The First Wife of Ezra Dibble (1697–1739) Was Rebecca Starr, Not Hannah Starr

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Burgis Pratt Starr in *A History of the Starr Family of New England*, identified a daughter of Josiah Starr of Danbury, Connecticut, named Hannah, as the wife of _____ Dibble and mother of Weakfield Dibble, who died in September 1759.\(^1\) Although Burgis Starr did not indicate the first name of the Dibble husband, the probate record of Ezra Dibble of Danbury names his son Wakefield Dibble.\(^2\)

Burgis Starr claimed from Josiah Starr’s probate documents that he had children Thomas, Benjamin, John, Hannah (?) married to _____ Dibble, Rachel married to John Benedict, Josiah, Samuel, and Comfort. Even though he commented that Hannah’s name was somewhat uncertain,\(^3\) Hannah Starr has been shown as the name of Ezra Dibble’s wife since the publication of *History of the Starr Family* in 1879.

A reading of Josiah’s probate documents revealed that no daughter Hannah was named. Capt. Josiah Starr of Danbury died intestate and his inventory was taken 2 February 1715/16. The relict Rebeckah Starr and son Thomas were named administrators. John Gregory and John Cornell took the inventory and were directed by the court to distribute the estate. The inventory was valued at £980:18:1 and distributed to the widow, six sons, and two daughters:\(^4\)

Rebeckah, the widow, was given her thirds £328.2.6.
Benjamin Starr received the double portion £145.2s, as the eldest son.
John Starr received £72.11s.
Thomas Starr received £72.11s.
Rachel Benydic and John Bennydick received £72.11s.
Josiah Starr received £72.11s.
Rebecca Starr received £72.11s.
Samuel Starr received £72.11s.
Comfort Starr received £72.11s.

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\(^2\) Fairfield District Probate, File 1939, Ezra Dibble, will dated 3 August 1739, proved 22 November 1739. Bequests were made to wife Elsebeth, Wakefield “my eldest son now,” sons Elisha and John, daughters Rebekah and Freelove. He also made provision for an unborn child. Distribution took place 2 February 1747/8 to the widow, Wakefield, John, Rebekah Taylor, and Freelove Noble. The unborn child was Elizabeth, who died as an infant, shortly after the death of her father. See also Spencer P. Mead, “Abstract of Probate Records at Fairfield, County of Fairfield, and State of Connecticut, 1703–1757,” (New York: 1934), 7:2172, database online at AmericanAncestors.org.

\(^3\) Starr, *History of the Starr Family*, [note 1], 268.

\(^4\) Fairfield District Probate, File 6074, Josiah Starr, using Rebeckah for the mother, Rebecca for the daughter.
The first page of the distribution begins with the widow's thirds. On the second page, the first paragraph is part of the widow's thirds. It begins with a scribble that doesn't look like Hannah, but Burgis Starr probably interpreted the name as Hannah. He assumed the distribution for the daughter Rebeckah was for the widow. He should have done the math, to see the section was for the daughter, not the widow. The author made a second error, naming Thomas, who served as executor, as the eldest son, but the double portion distributed to Benjamin indicates he was the eldest.

Did Burgis Starr have another reason for calling the Dibble wife “Hannah”? The Danbury records were destroyed, so there is no marriage record, nor birth records for children, and a different wife was named in Ezra Dibble’s will. Ezra Dibble married Elizabeth (Burr) Wheeler, in Stratfield, 3 April 1733, but several of the children named in his probate documents were born before their marriage, evidently to a first wife. Guardians were chosen or appointed on 5 December 1739 for Ezra's minor children. Rebecca chose John Benedict of Danbury. Wakefield chose Josiah Starr of Danbury. Comfort Starr of Danbury was appointed for Freelove, and Samuel Starr of Danbury was appointed for Elisha.

The Starrs were all sons of Josiah Starr, and John Benedict was Josiah's son-in-law. Wakefield Dibble, Ezra's son, called Comfort Starr his uncle in Wakefield's 1758 will, making it clear that the mother of Ezra Dibble's children was a daughter of Josiah Starr. There was no Hannah Starr, Rachel Starr was married to John Benedict, and therefore Rebecca Starr, daughter of Josiah, must have married Ezra Dibble.

