

Rev. Dr. Doug Showalter - dougshow@meganet.net
Corrections welcome

August 24, 2017

Draft #1b

Current Research on Mrs. Martha Cahoon
The Wife of Gurdin Burnham and Mother of Martha (Cahoon) Button
Who Was She?

I have not been able to answer that question, but here is where my research has led me thus far. Of course, it is possible that some entirely new direction for this research will emerge in the future.

I will begin with the Burnham typescript, p. 160, apparently intended to be added to the published 1884 Burnham genealogy of Roderick Burnham. That typescript is in the possession of a descendant of Gurdon C. Burnham, the son of Gurdon/Gurdin Burnham of East Hartford, CT and his wife **Mrs. Martha Cahoon**.

Fifth Generation.

79 $\frac{1}{2}$. Gurdon Burnham (son of Moses 42, gdson of Lt. Richard 19, grgdson of
Richard 6, grgrgdson of Thomas 1) of Cape Cod, Mass.;

Gurdon? born Feb. 20, 1757; died at sea, 1791-2.;
Married 1789? Mrs. Martha Cahoon;
born 1753; died Oct. 11, 1839, AE. 86 yrs.

Child.

150 $\frac{1}{2}$. Gurdon C., b. Feb. 10, 1791, m. Nov. 7, 1813 Elizabeth Amidon, d. Feb. 8, 1842

This (79 $\frac{1}{2}$) is probably the Burnham who sailed from Boston? to England (South Wales), there learned through London papers of an unclaimed Burnham estate, with heirs in America, and secured all the papers obtainable, bearing on the subject. On his return to America he published the discovery in a Boston paper, as referred to earlier in this work, and married. After a son, Gurdon C., was born to him, he left the papers with his wife and again sailed for England, (also previously referred to in this work), and was lost on the return voyage. After her husband's death, Mrs. Burnham lived with her daughter, Martha Button, formerly Martha Cahoon, at Concord, Lake Co., Ohio.

Analysis:

~ Gurdon/Gurdin said in his 1833 Rev. War pension application that he was born on Feb 13, 1756 in East Hartford, CT. He was baptized at the East Hartford Congregational Church on Feb 20, 1757.

~ Gurdon/Gurdin did not die at sea in 1791-2. Rather, he emerged in the South after that time,

married a woman [possibly named Polly] and raised a family with her, moving into VA, KY, TN, IL, and IN. Gurdin received a Rev. War pension and died about 1844. Gurdin is listed as an honored Rev. War vet on DAR memorial plaques in two different counties, each in a different state. And, I think it is likely he died in neither of those two counties, but rather in Vigo Co., IN.

~ The typescript manuscript speculates that Gurdin and **Mrs. Cahoon** may have been married in 1789. To date, no marriage record has been found for this couple. However, a Martha Cahoon household has been found in the 1790 census of East Windsor, Hartford, CT. Unfortunately, there is no indication of the ages of the three females in that Cahoon household.

1790 United States Federal Census for Matha Cahoon
Connecticut > Hartford > East Windsor

William Chalk	1		3
Elijah Stoughton	2	1	4
Abiel Sayton	1	6	5
William Bissell	2		3
Roswell Bissell	1	2	3
Nathaniel Bissell	1		1
John Copm	1	4	3
Martha Cahoon 4/11			3
Joel Bidsworth 4/12	1		4
Nathan Pitton	2	2	3
Nathan Pitton Jr	1		1
Lvi Baxter	1	2	1
Frederic Bidsworth	2	1	3
Daniel Carreter	1	2	2
Benjamin Watson Jr	2	4	2

This finding may be very significant:

~ because the son **Mrs. Martha Cahoon** and Gurdin Burnham had, namely Gurdon C. Burnham, did live in East Windsor, CT. He married there in 1813 and he appears as the head of household there in the 1820 census.

