members of both families belonged to the Bethlehem Church in Kingwood, Hunterdon County, and to the Knollton Church, founded in 1763 in what was then Sussex County. It seems clear that Joseph Laycock lived (and would die) in Hardwick Township of that county – the same township where Jonathan Stark lived, as we shall see. Joseph's date of death occurred between August 27, 1760, when he made his will, and October 8 in that year, when it was probated.⁴ The Laycocks evidently were the first of the cluster of Starks, Laycocks, and other families to move on to Virginia, to which they seem to have gone sometime during the early 1760s – by 1765 at the latest. They would continue on to

³ The supposed sightings of Joseph Laycock in some of these places may be based on guesswork rather than evidence. The location of Newtown is not clear but may have been somewhere in Burlington County. It is worth noting that the Wells family, which like the Laycock family intermarried with the Starks, was living in Burlington, New Jersey, at about the same time the Laycocks were. Information from New Jersey wills and elsewhere brings to our attention a Robert Lacock or Leacock who was well placed to have been Joseph's father. This man, a merchant in New York City who apparently died in February 1695, owned property in Monmouth County, New Jersey.

⁴ The correct spelling of Knollton in these years is uncertain, as the present town is spelled Knowlton. One source states that the church was atop a knoll, however, and so the original spelling may have been Knollton.

southwestern Pennsylvania in company with the Starks and others, though the Laycocks would live in Amwell Township rather than in Fallowfield Township in Washington County in that colony.

As we shall learn in this chapter, the Starks were a century-old Connecticut family when Jonathan Stark, a wheelwright by trade, moved from Connecticut to New Jersey, probably during the 1730s. Here, in 1734, he served as a witness for a deed in Woodbridge, Middlesex County. Several members of his family are known to have migrated to New Jersey from Connecticut at about this time, and Jonathan may have accompanied either them or else a Baptist or Rogerene group that was making the same move. A 1736 deed back in Connecticut identifies Jonathan as a resident of that colony, though, and it may be that after 1734 he temporarily returned from New Jersey to Connecticut in order to wind up his affairs there. From this point until 1750, we have no record of Jonathan Stark. On March 6, 1750, he placed an advertisement in Benjamin Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette*. In it, Stark offered for sale or rental 55 acres of land (half of it cleared), including a gristmill and tavern, in the town of Bethlehem, Hunterdon County, New Jersey – about a mile east of the Delaware River. Because Jonathan evidently was a member of Bethlehem Church in Kingwood, as was Joseph Laycock, we can place Stark's property somewhere near the present town of Baptistown, New Jersey, where the Bethlehem Church was located.⁵

⁵ It is not clear on which tributary of the Delaware River Jonathan Stark's mill was located. It would appear that the settlement around Bethlehem Church was known first by that church's name but sometime

About 1754, however, Jonathan Stark moved his family further north in New Jersey, to Knollton in Hardwick Township of Sussex (now Warren) County. On June 13, 1763, he and Sarah were among the fourteen souls who formed a new Baptist church in Knollton. Jonathan Stark's estate was settled in Sussex County on January 29, 1765, so he must have died either very early that year or during the preceding year. Some researchers think that he and other Starks moved to western Maryland by the mid-1750s but that Jonathan went back to New Jersey in order to die there, but I am doubtful that he did so. There is no doubt, though, that the Starks and their associated families did not remain in New Jersey long after the death of the family's patriarch, Jonathan. Soon they had traded their hardscrabble existence in Sussex County, which was also beset by frequent Indian raids, for life in the more fertile and seemingly safer Loudoun County, Virginia.

In 1769 and perhaps thereafter, Jonathan Stark's widow Sarah is thought to have been living with their youngest daughter (also named Sarah, the wife of the Baptist minister named William Wood we met in the previous chapter), probably in Loudoun County, Virginia. We do not know for certain when and where Sarah {Laycock} Stark died. It is possible she died in Virginia before the remainder of her family went on to southwestern

afterwards adopted its present name of Baptistown. (The 18th-century church itself no longer exists.) Bethlehem is today the name of a township in Hunterdon County, Kingwood Township (where Baptistown is located), having been formed out of Bethlehem Township. For views (in 2004) of possible sites of the original Bethlehem Church, see slides 10874, 10884, and 10888. Just north of Baptistown on Route 519 is an ideal location for a mill (indeed, there is an old mill and mill pond at this place). Might Jonathan Stark's mill have been sited here? See slides 10877-83, also taken in 2004.

Pennsylvania during the late 1760s or the 1770s, or she may have died in that corner of Pennsylvania after the Starks had moved there. Some researchers believe, however, that Sarah was still living into the 1780s and accompanied her daughter and son-in-law Wood – one of the ex-Virginians living in Washington County who had obtained a land certificate in Kentucky after Pennsylvania prevailed in the boundary dispute – when they set out for Louisville, Kentucky, in December 1784.

The Wood party departed in three boats from DeVore's Ferry, located on the Monongahela River about halfway between Redstone Old Fort and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Freezing weather and heavy icing during their trip down the Ohio River (into which the Monongahela River flows at Pittsburgh) forced the travelers to put in at Limestone (Maysville), Kentucky, on December 31, 1784. Here they took shelter Limestone's single rude cabin, which stood just below the mouth of Limestone Creek. The area had no minister, and William Wood was persuaded, in part by an offer of cheap land, to remain there and organize a church. A Sarah Stark, presumably the Sarah {Laycock} Stark who was the widow of Jonathan Stark, is listed among the charter members of the Limestone Baptist Church. The Wood family moved across the river into Ohio sometime after 1798, but once again it is not known whether Sarah died while they remained in Limestone or accompanied them on to Ohio. She could have died, therefore,

in Ohio, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, or Virginia at any time during a period spanning the last quarter of the 18th century and even into the early 19th century.⁶

Jonathan Stark's father was **WILLIAM STARK, JR.**, and his mother was **EXPERIENCE {LAMB} STARK**. William was born in New London/Groton, Connecticut, about 1687 or 1688 and was baptized at the First Congregational Church (often called the "Road" Church) in Stonington, Connecticut, on June 19, 1698. Information about the lives of this couple is sketchy. William seems to have died between May 22, 1731 (when he was last mentioned in a document) and May 5, 1736 (when his son Jonathan sold property he could have inherited only after his father's death). Depending on how we interpret another document, however, William might have died as early as December 1733. Experience's life span is also uncertain. It is estimated that she was born about 1690, and we know she was still alive as late as October 15, 1723, because she signed a document on that date.⁷ Information in Groton town records shows a marriage date for William Stark, Jr., and Experience Lamb of April 13, 1710, in

⁶ See slide 12996 for a view of the mouth of Limestone Creek and slide 12995 for the present site of the cemetery of the Washington Baptist Church in Washington, Kentucky, which presumably was also the site of the church itself. Both of these slides were taken in 2008.

