

649. Documentation for Mary Coffin
(20 February 1644/45 to 13 November 1717)
mother of Jethro Starbuck
(14 December 1671 to 12 August 1770)

8. Nathaniel Starbuck, Sr.(28)(29)(30) born 20 February 1634/35 in Dover, Stafford, New Hampshire and died 06 June 1719 in Nantucket, Massachusetts. He was the son of **16. Edward Starbuck** and **17. Catherine Reynolds**. He married **9. Mary Coffin** 1662 in Nantucket, Massachusetts.

9. Mary Coffin(31)(32)(33) born February 20, 1644/45 in Haverhill, MA; died November 13, 1717 in Nantucket, MA. She was the daughter of **18. Tristram Coffin** and **19. Dionis Stevens**.

Mary Coffin Starbuck initiated the rise of the Quaker faith on Nantucket in 1701 when she heard an itinerant Quaker preacher named John Richardson speak before a crowd of Nantucketers. It was in her house, situated in 2009 at what is now 10 Pine Street, that early Quaker meetings took place.??)

Parliament House was built circa 1677 by Mary and Nathaniel Starbuck as their home as well as the family's store. The original site was near Hummock Pond. The house is now a private residence at 10 Pine Street, corner of School Street in Nantucket.(7A) "Parliament House hosted the famous John Richardson meeting of 1702 and served for the first decade of active Quakerism on the island as the site of regular Meetings for Worship (1704-1711) and the business meetings that resulted in the formation of Nantucket Monthly Meeting in 1708. Women's Monthly Meeting also met there from 1708 to 1716."(7B)

When the Town of Sherburne removed from the Capaum area to its present location (Nantucket Town), Parliament House was left at its original site, but in 1820 it was moved to the lot in Nantucket Town that it now occupies. During renovations carried out in 1994, Parliament House was stripped of its interior wall coverings, and the framing around the original casement windows (which were removed to accommodate the crowd at the Richardson meeting) could be clearly seen.(7C)

"June 28, 1702. (QN, p13) A visiting minister has come to Nantucket. Mary Coffin Starbuck has issued an open invitation to a meeting for worship that he will hold in her home, known as Parliament House. The preacher is a Quaker, and the few Quakers already living on the island are pleased that one of their number should be attracting so much attention. For some, it is true, the attraction is not as much the preacher as the chance to view the shining woodwork and comfortable appurtenances of Parliament House and the lifestyle of the affluent and influential Starbucks. A storekeeper, Mary is the island's chief creditor, and few commodities leave or arrive on the island without passing through her hands.

Already people have filled the house, and the benches placed outside the doors have few spaces left. By the time the meeting begins, all the casement windows of Parliament House will have been removed, and virtually all the English settlers on the

island will be pressed close to hear. Few forms of entertainment on Nantucket can compare to a visiting minister, and today's meeting promises to be exceptional. Mary Starbuck is clearly leaning toward Quakerism; perhaps today will bring an open declaration.

Those who have met the minister-John Richardson is his name-report that he is a Yorkshireman, and his manner of speaking is exotic and even a bit unpleasant to most islanders' West Country ears. The oldest Starbuck son, Nathaniel Jr., has offered hospitality to Richardson; the whole family has been more than a little taken with other Quakers who have come to the island. Father Nathaniel's own sister has married into a Quaker family and been recognized as a minister herself.

Almost everyone has been to a meeting conducted by one of these Quakers before, and they know that the meeting will begin with a period of silence. When finally it comes, it takes a few moments for the quiet to ripple outward through the windows to the crowd in the yard. After some minutes, people stop shifting where they stand or sit, and a kind of deep tranquility sets in. Even the children are at ease.

The first to speak is James Bates, a Quaker from Virginia. Then at last a low voice is heard, hard and nasal-the Yorkshire preacher. He is not exactly praying, and certainly not preaching in the style of the Baptists and Congregationalists who have come to Nantucket before. There is a kind of rhythm to his speech, and a strange intonation. He is chanting.

As the listeners' ears become accustomed to Richardson's strange accent and manner of speaking, they realize that he is talking about Jesus. New Englanders are more comfortable with the temperamental deity of the Old Testament, but they know the parables of Jesus and the significance of the crucifixion and resurrection.

