

Children of the Patriarch: Robert⁴ Watson

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This article is part of a larger family history, **The WATSON Family of West Greenwich, Rhode Island**, which can be found via [this link](#).

A branch of the Watson family of Rhode Island settled in West Greenwich and lived there for nearly one hundred years. The patriarch of this branch was Samuel, designated #7 in *The American Family of John Watson of the Narragansett Country, Rhode Island*. Samuel was the grandson of John Watson, and the son of Samuel² and 1st wife Mercy (Helme) Watson. His line of descent as a 3rd-generation Watson is rendered Samuel³ (Samuel², John¹).

Robert⁴ Watson, son of the Patriarch

Robert⁴ WATSON (Samuel³, Samuel², John¹) was born circa 1737 in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. He died in Exeter, Rhode Island, before September 3, 1810. Robert is designated #23 in *The American Family of John Watson of the Narragansett Country, Rhode Island*.

Robert was mentioned in his brother Hazard's 1762 will and named as executor. This is the only record in which Robert's name appears alongside his father's. Named first among his siblings in his brother's will, Robert may also have been the eldest of Samuel³ and Hannah (Hazard) Watson's children. Robert married and became established earlier than his siblings.

Robert Watson's life reads like a list of real estate transactions, mostly because he got into the local records by buying and selling land over the course of his adult life. It appears that he did not serve in any military role during either the French and Indian War or the American Revolution. When Robert died in 1810 in Exeter, Rhode Island, he did so without leaving a last will and testament. The relative lack of other documentary evidence of the life Robert Watson led merely underscores the fact that he must have been a law-abiding citizen who paid his taxes and was a good neighbor.

Robert⁴ Watson, yeoman, in Exeter, RI

Robert is first of record on August 3, 1758, the day he married Rebecca RICHMOND in Exeter. Rebecca was the daughter of Stephen and Mary (Lawton) Richmond.

Robert and Rebecca must have settled first in Hopkinton, bordering Exeter: Robert was "of Hopkinton" on April 3, 1760, the day he paid Elisha Barber of Exeter £400 for 40 acres of land (Exeter Land Evidence, Vol. 9: pgs. 223-224). In this record, Robert was described as "husbandman" – a farmer – and Elisha Barber as "yeoman" – someone who owned the land he farmed.

Robert and Rebecca Watson were on the move again, late in 1761 and early in 1762.

On December 23, 1761, Robert (“yeoman”) and Rebecca Watson of Exeter sold 38 acres of their land to Samuel Baker Jr. of Exeter, “labourer,” for £570 (Exeter LE 9:414). (Samuel Baker Jr. sold the same acreage for the same price to someone else in April 1762, complete with its “dwelling house.” We wonder why this parcel of land changed hands so frequently.)

And then, on January 28, 1762, Robert and Rebecca sold five acres to Spink Hiames of Exeter.

According to these records, Robert and Rebecca Watson owned **40** acres in Exeter and then later sold **43** of them. The obvious gaps in the official record are further illustrated by six other land transactions, dated between 1761 and 1772, which describe Exeter properties bordering Robert Watson’s land. Clearly the Watsons owned more land than the extant records describe. The presence of Robert Watson’s name in these land records allows us to know of his tenure in Exeter.

On September 11, 1772, Robert and Ruth Spink of Exeter sold 45 acres to Robert Watson. This acreage, complete with houses, was bounded by land that Robert already owned (Exeter LE 1:239-240).

On March 2, 1776, Robert and Rebecca sold off six acres to Earl King of Exeter for 45 Spanish milled silver dollars (Exeter LE 1:428-429). And then, on February 19, 1777, Robert bought 15 acres, bounding on his own land, from Daniel and Hannah Bliven of Westerly (Exeter LE 1:482-483).

At least two more Exeter land records, dated 1777 and 1779, mention Robert Watson’s land as bordering someone else’s.

The household of Robert Watson, numbering 7 people, shows up in Exeter in the 1774 Rhode Island census. While Robert also shows up in Exeter in the 1782 census and tax list, that record does not tell us the size of his household.

Children of Robert⁴ and Rebecca Watson

Names of the offspring of Robert Watson and his wife, per the *John Watson* book, were provided by Leland E. Pound (in a “personal letter dated 27 January 1981”) and by a Mrs. Charles Brown. We have found at least one set of online references to Mr. Pound as a descendant of Robert and Rebecca Watson.

Robert and Rebecca (Richmond) Watson had nine children. The list given below is mostly as described in *John Watson*. We do not know the actual birth order of Robert’s and Rebecca’s children:

1. STEPHEN⁵, born December 7, 1760, in Exeter. In *John Watson*, he is designated #55. Stephen Watson married Mercy KENYON on March 2, 1781. Mercy, the daughter of John and Freelove (Reynolds) Kenyon, was born November 18, 1757. Stephen and

Mercy ended up moving from Rhode Island to Greene, Chenango county NY, which is where they both died – Stephen on October 24, 1828 (age 67), and Mercy on September 11, 1847 (age 90).

2. SAMUEL, born May 10, 1778. In *John Watson*, he is designated #56. This is the Samuel Watson who most likely married Nancy PRATT.

3. JOHN, born June 22, 1782 in Exeter. In *John Watson*, he is designated #57. John was the administrator of his father Robert's estate.

4. DORCAS, who married Stephen KING, son of Earl and Content (Richmond) King, in Exeter on February 24, 1789. Content King and Rebecca Watson were sisters – which means that Dorcas Watson married her first cousin.

5. HANNAH – We wonder if this is the same Hannah Watson who married Elias Young of Exeter, RI.

6. ELIZABETH

7. NANNY, who may have been the “Anne Watson, daughter of Robert Watson” mentioned in the 1784 will of Anne Hoxsie of Hopkinton, RI (Hopkinton Town Council and Probate records, Vol. 2, pages 234-237).

8. POLLY – This daughter *may have been* Mary Watson, born *circa* 1782, who first married Benjamin GRIFFIN, likely early in 1798. He died prior to the 1800 census, leaving Mary with their young son, Benjamin Jr., and pregnant with their daughter Dorcas. She married, second, Hezekiah⁶ GORTON (Hezekiah⁵, Samuel⁴, Samuel³, Samuel², Samuel¹ GORTON), with whom she had children. Mary died 21 July 1871, likely in Foster, RI, where she was living in 1870 with her son Benjamin Griffin Jr. She is [buried in Moosup Valley Cemetery](#) in Foster, RI.

9. LUCY

Robert⁴ Watson in West Greenwich, RI

Per *John Watson*, in 1784 Robert Watson “conveyed 45 acres to son Stephen, both of Exeter” (Exeter LE 6:323). In that same year, Robert bought land in West Greenwich from Thomas Rathbun (West Greenwich LE, old book 8, page 409). Perhaps 1784 was the year when Robert and Rebecca moved from Exeter to West Greenwich.

Two years later, in 1786, Robert Watson bought 6 acres of land in West Greenwich from Nathaniel Rathbun of that town (WG LE 1:123). In 1788, Robert sold land in WG to Jeremiah Hoxsie (WG LE 2:202). Then Robert seems to have settled in, neither buying nor selling property until 1805, though he did transfer land to a son in 1802.

Certainly, Robert Watson was “of Exeter” more than he was “of West Greenwich.” It’s likely that Robert resided in Exeter during most of the years he and Rebecca were raising their family.

As his children reached adulthood and began to establish their own households, Robert probably did what was typical back then: He shared his property with his adult sons, through sale and probably through (unrecorded) gift. Depending on how many “dwelling houses” were on the land Robert acquired over time, he may have given over the use of these to his sons Stephen, Samuel, and John.

