

Children of Samuel⁴ #26 Watson: Hazzard⁵ 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 these links to [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

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*.

Hazzard⁵ Watson, son of Samuel #26 Watson

Hazzard⁵ WATSON (Samuel⁴, Samuel³, Samuel², John¹) was born in autumn of 1778, likely nine or ten months after the marriage of his parents Samuel⁴ #26 Watson and Abiah Young on January 3, 1778. We know the approximate time of Hazzard's birth and his death by way of Alice Watson's deposition of December 28, 1836, made in support of her mother's application for a widow's pension (**emphasis added**):

I Alice Watson of Voluntown in the County of Windham in the State of Connecticut aged fifty one years do testify and say that I am the chi[ld] of Samuel and Abiah Watson, that I have had three brothers older than myself all being born as I have always understood, after the marriage of my said parents. **My eldest brother Hazzard died in August 1822 aged 43 years and would have been fifty eight years old had he now been living**, my second brother lives in the State of New York ~~in Stephentown~~ and is fifty six years old at this time, that I have always understood my father and mother were married during the war of the Revolution in the year 1778 and further the deponent saith not --

(signed) Alice Watson

State of Connecticut
Windham County/Voluntown **December 28th 1836**

I Alice Watson of Voluntown in the County of Windham
in the State of Connecticut aged fifty one years
do testify and say that I am the child of
Samuel and Abiah Watson, that I have had
three brothers older than myself all being
born as I have always understood, after the
marriage of my said parents. My eldest
brother Hazard Watson died in August 1822
aged 43 years and would have been fifty eight
years old had he now been living, my second
brother lives in the State of New York in settlement
and is fifty six years old at this time, that I
have always understood my father and mother
were married during the war of the Revolution
in the year 1778 and further the clearest recollection
not —

Alice Watson

State of Connecticut

Windham County Voluntown December 28th 1836

Has personally appeared Alice Watson above named
and signed the above deposition in my presence
and made solemn Oath to the truth of the
same before me — And I certify that
she is a credible Witness

William Dye Justice of the Peace

Because we've found Hazzard Watson's forename spelled most often with two Z's, we will use that spelling, unless we are citing from a specific source such as the Beaman record mentioned below.

Hazzard⁵ Watson in West Greenwich

Hazzard Watson is first of record in a West Greenwich town council entry for September 8, 1808, involving the "Valuation of Each mans Estate" for the purpose of local road maintenance. Hazzard's name appears in the No. 6 district list; his estate valuation was marked with a flat line rather than a number. (The lowest number appearing on the valuations was 100. Perhaps anything less than that was considered too small to count toward road maintenance taxation.)

There is no record of Hazzard Watson buying or selling property in West Greenwich.

We know little about Hazzard, due to his relatively early death and lack of a paper trail. But thanks to an entry in Alden G. Beaman's Rhode Island vital records series, we learn that Hazzard Watson married a woman named Amy; and they had a daughter named Sabra:

[WATSON, Sabra, of Hazard & Amy b 1814 WG. \[md Mr. Kelley; d 23 Mar 1865 NK\] \(NKD 3-21\)](#)

This item, based on information from a North Kingstown death record, says that Sabra Watson, daughter of Hazard & Amy, was born in 1814 in West Greenwich. She married Mr. Kelley; her death on March 23, 1865, in North Kingstown, was entered into the records of that town.

We found Sabra (Watson) *Kelly* in the 1860 census, living in Exeter, RI, with her husband Asa.

<i>Asa Kelly</i>	<i>59 M</i>	<i>Farmer</i>
<i>Sabra</i>	<i>50 F</i>	<i>House Wife</i>

We doubt that Sabra was born in 1814. Given that she was 50 years old in 1860, her birth year was 1810 (a supposition supported by census records for 1810 and 1820). We find Sabra named in no other census records. Asa may have been her first husband, but Sabra probably wasn't Asa's first wife. We don't know if they had any children together.

Hazzard Watson was recorded as head of household in West Greenwich twice – in the 1810 census and again in 1820. Considering the numbers, we are pretty sure that Hazard and Amy Watson had more children than just Sabra.

In 1810, Hazzard had eight people under his roof, counting himself. Six of those were under the age of 16 – three boys and three girls.

By 1820, Hazzard Watson's household had grown. The headcount indexed by Ancestry.com, however, isn't quite right. Careful study suggests that the enumerator started in the first column, realized his error, and corrected his first notations by writing over them, i.e., he made that far-left number into a *zero* and the next one into a *two*.