⁷ Some sources state that William Stark, Jr., married a second time, to a woman named Jane, in 1720 or 1721, but if he did remarry it could not have been before 1724 because his first wife Experience was still alive in 1723. There is also evidence to suggest that Experience {Lamb} Stark married again, on December 13, 1738, to a man named John Larkin. This would be consistent with our estimate about the date of death of William Stark, Jr.—and, naturally, would also rule out a second marriage for him. John Larkin had been married previously to a woman named Elizabeth Roos, who died in 1737. For the Road Church, see the USGS map for Stonington/Connecticut and slides 10837-39, taken in 2004.

New London/Groton, Connecticut. William became a freeman⁸ in Groton on May 22, 1712.

The records for New London/Groton show that William Stark, Jr., was involved, as a principal and as a witness, in numerous land transactions between 1714 and 1726. He also was a member of the Baptist church that his father had helped to found. Because William is not mentioned in any of these records later than 1726, he may have moved to another Connecticut town after that date. If so, the town was probably either Colchester or Lebanon, where we know a group of Starks did relocate at about this time. Other evidence, though, suggests that William Stark, Jr., moved not there but to Suffolk County, New York, just across Long Island Sound from Connecticut. Here he may have lived for several years before dying there sometime during the first half of the 1730s.

Most Lamb family researchers agree that Experience (a given name indicating her parents probably were Puritans) was the daughter of a man named **ISAAC LAMB**. Her mother's name is not known for certain but evidently was Elizabeth: both our Isaac Lamb and an Elizabeth Lamb were among the members of the church to which the Starks also belonged. Some Lamb family lore suggests that this woman's family name was Usher.⁹

⁸ During these years, a freeman had to be at least twenty-one years of age, not bonded or indentured, a member of the established church, and a landowner. This qualified him to take an oath to the English crown and made him eligible to become a freeman if the existing freemen voted their approval. Each town chose its own body of freemen.

⁹ Some researchers believe that Elizabeth's family name was Hempstead, but other research casts doubt on this.

This Lamb couple probably married just before 1690, when Experience, apparently their first child, is thought to have been born. Isaac Lamb bought land near the Mystic River in New London, Connecticut, on January 15, 1696/97; that portion of New London would become Groton in 1704. Isaac thus had to have been born sometime prior about 1670, and based on other evidence we can estimate that he was born between 1655 and that year. We cannot be more precise about his lifespan than that, unfortunately.

In 1714 Isaac Lamb sold his property along the Mystic River and built a solid and prominent house, which was still standing and in family hands as late as 2004. The house was placed on a commanding hill on Lambtown Road in a section commonly called Lambtown in what is now Ledyard, Connecticut.¹⁰ Isaac Lamb was active in the first Baptist church in Ledyard, founded in 1705, and he also served as a deacon of this church. He died in Old Mystic, New London County, Connecticut, between May 12, 1723 (when he prepared his will, which would leave half of the family property to his wife Elizabeth) and June 29, 1723 (when his estate was inventoried). Some researchers believe that Isaac Lamb was buried in the Wightman Cemetery, where many Starks were also buried, but if so his grave marker is either impossible to read or has been lost altogether. He might also have been buried in the Lamb family cemetery near his home.¹¹

¹⁰ See the USGS map for Uncasville/Connecticut and slides 10822-24 for views of Isaac Lamb's home. Slides 10825 and 10827 show some of Lamb's likely property. All these slides were taken in 2004.

¹¹ Isaac Lamb's will was proved on July 2, 1723. Both the church and the cemetery will be described later in this chapter.

Not surprisingly, there are a number of Lamb families in early New England, and there is no clear consensus among Lamb researchers about the particular one to which our Isaac belonged. Research to date has failed to confirm that he was related to any of these families but has found good reasons he cannot be linked to some of them. Given the multiplicity of Lamb families in New England it seems likely that information about several of them has been confused or conflated, and we may never be able to identify Isaac's parents with any confidence that we are correct.

The best candidate for Isaac's father is a man named John Lamb who was residing in New London well before Isaac himself first appeared in records there in 1695 (when Experience was baptized). This John Lamb was born in Hindon, Wiltshire, in England about 1625; this date is based on the age he gave as an adult and is confirmed by a baptismal record in Wiltshire in December 1625. John's parents were an older John Lamb and his wife Mary. The younger John died sometime during the early 1680s – almost certainly prior to 1683, when his widow, by signing a document, signified that she was now unmarried and so able to represent herself in court. This Lamb woman was named Ann, a woman traditionally thought to have come from either the Powell family or the Skelton family, though there seems to be no documentary proof that she belonged to either of these families.