It was also typical of parents, once they were “empty nesters,” to move into a smaller home on their property so that a son could take over the larger family residence to house his expanding family. This might be an explanation for why Robert spent a large chunk of his adult life in Exeter, moved to West Greenwich for a smaller chunk of time, and then moved back to Exeter in the years preceding his death.

Robert and Rebecca Watson resided in West Greenwich for about twenty years. In the 1790 census, their household consisted of seven people – two males under the age of 16; two males 16 and over; and three females.

By 1800, this household had dwindled to a total of four people – one male between the ages of 16 and 25; one male aged 45 and over (Robert); one female between the ages of 10 and 15; and one female aged 45 and over (Rebecca).

On April 11, 1802, Robert gave his own son Samuel⁵ some West Greenwich acreage “for love and affection” (WG LE 3:32). This gift likely corresponded to the time when son Samuel got married. Robert’s son Stephen appears to have moved from Exeter to West Greenwich in that same year.

In the autumn of 1805, Robert Watson resumed buying and selling property – but mostly selling.

On October 24, 1805, Robert sold land to Samuel⁴ Watson Jr., most certainly his younger brother (WG LE 3:264). (By this time, their father, the patriarch – known in his younger years as Samuel Jr. – had been living in Pownal, Vermont for some time. The nominal suffix “Junior” passed to his son Samuel in West Greenwich when the patriarch moved away after 1791.)

Less than a month later, on November 19, 1805, Robert sold land to William Gallup (WG LE 11:230). This land transaction, paired with another earlier the same year, gives us one of our best ideas as to where in West Greenwich Robert lived.

On February 6, 1806, Robert Watson sold land to Israel Gates (WG LE 3:305). And on September 13, 1806, Robert and his own son Samuel⁵ deeded property to Amasa Pratt, who we

understand to be the father of Samuel⁵'s wife Nancy Pratt (WG LE 3:371). The next year, Amasa Pratt sold some land back to Robert (WG LE 3:470).

Since Robert Watson shows up in Exeter in the 1810 census, we may guess that this series of land sales was a prelude to his moving out of West Greenwich. In that census, Robert's household still numbered four people, but its younger members were more likely grandchildren: One male under the age of 10; one male aged 45 and over (Robert); one female under the age of 10; and one female aged 45 and over (Rebecca).

Where in West Greenwich was Robert Watson Located?

We can't say with absolute certainty where in West Greenwich Robert Watson owned land and lived. But we have a good idea. Based on several clues – a very old house; a tiny graveyard named on a map; and a bit of local history – we suspect that Robert Watson and his family lived along present-day Escoheag Hill Road in West Greenwich, very near the Exeter town line.

An Old House

On March 28, 1805 – nearly seven months before Robert Watson sold some of his land in West Greenwich to William Gallup – William had acquired 100 acres with a dwelling house in West Greenwich from John Rathbun Jr. of Exeter (who was “now residing in West Greenwich”). It was bounded east by the highway, *south on the land of Stephen Watson, westerly on the land of Robert Watson, northerly on the land of John Hazard*” (WG LE 3:229).

The dwelling house involved in this transaction was the subject of an item we found at West Greenwich's Louittit Library, in the local historical society's records. It identified the then-current owners of the William A. Gallup House (Robert & Helen Maine); asserted that it was built in 1808; and supplied its street address along the southern stretch of Escoheag Hill Road (West Greenwich Preservation binder #4).

Knowing where the Gallup House was located would tell us where Robert Watson's land and that of his son Stephen was more or less situated. So we looked it up on Google Maps street view. And then we cross-referenced it with an old photo of the “S. Congdon House” shown in *Historic and Architectural Resources of West Greenwich, Rhode Island: A Preliminary Report*, published by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, October 1978

Knowing where the Gallup House was located would tell us where Robert Watson's land and that of his son Stephen was more or less situated. So we looked it up on Google Maps street view. And then we cross-referenced it with an old photo of the “S. Congdon House” shown in *Historic and Architectural Resources of West Greenwich, Rhode Island: A Preliminary Report*, published by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, October 1978 (http://www.preservation.ri.gov/pdfs_zips_downloads/survey_pdfs/west_greenwich.pdf).

It's a match. And the description of the "S. Congdon House" gives its date of construction as circa 1760.



S. Congdon House (c. 1760): A mid-18th-century, 2½-story, 5-bay, gable-roofed house with a large center chimney and a pronounced second-story overhang. The central doorway is plain with a transom. A row of formal granite posts line the road--the remains of what must have been a handsome fence. (Map #6)

The alternate labelling of this house – S. Congdon – comes from the name of a later owner, Stephen Congdon, who eventually sold it to Nathan Palmer in 1870.

Nathan [Palmer] ... acquired a total of 100 acres of land (including the land deeded to the church) with a "dwelling house," barn and other buildings in 1870. He purchased it for \$2000 from Stephen Congdon. The witnesses at that purchase were George H. Olney, David Congdon and George F. Barber. The property included the "William A. Gallup House" which was **built in 1808** by William Gallup. (Note: Our source for this information, <https://www.wglandtrust.org/palmermeetinghouse.htm>, no longer exists. The West Greenwich Land Trust's current [page for this property](#), accessed on 14 March 2023, offers photos but none of the history we have quoted here.)

There's that 1808 date again, and the initial "A" stuck in the middle of William Gallup's name. William's son William Alban Gallup (who went by Alban W.) was born in 1803, so we doubt *he* built this house. The earlier construction date of circa-1760 is probably closer to the truth, suggesting that an earlier owner, perhaps John Rathbone Jr., built what became known as the William Gallup House.

The historic William Gallup House sits on land that was bounded, in 1805, by land owned by Robert Watson and his son Stephen. And this house is three-tenths of a mile north of the "Old Watson Cem." on Escoheag Hill Road.

An Old Cemetery

Shown below is an excerpt from a West Greenwich map drawn in 1966 by George Everett Matteson (1902 – 1977). We added a red arrow of our own, and enhanced Mr. Matteson's hand-drawn arrow with a red overlay to make it easier to follow.



For what it's worth, this is the only mention of the Watson name on the entire map.

The Old Watson Cemetery was located, per George Matteson, on the property of what is now Stepping Stone Stables in West Greenwich. The Find A Grave volunteer who documented this cemetery noted that it “was destroyed between 1992 and 2007. Today it would be located in a grassy spot behind where a ‘no parking’ sign is posted”

(<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2627231/watson-lot>).

Before it was destroyed, the Old Watson Cemetery / Watson Lot (designated WG040 by the Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries Transcription Project) was documented as having five burials, with two inscriptions. One of the inscriptions was simply the letter A carved into a stone. The other marked the burial of Sarah Richmond, born circa 1734, died March 6, 1761.

This Sarah Richmond *may have been* Sarah Hazard, wife of John Richmond (Stephen and Mary [Lawton] Richmond's son). Most online sources give Sarah's date of death as November 1760, not March 1761. Sarah (Hazard) Richmond was sister-in-law to Rebecca Richmond (Stephen and Mary's daughter) who married Robert Watson. Sarah also happened to be Robert Watson's second cousin on his mother's side.

That this inscription didn't result in the cemetery being called the “Sarah Richmond lot” instead of the Watson lot speaks to the likelihood that, when the lot was documented, somebody knew something about which family had owned this land and buried their dead on the property.

We don't think that Robert Watson was buried in the Old Watson Cemetery in West Greenwich. Likely he was laid to rest in the town of Exeter, where he lived the last years of his life and where he died in 1810.

A Bit of Local History

The Rhode Island Historical Society, Manuscripts Division, has a web page detailing its Matteson Family Papers holdings (<http://www.rihs.org/mssinv/Mss1021.HTM>). That page includes this description:

Asahel Matteson (1811 – 1890), son of Reuben and Esther (Burlison) Matteson, was born in West Greenwich, R.I. at the family farm now known as Stepping Stone Ranch.