The headcount actually begins with the second-from-the-left column, indicating that there were two males between the ages of 10 and 15. One male was between 16 and 18 years of age; two males were between 16 and 25. The one male between 26 and 44 would have been Hazzard.

The females in this house numbered three. There was one girl between 10 and 15 (this likely was Sabra) and another between 16 and 25. Apparently Hazzard's wife Amy was slightly older than her husband – she was counted in the age group of 45 and up.

The grand total of people under Hazzard Watson's roof in 1820 was 9 (not the 10 cited by Ancestry.com). The younger folks likely were five sons and two daughters. The number of people in this household "engaged in agriculture" was 5 (the last notation on the far right).

We cannot glean any information from the 1810 and 1820 censuses regarding who Hazzard Watson's neighbors were. The reason for this: Both censuses were written up in alphabetical order by first name, not by the geographic proximity of one family to another.

Hazzard⁵ and Amy Watson's Children

The names of Hazzard and Amy's children, other than daughter Sabra mentioned earlier, are an enduring mystery. If more people (especially men) surnamed Watson had continued to live in West Greenwich, we might have been able to tell you who they were. But there is such an absence of information that we wonder if most of Hazzard's sons moved away.

We have found evidence pointing to the name of a *possible* son – John Willet Watson, Sr. (~1809-1858), who shows up in some records as John W. Watson and in others simply as "Willet." It appears that he went by his middle name.

The one big clue we have is the name of Willet Watson's eldest son, Willet Hazzard Watson (~1829-1909), who ordinarily went by "Hazzard." It looks to us like Willet named his son for his late father. While this is not a watertight argument for saying that Willet Watson was the son of Hazzard and Amy Watson, it's a reasonable one.

We also know the town of West Greenwich intervened when Willet was unable to cope after his wife's death. This tells us that Willet "belonged" to West Greenwich; he was born there. The town honored its obligation and exercised its authority to deal with Willet and his children.

Willet Watson's life was a dramatic and sad one, which we plan to recount in a separate document. Once that's done, we'll update this document with a link to Willet's story.

Widow Amy Watson

Amy Watson's maiden name *may have been* Wilcox. In 1967, when applying for membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution, Gertrude Moore (Nat'l No. 528841) named Hazzard Watson's wife as "Abbey Wilcox." We have found errors in some of Miss Moore's other information; so we offer the Wilcox surname only as a possibility, not a certainty.

We don't know the date on which Amy and Hazzard Watson married. Based on the ages of the children enumerated in 1810, we would guess that they wed either in or soon after 1800.

As we know from Alice Watson's 1836 deposition, Hazzard Watson died in August 1822. We have found no death record for him, in West Greenwich or anywhere else.

We find Amy Watson in one West Greenwich town council record. On September 20, 1829, Charles Stone was "allowed \$6.50 for taking care of Amey [*sic*] Watson through her sickness." (WG TC 7:131)

We cannot find Amy in the 1830 census. The numbers for Charles Stone's household in 1830 don't account for the possibility that she was living under his roof at the time; the eldest female is too old to be Amy.

By 1840, Amy Watson reappears in the census. She was enumerated in West Greenwich as head of household, living alone. Amy appears on the same census page as her sister-in-law Alice Watson, suggesting that they lived near each other.

In 1850, we find Amy Watson not once but twice, in census records made nine weeks apart.

On July 30, 1850, in West Greenwich, Amy Watson's name was written on the line following Alice Watson's. Amy lived alone; she was noted as being 78 years old.

On October 2, 1850, Amy Watson was enumerated in Voluntown, Connecticut, living in the household of Thomas V. Walker. This time, Amy was noted as being 87 years old. (We doubt the accuracy of that, and wonder if the enumerator transposed the numbers.)

There was another old woman – 85-year-old Huldah Gordon – living in the Walker household, also apparently unrelated to either Thomas Walker or his wife Elizabeth (Whitman) Walker. The common thread of this household is that each person was a native of Rhode Island.

For Amy, there was another thread – the Watson folks enumerated nearby.

We show, on our next page, an excerpt of the 1850 census page on which were listed Sarah Cory (line 12); Jeffrey, Anna, and Nehemiah Watson (lines 13-15); and Amy Watson (line 29).