A better hypothesis, in my estimation, is that Isaac Lamb's wife Ann was the Ann Plaisted born about 1627 in Darnford Mill, Wiltshire, England, to Roger Plaisted and his wife, Siceile, of Mildenhall, North Wiltshire. On July 5, 1647, Ann Plaisted married a William Clift of Preshute, Wiltshire, England, also in Darnford Mill. Clift apparently died, however, and after his death Ann probably journeyed to America with her brother, Roger Plaisted. This was sometime before 1650, as Roger is listed among the early (1630-1650) settlers of South Berwick, Maine, (a part of Massachusetts until 1820, when it became a state). Here the Plaisted brother and sister lived on Salmon Falls Brook, and here, presumably during the mid-1650s, Ann is believed to have married a man named John Lamb.¹²

The Plaisted connection is helpful in identifying our Lamb line because it links the John Lamb who later lived in New London to the man of that name who lived in this part of Maine at the same time these Plaisted did. This John Lamb is not listed among the 1630-1650 settlers of South Berwick but does come to our notice in March 1651, and again in June 1653, when court records in Kittery, Maine, show that he was accused of being a thief and a liar. About this time he apparently purchased two plots of land, one of 50 acres and the other of 20 acres east of William Love's bridge, including a landing

¹² This estimate reflects the births of two sons to this couple, John, Jr., and Thomas, in 1657 and 1658, respectively. There is no birth record in Maine or in Connecticut for an Isaac, son of John, Sr., and Ann. After John Lamb's death, Ann may have married a man named Rowland Powell, but there is some doubt that she did. The Salmon Falls River is the name of the upper reaches of the Piscataqua River, which forms part of the border between Maine and New Hampshire. Settlement here grew largely in response to Great Britain's insatiable demand for the majestic white pines of the area, which it needed for its fleet.

place subsequently called “Lamb’s Landing.” His properties were near to where the Plaisted siblings lived before Ann married. John Lamb then lived in York County, Maine’s only organized township, where he “burned” (manufactured) charcoal at a landing place on the Great Works River.¹³ As early as late 1660 or early 1661, this John Lamb had become a resident of New London, Connecticut. One important piece of evidence for this arguing these two men are the same John Lamb is a deed showing that in July 1666 the John Lamb of Maine sold his 50-acre property in Berwick to a man the records call “Start” – possibly a Stark. Then, in 1674, the John Lamb in Connecticut agreed to lease a mill, owned by Roger Plaisted, that was described as being where the Paucatuck path crossed the Mystic River; Ann Lamb witnessed this document.¹⁴ John Lamb is said to have made his will on August 14, 1673, but no copy of it is known to exist. As for Ann, we know only that she lived beyond 1683.

All this generally accords with Lamb family tradition, which says that our John Lamb settled before 1654 in the Kittery area in Maine but because of continuing harassment from Indian attacks subsequently departed for Connecticut and bought land in New London in 1663 and 1664. This land was said to have been where a stream once known as Lamb’s Brook joins the Mystic River; I have been unable to make a positive

¹³ See the USGS map for Dover East/New Hampshire for the Great Works River.

¹⁴ This site may be where the Pequot Trail crosses the Mystic River, which is in what is today Old Mystic, Connecticut. For two possible locations of this rented mill site in Old Mystic, see the USGS map for Old Mystic/Connecticut and slides 10834-35 (taken in 2004). Ongoing DNA testing within the Lamb family may provide additional evidence to link this John Lamb to our Isaac, and so to the latter’s daughter Experience.

identification of this place, but judging from contemporary and modern maps of the area John's land would seem to have been near that of Experience's father, Isaac Lamb. John Lamb became a freeman in New London on October 14, 1669. (The concern for how unsafe living in Maine was proved to be well-founded, as Roger Plaisted would be killed there by Indians in October 1675.)

But was this John Lamb in fact the father of our Isaac, who was the father of Experience Lamb? Beyond physical proximity, is there any link between Isaac Lamb and any of the other Lambs who were living in the New London area? Some researchers point out reasons for doubting such a connection. The documentary evidence shows evident family relationships among several of the Lamb males who resided in this area of Connecticut, but these relationships do not seem to include Isaac. In addition, there are hints that Isaac was significantly different from this cluster of other Lamb males: he was better educated (he could read and write but they could not), he was more active in the ferment surrounding the emergence of the Baptist church in Connecticut, and he seemed to be of a higher class as well. None of this analysis gives us a conclusive answer to our question, unfortunately.

Although the John Lamb who had lived in Maine seems by far our best candidate for Isaac's father, without additional collaborating evidence we must allow for other possibilities. One is that our Isaac Lamb arrived in New London as an adult (perhaps

about the time Experience was born), one of several other Isaac Lambs who left traces in various records elsewhere in New England but whose ultimate fates are not known. Another is that Isaac may have come to America from England during the 1690s, which would mean that both he and his daughter Experience had been born there rather than in Connecticut.

The most plausible alternative explanation, I think, is that John Lamb did not live in Connecticut before the 1660s (which would account for his lack of ties to the other Lambs there) but went from England to Maine during the 1650s and then moved on to Connecticut about a decade later. In my opinion, the John Lamb originally residing in South Berwick, Maine, is the strongest candidate to be Experience {Lamb} Stark's father. Until we learn more, we leave must Isaac Lamb's line with several key questions unanswered and return to the Stark line, which is much better documented.

The father of William Stark, Jr., was another man named **WILLIAM STARK**. We will refer to the latter as William Stark, Sr., although of course he would not have become known as such until his son William had reached maturity around 1710. He was born in Stonington, Connecticut, probably in 1664, since his grave marker states that he was in his sixty-sixth year when he died in September 1730. William's wife was a woman named **ELIZABETH**. Her family name we do not know, but there is no shortage of speculation among Stark researchers about what it was. William, Jr. (the oldest child of

William Stark, Sr.), had to have been born by 1689 in order to have witnessed a document in 1710, so William and Elizabeth were evidently married during the second half of the 1680s. One guess about Elizabeth's identity is that she was the daughter of Daniel and Elizabeth Pierce. Pierce was the first minister of the Baptist church founded in Groton in 1704, and in view of the Starks' prominence in that church a union between the two families would have been natural. Another guess is that the wife of William Stark, Sr., was Elizabeth Hadsell, daughter of Joseph Hadsell and Mary {Graves} Hadsell. This Hadsell couple married in Gloucester, Massachusetts, affiliated with the Baptists in Rhode Island, and seem to have been closely connected to the Stark family in Connecticut later on. Elizabeth Hadsell was born in 1679, however, too late to have had a child in 1689, which eliminates her as the mother of our William Stark, Jr.¹⁵

This does not mean, however, that we have to accept Elizabeth Pierce as the mother of the younger William. First, the older William's wife could have been an Elizabeth from a family wholly unknown to us. In addition, it is possible that William Stark, Sr., was married to another woman before he married the Elizabeth we know was his wife in later years; this earlier marriage, if there was one, would have taken place between about 1681 (when the older William reached twenty-one years of age) and 1689 (the latest year, it would appear, that his son named William could have been born to have reached his maturity by 1710). This first wife might have died soon after bearing William, Jr. It is