We find this of interest, because ... on September 24, 1814, Robert Watson's son Stephen sold land in West Greenwich to Reuben Matteson, whose surname got recorded as "Maddison" (WG LE 4:483).

If Asahel Matteson was born three years before his father Reuben bought that property from Stephen Watson, were they renting before the sale? We can't answer that question. But the reference to Stepping Stone Ranch in the context of our broader question about the Watson land holdings is illuminating.

This series of clues leads us to believe that Robert Watson and his family lived on Escoheag Hill in West Greenwich, along the "highway" now named for that hill, where present-day Stepping Stone Ranch and Oak Embers Campground are located across the road from each other.

Robert⁴ Watson's Death and Estate

Robert died, intestate, in Exeter, RI, prior to September 3, 1810, the date on which his son John was named administrator of his father's estate. Considering that Robert Watson's household appears in Exeter in the 1810 US federal census – which was conducted on August 6th that year – the timeframe in which Robert likely passed away is narrowed essentially to August 1810.

We do not know where Robert Watson was buried. We'd expect his final resting place to be in a small graveyard on family-held land in Exeter, perhaps marked with an uninscribed fieldstone.

Documents relating to Robert Watson's estate are found in Exeter, RI, Town Council & Probate records, Vol. 8 – 1810-1816. We obtained copies of these records (shown below).

The first four pages are those from September 3, 1810, beginning with page 8: Robert Watson died intestate; son John Watson appointed administrator; independently appointed appraisers list inventory of Robert Watson's personal estate and value thereof.

The final two pages are from October 1, 1810, pages 12-13: Widow Rebecca Watson gave her own inventory of her late husband's personal property. Please note that these two pages are in proper order; Rebecca's inventory of items are listed before the commentary.

Seal

State of Rhode Island & Providence Plantations By the Court
of Probate of the Town of Exeter in the County of Washington
in the State of Rhode Island Whoby Law are imposed to
Take the probates of Wills and to Grant Letters of Administratⁿ
on Estates intestate in said town

To John Watson of Exeter in the County of Washington Yeoman & Greeting
Whereas Robert Watson late of Exeter in the County of Washington & State of
Rhode Island deceased yeoman departed this life intestate having while he lived and
at his death Divers good Chattels: and which by Law have & do devolve
the Care of said Court of Probate to Whom appertain the Power of Commit
ing Administration and full Disposition of all and Singular thereof
hearing Examining & allowing the accounts of such Administrator ^{Washing} therefore
to your Prudence Care and fidelity the said Court of Probate do by these pre
sents Commit unto the said John Watson full power to ask for gather Re
cover & Receive all and whatsoever good Chattels Wares merchandize Rights
Credits effects & things the Whole Personal Estate whatsoever which this
Robert Watson while he lived and at the time of his death did appertain
& Belong and the same to administer and faithfully to dispose of according
to Law to pay all Debts in which the said Deceased stood bound so far
as his goods & Chattels will Extend according to the Value thereof to
make a True and perfect Inventory of all & Singular of this Goods
Chattels Wares merchandize Rights Credits and personal Estate
to exhibit the same to the Court of Probate on the third day of
December Next & to Render a Just & true account of your Administra
tion of said Estate to the Court of Probate within Twelve months from
the date of these presents in testimony whereof the said Court have
caused their office Seal to be hereunto affixed at Exeter this 3 day
of September 1810 By order and in Behalf of said Court

Stephen Reynolds Clerk

Recorded September 3 1810

Stephen Reynolds Clerk

7

Exeter September the 10 day A D 1010 the Subscribers
 Being appointed by the Honourable Court of Probate
 to take an Inventory of the personal Estate of Robert
 Watson late of Exeter Deceased: in Obediance to our appoin-
 tment we met together & appraised the following articles

To the Warring apparel	\$ 13 35
To 1 Bedsted Bed & furniture belonging thereto	10
To 1 Bed Quilt two Sheets & one Blanket	6 50
To 1 Bed Bedsted and furniture belonging to it	12
To 1 Desk	4
To one great Bible and one other old Book	2 50
To one Table	1
To one Cupbord and Groceries in it	2 60
To 1 Silver Spoon	1
To eight Pinter Plates	2 30
To Pinter	5 6
To three Iron Spoons and tin Ware	76
To one Looking Glass and few Chairs	1 50
To one Warming pan	2
to one Rundlet	40
to one Cedar Rundlet	26
To one pair of Stilliards & one Chopping knife	1 20
to one hand Saw one Claw hammer & Whetstone	1 60
to one pair of Hand irons	3 30
To one Shovel and longes	1
To pots and Skittles and frying pan	2 53
To one meal Chest & Bread trough & one Mortar	2
To two Wash tubs & Churn	1 5
To one ax	75
To one Wheeling one Lunning Wheat and Peal	3 50
To two water pails one milk pail Ladle & Dippers	91
to Knives and forks	75
	91 90

To three trays, knife, Box and two Cheese fats	1	25
To one Cheese Basket and one meal Bag	1	75
To one pair of old Toe cards & one Candle Stand	1	02
To one old Chest	1	25
To one Case and eight Bottles in it	1	50
To Two Jerry headed Carnes	1	25
To thirty Scains Linning yarn	3	42
To one flat	1	20
To six pounds of Cotton	1	40
To twelve Scains Linnen yarn	1	40
To one Side Saddle and Bridle	0	—
To 4 Slays, six & thirty, two & thirty one, thirty & eight & twenty	3	33
To one Loom washing bars, quail Wheat and sweetened Lark	6	—
To Twelve pounds of Wool	4	—
To five yards thick Mixed Coloured Cloath	4	17
To one meet back and meet in it	2	—
To one Sape tub and Sape in it	1	50
To one wooden Platter, Hole one & six one Candlestick	1	33
To 1 Chamber pot	1	25
To 1 seven year old Red & White fatted Cow	15	0
To one yearling Red Heifer	6	0
To one Stack of hay with Stalkes on it	12	50
To ten Sheep and Sheep Bill	12	16
To one ten year old Red Cow	14	50
To one pair of four old oxen	25	—
To one old Black mare	11	—
To three pounds of halchid flax	1	—
To one Saddle & Bridle & Saddle Bags	5	—
To one Bed Stee	0	75
To four hundred Seventy feet of spin cords	4	75
To Two old hogheads & one old Barrel	1	12
To one old Cart	10	0
To one flax Brake	10	50
To seven Harrow teeth	2	50
To one Clowr Stack of hay	7	50
To one Stack of hay	8	90
To one Ginstone & brank	1	50
To Two half hogheads & Cyder tubs	—	75
	100	45

To one goose and ten turkeys	\$	4	25
To 1 Stock of Bardski seed and hatched half Bushel			67
To 1 Iron Bar and some Maple Bards as best turned		4	
To 1 account against Elliot Lark		26	29
To one Note against Amasa Pratt Payable March 25 1811		120	00
To one Note against Amasa Pratt payable March 25 1811		120	00
To one Note against Amasa Collins		32	60
To one Note against Stephen Watson principal & Interest		45	43
To 1 Note against Stephen Watson principal & Interest		0	33
To Pocket Book		5	
To 1 Swine hog		2	00
To Ditto		1	50
To three Small Pegs			60
To 1 yoke & Irons old pair of mil Irons			
To three baskets & augur old Iron that win them		3	75
& Riddle and Wedges			
To one pair of old traces & one pair of plow Irons		1	92
To one horse collar			20
To one shoe hammer punches 2 pair & pins & 6 awls		1	
To one Drawing Knife			10
To two pounds & four teen ounces of Soleather			72
To 2 old Riddles & one pair of traces		1	12
With subscribers do hereby certify that the above		374	12
& that it is a true Inventory according to the best of our judgment		100	45
		91	90
		646	55