Richardson is talking about Jesus the man-a simple, good man whose words and teachings are not meant to be just cautionary tales against misbehavior. This Jesus is not an impossibly righteous divinity but rather a man whose words of common sense cut through anger, hatred, greed, and envy. The preacher is suggesting in a simple, eloquent fashion that the world could be a much better place-a paradise-if everyone followed these words, if everyone accepted the living spiritual rebirth proclaimed by Jesus. Skeptics raise their eyebrows; they have heard this before. But the Yorkshire Quaker puts the case well. One can almost imagine . . .

Those close to the front can see that Richardson has now turned his attention full on Mary Starbuck, who has begun to weep openly. Inspired by the palpable response of his listeners, Richardson becomes more eloquent, the vision he lays out more beautiful still.

Many are sobbing by now. More than an hour has passed, and for some time now most of the white population of Nantucket has been caught up in the words of the Quaker. Seeing their leaders succumbing to honest emotion, they surrender, too. When Richardson suddenly stops speaking, they hunger for more. His own emotional state, he will later write, is 'beyond his measure.'

Mary Starbuck's meeting has been a success, in more ways than anyone could have expected. The Quaker Richardson has shown the islanders a new path. It is not fire and brimstone that will fuse them into a spiritual community, but a simple testimony of peace, honesty, and love. As Mary stands at the meeting's end, she holds out her hand. 'This,' she tells the gathered multitude, 'is the overwhelming truth.'

Children of Nathaniel Starbuck and Mary Coffin are:

i. **Mary Starbuck³⁴**, born March 30, 1663 in Nantucket Island, MA \ (first child of English parents born on Nantucket); married James Gardner; born May 19, 1664 in Salem, MA \ (prob.); died Abt. 1723.

ii. **Elizabeth Starbuck³⁴**, born September 09, 1665 in Nantucket, MA; died Abt. 1706; married (1) Nathaniel Barnard, Jr.; born Bet. 1645 - 1665; married (2) Peter Coffin Abt. August 15, 1682; born August 20, 1660 in Dover, Stafford Co., NH; died Abt. 1699 in Nantucket, MA \ (prob.).

iii. **Nathaniel Starbuck⁽³⁴⁾** born August 09, 1668 in Nantucket Island, MA; died April 09, 1753 in Nantucket Island, MA; married Dinah Coffin November 20, 1690; born July 1674 in Nantucket Island, MA; died October 01, 1750 in Nantucket Island, MA.

4 iv. **Jethro Starbuck** born December 14, 1671 in Nantucket Island, Nantucket, MA, USA; died August 12, 1770 in Nantucket, MA; married Dorcas Gayer December 6, 1694 in Nantucket, MA.

v. **Barnabus Starbuck⁽³⁴⁾** born 1673; died November 21, 1732 in \ (reportedly died unmarried).

vi. **Eunice Starbuck⁽³⁴⁾⁽³⁵⁾** born April 11, 1674 in Nantucket, MA; died July 12, 1766 in Nantucket, MA; married George Gardner; born Bet. 1664 - 1674; died February 17, 1749/50 in Nantucket, MA.

vii. **Priscilla Starbuck⁽³⁶⁾⁽³⁷⁾** born August 24, 1676 in Nantucket, MA; died March 14, 1762 in Nantucket, MA; married John Coleman Abt. 1694; born August 2, 1667 in Nantucket, MA; died January 18, 1762 in Nantucket, MA.

viii. **Hepzibah Starbuck⁽³⁷⁾** born April 02, 1680 in Nantucket, MA; died July 02, 1740 in \ (or April 7, 1740); married Thomas Hathaway; born Bet. 1670 - 1680.

ix. **Ann Starbuck⁽³⁷⁾** born Aft. 1681; died in \ (died single).

x. **Paul Starbuck⁽³⁷⁾** born Aft. 1681; died in \ (died single). Quaker Preacher of Nantucket Island

Mary Coffin Starbuck was born February 20, 1645 in Haverhill, Massachusetts, just two years after her parents' arrival from Devonshire, England. Ten men got together and planned the purchase **Nantucket Island**, off the Massachusetts shore. Mary's father, Tristram Coffin was the leader of the group -- along with Edward Starbuck, Thomas

Macy, and Isaac Coleman – and the purchase took place in 1659. He took his family to the island in 1660, where he was Chief Magistrate in 1671 and Commissioner in 1675.