¹⁵ Another researcher's guess is that William Stark's wife Elizabeth was from the More family, but I have seen no evidence to indicate this is so.

interesting to observe that the second known child of William Stark, Sr., was not born at least until the mid-1690s. Thus Elizabeth Hadsell – too young during the 1680s to have been the mother of William Stark, Jr. – *could* have been old enough to have borne this delayed second child of the older William Stark a decade later, as well as the other children who followed him. This is as far as we can go toward identifying the mother of William Stark, Jr.¹⁶

William Stark, Sr., was a farmer. Having inherited a part of his father's property in Groton in 1685, he then added a large adjoining tract to it and continued to buy and sell land until his last years. Land records show that among his various other properties were tracts on Cow Hill and Fort Hill in Stonington, near Musoe Rock on the Mystic River, and south of Contary Road. From about 1712 onward, William also ran a sawmill in Groton, where he produced planks for shipbuilding. In addition, he held a license to operate a public house.¹⁷ William Stark, Sr., was evidently in the militia at some point, for some documents refer to him as "Sergeant Stark"; other documents refer to him as a

¹⁶ There are alternate dates and places of birth for both William and Elizabeth. Some sources say he was born in Mystic, Connecticut, in 1664 or in Groton, Connecticut, about 1665. Some Stark researchers state that Elizabeth was born about 1660 or in 1674.

¹⁷ Cow Hill, presumably the place known today as Stark's Hill, can be found on the USGS map for Old Mystic/Connecticut. There are several places in Connecticut known as Fort Hill. The closest one to where we think Aaron Stark lived is the one (found on the USGS map for New London/Connecticut) that may have been the site of the Pequot War battle in 1637. I do not know the locations of Musoe Rock or Contary Road, but the latter likely is a misreading of "County" Road – which does exist in this area. For views of William Stark's property in 2004, see slides 10818-21 and 10828-33. Slides 10818-21 and 10831-32 focus on possible locations for Stark's sawmill; slides 10828-30 and 10832 focus on possible locations of Stark's residence.

yeoman. There can be little doubt that he was a respected and influential member of the Groton community.

Since William Stark, Sr., seems to have disposed of much if not all of his property before 1726, when he made his will, he might have been the victim of an illness or some other problem that would lead to his death four years later. His problem may actually have surfaced even earlier. In March 1718 William deeded his homestead to his son Christopher with the proviso that the parents would have the use of the house so long as they lived. After William removed this condition in 1729, he moved to a four-acre site in the town of Stonington, perhaps because he could be better cared for there than in the countryside.

The most interesting aspect of William Stark, Sr., is his religious life. Probably because (as we shall see later in this chapter) his father had been so late in affiliating with the Puritan Church, William was not baptized until he was an adult, on June 19, 1698. On that date he became a member of the First Congregational or "Road" Church in Stonington, Connecticut. Sometime after mid-1701, though, he abandoned the Puritan faith and became a Baptist, joining a dissenting sect that had found sanctuary in neighboring Rhode Island. In 1704, William Stark, Sr., helped to organize the first Baptist congregation in Connecticut; indeed, this congregation met in Stark's home.¹⁸

¹⁸ For the location of the Road Church, see the information provided in an earlier footnote in this chapter.

Such an unadorned statement hardly does justice to the contributions of William Stark, Sr. He played a significant role in the establishment of the Baptist denomination in Connecticut, and so in North America, and in that colony's acceptance of the principles of religious toleration as well. When the Baptists organized in 1704, they were the first dissenting church in Connecticut, a colony that, like Massachusetts, actively discouraged worship outside the Congregational faith that it officially recognized and financially supported. A book written on this topic, from which the following account is drawn, concludes that Baptist preachers in Newport and Westerly, Rhode Island, evangelized a number of longtime residents of Groton, just across the border in Connecticut. The Starks were among the Baptist converts.

Five of these Baptists, including both Isaac and Elizabeth Lamb, and probably William Stark, Sr., as well, were arrested in Groton about September 1704 for failing to attend Congregational worship services. In New London's County Court, they described themselves as dissenters and asked that court to license their own worship meetings. (Connecticut law required that new churches receive such authorization from the General Court, the colony's legislature.) On October 5, 1704, Isaac Lamb, Elizabeth Lamb, William Stark, Sr., and Elizabeth Stark were among the twelve persons who petitioned the General Court of Connecticut to be recognized as a dissenting church that would be accorded toleration. No action was taken, the Baptists continued to worship, and on at

least one occasion some of them – including Daniel Pierce, now an elder – were fined for doing so.

In 1705, the Baptists called Valentine Wightman of Rhode Island to be their minister, replacing Daniel Pierce. Wightman was not living in Groton at the time: he had not been legally admitted as a resident by majority vote of the existing residents.¹⁹ Accordingly, on October 17, 1707, the town selectmen visited Wightman in the home of William Stark, Sr. (where he was presumably staying, or perhaps preaching). They warned Wightman to leave the town, not only because he had not been properly admitted to Groton but because he had no visible means of support and thus might become a charge on the town, they said. When Wightman refused to leave, he was arrested and fined.

The subsequent legal proceedings revealed that at some point William Stark, Sr., had given Wightman and his church 20 acres and a house (previously Stark's own residence) near the former's sawmill, and also that – their religious views aside – the Baptists of Groton were generally regarded as respected and substantial citizens.²⁰ The town sought to have Wightman and Stark sign a bond absolving the town from having to support Wightman in the event he could not provide for himself. The two men refused to sign,

¹⁹ New England communities maintained tight control over who could and could not live in them, in part to ensure “right” thinking and in part to exclude those who were likely to require economic assistance from the community.

²⁰ William Stark's original house was presumably the same one that his father Aaron had lived in. After it was given to Wightman, it was used as the manse for the Baptist church. For views of its possible location, see slides 10846-48 (2004) and the USGS map for Uncasville/Connecticut. When this structure burned sometime during the 20th century, it was reputed to have been the oldest existing manse in America.

but after some negotiation a compromise was reached on April 4, 1708. Perhaps it was the standing in the community of the senior William Stark and the other Baptists that enabled the them to survive in Groton with only mild constraints.