~ because there is at least one other female in that Cahoon household, who might be Mrs. Martha Cahoon's daughter, Martha Cahoon, who lived out in Concord, Lake Co., OH—as the Burnham typescript indicated.

If this is **Mrs. Martha Cahoon**, she apparently is still a widow—and not yet married to Gurdin. The date of this 1790 census is not known, but, by law, it was supposed to show the population of the U.S. as of **2 Aug 1790**. The Burnham typescript indicates that Gurdon C. Burnham was born on **10 Feb 1791**. Correct or not, the typescript gives no other source for that date, which is a little over six months from the supposed census date.

Presumably, Gurdin and **Mrs. Cahoon** were married sometime in **1790-91**. In his 1833 Rev. War Pension application, Gurdin explicitly indicates that he spent two years and four months at his father's household in East Hartford, CT in about this period of time. The distance between East Hartford and East Windsor could be about 11 miles roughly, give or take. In his pension application Gurdin does not mention being married at that time in CT. He does mention being married in Buckingham Co., VA at some point one to four years after that time of being in East Hartford.

Notice the household of **Ebenezer Watson Jr.** in the above 1790 census. I will be commenting on it later, in connection with a possible Cahoon family Martha might have married into. A cursory review of other surnames, besides Watson, living near Martha Cahoon in that census did not turn up any obvious Cahoon connections.

The Burnham typescript indicates that **Mrs. Martha Cahoon** was born in 1753, but, unfortunately, no source is given for that, nor is the location of her birth indicated.

The Burnham typescript gives a detailed date for the death of Mrs. Martha Cahoon and her age at death, but again, no source and no location, unfortunately.

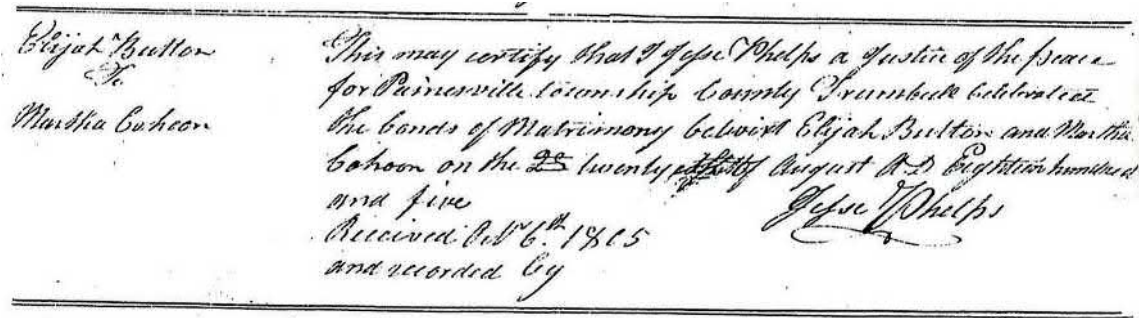
I tend to discount entirely the typescript author's comments linking Gurdin Burnham to an effort to publish and secure an unclaimed Burnham inheritance in England. As that author says, "probably" Gurdin was the Burnham involved in that project. However, even in the 19th century it was determined that unclaimed inheritance was just a legend and it seems that efforts to chase after it did not occur until decades after Gurdin's supposed death in 1791-92.

The Burnham typescript says, "*After her husband's death, Mrs. Burnham lived with her daughter, Martha Button, formerly Martha Cahoon, at Concord, Lake Co., Ohio.*"

This has turned out to be key information, for a review of the 1830 Concord township census [which was then in Geauga Co.] in Ohio found that a **Martha Cahoon**, age 70-79, was living right next door to the Elijah Button household.



And marriage records for 1805 in that same area showed the marriage of Elijah Button and Martha Cahoon—**Mrs. Cahoon’s daughter**.