William Mirreps }
 Nathan Rathburn } appraisers
 Robert Grandall

William Mirreps Nathan Rathburn and Robert Grandall the within and Before mentioned Inventors was sworn to put a just value on each article contained in the within Inventory according to the Best of their Judgments also John Watson Administrator to the Estate of Robert Watson Late of Exeter Deceased exhibited said Inventory in Town Court of Probate of Exeter October 11 1811 & Made solemn oath that he had shown forth to the aforesaid Inventors all the personal Estate that he knew of that did belong to the Deceased and that he would add what & so much more there unto as shall come to his hands possession or Knowledge of here this John Watson or into the hands and possession of any other person or persons for him for which Reason & Inventory is allowed to be lawfully proved and approved of by J. Court Mirreps Stephen Reynolds P. C. &c
 Recorded October 11 1811

	12		
To the Warming apparel		\$	13 35
To one Bedsted Bed and furniture			10 —
To one Bed Lust Two sheets and one Blanket			6 50
To one one Bed Bedsted and furniture			12 —
To one Desk one great Bible one other old Book			6 50
To 1 Table butter & Crochery indit & one Silver Spoon			4 60
To all the Pates			7 36
To three Iron Spoons and tin Ware			76
to one Lackinglofs and five Chairs			1 50
To one Warming pan			2 50
To one Rundlet			— 40
To one pair of Stickers one Chopping Knife			1 20
To one pair hand prons and one Shovel & long			4 38
To Pots and Kettles and frying pan			2 53
To one Meal Chest and Bread trough one mortar			2 —
To two Wash tubs and one Churn one ax			3 50
To Wooling wheel Linnong Wheel and great			91
To Two Water pails one milk pail and Dipper			75
to Knives and forks			—
To three Trays one Knife Box and two ches fats			1 75
To one Cheese Basket & one meal Bag			—
To one pair of old boards and candle Stand			1 2
To 1 old Chest one Case & eight Bottles in it			1 75
To thirty searn linnong yarn & flat six pound Cotton			4 62
To side Saddle & Bridle and Twelve searn linnong yarn			9 40
To one four Slays ^{Loops} & all the lackung of 3 Looms			9 33
To Twelve pounds of wool five yards thick Coath			8 17
To one neat Cask and meat in it soap Cask & Soap			3 50
to one Wooden Platter one Bowl seven & candle stick			— 38
to one Chamber pot			— 25
to one seven years old Red White faced Cow			15 —
To one yearling heffer			6 —
To one stack of hay with Corn stalks on it			12 50
to five Sheep and Sheep Bull			6 30
to three pounds of halcked flax			1 —
to one small & Two small Pigs			3 80
To Two Jerry headed Stators & one Pocket Book			— 50
To 2 1/4 Sheath			— 72

(13v)

The within Before Written articles was exhibited in town court
of Probate of Exeter October 1 1810 by Rebecca Watson widow to
Robert Watson Late of Exeter Decided saying that the same
might be set of to her by said Court which was Received
Allowed proved and approved of by said Court Writings
Recorded October 1 1810
Stephen Reynolds Clerk

These pages are mostly readable. Where the handwriting is legible, the terminology and the items ranging from livestock to “linning” (linen) yarn to “Puter” (pewter) to “one great Bible and one other old Book.” Robert Watson’s personal estate was given a total value of \$646.55, but more than half of that was money owed to him by four different people (including his son Stephen; and Amasa Pratt – his son Samuel’s father-in-law).

Though the *John Watson* book doesn’t mention Robert Watson’s 1810 probate documents, it details several land transactions in the year after Robert died (page 28-29):

“Robert died prior to 16 March 1811 when his widow Rebecca was given part of his property (7:72) and 14 October, when John Watson, probably his son, as administrator of his estate, sold land to pay debts. Also in 1811 John Watson, described as Executor, conveyed 75 acres to Stephen (7:73); and on 20 March 1811 Stephen King, son-in-law of Robert, ‘late of Exeter, deceased . . . (received) all dower rights’ from John of Exeter. (7:41)”

Each of the aforementioned transactions appears to be pertinent to the town of Exeter.

Robert⁴ Watson’s Widow and Children

Widow Rebecca

As *John Watson* asserts, Robert’s widow Rebecca left Rhode Island (page 29):

“It is believed that Rebecca accompanied her son, Stephen, and his family, when they removed to Greene, Chenango county, New York, in 1815. She died 12 March 1836, interred in the family grave-yard on the Carter farm at the north of the village. (Mildred Folsom, Greene Historian)”

We believe that the date given for Rebecca Watson’s death (March 12, 1836) is incorrect. Please see the section entitled [“Why People Think Robert⁴ Watson Died in New York.”](#)

Son Stephen⁵

John Watson's section on Stephen Watson (page 47) says, "Stephen's removal to Greene, Chenango county, New York is indicated by the sale to him by *John Watson of that town* [emphasis added] on 16 February 1816. (Book V:106) He and his family settled there on the East River Road, and appear in the 1820 census for Greene."

Speaking of Stephen and his family, the 1810 census showed a total of ten people in his West Greenwich household (we assume them to be five sons and three daughters, plus Stephen and Mercy). By 1820, Stephen's household, now in Greene, NY, was down to four people. In [paragraphs to follow](#), we discuss the four of Stephen's children who are named in *John Watson*.

Stephen was 67 years old when he died on October 24, 1828, in Greene, NY. He was buried in what became known as the Watson cemetery, which likely was on their own land. *John Watson* refers to this "family burial lot" as "situated on the Carter farm at the north of the village." A transcription of the burials in this lot, done in 2006, refers to the location as the Fred Seymour Farm. (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/86927046/stephen-watson>) Stephen's widow Mercy was 89 years old when she died in Greene in 1847. She was buried with her husband in the Watson cemetery (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/39467221/mercy-watson>).

The coordinates for the Watson Cemetery in Greene, NY, are 42°20'08.7"N 75°45'27.6"W.

At least four of Stephen's and Mercy (Kenyon) Watson's children – sons **John** and **Gardner**, and daughters **Freelove** and **Rebecca** – left Rhode Island with their spouses and families to live in Chenango county, NY.

John Watson says that Stephen's son John bought 320 acres in Greene, Chenango county, NY, around June 1, 1815.

But – the John Watson who sold land in Greene, New York, to Stephen in February 1816 could have been Stephen's much younger *brother* John⁵ – born June 22, 1782 (designated #57 in *John Watson*). Or it could have been Stephen's *son* John⁶ – born November 24, 1782 (designated #101 in *John Watson*). Two men named John Watson, uncle and nephew, born in the same year, are easily confused.

John Watson, page 69, seems to think the grantor in this land sale was Stephen's brother: "He [John⁶], brother Gardner, and sisters, Freelove and Rebecca, inherited the land which Stephen had acquired *from brother John* [emphasis added] on 16 February 1816 (Book V:106)"

And yet – *John Watson*, page 48, gives very short shrift to Stephen's brother John (#57), as though he never left Exeter. We suspect that *John Watson* has confused two men of the same name, leaving us to wonder which one actually sold the land to Stephen in 1816. And whether both – or only one of them – moved to New York.

John⁶ Watson (1782 – aft 1860) appears to have lived in Greene until sometime after the death of his first wife, Isabel Dyer (1784 – 1838). Isabel (Dyer) Watson is said to be buried in the Watson cemetery on the Carter Farm in Greene. John married again, to a woman named Hannah, and apparently moved to Springfield, Bradford county, Pennsylvania, where two of his sons were living. It is presumed that John died and was buried in Pennsylvania.