In 1662, Mary married **Nathaniel Starbuck**, a prosperous farmer, local official, and partner with her father in purchasing the area from the Indians. The son of Edward and Catherine (Reynolds) Starbuck, Nathaniel was born February 20, 1634 in Dover, New Hampshire. Mary was eighteen when her first child was born – the first white child born on the Island of Nantucket. From this family all of the Starbucks of America are descended.

The Starbuck and Macy Houses on Nantucket 1916

(The Macy house is in the foreground)

For several years, Town Meetings were frequently held in the "great fore-room" of her home, which became known as "**Parliament House**." John Richardson an early Quaker preacher said of her, "The Islanders established her a Judge among them, for a little of moment was done without her advice." She held religious meetings in her home, being herself a Quaker preacher of power and eloquence.

The population of Nantucket in 1700 was approximately 300 whites and 800 Indians. Short of specie and wanting loyal suppliers, traders advanced up to ten pounds of cloth, fish hooks, shoes, shot, kettles, and more in exchange for feathers and fish – and **Mary's company store** was born. The use of **the credit system** depended on the courts allowing the Indians to be sued for debt. Mary's book shows accounts for as many as 200 Indians, who were primarily engaged in codfishing and fowling but were also performing routine manual labor, and later whaling. In return for their efforts, they received necessary tools, cloth, and supplies.

Mother of ten children, of whom five daughters and three sons lived to maturity, Mary and her eldest son Nathaniel helped make Quakerism **the leading religion on the island** sometime after her own conversion from Puritanism by the Quakers – the Society of Friends – at Providence, Rhode Island, in 1701 at the age of 56.

Quakerism in Early Nantucket

The Society of Friends (Quakers) was the first religious group to formally organize on the island. Mary Starbuck and her husband Nathaniel led the Quaker movement on Nantucket. The Nantucket Meeting was formed in 1708, with Mary serving as an elder and her son Nathaniel Jr. as clerk. Mary became the first recognized minister among the islanders.

The first meetings were held in **the Starbuck home**. Englishman John Richardson wrote of a meeting at which Mary "Spoke trembling... Then she arose, and I observed that she and as many as could well be seen, were wet with Tears from their Faces to the fore-skirts of their Garments and the floor was as though there was a Shower of Rain upon it."

"The islanders esteemed [Mary Starbuck] as a judge among them, for little was done without her, as I understood," Richardson wrote. [She was a] "most extraordinary woman, participating in the practical duties and responsibilities of public gatherings

and town meetings, on which occasion her words were always listened to with marked respect."

Mary, who became known as "**Great Mary of Nantucket**," was a woman of great power and influence. She was consulted upon all matters of public importance, because her judgment was superior, and she was universally acknowledged to be a great woman.

The Quakers on Nantucket were strong politically and financially; many were involved in the lucrative whaling industry. They were in the majority for most of the eighteenth century, and their devotion to simplicity and strict adherence to traditional ways influenced Nantucket's architecture, home furnishings, clothing, and social behavior.

Quakerism gradually became the dominant religion of Nantucket's ruling elite and a majority of island residents during the most prosperous days of the whaling industry. It effectively served as the official faith of the small maritime community that would become the whaling capital of the world.

Although the first Meeting house on Nantucket was built in 1711, Mary did not live to see the official **Nantucket Monthly Meeting** be established. **Mary Coffin Starbuck** died on Nantucket Island November 13, 1717, at the age of seventy-two. Fittingly, her body was laid to rest in the Friends' burial ground next to the new meetinghouse built on land donated by her son and the Nantucket proprietors.

SOURCES

[Mary Coffin Starbuck](#)

[Rootsweb: Mary Coffin Starbuck](#)

[The History of Quakers on Nantucket](#)

[Mary Coffin Starbuck's Account Book with the Indians](#)

"Reverend" Mary Coffin was born February 20, 1644/45 in Haverhill, Massachusetts just two years after her parents' arrival from Devonshire, England. She moved to Nantucket Island with her father, Tristram Coffin, who led the colonization of the island in 1660-1661. In 1662 she married Nathaniel Starbuck, a prosperous farmer, local official, and partner with her father in purchasing the area from the Indians. The son of Edward and Catherine (Reynolds) Starbuck, Nathaniel was born February 20, 1633/34 in Dover, New Hampshire and died June 6, 1719 on Nantucket.

Mother of ten children, of whom five daughters and three sons lived to maturity, Mary and her eldest son Nathaniel helped make Quakerism the leading religion on the island sometime after her own conversion from Puritanism by the Quakers of Providence, RI in 1701 at the age of 56. She was a minister, as were her children and grandchildren.