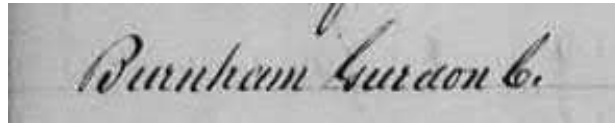
It appears that the Burnham typescript was accurate in making that assertion about Mrs. Burnham, following the supposed death of her husband. Though, the typescript spoke of that OH locale as it was known after Lake Co. was formed in 1840 with the town of Concord being a part of it.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to find **Mrs. Martha Cahoon/Burnham** in 1800, 1810, 1820, or 1840 censuses. I would assume that she spent some time with her son, Gurdon C. Burnham, in East Windsor, CT.

Martha’s son **Gurdon C. Burnham** apparently moved out to OH too. He appears in the **1827** Personal Tax list of Painesville township of Geauga County, OH, not far from the town of Concord in that county, where his mother and half sister Button lived.

Painesville Personal Property					1827-1829				
	Real Estate	Personal	Merchant's Stock	Total	State Tax	County Tax	Local Tax	County Tax	Annual
	Value	Value	Value	Value	\$	¢	\$	¢	\$
Concord James					9	6	10	06	24
Simon Aker		24		24	27	2	06	06	64
Asa Hoxey	1	20	2	24	19	2	16	06	24
Burnham Gurdon C.		24		24	27	2	06	06	72
		72		72	21	6	18	06	68

Here is an expanded view of Gurdon's name in the above tax list.



By **1829**, Gurdon C. Burnham was a resident householder in Portland, Huron Co., OH, which eventually became Sandusky City in Erie Co., OH. Sandusky City was something like eighty miles west of Concord, OH.

He also seems to appear at the age of 30-39 in the **1830** census of Sandusky, Huron, OH.



Sources: 1827-1829 Geauga Co., Ohio Tax Records [Familysearch.org]
<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GPPZ-99JQ> [image 124 of 739]
 ~ "History of Erie County, Ohio," by Lewis Cass Aldrich, 1889, p. 293
<https://books.google.com/books?id=wNMyAQAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Now, the compelling fact was that while **Mrs. Martha Cahoon** was in Concord township, OH in the 1830 census, Gurdin Burnham himself was in that same census in Vigo Co., IN. He was more than 400+ miles away from Concord. And, he was living with a woman, age 60-69, who apparently had been his wife for a number of years—**apparently his second wife**.

As he noted in an 1835 request to transfer his pension from Edgar Co., IL where he had applied for it in 1833, he now wanted it given to him in Vigo Co., IN where he and his wife had recently moved, because they want to be closer to four of their children [three sons and a daughter] who were then living in Vigo county and could care for Gurdin and his wife because of their advancing age. Though in two different states, those two counties are adjacent to each other.

Who was Martha's Cahoon's husband [before her marriage to Burnham] and the father of her daughter, Martha Cahoon, who married Elijah Button in 1805 in OH?

At present, after considerable research, I have **not** been able to find a good answer to that question. But, I can share some of my thinking to date.

An IGI record indicated that **Martha Cahoon** was born about 1768 and "of Wayne, KY." My strong suspicion is that if there is any truth to that assertion it is related to Gurdin's second wife, whom he said he married in Buckingham Co., VA—**not** to **Mrs. Martha Cahoon**.

For a number of reasons, I am inclined to believe that Mrs. Martha Cahoon very likely was a New Englander, as was Gurdin. Those reasons include:

- ~ the appearance of a Martha Cahoon in the 1790 East Windsor, CT census
- ~ the marriage of her son, Gurdon C. Burnham, in 1813 in East Windsor, CT and his appearance there in the 1820 census
- ~ the movement of Martha's daughter and Martha herself out to Concord, OH.

The land on the southern shore of Lake Erie that Martha Cahoon, daughter and mother moved to, was part of the **Western Reserve** which was claimed by **CT** in the period after the Revolutionary War. The article on the Western Reserve in Wikipedia essentially noted the following [as abbreviated by me for easier reading]:

Connecticut retained 3,366,921 acres in Ohio which became the "Western Reserve." The state sold the Western Reserve to the Connecticut Land Company about 1796. They were investors mostly from Suffield, Connecticut. They planned to divide the land and sell it to settlers from the east, particularly younger men from New England.