Meanwhile, the Baptists had delayed applying for recognition under Connecticut's new (1708) toleration statute, which allowed them to exercise their "sober" dissent if they qualified.²¹ On April 20, 1709, therefore, a grand jury charged a number of the Baptists (Isaac Lamb, William Stark, Sr., and their wives among them) with holding unlawful religious meetings. Since no further action is recorded, this matter evidently was settled through negotiation as the question of Wightman's status had been resolved. By 1718 the Baptists had erected their own place of worship, which seems to have been located just east of Groton off Cold Spring Road.²² Wightman remained as their minister. Curiously enough, in later years William Stark, Sr., appears to have become more and more "radical" (in 18th-century terms): he began to argue that worship services should be held on Saturdays, which he had come to view as the real sabbath, rather than on Sundays. This viewpoint got him into further trouble with the authorities and may have led to his eventual expulsion from the congregation that Wightman led.²³

²¹ Qualification required applicants to swear an oath to the English monarch and to deny the doctrine of transubstantiation but did not exempt them from paying taxes to support the established Congregational Church.

²² For 2004 views of the site of the original Baptist church, see slides 10813 and 10816. A plain and simple (and unheated) structure, this church was razed in 1790 and a second building was erected on the same spot. This site is just east of the entrance to the Wightman Cemetery.

²³ This point of view was espoused by a group called the Rogerenes, named for a New London family the Starks surely knew. The Rogerenes, who predated and were not connected with the Seventh Day Adventists, rejected the concept of a special sabbath day and to make their point often brought their everyday work to worship.

In addition to the 20 acres of land that William Stark, Sr., had donated to Wightman, about 1716 he sold the Baptists an adjacent acre and one half in order to provide them with a cemetery, still called today the Wightman Burying Ground. William Stark, Sr., made his will on February 7, 1726, and died in Groton on September 8, 1730; his will was proved on September 21 in that year. He is buried on the land that he sold for the cemetery. Some Stark researchers believe that Elizabeth Stark also died in 1730; we know only that she was still living at the time of her husband's death. Presumably she is buried in the same location as her husband William was interred.²⁴

With the father of William Stark, Sr., we reach the earliest member of the Stark family we can identify by name. He was **AARON STARK**, who was probably born in the south or east of England, evidently sometime in 1608. This date comes from a document dated June 11, 1673, which states that Aaron was then "sixty-five" years of age. Some Stark researchers have wondered if the document originally said "fifty-five" and was written over later. After looking at a copy of the document myself, I concluded that the clerk who penned it did intend to write "sixty-five" as Aaron's age. In any case, based on what else we know about him the year 1608 seems about right for his birth. Aaron married a

²⁴ The language of William Stark's bequest implies that the land he was giving for the cemetery was already being used as a burying ground. See the USGS map for Old Mystic/Connecticut and information (based on a 1911 visit to the area) in my files. As mention in a previous footnote in this chapter, the original Baptist church adjoined the cemetery. For views of William Stark's grave markers, see slides 10814-15 and 10849-51, taken in 2004. The last of these shows a place next to Stark where his wife, Elizabeth, may have been buried.

woman named **SARAH**, whose family name is not known to us but possibly was Fish, since the Stark and Fish families seem to have been closely associated at this time.²⁵

Stark family lore holds that Aaron Stark came to America in 1627 or 1629, having landed in Salem, Massachusetts, where so many of those destined for the settlements in the Massachusetts Bay area colony arrived. Some Stark researchers have speculated that Aaron had gotten himself into difficulty in England, that he was a bonded or indentured servant, or that he was a crewman or cabin boy aboard a ship that sailed to New England and decided to remain in America. More recently, Stark researchers have begun to wonder if Aaron might have been a mercenary soldier who was hired to come to New England and help provide for its defense against the native Indians. There is no specific evidence to support any of this speculation (but some circumstantial evidence, as we shall see), and in the end we cannot say for sure when or why Aaron Stark came to these shores. There was a large surge of immigration during the years 1633 to 1636, and he may even have come to America even that late.²⁶

Between his arrival in Massachusetts and the mid-1630s Aaron Stark may have lived in that colony's towns of Cambridge, Watertown, and Dorchester before he comes to our

²⁵ Some Stark researchers believe that Aaron married a woman named Sarah in Mystic, Connecticut, on December 17, 1645, or in 1649. They also give Sarah's year of birth as 1620 and say it occurred in New London, Connecticut, but this date obviously is too early for that location.

²⁶ Broadly speaking, Aaron Stark came to New England as part of the "Great Migration," which saw more than 30,000 newcomers arrive there between 1629 and 1640. Most of this migration was caused by religious and political ferment and conflicts in England, but there were other reasons why persons chose to emigrate to America. Aaron very likely came for other than religious reasons.

attention in Connecticut. Some researchers think Stark may have been one of about one hundred persons from these Massachusetts towns who followed a minister named Thomas Hooker²⁷ to establish the earliest settlements in Connecticut in June 1636.²⁸ One authority has termed this movement, along the Old Bay Path, “the first mass migration in the history of the American frontier.” Like many of the later migrations, it was caused by perceived overcrowding in the settled areas (around Boston, in this instance), dissatisfaction with those in control in those settled areas (the religious hierarchy in Boston), and a desire to leave settled areas altogether. Once he did arrive in Connecticut, whenever he did, Aaron Stark lived at one time or another in Wethersfield, Windsor, Hartford, Stonington, and New London.

In 1637, Aaron Stark saw action against the Indians in what became known as the Pequot War. This war, the first significant conflict between the natives and European settlers in America, was a punitive expedition the settlers in Connecticut launched against the Indian nations who occupied much of what is now western Rhode Island, Long Island, and the Connecticut shore. The Pequots, feeling squeezed between European settlers who were arriving in the rich Connecticut River Valley on one side and around Narragansett Bay on the other, began to raid isolated Connecticut settlements. When they staged a particularly large raid on Wethersfield in April 1637, the colony decided to

²⁷ A leading nonconformist minister, Hooker was repeatedly in hot water with the Puritan establishment and finally decided to strike out for the wilderness. He is considered the founder of Connecticut.