"The islanders esteemed [Mary Starbuck] as a judge among them, for little was done without her, as I understood," wrote Englishman John Richardson, describing his 1701 visit. He bestowed on her the epithet "the great woman," and in the same journal entry deprecated her husband as "not a man of mean parts but she so far exceeded him in soundness of judgment, clearness of understanding, and an elegant way of expressing herself ... that it tended to lessen the qualifications of her husband."

Mary was a "most extraordinary woman, participating in the practical duties and responsibilities of public gatherings and town meetins, on which occasions her words were always listened to with marked respect." For several years, Meetings or worships as well as Nantucket's political affairs were held in the "great fore-room" of her home which became known as "Parliament House," situated on what is now known as Island View Farm between the Macy's and the north head of Hummock ponds.

Despite Mary's involvement in the weighty matters of religion, she did not neglect domestic issues, as evidenced by a letter which Lydia Hinchman quotes in *Early Settlers of Nantucket*. In the aftermath of a fire experienced by her granddaughter, Eliza Gorham, Mary wrote to her:

Nantucket 17th of 1st mo 1714

Dear Child E.G.

These few lines may certify thee that thou art often in my remembrance, with thy dear husband and children, with breathigs to the Lord for you, that you may find rest in all your visitations and trials: and also that there is a trunk filled with goods which is intended to be put on Eben Stewards vessel, in which are several small tokens from thy friends which thou may particularly see by the invoices here enclosed, and by some other marks that are upon the things.

Thy Aunt Dorcas in a new pair of osnaburg sheets, thy Aunt Dinah in a pair of blankets. Thy Grandfather intends to send thee a bbl. of mutton, but it is not all his own, for cousin James Coffin sent hither 17 pieces. Cousin James said he intended to send thee two or three bushels of corn.

There is likewise sent from our women's meeting £7 which thy uncle Jethro said he would give an order for, for thee to take to Boston.

Sister James told me she intended to send thee two bushels of corn and some wool and likewise that Justice Worth said he would send thee some corn.

More meat and corn will be sent which will be in larger quantities, which thy uncle Jethro STarbuck will give thee an acct. of or to thy husband.

I should have been glad if he had come over with Steward, but I hope we will see him this summer, if not both of you.

So with my kind love to thee and thy husband, children and to all our frds. committing you to the protection of the Almighty who is the wise disposer of all things and remain thy affectionate grandmother. Mary Starbuck

Although the first Meeting house on Nantucket was built in 1711, Mary did not live to see the official Nantucket Monthly Meeting be established on May 16, 1780. She died on Nantucket Island September 13, 1717 at the age of seventy-two.

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Mary Coffin Starbuck's "Account Book with the Indians" By Helen Stehling

MARY COFFIN STARBUCK'S "ACCOUNT BOOK with the Indians" is a sheepskin-covered ledger tracking the credits and debits of the two hundred Indians who patronized her store. She began keeping the account book in 1683 and the book was completed after her death in 1717 by her son, Nathaniel Starbuck, Jr., in 1766.

Tristram Coffin's daughter "Great Mary," or the "Great Woman," as she is frequently referred to, was an exceptional woman. Born off-island in 1645, she and her husband Nathaniel were the first English couple married on Nantucket and parents of the first white child (a daughter, Mary) born on the island, in 1663. Mary (the mother) was the island's first storekeeper and Nathaniel invested in whaling. In later life she had a deep commitment to Quaker ideals and was instrumental in the growth and development of Nantucket's Religious Society of Friends.

The population in 1700 was approximately 300 whites and 800 Indians. Short of specie and wanting loyal suppliers, traders advanced up to ten pounds of cloth, fish hooks, shoes, shot, kettles, and more in exchange for feathers and fish — and Mary's company store was born. The use of the credit system depended on the courts allowing the Indians to be sued for debt, and they were. Mary's book shows accounts for as many as 200 Indians, who were primarily engaged in codfishing and fowling but were also performing routine manual labor, and later whaling. In return for their efforts they received necessary tools, cloth, and supplies as well as a lesson in the English economic system.