One more thing about John⁶ Watson: He named *two* of his sons John. One was John Kenyon⁷ Watson (born 1804); the other was John Mumford⁷ Watson (born 1809). We'd guess these guys went by their middle names.

Gardner⁶ Watson (1785 – 1839) (spelled “Gardiner” in *John Watson*), whose first wife was Deborah Wilcox, seems to have moved to Greene right around the same time as his siblings. *John Watson* says they “settled in the East River Farm in Greene in 1815.” Another source, the *Rhode Island Genealogical Register*, mentions Gardner’s son Elam as having come to Greene in 1817:

Elam, son of Gardner Watson was b in Greenwich, R.I. 3 Jan 1809;
in 1817 the family came to Greene, Chenango Co, NY;
in 1829 Elam came to Lindley [NY].

(RIGR, ed. Alden G. Beaman, Vol. 4, number 1 (July 1981): They Left RI, part 16;
from 1850 census of Steuben county, NY. Abstracted from Historical Gazetteer,
Steuben Co. N.Y. compiled & edited by Millard F. Roberts; page 457)

John Watson says that Gardner had three children with each of his two wives.

We first found the maiden name for Deborah, Gardner’s first wife, from her listing at Find A Grave (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/83991425/deborah-watson>). Deborah Wilcox was the sister of Alva Wilcox; Alva married Gardner Watson’s sister Rebecca (see “[Resources](#)” at the end of this article).

Deborah died of smallpox (per *John Watson*) in 1830 and was buried in the Watson family cemetery in Greene, on the “Carter Farm.” Later on, she was reinterred in Sylvan Lawn Cemetery in Greene, where Gardner was buried when he died in 1839 (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/83991228/gardner-watson>).

Gardner married, second, Louisa Stephens, who outlived Gardner. She died at age 85 and was buried in Nineveh Presbyterian Cemetery in Nineveh, Broome County, New York, where she had been living with her son Robert B. Watson (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/106874100/louisa-watson>).

Freelove⁶ Watson (1790 – 1887) married Job Bly, Jr. (not *John* Bly, as written on page 47 of *John Watson*), with whom she had nine children. Freelove and her

husband are buried in Sylvan Lawn Cemetery in Greene. Check out Freelove's listing at Find A Grave – her children are named, and there's a nice picture of her posted there: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/31024771/freelove-bly>.

Rebecca⁶ Watson (1800 – 1873) married Alva Willcox. We have not come across definitive evidence of any children they may have had, though census records suggest that they had offspring. Rebecca's husband's name appears variously as Alva/Alvah/Wilcox/Willcox.

The household of Alva Willcox appears in the 1820, 1830, and 1840 censuses in Norwich, Chenango county, NY. The 1850 census finds Alvah (age 55) and Rebecca (age 50) living in Bango, Elkhart county, Indiana, next door to Ransom Watson (John and Isabel Watson's son). Alvah Willcox died around 1853, per the family trees of other researchers which give no supporting evidence for that date. We have not found a listing at Find A Grave for Alvah.

Rebecca (Watson) Willcox is found living in Greene, NY, following Alvah's death. She appears there in the 1860 census, living with the family of Joseph & Ruth Bly. In the 1865 NY state census, Rebecca is listed as living with the family of Varnum Watson (son of Gardner & Deborah [Willcox] Watson). In 1870 Rebecca resided with the family of Olive Beardsley, next door to the household of James L. Bly and his mother Freelove (Watson) Bly.

Rebecca (Watson) Willcox died on September 1, 1873, probably in Greene. She was buried in Sylvan Lawn Cemetery in Greene. Her gravestone describes her as the wife of Alva Willcox (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/96852952/rebecca-wilcox>).

Son Samuel⁵

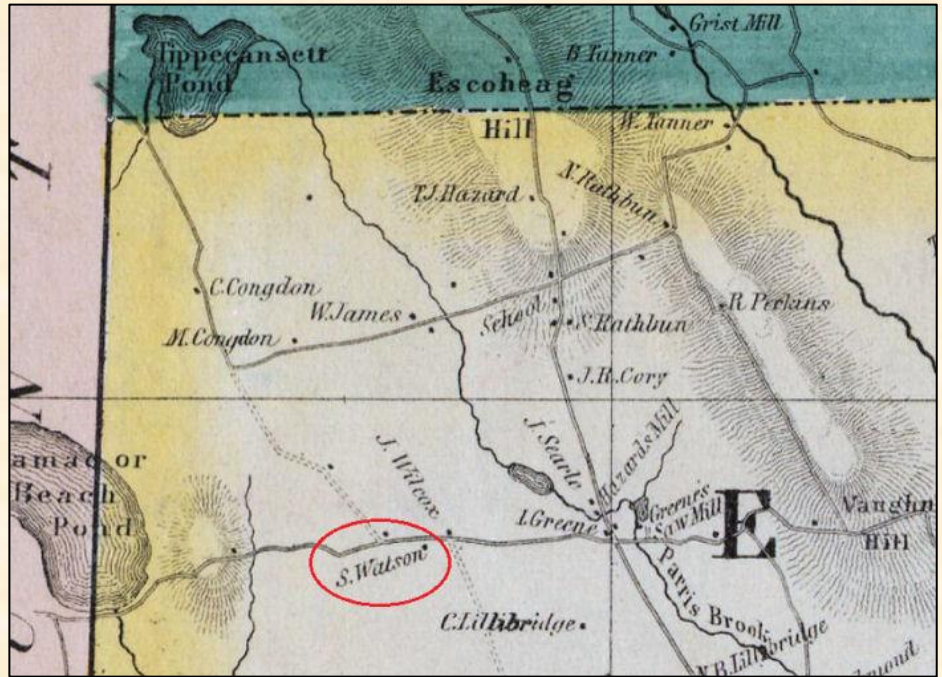
Robert and Rebecca (Richmond) Watson's middle son, Samuel, stayed in Rhode Island. For this we are grateful, because it allowed us to trace him more effectively – and to make our case for his having married Nancy Pratt, the daughter of Amasa and Freelove (Tefft) Pratt.

In the 1800 census for West Greenwich, the numbers for the Samuel Watson household listed immediately after Robert Watson's describe that of a young couple with a child – one male under the age of ten, one male aged 16 to under 26, and one female aged 16 to under 26. In 1800, Robert's son Samuel would have celebrated his 22nd birthday. Nancy (Pratt) Watson's age also agrees with this census data.

As noted earlier, on April 11, 1802, Robert gave his son Samuel some West Greenwich acreage “for love and affection.” According to *John Watson*, Robert conveyed land in Exeter to Samuel on September 13, 1806 (EX LE 6:323). Samuel was counted in the 1810 census in Exeter. By August 5, 1812, he had attained freeman status in Exeter.

On December 13, 1815, Samuel's brother Stephen deeded 25 acres to him along Ten Rod Road in Exeter (EX LE 7:444).

On an 1855 Walling map of Rhode Island, we see "S. Watson" written with a dot marking a location, which we have circled in red. It's on the south side of Ten Rod Road in Exeter, not far from the Connecticut border to the west.



We believe this map shows us where Samuel Watson, son of Robert and Rebecca, resided in Exeter.

If Samuel Watson had died in 1820, as *John Watson* erroneously asserts, we'd have some doubts. But Samuel appears in the Exeter census consistently between 1810 and 1850.