The western end of the reserve included the Fairylands or "Sufferers Lands," 500,000 acres reserved for residents of several New England towns which had been destroyed by British-set fires during the Revolutionary War. The Land Company sent surveyors to divide the land into square townships, 5 miles on each side. The territory was originally named "New Connecticut." Settlers began to trickle in over the next few years. Connecticut finally ceded sovereignty over the Western Reserve in 1800. The United States absorbed it into the Northwest Territory, which organized Trumbull County in the boundaries of the Reserve.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Connecticut_Western_Reserve

On the following page there is an image of the Map of the Western Reserve in 1826, in the public domain and available from Wikipedia Commons. Note that Geauga county where Elijah Button and his likely mother-in-law **Martha Cahoon** were in 1830 and also Huron Co., where Gurdon C. Burnham may have been in 1829, are both within that Western Reserve.



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Western_Reserve_Including_the_Fire_Lands_1826.jpg

Another factor in my view that **Mrs. Martha Cahoon** very likely was a New Englander, was that she appears, perhaps like other members of Gurdin's family in CT, to have believed that Gurdin actually died in 1791-92. Either that, or perhaps along with those CT relatives, she maintained the false story that he had died, in order to cover up the fact that she and Gurdin had divorced or he had simply abandoned her. It seems that Gurdin essentially lived his life in "two different worlds," the New England one and then the Southern one. I could be wrong, but it has seemed to me that very likely Martha was part of the former one and **not** a part of the latter one at all. Also, after Gurdin's supposed death, Martha apparently did not head to the South.

As I discovered in researching **Mrs. Martha Cahoon**, very few people in New England or the South in that period had the surname Cahoon [by birth or marriage] and also the name Martha. The options are very limited.

One of those who did was **Martha Rogers** who married **Stephen Cahoon** in 1751. He was from Chatham, Barnstable, MA. However, he supposedly lived until 1825, so I ruled that Martha out. Of course, another of my assumptions about **Mrs. Martha Cahoon**, was that she was a Cahoon widow at the time she married Gurdin Burnham.

Another Martha, who looked promising for awhile, was the Martha who married **John Cahoon** of Kent, Litchfield Co., CT and then after his death served as the administratrix of his estate in

1788. When I finally discovered that her maiden name was **Martha Rowley**, I learned also that she had been born about 1736, which would have made her about 94 years old at the time of the 1830 census. So, that likely ruled her out, as the Martha Cahoon in the 1830 census beside Elijah Button's household was listed as only age 70-79 then. I realize that sometimes people's ages are misstated in censuses, but that age difference seemed too great, in addition to the fact that Burnham's typescript does list Martha's birth year as 1753, not 1736.

One intriguing prospect is the **Cahoon** I found in East Windsor, CT both before and after the 1790 census in which Martha Cahoon seems to appear there. As I have discovered, all of those other Cahoon in early East Windsor seem to have come from the same Harwich, Barnstable, MA Cahoon family. One wonders, did Martha Cahoon also have a connection to that family?

The book "*David O'Killia the Immigrant of Old Yarmouth, Massachusetts with His Descendants and Allied Families: 1652-1962*," by Eunice Kelley Randall, 1962 gives the following description of that Harwich, MA Cahoon family on pp. 52-53.

John⁴ Cahoon, (Sarah³ O'Killiey, David Jr.,² David,¹) b. —, 1731, d. —; m. Oct. 26, 1752 Patience Small or Smalley, a dau. of Benjamin and Patience (Baker).

In 1758 John Cahoon under command of Col. Doty in Capt. Samuel Knowle's Co., served 8 mos., 20 das., in an expedition to Canada, Apr. 14, 1758 to Nov. 30, 1758.