An example of one account in the book is for Tom Poney [Pone, Pony] who in 1734 and 1735 bought from the general store such items as blankets, corn-meal, meat, thread, tobacco, a great coat, women's shoes, candles, molasses, and seed corn among other things. For the same years he was credited for "fish caught at Siasconset," a "share of a whale got with John Russel," "share of a whale got with Shubael Folger at Cansco," fish caught at Shawkemo, and a "share of a whale caught with Jethro Folger." He was also credited for his labor, "washing sheep" and "plowing two acres." In 1737 he was even given credit for labor performed by his sister: "carding wool."

A study of the account book, held in the NHA Research Center, introduces readers to Indian names, their businesses, and the economy of the island. According to Elizabeth Little, "it is a treasure trove of data about Indian life on Nantucket covering the years 1683, when the cod-fishing industry of Nantucket got under way, to 1764, when most of the Indians died of a tragic illness." It is an invaluable research tool and a lasting document meticulously kept by a great woman of Nantucket.

Helen Stehling has been summering on the island for twenty-five years. She is a valued volunteer for the NHA, indexing logs for our library and research center for close to ten years. When she is not in Nantucket, she lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland

Frequently Asked Questions: Can you tell me a little about the history of Quakers on Nantucket?

The Quaker (Friends) Meeting House on Fair Street was erected circa 1838 by builder James Weeks and originally served as a Friends school for the Wilburite sect. John Boadle, a Quaker schoolmaster from London, was the teacher, and the school was called "John Boadle's School." In 1864, with the decline in the number of Friends on Nantucket, the school was converted into a meeting house and the large South Meeting House next door was sold and removed. The existing meeting house was purchased from the Friends in 1894 by the Nantucket Historical Association and served as its first museum.

Quakerism in America Quakerism had its roots in England in the 1650s, when George Fox gathered together a group of "friends" who felt that the spirit of God, or the "Inner Light," was within each person and that the worship of God did not require an intermediary (minister or priest). The Society of Friends, as it became known, was vehemently persecuted in England and many Friends died in prison. The first missionaries of the Society of Friends from England arrived in America in 1656, but only in the colony of Rhode Island were they cordially received.

Quakerism in Massachusetts was a radical departure from mainstream Puritan thought. In addition to their doctrinal differences, the seventeenth-century Friends, unlike the quiet, inward-looking Friends of the eighteenth century, were activists. Refusing to recognize rank, take oaths, or pay any kind of church taxes, they opposed the established church. Massachusetts took the strongest measures to suppress Quakerism, including hanging, and even those who communicated with Quakers were subject to fines. It was not until 1661, when Charles II was restored to the throne and ordered that Quaker trials be transferred to England, that pressure lessened in the Bay Colony. By the 1660s, Quakerism was spreading throughout New England, and Rhode Island elected a member of the society as governor. Even Massachusetts was fairly accepting of the Quakers by the beginning of the eighteenth century.

There does not seem to have been any organized religious group in the Nantucket English community during the seventeenth century. Obed Macy, in his *History of Nantucket* (1835; reprints 1880 and 1972), remarks that "During the first fifty years after the settlement, the people were mostly Baptists; there were some Presbyterians, a few of the Society of Friends."

Quakerism in early Nantucket The Society of Friends was the first group to formally organize on the island. This firm commitment was a direct outgrowth of the missionary visits of Friends from off-island, including Thomas Chalkley, a Quaker missionary-merchant from Philadelphia, and John Richardson, a well-known English Friend. Between 1704 and 1708, a number of other Friends visited Nantucket from Rhode Island, Long Island, Philadelphia, and England.

Mary (Coffin) Starbuck (1645–1717) and her husband Nathaniel led the Quaker movement on Nantucket. The Nantucket Meeting was formed in 1708 with Mary serving as an elder and her son Nathaniel Jr. as clerk. The first meetings were held in the Starbuck home, called "Parliament House," in the original Sherburne settlement at Capaum. [Tradition has it that the house was moved into the Fish Lots at 10 Pine Street, but it is more likely that only materials salvaged from the original house were used.] John Richardson wrote of a meeting at which Mary "Spoke trembling. . . . Then she

arose, and I observed that she and as many as could well be seen, were wet with Tears from their Faces to the fore-skirts of their Garments and the floor was as though there was a Shower of Rain upon it."

In the forty-year period after 1708, the Meeting outgrew a series of meeting houses and expansions. By the late 1750s, the Friends meeting house at the corner of Pleasant and Main Streets served 1,500 persons. In 1762, with the Quaker community having grown to almost 2,400 persons, the much larger Great Meeting House was built at the crossroads of Main Street and Madaket Road.