²⁸ There is a neat irony for us here: the movement of English settlers into Connecticut caused alarm in Dutch New Netherland, which also aspired to control this valuable and strategic area, and then friction between the two groups. Our ancestors were on both sides of this issue during the 1630s.

take military action. In early May, it collected a force of ninety armed men – Aaron Stark among them – and, with some Indian allies (enemies of the Pequots), attacked the Pequot stronghold in what is now Eastern Connecticut. One third of the Connecticut soldiers came from Windsor, where Aaron Stark apparently was living at the time; the others came from Hartford and Wethersfield.

The Connecticut armed force would make a surprise attack from behind rather than a potentially costly frontal one on the fortified Indian camps. Led by Captain John Mason of Windsor (an English officer who was the colony's militia commander), the small army departed from the mouth of the Connecticut River (Saybrook) aboard three ships on May 10, 1637, and sailed eastward past the perplexed Pequots, who were poised for a battle. On May 30, Mason's men landed many miles to the east on the shore of Narragansett Bay – to the rear of the Indians. They then secretly stole thirty or forty miles back westward across what is now western Rhode Island in the direction of the stronghold of the Pequots' chief sachem, Sassacus. The Pequots' fortified camp was located on the east side of the Mystic River near the present-day town of Mystic, somewhat to the east of what is now New London, Connecticut.

Attacking at night on June 5, Mason and his men did surprise the Pequots, who had been celebrating what seemed to them a great victory over the Connecticut soldiers, who had appeared to have fled rather than attack them. After some bloody hand-to-hand combat,

Mason's forces burned the Indians' stronghold, killing as many as 700 Pequots – men, women, and children – while losing only two members of their own force. The handful of Pequot survivors were hunted down and virtually exterminated.²⁹ This war settled the fate of the important Connecticut Valley, opening the interior of New England to large-scale European settlement. Perhaps not coincidentally, the New Englanders also thereby took control of the important seawan sources along Long Island Sound; seawan, made from shells found only here, was already becoming legal tender throughout New England and New Netherland alike.

Following his service in this little “war,” Aaron Stark went to live in the Connecticut towns of Hartford and Windsor. We are sure he was living in the first of these towns by April 1639: its records say that in that month he was one of three men who were charged by the authorities with “unclean practices” with a servant girl named Mary Holt; in fact, the men had been caught in “fornication” with her. Aaron, described in some contemporary accounts as “an unpromising youth,”³⁰ was sentenced to stand upon the pillory and be whipped from “the ringing of the first bell to the end of the lecture

²⁹ Stark's later deposition says that he and his colleagues in arms were landed in Narragansett country. After the war, the Pequots for all intents and purposes disappeared, or were absorbed into other Indian nations, but during the 1980s and 1990s the recognized remnants (many having only a small amount of Pequot blood) aggressively developed casinos and made this small Indian nation into the wealthiest one in the United States. Its museum on Pequot culture at the Foxwoods Casino is regarded as an outstanding one. Aaron Stark and his contemporaries doubtless would be astounded by the Pequots' survival, let alone their renaissance and current prosperity. The precise site of the Pequot camp and subsequent battle is not known. A Connecticut historical marker commemorates the event, but how the location for that marker was chosen is also not known. See the USGS map for New London/Connecticut for the marker's location and slides 10844-45, taken in 2004, for views of it and its setting.

³⁰ One source, often quoted, mistakenly reports this early description of Aaron Stark as “uncompromising.” Although this almost-identical word may well fit Aaron (and some of his descendants as well), the word used in the original source was “unpromising.”

[sermon].” After that, he was to be whipped again behind a cart – first in Hartford and then again, within eight days, in Windsor. In addition, the letter *R* was to be branded onto Stark’s cheek and he was told to pay Mary Holt’s parents a considerable sum of money. Mary herself was to be punished for concealing the (unspecified) matter so long, and she and Aaron were instructed to get married.³¹ The record does not reveal whether the two actually did become man and wife. Some Stark researchers believe that they did, but since other men were punished for their conduct with Mary and she was later banished (as Mary *Holt*, not Stark) for repeated transgressions, it would appear that Aaron did not marry her as instructed.

The next year, 1640, saw Aaron Stark again in trouble. On July 2 in that year he was in a Connecticut court accused of "buggery with a heifer" – regarded as a very serious (indeed, capital) crime in Puritan New England. Perhaps because the specified witness did not agree to testify, or perhaps in a kind of plea bargain arrangement, Aaron was permitted to confess to a somewhat modified offense. According to his statement, he had only leaned across the heifer and then when aroused had found the animal too small to penetrate. His punishment, if there was any, for this offense is not described in the

³¹ Some researchers have inferred from the language found in the court records that Mary Holt had become pregnant and perhaps had given birth, but there is room for doubt about this. Some researchers also believe that the *R* stood for “ravisher,” which would imply that Aaron Stark (and perhaps the others?) were accused of having taken Mary Holt by force, but again the evidence is far from conclusive. Reading between the lines of the document in question, it would appear that Mary did not report her encounter or encounters with Aaron and the others until her pregnancy was evident, and by then she could not identify which of them (if any) was the father of her child. Thus all three men were accused. The fact that Aaron was ordered to pay Mary’s parents suggests that she was rather young, and some researchers believe that she was a servant girl of some sort.

record, but Stark remained in custody at least until the court's next monthly meeting. The Windsor constable was directed to keep him under "lock and chain" and to subject him to "hard labor and a coarse diet" until then.

A couple of years later, on April 6, 1643, another Connecticut court sentenced Aaron to be whipped in Windsor for yet another offense, which the record does not identify. As a repeat offender he was at risk of being banished from the colony, but it would appear that Stark's former commander, Captain Mason, who lived in Windsor, now stepped forward and agreed to take charge of the miscreant. Aaron was ordered to serve Mason for an indefinite period, until the authorities released him from this sentence of compulsory service. Some accounts state that Aaron also was once whipped for chopping wood on the sabbath day, but I have seen no documentary evidence to support this.