Fourth Generation

53

Children:

order
uncertain

Sarah b. —, m. Mar. 12, 1774 Cornelius Ellis

William b. —

Samuel b. —

Nathan b. — was a Sea Capt. d. May 7, 1813
aged 44, at East Windsor, Conn.

Tamson b. Mar. 14, 1765 d. May 20, 1846

Mary b. —, m. James Walker

John b. —

He d. prior to 1799 for his will was made but never recorded.

Other sources have indicated the following:

~ **John Cahoon**, the father of that family, was born in Harwich, Barnstable MA and married his wife **Patience Small** there on **26 Oct 1752**. He died on **6 May 1779** in Port Medway, Nova Scotia, Canada. Patience is said to have died in Harwich on 6 Feb 1805.

~ **Josiah Cahoon**, who married Abigail Loomis, was yet another child in the above family. Josiah is said to have been born about **1769** and died on **6 Oct 1807** in East Windsor. Abigail was born in East Windsor, Hartford, CT on **9 Nov 1773**. She was a daughter of Roger and Chloe Loomis of East Windsor.

Here is an overview of the Cahoons from the **John** and **Patience (Small) Cahoon** family found in early East Windsor, Hartford, CT.

1785 - Son **Nathan Cahoon**, age 17, had a legal guardian in East Windsor, CT appointed for him.

1790 - **Martha Cahoon** appears in the East Windsor census with two other females in her household.

1800 - **Josiah Cahoon** appears in the East Windsor census

1806/1807 - **Josiah Cahoon** died in East Windsor, CT.

1810 - none shown

1813 - **Capt. Nathan Cahoon** died in East Windsor, CT.

1820 - **Reuben Cahoon** and **Horace Cahoon** appear in the East Windsor census.

1830 - **Reuben Cahoon** and **William Cahoon** appear in the East Windsor census.
[A considerably younger man, William's identity is not currently known.]

1840 - **Reuben Cahoon** and **John W. Cahoon** appear in the East Windsor census.
[A considerably younger man, John W.'s identity is not known currently.]

1858 - **Reuben Cohoon** died in South Windsor, CT and is buried there.

We can wonder, was Martha Cahoon also a member of the above Cahoon family through marriage?

Very little is known about the following sons of **John Cahoon** and **Patience Small**:

Samuel and John [said to have died sometime before 1799]. Could Martha have been a widow of one of them or of a presently unknown son of theirs?

Of the other known children of **John Cahoon** and **Patience Small**, it is said:

~ Sarah married Cornelius Ellidge and may have lived in Middleboro, Plymouth, MA

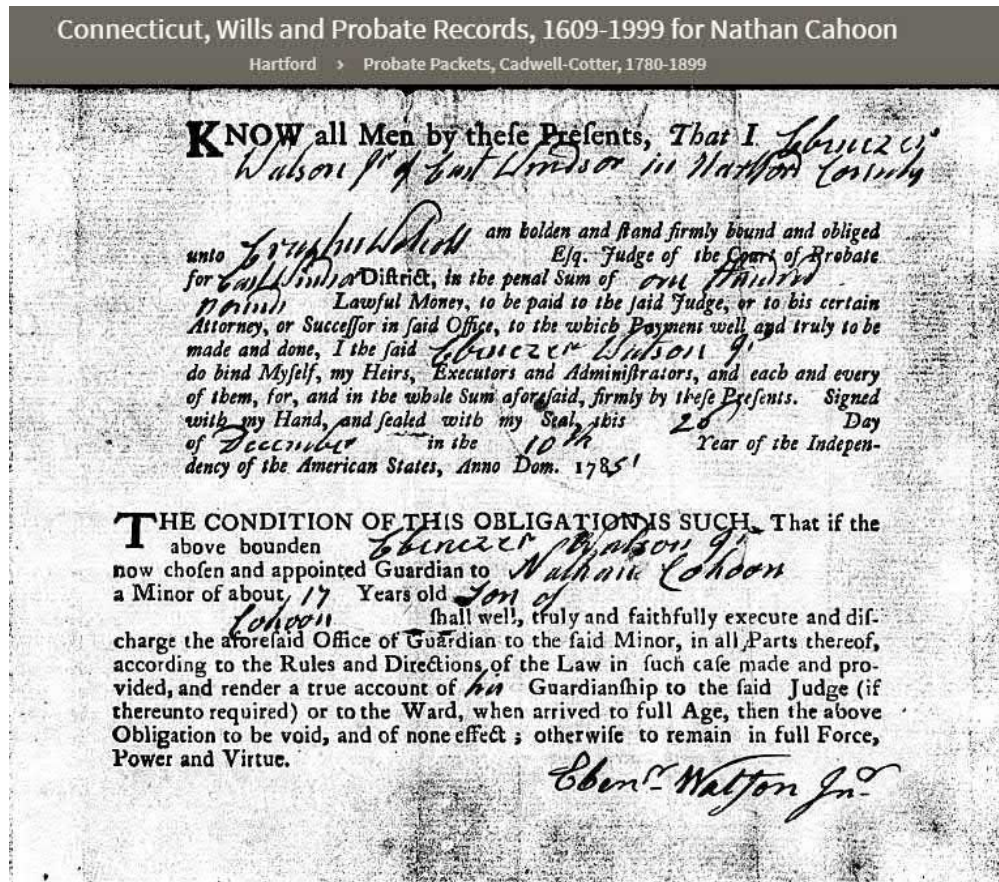
~ William married Mary Long in Harwich, Barnstable, MA in 1778.

~ Tamson married Isaiah Ellidge and died in East Harwich, Barnstable, MA.

~ Mary married James Walker and resided in Harwich, Barnstable, MA.

Here is more specific information on the above overview:

1785 - Nathan Cahoon, a son of the late **John Cahoon** and wife **Patience**, was 17 years old and had **Ebenezer Watson Jr.** of East Windsor, Hartford, CT appointed as his legal guardian.



https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/9049/007628003_00001?backurl=http%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestry.com%2fsearch%2fdb.aspx%3fdbid%3d9049%26path%3d&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnBrowsing#?imageId=007628003_00076

What did it mean for Nathan to have a legal guardian? As Ancestry.com says about legal guardianship in that early period:

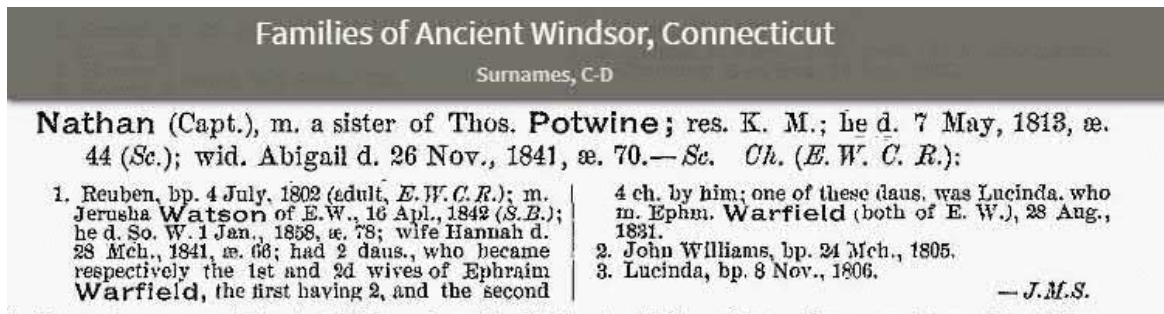
"A guardian is a responsible individual of legal age appointed or acknowledged by the court to manage the property ownership of those incompetent by reason of youth or mental or physical handicap to handle their own affairs. . . An orphan is a minor whose father is dead or whose deceased mother left separately owned property to her child but excluded the father. In both cases, a guardian is appointed to assume the legal responsibilities of property ownership. In other words, the "orphan" may have a living parent in either case."