The Quakers on Nantucket were strong politically and financially; many were involved in the lucrative whaling industry. They were in the majority for most of the eighteenth century, and their devotion to simplicity and strict adherence to traditional ways influenced Nantucket's architecture, home furnishings, clothing, and social behavior.

Factionalism in Nantucket Quakerism The Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 were disastrous for the Society of Friends. Their doctrine of pacifism led them to read out of meeting dozens who had supported and/or participated in the "American Cause." After 1820, Quakerism on Nantucket started to decline rapidly, with a great decrease in the number of Quakers by the 1840s. Members were read out of meeting for marrying non-Quakers and for nonattendance. Around 1830, the Hicksite division had a devastating effect on American Quakerism. The Nantucket Meeting broke into factions, with older, more orthodox, Quakers unable to accept the changing times. Three different sects—the Hicksites, the Gurneyites, and the Wilburites—held separate meetings on the island, thus shattering Quaker unity. By the late 1860s there were only a few Quakers on the island, and by 1900, it is said, there were none.

Quakers Today Since 1939, members of the Religious Society of Friends have used the Quaker Meeting House on Fair Street for worship according to the Quaker manner on Sunday mornings during the summer. Since 2000, a small group has been meeting there year round. Although under the oversight of the Friends of the New England Yearly Meeting, the group is without formal organization. Today, the Religious Society of Friends is one of the recognized Christian denominations with about 120,000 members in the United States and perhaps about 200,000 in all other parts of the world. Present-day Friends believe that the old Quaker principles and manner of worship are applicable in modern life.

For further information on current activities of the Nantucket Friends: May to October: 508.257.6101 Off-season: 508.228.1730 Or write to:

Nantucket Friends Meeting PMB 2 2 Greglen Avenue Nantucket MA 02554 The Quaker Meeting House has been the property of the Nantucket Historical Association since 1894.

Mary Coffin Starbuck is mentioned in *Quaker Nantucket* by Robert J. Leach and Peter Gow on pages 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 30, 36, 40, 43, 51, 58, 86, 147, 148, 149, 153, 158, 190 and 196.

Page 11, "Another leading citizen was Nantucket's first storekeeper, Tristram

Coffin's daughter Mary. The energetic Mary quickly became an important figure in the young settlement, arranging credit and commerce among the growing white population and the Indians. Mary's husband was Nathaniel Starbuck, whose sister, Sarah Starbuck Austin, was a Quaker minister living on the New Hampshire coast. Nathaniel's investments in whaling, along with Mary's profits from the store, became the foundation of one of Nantucket's early fortunes."

Page 12, "The next year John Gardner's own niece Sarah married Joseph Paddock, nephew of Ichabod, in the Yarmouth Meetinghouse. It is doubtful whether her old Puritan uncle attended the ceremony, but he probably offered no objections. In 1698 Mary Coffin Starbuck's youngest daughter, Hephzibah, stood up in the Apponegansett Meetinghouse (near where New Bedford would later be founded) to marry Thomas Hathaway. Hephzibah, like Puella Hussey Gorham, was soon acknowledged, by virtue of her eloquence in meeting, as a minister. There was no way to prevent this ministering young woman from going to visit her mother, the powerful shopkeeper, and her father, a founder of Nantucket's whaling industry. Seeing the inevitable at hand and perhaps tired of controversy, John Gardner retired from the magistracy that same year."

Continuing on page 12, "For nearly forty years Mary Starbuck and others had resisted the establishment of any kind of paid ministry on Nantucket. Denominationally diverse, the English settlement continued to look off island for religious sustenance. Now it was time for visiting Friends, many of whom had important family connections on the island, to try their hands at cultivating Nantucket's spiritual garden."

Page 13, "June 28, 1702. A visiting minister has come to Nantucket. Mary Coffin Starbuck has issued an open invitation to a meeting for worship that he will hold in her home, known as Parliament House. The preacher is a Quaker, and the few Quakers already living on the island are pleased that one of their number should be attracting so much attention. For some, it is true, the attraction is not as much the preacher as the chance to view the shining woodwork and comfortable appurtenances of Parliament House and the lifestyle of the affluent and influential Starbucks. A storekeeper, Mary is the island's chief creditor, and few commodities leave or arrive on the island without passing through her hands." "Mary Starbuck is clearly leaning toward Quakerism; perhaps today will bring an open declaration."