In the 1850 census, Samuel is 73 years old; his wife Nancy is 71. Theirs was the 73rd dwelling place listed. A couple of pages later, at dwelling #86, we find the family of Caleb and Catherine Lewis. Because we know from other family history that Caleb Lewis's daughter Mary Ellen (5 years old in 1850) was born in "Beach Pond, Rhode Island" – clearly shown on the 1855 map above, overlapping into Connecticut – we can confirm with more confidence that Samuel and Nancy Watson lived in that part of Exeter.

38	73	70	Samuel Watson	73 m	Farming
39			Nancy	71 f	

The last time we find Samuel and Nancy (Pratt) Watson is in the 1850 census. Their final resting places are unknown.

John Watson claims that Samuel and Nancy (Pratt) Watson had six children. There might have been one more, given that Samuel and Nancy appear to have been married with one child at the time of the 1800 census. Or, more likely, the birth dates reported for their children are a bit off.

Yes, we've seen the marriage date for Samuel Watson and Nancy Pratt as stated in Ancestry.com's *U.S. and International Marriage Records, 1560-1900*. But we doubt that Samuel and Nancy wed in 1801 as this online record says.

Consider how Ancestry.com describes the 'original data' for *U.S. and International Marriage Records, 1560-1900*.: "This unique collection of records was extracted from a variety of sources

including family group sheets and electronic databases. Originally, the information was derived from an array of materials including pedigree charts, family history articles, querie” [sic].

In other words, there’s no genuine record to view, and we don’t even know where this marriage took place, other than the state of Rhode Island. Early on we learned to have a healthy skepticism of “unsourced resources.” We are not convinced by this particular database item.

Samuel likely wed Nancy in 1798 or 1799 in West Greenwich.

Nancy became a resident of West Greenwich when her family moved there from Foster, RI, sometime between 1790 and 1800. Given that the Amasa Pratt Lot – the family burial ground where Nancy’s parents are interred – is very close to the area where Robert Watson likely lived, these two families probably were near neighbors. (For more information on the Amasa Pratt Lot, see “[Resources](#)” at the end of this article.)

Per *John Watson*, the children of Samuel and Nancy (Pratt) Watson are as follows:

Stephen⁶ Watson was born circa 1801-2 “in either RI, PA, or Ohio.” Stephen’s data in *John Watson* apparently was mined from census records by contributors to the *John Watson* book. We submit that Stephen was born in Rhode Island, most likely in West Greenwich. And, based on what else we’ve found, we’d guess that he was born circa 1800, given when he married.

Stephen was married twice; he had around 15 children by these two wives.

He first married Sabra Vaughn of Sterling, Connecticut, on January 7, 1821. At that time, Stephen was “of Exeter.” Stephen headed west; in 1830 he was living in Portage county, Ohio. Apparently Sabra died while they were living in Portage. Stephen married Elizabeth Clark as his second wife on August 19, 1832, in Trumbull, Ohio. By 1850 Stephen and his family were living in Brookfield, La Salle county, Illinois. This is likely where Stephen died prior to 1860.

Amasa⁶ Watson was born “between 1802-04,” per *John Watson*. Amasa appears in the 1830 census for Exeter, his name written on the line above his father’s. That census record shows what is likely a young couple, each between the ages of 20-29. We could not find any further record of Amasa Watson, though some researchers (without citing a single source) place his death in Park county, Indiana, in 1839.

Male, born between 1804-1810.

Hannah⁶ Watson, born in 1811, married Joseph Stanton Bitgood (1800 – 1873), with whom she had at least eight children. In 1850 this family was enumerated in Hopkinton, RI; in 1860 they were living in Coventry, RI. Hannah died at age 52 in 1863, possibly in Connecticut. She and Joseph are buried in Westfield Cemetery in

Danielson, Connecticut, with three of their children (plus another named Lucius Bitgood who may have been a grandchild). Hannah's Find A Grave listing is at <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/77544345/hannah-w-bitgood>.

Rowena⁶ Watson, born circa 1817, apparently had the middle name "Olive." She married Smith Tourgee Perkins. Family trees created by other researchers give their date of marriage as 1835. Given that one of her nine children – Amasa Pratt Tourgee Perkins – has a birth year of 1831 carved on his tombstone, either Rowena was a *very* young bride or, more likely, she was born earlier than 1817 (and that marriage occurred earlier, too). Rowena died on February 25, 1869, in Johnson Station, Tarrant county, Texas, per what is written at her Find A Grave listing (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/129798729>). She is buried at Johnson Station Cemetery in Arlington, Tarrant county, TX.

Male, born between 1825-30.

The children and wife of Samuel⁵ Watson are listed on page 30 of *The American Family of John Watson of the Narragansett Country, Rhode Island*. **Please note** that they have been **assigned erroneously** to Samuel⁴ Watson #26, the paternal uncle of Samuel⁵. We have addressed this issue in our article "Regarding Samuel #26 Watson," available at this [link](#).

We add here the name of a possibly unidentified child of Samuel and Nancy (Pratt) Watson:

Robert⁶ Watson, born circa 1801, was "of Exeter" when he married Martha Lewis of Voluntown, Connecticut, on November 28, 1822.

Robert and Martha removed to New York, where they were enumerated in Smyrna, Chenango county, in 1830. Their household included a boy between the ages of 5 and 9 – who probably was son Warren (born 1824). By 1850 Robert and Martha were living in Taylor, Cortland county, NY. Robert's birth place was listed as Rhode Island, Martha's as Connecticut. Their 14-year-old son Lewis lived with them.

The 1855 NY state census shows their now 18-year-old son listed as Benjamin L., giving us Lewis's first name. Two grandchildren – Randolph, age 7; and Ellen A., age 1 – lived with Robert and Martha.

Robert died March 13, 1860, and was buried in Cincinnatus Cemetery in Cincinnatus, Cortland co., NY (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/30783741/robert-watson>). His gravestone inscription says he was 59 years, 6 months, and 4 days old when he died. His wife Martha (Lewis) Watson passed away on October 2, 1878. She, too, was buried in Cincinnatus Cemetery (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/30783913/martha-watson>).

Do we know for a fact that this Robert⁶ Watson was the son of Samuel⁵ and Nancy Watson? We do not. But it remains a good possibility, given that Samuel probably honored his father by naming one of his sons Robert. In 1810 Samuel's household included three males under the age of 10. The line-up for Samuel's family as given in *John Watson* includes sons Stephen, Amasa, and an unnamed male, all presumably born since 1800. It's not a stretch to put Robert Watson, husband of Martha Lewis, into that timeframe in this family.

The record of Robert Watson's marriage to Martha Lewis was *mis-transcribed* from the records in Voluntown, Connecticut. In the Barbour Collection of Connecticut Vital Records, his name is given as "Richard." In the original record, his name is clearly written as **Robert. We witnessed this with our own eyes at the Voluntown Town Hall on October 27, 2015.**

Connecticut, Town Marriage Records, pre-1870 (Barbour Collection)	
Voluntown Vital Records 1708-1850	
<p>Per the original record in the Voluntown Town Hall, this name is ROBERT WATSON, *not* Richard</p>	<p>WATSON, Jeffrey, d. Jan. 6, 1864, ae 77; b. in R. Island</p>
	<p>Richard, of Exeter, R.I., m. Martha LEWIS, of Voluntown, Nov. 28, 1822, by Nathaniel Sheffield, Elder</p>
	<p>Sally, m. William HAWKINS, May 30, 1837, by Kinne Gallup, J.P.</p>
	<p>Sarah E., m. Joseph CORY, b. of Voluntown, Dec. 8, 1849, by Amos Witter, J.P.</p>
	<p>3 73</p>
	<p>2 51</p>
	<p>2 83</p>
	<p>2 135</p>

Robert⁴ Watson's Children, continued

Son John⁵

We can't tell you what happened to Robert and Rebecca Watson's son John⁵. He was enumerated in the 1810 census in Exeter but not in 1820. The *John Watson* book lists no wife or children for him, and offers nothing beyond mentioning some land in Exeter deeded to him by his brother Stephen in 1806 and 1807. Though *supposedly* John sold land in Greene, NY, to his much-older brother Stephen in 1816. Poor John fell victim to the problem of a way-too-common first name.