<https://www.ancestry.com/wiki/index.php?title=Probate>

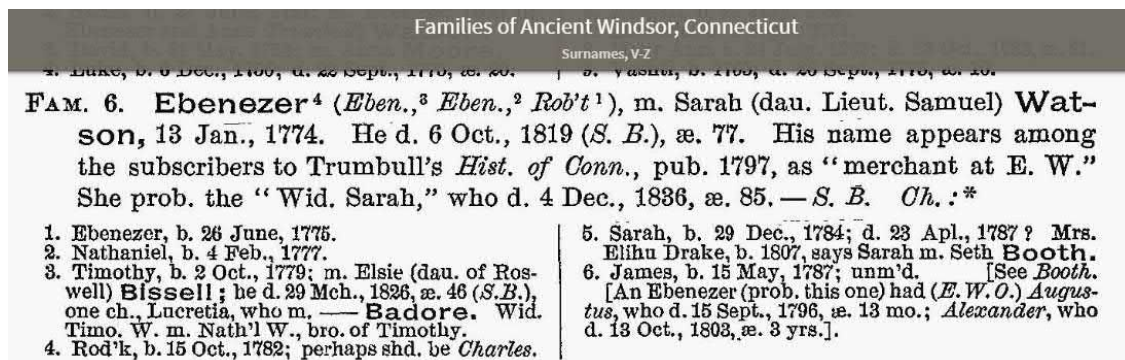
Supposedly, Nathan's mother, **Patience (Small) Cahoon**, was still alive in 1785, her husband **John** having died about 6 years earlier. The probate information for Nathan Cahoon following

his death in 1813 in East Windsor, CT is in the records of Hartford Co., CT along with the above legal guardian documentation from 1785.

The "*Families of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut*," by Henry Stiles, Vol. II, p. 157, describes Nathan Cahoon as follows:



Who was **Ebenezer Watson Jr.**? Thus far, I have not been able to find a family relationship between him and any Cahoon. The "*Families of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut*," by Henry Stiles, Vol. II, p. 777, describes Watson families in East Windsor and specifically notes that Ebenezer Jr. was a merchant in that community:



<https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/48654/WindsorCT-009827-770?backurl=http%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestry.com%2fsearch%2fdb.aspx%3fdbid%3d48654%26path%3d&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnBrowsing#?imageid=WindsorCT-009834-777>

Is it possible that Ebenezer was chosen as legal guardian of Nathan's property because of business connections Ebenezer had had with Nathan's father, John Cahoon, perhaps related to shipping? It is known that Nathan became a sea captain. These are unanswered questions.

1790 - I find it potentially significant that **Ebenezer Watson Jr.** appears just seven households away from **Martha Cahoon** in the 1790 East Windsor, Hartford, CT census. No other Cahoon found in this Hartford Co., CT census.

1790 United States Federal Census for Matha Cahoon
Connecticut > Hartford > East Windsor

Matha Cahoon	4/11			3			
Joel Edsworth	4/12	1			4		
Nathan Pelton		2	2		3		
Nathan Pelton Jr		1			1		
Levi Praxter		1	2		1		
Lucine Edsworth		2	1		3		
Daniel Carpenter		1	2		2		
Ebenezer Watson Jr		2	4		2		

Ebenezer Watson Jr. - 2m(16 and over), 4 males(under 16), 2 females

1800 - Josiah Cahoon - East Windsor, Hartford, CT census. No other Cahoon seen in Hartford Co., CT in this census.