Page 16, "Those close to the front can see that Richardson has now turned his attention full on Mary Starbuck, who has begun to weep openly. Inspired by the palpable response of his listeners, Richardson becomes more eloquent, the vision he lays out more beautiful still."

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The chapter entitled, "Great Mary's Children," on page 21 states, "The first

Quaker visitor to Nantucket with explicitly missionary ambitions was Thomas Turner, who arrived in 1698. A former traveling companion of Fox, Turner was accompanied by Hugh Copperthwaite, a Long Island Quaker, and, most probably, by Haphzibah Starbuck Hathaway, daughter of Nathaniel and Mary Coffin Starbuck. Captain Peleg Slocomb, son-in-law of Christopher Holder, sailed the party to the island. Little specific information survives concerning this visit, but it is reasonable to surmise that Turner and company held an appointed meeting, perhaps at Parliament House, the home of Nathaniel and Mary Coffin Starbuck."

Page 22, "The arrival on Nantucket of some of Newport's leading Friends was tantamount to an offer: We in the Narragansett region will undertake to defend your interests, in particular your religious freedom. We ask in return that you consider the Quaker way, and that commercial ties between our communities be strengthened. That the island's storekeeper, Mary Coffin Starbuck, and one of its principal whaling entrepreneurs, her husband, Nathaniel, seemed favorably disposed to Quakerism suggested strongly that a positive response might be anticipated."

Continuing on page 22, "Another facet of Quaker culture became apparent in 1698 when Joanna Slocomb Mott arrived on Nantucket to preach. To the two hundred or so who turned out to hear her, the novelty of a female minister, traveling without her husband, must have been considerable, although it was well known that women Friends were welcomed into the ministry. After all, two daughters of the island, Puella Hussey Gorham and Hephzibah Starbuck Hathaway, had already been acknowledged as ministers on the mainland."

Page 26, "For two years after Richardson's 1702 visit, appointed meetings were held sporadically at Parliament House by ministers who came to Nantucket. The visitors commonly stayed for several weeks or more, preaching at public appointed meetings as well as passing among Quaker or Quaker-inclined homes and sharing private meetings of the host families. As the Quaker spirit on Nantucket was catalyzed, Mary Coffin Starbuck's own conviction continued to deepen. From a passive role as benign protective spirit and host to Quaker visitors, she became more and more active in worship. At last she herself became a minister, and surviving reports describe her preaching as powerful and compelling. History has come to know Mary Starbuck as the 'Great Woman' or 'Great Mary,' and much of Nantucket's later glory can be attributed to her leadership in bringing to the island a creed that promised community and stability as well as (for a time, at least) unity of purpose."

**ORIGINAL SOURCE MATERIAL to support the RELATIONSHIP between
MARY COFFIN and her son JETHRO STARBUCK**

1) Nantucket Vital Records to 1850, 5 vols. Boston, 1925-28, Births, page 507, Starbuck, Nathaniel, h. Mary (d. Tristram Coffin 1st and Dionis), s. Edward and Catharine Reynolds, , 1636 [? In Dover, N. H.], P.R. 38.].

2) NVR to 1850, Births, page 302, Coffin, Mary, w. Nathaniel Starbuck (s. Edward and Catharine), d. Tristram and Dionis (Stevens), 20th, 2 mo. 1645 (see Haverhill Vital Records), P.R. 38.

- 3) NVR to 1850, Births, page 501, Starbuck, Jethro, s. Nathaniell, Dec. 14, 1671. [h. Dorcas (d. William Gayer and Dorcas), s. Nathaniel and Mary (Coffin), 14th, 12 mo., P.R. 38].
- 4) NVR to 1850, Deaths, page 544, Starbuck, Jethro, h. Dorcas, 12th. 8 mo. 1770, C.R. 4. [h. dorcas (d. William Gayer and Dorcas), s. Nathaniel and Mary (Coffin), a. 98 y. 8 m., P.R. 38. A. 98 y. 8 m. 6 d., P.R. 63].
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- 7) NVR to 1850, Marriages, page 396, Starbuck, Jethro and Dorcas Gayer, 6th, 10 mo. 1694. Intention not recorded. [Jethro, s. Nathaniel and Mary (Coffin), and Dorcas Gayer Jr., d. William and Dorcas (Starbuck) (first w.), P.R. 38].

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