Much is known about Captain John Mason, a prominent figure in Connecticut's early history, and this man's whereabouts during the mid-17th century may give us some clues about Aaron Stark's movements, both within Connecticut and before then. Mason, who was not a Puritan himself, evidently lived in Windsor from about 1636 to at least 1646, so the two men were residents in Windsor at the same time. Mason moved to Saybrook, Connecticut, around 1648 and lived there for the next dozen years or so. Meanwhile, this officer was rewarded with land in what would become Stonington, where he would eventually move.

We cannot be sure that Aaron followed Mason from Windsor to Saybrook, but if he continued in service to Mason after 1643 it is likely that he did. Aaron probably farmed Mason's land and perhaps even lived in his benefactor's household. He would also have been a reliable and experienced soldier readily available when Captain Mason, still Connecticut's chief military officer, was gathering and using armed forces for new battles with the Indians. It was about this time, during the early 1650s, that Aaron Stark married Sarah, so she and her family may have been living in Saybrook when they wed. Perhaps Sarah, evidently quite a bit younger than Aaron was (he was forty-five years old in 1653), had also been residing within the Mason household, either as a servant girl herself or the daughter of one of Mason's hired servants.

Mason had come to New England prior to late 1632 and was living in Dorchester, Massachusetts, in 1634.³² Thus it is possible that he and Aaron had known one another at least that long, given the small size of that colony in those years. In fact, some researchers wonder if Aaron Stark had come to America as a soldier on Mason's ship – which may have been in pursuit of a pirate named Dixy Bull, one of them says. (Massachusetts had commissioned Mason to suppress Bull in 1632.) Earlier, in 1629 and 1630, Mason had been among the English soldiers who had fought – either out of conviction or as mercenaries – for the Dutch who were rebelling against their Spanish

³² It may be significant that Thomas Hooker came to the colony from the Netherlands at about the same time Mason did.

occupiers, and it may have been that Aaron was a mercenary soldier then too. Hence the speculation among Stark researchers that Mason and Stark might have come to the Massachusetts Bay Colony together as hired soldiers during the early 1630s. When Aaron got himself in trouble in Hartford and Windsor, therefore, as his commanding officer Mason felt obligated to take the wayward but still valuable soldier under his wing, after which Aaron continued to serve him. It seems that Aaron continued in Captain Mason's employ for some years, even after he had been released from the service the court had prescribed in 1643.

Whether or not this possible scenario is accurate, by late 1653 Aaron Stark was living in Stonington, Connecticut – perhaps as caretaker for or tenant on Mason's newly obtained property there, since at least one contemporary source refers to him as “Captain Mason's man.” That source, the diary of a neighbor, in fact mentions Aaron rather frequently – as a farmer, as someone who helped to collect taxes, and in one instance as a brawler. This diary also suggests that Aaron might have been seen a clairvoyant able to foretell the future, which could have been a dangerous gift in a culture that believed in witchcraft.³³

In March 1664/65 Aaron Stark was granted 150 acres in Stonington. It does not appear that he actually resided on this land, however, for it had not yet been surveyed as late as May 1670. But land ownership would have qualified Aaron to take the freeman's oath,

³³ For the approximate location of Mason's land on which Aaron Stark may have worked, see the USGS map for Mystic/Connecticut and slide 10843, taken in 2004.

which he did in May 1666, and to have qualified for this oath he must also have been freed by then of any obligation to Mason. Thus it does seem likely that even after the court released Aaron from his compulsory service to Mason (at some unknown point after 1643) Aaron had continued working on Mason's land as a tenant or employee at least until he was able to purchase his own land and take the freeman's oath. The evidence also suggests that about now Aaron finally joined the Puritan Church, for both land ownership and church membership were required before one could be accepted as a freeman. Since King Charles II had been encouraging the admission of freemen who were not Puritans, though, we cannot be certain Aaron had now become a Puritan.³⁴

Aaron would not remain in Stonington for long after 1666. In November 1664 he had purchased a farm of approximately 500 acres in present-day Groton (then still part of New London) at the "head of Mystic." This farm, which we have already encountered in our discussion of Aaron's son William Stark, Sr., was located on the west side of the Mystic River about two miles south of Old Mystic. It was at the top of what is now known as Stark's Hill, not very far from the site of the decisive battle of the Pequot War.³⁵ Stark purchased this property from William Thompson, a well-known missionary

³⁴ To have become a freeman Aaron Stark must have been at least nominally a Puritan, but the fact that his son William was not baptized until he was an adult suggests that Aaron was something less than a zealous Puritan – which in light of his early history should not surprise us. Nor did Aaron receive his reward (in land) for his service in the Pequot War until many years after other participants in that war got theirs, which also suggests that he had remained apart from the church until the 1660s. Perhaps it should come as no surprise, either, that his son William would become a dissenter.

³⁵ See the USGS maps for Mystic/Connecticut and Old Mystic/Connecticut, respectively, for Stonington and Stark's Hill and also slides 10818-21, 10828-33, and 10846-48, taken in 2004. Aaron's property was near the juncture of Cold Spring Road and Route 184.

to the Indians. Aaron and his family probably moved to New London between May 1666 and December 1667, when he appears on a minister's list there. Aaron became a freeman in New London in October 1669, after which (on September 30, 1670) he sold the 150 acres he had been granted in Stonington. A few days later, he also sold the 50 acres in Preston, Connecticut, that he had previously been awarded for his service in the Pequot War but probably had never inhabited. Perhaps Aaron used the proceeds of these two sales, along with income he had received over time for working for Mason, to help pay for his purchase of Thompson's property in Groton.

In 1664 Stark had been selected in Stonington to warn Indians off the town's lands, which reinforces the idea that Aaron had for years actively participated in the forays Captain Mason led against the Indians and their settlements. References to Aaron in contemporary documents also hint that he helped to enforce the laws, collect taxes, and so forth, so perhaps he was something of an unofficial constable in Stonington. The 150 acres he received in March 1664/65 may have been the town's way of compensating him for such duties. In any case, we can second the observation of one Stark researcher that Aaron not only survived his early encounters with Connecticut law and Puritan mores but ultimately became a solid citizen.