1800 United States Federal Census for Josiah Cahoon
Connecticut > Hartford > East Windsor

Josiah Cahoon	3			1				1		
Josiah Priford	4	2			1			2		

Josiah Cahoon - 3m(under 10), 1m(26-44), 1f(26-44)

The "Families of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut," by Henry Stiles, Vol. II, p. 157, describes Josiah Cahoon as follows:

Families of Ancient Windsor, Connecticut
Surnames, C-D

COHOON (Cahoon, undoubtedly a corrupt form of the Scotch *Colquhoun*), **Josiah**, who d. 6 Oct., 1806 or '7, æ. 37, and Abigail, had :

1. Samuel, b. 22 July, 1793; d. 10 July, 1826, æ. 32.— <i>S. B.</i>	4. Josiah, b. 19 Dec., 1800.
2. Horace, } twins, b. 2 Sept., 1795.	5. Abigail, b. 2 Oct., 1805; prob. the A. who married
3. Harvey, }	Chauncey Bevin, 16 Apl., 1827.

1810 - No Cahoon seen in the Hartford Co. CT census, including in East Windsor.

1813 - Capt. Nathan Cahoon died. He is listed in Ancient Families of Windsor as residing in K. M. = Ketch Mills (now Windsorville), East Windsor Graveyard.

1820 - Reuben Cahoon and Horace Cahoon are seen in different parts of the East Windsor, Hartford, CT census. Apparently they were cousins. Reuben was a son of Nathan Cahoon and his wife. Horace apparently was a son of Josiah Cahoon and Abigail Loomis. No other Cahoon are seen in this Hartford Co., CT census.

1820 United States Federal Census for Reuben Cahoon												
Connecticut > Hartford > East Windsor												
<i>John Stuart</i>												
<i>Abigail Wolcott</i>												
<i>Reuben Cahoon</i>	2		3	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	

Reuben Cahoon - 2m(under 10), 1m(26-44), 1f(45 and over)

1820 United States Federal Census for Horace Cahoon												
Connecticut > Hartford > East Windsor												
<i>John Richardson</i>												
<i>Reuben Cahoon</i>	2											
<i>Horace Cahoon</i>				2	2	2						

Horace Cahoon - 1m(16-25), 2f(10-15), 1 f(26-44)

1830 - Reuben Cahoon and William Cahoon are seen in different parts of the East Windsor, Hartford, CT census. Reuben was a son of Nathan Cahoon and his wife. The identity of William, a considerably younger man, is not known at present. No other Cahoon are seen in this Hartford Co., CT census.

1830 United States Federal Census for Reuben Cahoon												
Connecticut > Hartford > East Windsor												
<i>Reuben Cahoon</i>												

Reuben Cahoon - 1m(10-14), 1m(50-59), 1f(50-59)

1830 United States Federal Census for William Cahoon												
Connecticut > Hartford > East Windsor												
<i>William Cahoon</i>												

William Cahoon - 1m(20-29), 1f(20-29)

1840 - Reuben Cahoon and John W. Cahoon appear in the East Windsor, Hartford, CT census. Households are listed alphabetically, thus individuals listed together are not necessarily living near each other. The identity of John W. Cahoon is not presently known.

1840 United States Federal Census for Reuben Cahoon												
Connecticut > Hartford > East Windsor												
<i>Cahoon John W</i>	3	1										
<i>Cahoon Reuben</i>									2	1		1

John W. Cahoon - 2m(under 5), 1m(5-9), 1m(30-39), 2f(5-9), 1f(20-29)

Reuben Cahoon - 1m(60-69), 1f(60-69)

1858 - Reuben Cahoon died on 1 Jan 1858 and is buried in Center Cemetery, South Windsor, CT. His surname is spelled Cohoon on his tombstone. His wife Hannah (1785 - 28 Mar 1841) is buried in that same cemetery.

<https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=cohoon&GSfn=reuben&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GSob=n&GRid=16198431&df=all&>

<https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=16198425>

We can wonder, was Martha Cahoon also a member of the above Harwich, Barnstable, MA/East Windsor, Hartford, CT Cahoon family through marriage?

Perhaps more evidence will turn up in the future which will identify Martha Cahoon's husband with certainty.

+++++++