11	175	Joseph Cory	29 m	"		Connecticut
12		Sarah "	18 f			Rhode Island
13	176	Jeffrey Watson	62 m	Farmer	1,100	"
14		Anna "	73 f			"
15		Nehemiah	8 m			Connecticut
16	177	John Douglass	70 m	"	1,000	"
17		Thankfull "	59 f			"
18		Theodore "	28 m	Non		"
19		Andrew "	23 m	Farmer		"
20		David R. "	19 m	"		"
21	178	Daniel Cagwin	75 m	"	1,200	"
22		Salinda "	66 f			"
23	179	Thomas V. Walker	41 m	"	1,000	Rhode Island
24		Elizabeth "	44 f			"
25		Cyrus A. "	18 m	"		"
26		Henry A. "	15 m	"		"
27		Nathaniel G. "	13 m			"
28		Huldah Gordon	85 f		3,000	"
29		Amy Watson	89 f			"

Jeffrey Watson was Hazzard Watson's younger brother. Sarah Cory was Willet Watson's daughter. Joseph and Sarah Cory may have lived and worked on the property where Jeffrey Watson, his wife Anna, and their grandson Nehemiah resided.

This excerpt from an 1856 map shows the Voluntown neighborhood that included Thomas V. Walker and A. W. Watson (which should have been written as E. W. Watson; Elhanan W. Watson was Nehemiah Watson's father).

The two families enumerated between Jeffrey Watson and Thomas Walker were those of John Douglass and Daniel Cagwin (properly spelled Keigwin). Notice the name **J. Douglas** near the center of the bottom edge of this map.



Over to the left side, near Voluntown's border with the town of Sterling, we find the names **Keigwin** and **Gordon**.

Our guess is that Thomas and Elizabeth Walker were paid, by the respective families, to host both Huldah Gordon (widow of Samuel) and Amy Watson.

Unsurprisingly, we don't find Amy in the census after 1850. Perhaps she died in Voluntown, though no record of her death exists. We also don't know where she was buried, but we hope it was with her husband Hazzard Watson.

Summary

Hazzard⁵ Watson, the son and eldest child of Samuel⁴ Watson and Abiah Young, was born in autumn 1778. He married Amy (maiden name *Wilcox?*) likely in or soon after 1800. Hazzard and Amy Watson made their home in West Greenwich.

Amy and Hazzard appear to have had a large family – possibly five sons and three daughters – yet we know nearly nothing about their children. One of their daughters was named Sabra; she married Asa Kelly. One of their sons *may have been* John Willet Watson, Sr.

Hazzard Watson died in August 1822. We have found no record of Hazzard's death; we don't know the cause of death, nor where he was buried.

Hazzard's widow Amy lived another 28 years (at least) beyond her husband. Amy was last of record in October 1850, when she was enumerated in Voluntown, Connecticut. We have no information on when she died, nor where she was buried.

Resources

Ancestry.com <https://www.ancestry.com/>, our favorite source for census records, including:
Year: 1850; Census Place: *Voluntown, Windham, Connecticut*; Roll: *M432_51*; Page: *199B*;
Image: 218. Ancestry.com. *1850 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Images reproduced by FamilySearch.

Beaman, Alden G. *East Greenwich and West Greenwich, Rhode Island, Births from Probate, Grave, and Death Records, 1680-1860*; Volume 6 of Rhode Island vital records: New series. Princeton, Mass: Beaman, 1980. (Cited item about Sabra Watson was found on page 313.)

Rhode Island Roots Vol. 26 (2000), page 86: "Highway Districts and Property Values in West Greenwich." Rhode Island Roots. Warwick, RI: Rhode Island Genealogical Society, 1975–. (Online database. AmericanAncestors.org. New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2018.)
<https://www.americanancestors.org/DB487/rd/13971/86/253024894>

West Greenwich Town Council Book # 7, page 131: Entry for September 20, 1829, regarding town assistance rendered to “Amey” Watson.

Map of Windham County, Connecticut, 1856. Gerrish, E. P.; Eaton, Wm. C.; Osborn, H. C.; and Woodford, E. M. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C. 20540-4650 USA. Accessed at the Library of Congress web site on 15 March 2020.

Digital Id: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3783w.la000068>

LCCN Permalink: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2001620487>

Note: Voluntown, CT, was part of Windham County between 1726 and 1881, after which it became part of New London county.

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