A few years later, Aaron Stark may have volunteered for service in what is usually called King Philip's War (1675-77) after an Indian leader of that name. This war was the result

of continuing friction between the ever-growing numbers of European colonists and the Indian tribes native to New England.³⁶ King Philip's War was another major conflict that saw repeated Indian raids on numerous backcountry towns and retaliation by settlers against the natives from Maine to the Connecticut Valley. Many casualties and much destruction resulted until the surviving Indians were eventually subjugated and driven northward and westward. Most of the fighting was outside of Connecticut, but on March 13, 1676, much of Groton was burned in a surprise Indian attack; we cannot say whether or not Aaron Stark's property was affected by it.

Connecticut supplied about one third of the total armed forces raised during King Philip's War to deal with the Indian threat. We do not know whether it was our Aaron Stark (then apparently in his sixties, if we trust the testimony dating his birth in 1608) or his son Aaron who is listed as a soldier in this war and subsequently received land for his service. Both the surviving evidence and common sense suggest that the Aaron Stark who is listed among the volunteers for this war was the younger one, but we cannot be entirely sure: Aaron could have held a command rank of some sort. In any case, the award for King Philip's War was property in Voluntown, some distance from where the two Starks lived, and there is no evidence either of them actually lived there.

³⁶ This conflict is also called Metacom's War.

We do know that the Aaron Stark born in 1608 died in either Groton or Stonington (probably the former) sometime before June 3, 1685, the date his estate was inventoried. He was buried in Stonington, however.³⁷ His wife, Sarah, is known to have been alive in 1670. Some Stark researchers wonder if she, a woman then around fifty years old with one or two daughters at home, might have remarried after Aaron's death in 1685. Several land transactions suggest that she did, and that Sarah's second husband was a man named Rogers. Unfortunately, there is too little evidence to make a determination in this matter.

Before we leave Aaron Stark, it seems fitting to note that his name lives on thanks to a poem by Edwin Arlington Robinson, a Maine poet who lived during the late 19th century and early 20th century. Included in his book *Children of the Night* is the following work, which even if it does not paint a literally accurate picture of Aaron Stark must have been inspired by something Robinson had read about him in a sourcebook on New England history:

Aaron Stark

Withal a meagre man was Aaron Stark, --
Cursed and unkempt, shrewd, shrivelled, and morose.
A miser was he, with a miser's nose,
And eyes like little dollars in the dark.

³⁷ Aaron's son William, Sr., would not donate land for a cemetery (the Wightman Burying Ground) until many years later, but when he did so Aaron's remains may have been transferred there. One source states that Aaron's father was also named Aaron, a man born about 1582. Another source contends, though, that the father of the Aaron Stark who is said to have come to Massachusetts from Scotland was a man named John Stark, who was born in Auchenstarie, Scotland, before 1591 and died before 1647. Neither of these assertions has any evidence to support it, and unfortunately for those who have worked on establishing a Scottish heritage for our Aaron Stark, the DNA evidence and the analyses drawn from it now show that they have been on a hopeless mission.

His thin, pinched mouth was nothing but a mark;
 And when he spoke there came like sullen blows
 Through scattered fangs a few snarled words and close,
 As if a cur were chary of its bark.

Glad for the murmur of his hard renown,
 Year after year he shambled through the town, --
 A loveless exile moving with a staff;
 And oftentimes there crept into his ears
 A sound of alien pity, touched with tears, --

And then (and only then) did Aaron laugh.

The poem takes considerable liberties with Aaron Stark, to be sure, as no description of his physical appearance or personality has survived, but even if imaginary, the poem does merit inclusion here – how many of our ancestors have the subject of a renowned poet, after all?

Although the Stark line traces to England, through Aaron, it may in fact be German in origin. One tradition in the Stark family recounts how the Starks were hired in 1495 when the Duchess of Burgundy (a small principality in what is now eastern France) sent a body of soldiers under General Martin Swart to support an invasion of England on behalf of Perkin Warbeck, a pretender to the throne of its monarch Henry VII.³⁸ The invaders were defeated on England's Plain of Stoke near Newark in 1487, and those who survived fled to Scotland. Because the king of that independent realm protected them, these Starks decided to make Scotland their permanent home. Another family tradition traces the

³⁸ Warbeck claimed to have been Richard, brother of King Edward V. He was captured by King Henry VII in 1497 and executed in 1499.

Starks back to the 6th century in Germany and says that the name Stark (German for strength or force) was awarded to one family member in Scotland in 1480 for his conspicuous bravery in battle. Starks who trace their origins to Scotland as well as Starks who came to America from Germany in the 20th century both have a strong oral tradition that their ancestors saw military service in Germany hundreds of years earlier.

This makes a good story, but recent DNA findings seem to contradict it. Based on extensive testing and analyses of the results, there is now credible evidence that Aaron Stark was born in the south or east of England – perhaps in Essex County or Suffolk County. The specific DNA components show that the Stark family's origins were, broadly speaking, German and Saxon and probably stemmed from the Frisian tribes within that grouping. Many of these peoples migrated into Britain about 400 to 600 A.D. from what is now northern Germany and the northern parts of the Netherlands (where many Frisians still reside). The ultimate origins of our Stark ancestors were much further east and south, in Europe and Asia.

Again based on the DNA evidence, two likely ancestors of Aaron Stark and his own descendants were Rannulf Stark of Suffolk County (1200s) and William Stark of Essex County (1300s), but the details of the connection between them and the Aaron Stark who was born in 1608 are not yet known. Research attention is now being focused on probing these English roots of the American Stark family.

With this speculation about Starks in Germany we have exhausted our knowledge of the entire Stark line, which in America traces back from Rebecca {Stark} Chastain to Abraham and Sarah Stark, her parents, to two sons of Jonathan Stark: Daniel and Christopher. From Jonathan the line runs through William and his father, also named William, to Aaron Stark the immigrant. It is worth remembering as we leave the Starks that some of them were fervent Baptists who made notable contributions to their church and beyond, first as the church was established in New England and later as it spread on the American frontier. Sometimes “unpromising” beginnings have truly remarkable outcomes.