Daughter Dorcas⁵

Robert and Rebecca Watson's daughter Dorcas⁵, who married her first cousin Stephen King, left Rhode Island soon after her marriage. According to people tracing this family line, Stephen and Dorcas moved to Petersburg, Rensselaer county, New York, where they appear in the 1790 census. These same family researchers name at least two children of Stephen and Dorcas (Watson) King – sons Earl King (1790 – 1856) and Stephen King Jr. (1806 – 1887). In later years, this family may have removed to Erie county, Pennsylvania.

Daughters Hannah⁵, Elizabeth⁵, Nanny⁵, Polly⁵, and Lucy⁵

The stories of these Watson daughters are, unfortunately, lost to time. If we're right that "Polly" was the Mary Watson who wed (1st) Benjamin Griffin and (2nd) Hezekiah Gorton, her life is traceable, especially as she apparently outlived her second husband by perhaps 30 years.

About Watson Cemetery in Greene, NY

Watson Cemetery in Greene, NY, reflects its occupants' Rhode Island roots: As family members passed away, they were buried in a lot set aside on family farm land. As that land changed hands, such graveyards might remain untouched but, by the same token, deteriorate over time for lack of maintenance. Watson Cemetery is such a place.

Its location has been described as on the "Carter farm" (*John Watson*) as well as "on Fred Seymour farm" (USGenWeb page for "Town of Greene – small cemeteries – Chenango Co., N.Y." <http://www.usgenweb.info/nychenango/cemetery/engwatwn.htm>).

It's worth a look at the photo showing the entire lot, its headstones broken and lying flat on the ground, at Find A Grave: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/203847837/unknown-watson#view-photo=193990326>. Find A Grave has separate listings for Mercy (Kenyon) Watson – Stephen⁵'s wife; P.M. (Permily Minda) Watson; Robert Watson; and Stephen Watson. A final listing for this lot, "Unknown Watson," offers this summary:

supposedly buried here: WATSON FAMILY BURYING GROUND

42°20'08.71" N 75°45'27.62" W on Fred Seymour Farm:

WATSON, Robert - 1737-1836, Dec. 17 - (99) (from Rhode Island)

(Watson), Stephen - 1761 - 1828, Oct. 21 - (67)

(Watson), Isobel, wife of John - 1784-1838, Mar. 12 – 54

(Watson), P. M. (Permily Minda)

(Watson), Stephen D. (d. in Bristol, Ind. In 1860)

.....Buried here but transferred to Sylvan Lawn Cemetery in Greene NY:

Gardner Watson 1784-1830 and wife Deborah Watson (died 1839)

This summary appears to draw from the aforementioned USGenWeb page, which says this:

WATSON FAMILY BURYING GROUND – on Fred Seymour Farm

WATSON, Robert - 1737-1836, Dec. 17 - 99 (from Rhode Island)

(Watson), Stephen - 1761 - 1828, Oct. 21 – 67

(Watson), Isobel, wife of John - 1784-1838, Mar. 12 – 54

(Watson), Deborah, wife of Gardner - 1784-1830, Mary 19 – 46

(Trans. To Sylvan Lawn beside her husband who d. in 1839)

(Watson), P. M. (Permily Minda)

(Watson), Stephen D. (d. in Bristol, Ind. In 1860)

Added note: (Did John and Stephen D. Watson move to Indiana after 1839?

Only the Ira Watson family appears to have remained in Greene.)

Transcribed and contributed by Mary Hafler - September, 2006

In the USGenWeb listing immediately above, the last number given in each person's data indicates *age at death*. USGenWeb omits Mercy (Kenyon) Watson, Stephen's wife; but adds Isobel [Isabel] (Dyer) Watson, John⁶'s wife. At Find A Grave, Isabel Watson does not have her own separate listing. Birth years were computed by transcribers subtracting the age at death from the year of death.

The one burial missing from both Find A Grave's and USGenWeb's listings – the one we'd expect to find – is Robert⁴ Watson's wife Rebecca Richmond.

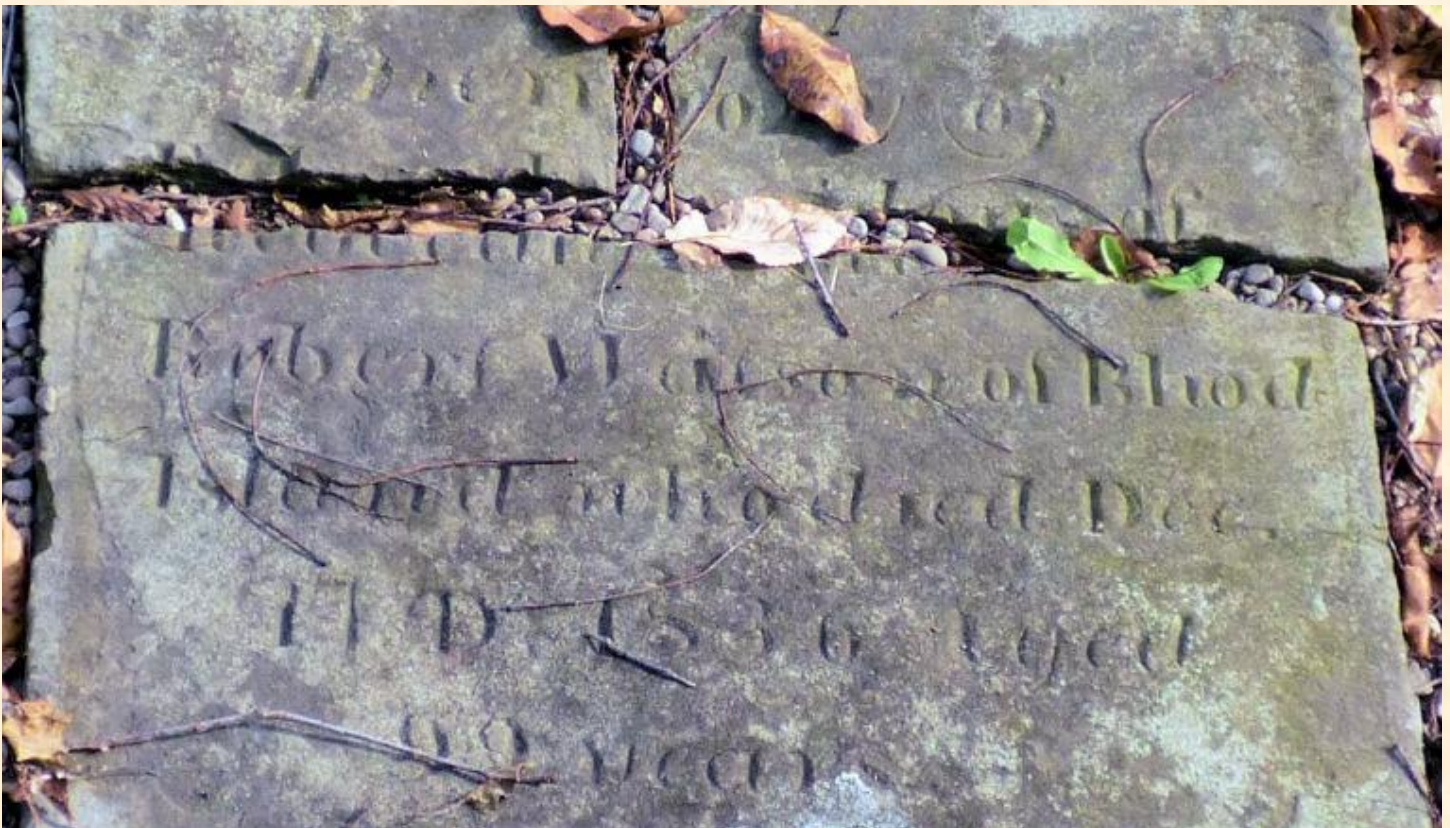
Why People Think Robert⁴ Watson Died in New York

We know that Robert⁴ Watson died in Exeter, Rhode Island. Was he dug up and reinterred in New York? Not likely. Yet Robert's burial is documented in Watson Cemetery in Greene (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/203868584/robert-watson/photo>) but his wife's is not?