Genealogical Summary

1. Josiah Starr, son of Thomas and Rachel (______) Starr, was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts, 1 September 1657. He died in

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8 Starr, History of the Starr Family [note 1], 267

Danbury, Connecticut, 4 January 1715/6. His wife, Rebeckah ______, died there 15 July 1739, aged 74.\[10\]

Children of Josiah and Rebeckah (_____) Starr, listed in the probate distribution order.

i. **Benjamin Starr**, eldest son, b. ca. 1684; d. 29 Nov. 1754, in his 71st year;\[11\] m. **Eunice Taylor**, b. ca. 1689, daughter of Thomas and Rebeckah (Ketcham) Taylor.\[12\]

ii. **John Starr**, b. ca. 1684; d. 27 July 1739, aged 55;\[13\] m. _____\[14\]

iii. **Thomas Starr**, d. before 7 March 1733/4, when his wife Elizabeth was named administrator of his estate.\[15\]

iv. **Rachel Starr**, b. ca. 1700; d. 7 Feb. 1775 aged 75; m. **John Benedict**\[16\] b. Oct. 1689, d. Danbury in Feb. 1765, son of James and Sarah (Gregory) Benedict.\[17\]

v. **Josiah Starr**, b. ca. 1694; d. Dec. 1778 in his 85th year;\[18\] m. (1) **Rebecca _____**; (2) ca. 1758 **Rebecca (Seymour) (Whitney) Boughton**, daughter of John and Sarah (Gregory) Seymour, and widow of Elijah Whitney and John Boughton.\[19\]

2. vi. **Rebecca Starr**, m. **Ezra Dibble**.

vii. **Samuel Starr**, b. ca. 1697; d. 29 Dec. 1744, aged 47;\[20\] m. **Abigail Dibble**, b. Windsor, Conn., 1 Oct. 1703, daughter of Wakefield and Jane (Fyler/Filer) Dibble, and sister of Ezra Dibble, who m. Rebecca Starr.\[21\]

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14 Starr, *History of the Starr Family* [note 1], 303–304.

15 Fairfield District Probate, File 6075, Thomas Starr.


17 Jacobus, *Families of Old Fairfield* [note 5], 1:64; 2:2:1071).

18 Bailey and Hill, *History of Danbury* [note 10], 505. The authors mention that this gravestone was erected in 1790.


2. **Rebecca Starr** was the daughter of Josiah and Rebeckah (_____ ) Starr. No birth, marriage or death records exist for Rebecca, but she was named in the 1716 distribution of Josiah Starr's estate. She was born in the last few years of the 1600s or early in the next century. She died before 3 April 1733, when her husband married Elizabeth (Burr) Wheeler. Rebecca married, say 1720, **Ezra Dibble**, born in Windsor, Connecticut, 7 October 1697, son of Wakefield (Ebenezer2, Thomas2, Robert1) and Jane (Fyler/Filer) Dibble, and brother of Abigail Dibble, who married Samuel Starr (see above). [24] Ezra died between 3 August 1739 (date of his will) and 22 November 1739 (date will proved). His second wife was Elizabeth (Burr) Wheeler, daughter of John and Elizabeth (Hanford) Burr, and widow of John Wheeler. [25] Ezra and Elizabeth had two children, John and Elizabeth. [26]

Children of Ezra and Rebecca (Starr) Dibble:


ii. **Wakefield Dibble**, b. before 1725 (over 14 in 1739); d., probably Danbury, between 4 Dec. 1758 and 4 Sept. 1759; [28] m. **Abigail Bostwick**, b. Brookfield, Fairfield Co., Conn., 28 Sept. 1725, daughter of Ebenezer and Rebecca (Bunnell) Bostwick. [28] In his 1758 will Wakefield called Comfort Starr his uncle. [30]

iii. **Rebecca Dibble**, b. before 1725 (over 14 in 1739); m. _____ Taylor before 1747, [31] perhaps Benjamin Taylor, son of Theophilus and Sarah (Gregory) Taylor. [32]

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22 Photograph of gravestone at FindaGrave.com, memorial no. 40449821; Bailey and Hill, *History of Danbury* [note 10], 505; Starr, *History of the Starr Family* [note 1], 269–270, says 5 months.


24 See note 21.


26 Fairfield District Probate, File 1939, Ezra Dibble [note 2].


28 The dates of will and probate are from Danbury District Probate Records, 1:171–173, will of Wakefield Dibble of Danbury.


30 “Collected Source Material,” Dibble [note 7].

31 Fairfield District Probate, File 1939, Ezra Dibble [note 2].

iv. Freelove Dibble, b. after 1725 (under 14 in 1739); m. Danbury 27 Oct. 1747, Zadock Noble, b. New Milford, Litchfield Co., Conn., 17 Sept. 1723, son of David and Susanna (Sherman) Noble. [33]

v. Elisha Dibble, b. after 1725 (under 14 in 1739); living in 1747. [34]

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