The short answer: Robert's gravestone in Watson Cemetery is probably his wife Rebecca's.

The long answer: Mildred Folsom, the Greene, NY, historian who provided Rebecca's death and burial data for *John Watson*, said that Rebecca "died 12 March 1836 [and was] interred in the family grave-yard on the Carter farm." The March 12th date corresponds to Isobel [Isabel] (Dyer) Watson's death data, whose year of death has been noted elsewhere as 1838. *John Watson* gives Isabel's age at death as 51, which disagrees with USGenWeb's description. There is more than a little confusion over these details.

We studied the details of Robert Watson's gravestone as photographed and posted by Find A Grave volunteer "geliza."



The word “Memory” appears split between the two upper pieces of the gravestone. The word “of” appears twice on the upper right-hand piece – once after the word Memory, in a flowing script, and again in a plainer script at the lower edge.

Remnants of letters appear along the upper edge of the large lower piece. The stone broke at that point, taking with it most of the inscription that appeared beneath “In Memory of.” What remains reads as “Robert Watson of Rhod(e) Island who died Dec 17 AD 1836 aged 99 years.” Little wonder that people think Robert died in New York.

The way the stone carver shaped his narrow 6’s and 9’s is different from the way he shaped his wider 8’s. We think the age of death for this person reads as 99, not 98. By the same token, the year of death looks to be 1836, not 1838.

The year 1836 agrees with Rebecca’s year of death as given by Mildred Folsom. Rebecca’s year of birth is given as 1739 in *Gardiners of Narragansett* (Caroline E. Robinson, pg. 111), a year that agrees with Rebecca’s reproductive span (her youngest son being born in 1782). If true, Rebecca would have been 97 years old at death – not an exact match with the gravestone notation, but also not an uncommon discrepancy. We’ve seen this before.

The missing piece in this puzzle is a chunk of stone likely with Rebecca’s name on it. The original unbroken stone *might have said* something like “In Memory of Rebecca [Rebekah], Relict of Robert Watson of Rhod(e) Island who died Dec 17 AD 1836 aged 99 years.”

In choosing to move from Exeter, RI, to live in Greene, NY, Rebecca (Richmond) Watson might have been grieved to know she would not rest in death beside her husband. We think someone went to the trouble of identifying Rebecca as the wife of Robert Watson of Rhode Island, possibly at Rebecca’s own request. Ironically, her husband’s name survived in this cemetery while hers did not. Thank goodness for local historians like Mildred Folsom, who apparently had information in the early 1980s that more recent cemetery transcribers did not.

It is remarkable that the people who documented Watson Cemetery gleaned as much information as they did, from what amounts to fragments. We appreciate their work.

Summary

Robert⁴ Watson, son of Samuel³ Watson and Hannah Hazard, was born circa 1737 in North Kingstown, Rhode Island. On August 3, 1758, in Exeter, RI, Robert married Rebecca Richmond, the daughter of Stephen and Mary (Lawton) Richmond. Robert and Rebecca had three sons and six daughters. While they and their family lived in West Greenwich, RI, for a portion of their lives, most of the time they were “of Exeter,” the town immediately south of West Greenwich. Robert died, intestate, in Exeter, RI, before September 3, 1810. His widow Rebecca moved to Greene, Chenango county, NY, with their son Stephen⁵ around 1815-1816. That is where Rebecca died in 1836.

Resources

Ancestry.com <https://www.ancestry.com/>

Find A Grave <https://www.findagrave.com/>

Davis, George C., and Jean Adams Bradley. *The American Family of John Watson of the Narragansett Country, Rhode Island*. Kingston, R.I.: Pettaquamscutt Historical Society, 1983. At FamilySearch: <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/112023-the-american-family-of-john-watson-of-the-narragansett-country-rhode-island>

John Watson contains a number of errors, mostly where it (mis)assigns vital and other records to individuals sharing first names with relatives. All Watson researchers should endeavor to confirm this book's statements against actual records as available.

Robinson, Caroline Elizabeth Rodman, and Daniel Goodwin. *The Gardiners of Narragansett; Being a Genealogy of the Descendants of George Gardiner*. Providence: The editor, 1919. Available at Google Books: <https://tinyurl.com/The-Gardiners-of-Narragansett>

Gorton, Adelos. *The Life and Times of Samuel Gorton: The Founders and the Founding of the Republic, a Section of Early United States History, and a History of the Colony of Providence and Rhode Island Plantations in the Narragansett Indian Country, Now the State of Rhode Island, 1592-1636-1677-1687 : with a Genealogy of Samuel Gorton's Descendants to the Present Time, Compiled from Various Accounts, Histories, Letters, and Published and Unpublished Records*. Salt Lake City, Utah: Digitized by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 2015. The information on Mary (Watson) Griffin's marriage to Hezekiah Gorton can be found on page 246. See also Supplement page 955 for clarification on what year they wed.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF WEST GREENWICH. Vol III – Stephen Watson GRIFFIN, p. 1216 – 1217 (http://www.usgenwebsites.org/RIKent/bios/EG_WGbios.html, accessed 23 May 2021)

Map of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations from surveys under the direction of Henry F. Walling, civil engineer – 1855; (re-)accessed December 2, 2019 at this link: (<https://iiif.lib.harvard.edu/manifests/view/ids:5271618>)

The Amasa Pratt Lot, also known as Rhode Island Historic Cemetery West Greenwich #7 (WG007), is located along the east side of Escoheag Hill Road across from the Escoheag Baptist Church. The coordinates for this cemetery are 41.6008830, -71.7612080.

An article about “Edward Wilcox of Rhode Island” in *Your ancestors, a national magazine of genealogy and family history*, Volume 5, #11-12 – November-December 1951, as found at <https://archive.org/details/yourancestorsnat46unse/page/n651>, accessed on December 1, 2019.

We found reference to both Alva Wilcox, who married Rebecca Watson, as well as Deborah Wilcox, who married Gardner Watson. (And *now* we’re wondering – whose child was Patience Watson? We’d bet she was from Exeter.)

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EBENEZER ⁵ WILCOX, son of Abraham and Lydia (Harrington)		
b	/ / 1759 abt	
m	/ /	Elizabeth Himes
d		
Res.: Exeter, R. I.--removed to Oxford, Chenango County, New York; thence to Troupsburg, Steuben County, New York		
CHILDREN:		
+Simon	/ / 1778	m Polly
+Ebenezer	/ / 1790	m Ann
+William	/ /	m Martha
Hannah	/ /	m Peleg Aylesworth
John	/ /	
Alva	/ / 1798 abt	m Rebecca Watson
+Joseph	1/17/1799	m Patience Watson
Deborah	/ /	m Garner Watson
Martha	/ /	m Ellsworth or Aylesworth
Lydia	/ /	m John Bennett
Eunice	/ /	
Anna	/ /	
Mary	/ /	