

Correcting Mistakes About Zedekiah Drury

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Zedekiah Drury was born in Framingham, Middlesex County, Massachusetts on 30 April 1716,¹ the son of Caleb Drury and Elizabeth Eames.² Beyond that, there is much confusion about Zedekiah Drury on the internet - a reflection of mistakes that were published in early town histories and early Drury genealogies. Specifically, the following facts about Zedekiah's life are often mistaken:

- The identity of his second wife, Hannah Woolley. Repeating mistakes in *The History of Framingham*, his second wife is often identified as Hannah Flagg, daughter of Ebenezer Flagg of Woburn.³
- His death date is often given as 1776, repeating mistakes found in *An Account of some Early Settlers of West Dunstable, Hollis, and Monson, N.H.*⁴ In fact, he lived until at least 13 September 1790, when he and his wife Hannah signed a deed in Temple, New Hampshire (see below).

The correct information about the wives of Zedekiah Drury can be found in the following *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* article:

- Irene Cynthia Gould, "Christopher Woolley of Concord, Mass. and Some of His Descendants," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* Vol. 75 (January 1921), p. 31-2.

This earlier *Register* article accurately identifies his first wife, but says nothing further about him:

- S. J. Axtell, "The Axtell Family in America," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* Vol. 53 (1899), p. 228.

These articles, however, do not cite sources. To fill in this gap, the sources and proof arguments will be discussed below.

1 Thomas W. Baldwin, *Vital Records of Framingham, Massachusetts, To the Year 1850* (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1911), p. 60; database with images, *Archive.org* (<https://archive.org/details/vitalrecordsoffr00fram/page/60> : accessed 23 Jan 2020).

2 For maiden name of mother, see Baldwin, *Vital Records of Framingham*, p. 270, Drury-Eames.

3 J. H. Temple, *History of Framingham, Massachusetts* (Framingham, Massachusetts : Town of Framingham, 1887), p. 527; database with images, *Archive.org* (<https://archive.org/details/historyofframing00templ/page/526> : accessed 20 January 2020).

4 Charles S. Spaulding, *An Account of some Early Settlers of West Dunstable, Hollis, and Monson, N.H.* (Nashua, New Hampshire: Telegraph Press, 1915), Biography of Zedekiah Drury, p. 33; database with images, *Archive.org* (<https://archive.org/details/anaccountsomeca00spaugoog/page/n42> : accessed 20 January 2020).

The Wives of Zedekiah Drury

There is general agreement that the first wife of Zedekiah Drury was Hannah Axtell, daughter of Thomas Axtell and Sarah Barker.⁵ They were married 20 July 1738 in Sutton, Worcester County, Massachusetts.⁶ Zedekiah and his wife moved to Bedford, Middlesex County, Massachusetts sometime around 14 March 1738/9 when Zedekiah Drury, blacksmith, "of Sutton" purchased 36 acres with dwelling house in Bedford.⁷ Hannah died in Bedford on 11 January 1739/40.⁸

There is less agreement about his second wife. The Bedford vital records, however, seem quite clear that his second wife was Hannah Woolley. About a year after Hannah (Axtell) Drury died, Zedekiah Drury married Hannah Woolley in Bedford on 2 April 1741.⁹ The proximity of records suggests that she was the Hannah Woolley who was born in nearby Concord, Middlesex County, Massachusetts on 29 March 1722, daughter of "Thomas Woolley and Mary his wife."¹⁰ Hannah probably lived in the portion of Concord that was incorporated into Bedford in 1729, which would have made her a neighbor of Zedekiah Drury, and given the two plenty of opportunity to meet and form a relationship. This premise is supported by a 4 April 1757 deed in which Zedekiah Drury purchased land in Bedford abutting that of Thomas Woolley.¹¹

While the Bedford vital records point directly to Hannah Woolley as the second wife of Zedekiah Drury, the vital records of Woburn and the probate records of Middlesex County, Massachusetts rule out the claim that Zedekiah Drury married Hannah Flagg, daughter of Ebenezer of Woburn. In fact, the Woburn marriage records indicate that Hannah Flagg married Nathaniel Reed in Woburn on 3 October 1733.¹² The Middlesex County probate records are consistent with the marriage record. On 14 July 1746 the children of Ebenezer Flagg of Woburn petitioned the probate court to allow their fathers will. Amongst the signatories were Hannah Reed and Nathaniel Reed.¹³ Hannah (Flagg) Reed was still married to Nathaniel Reed when he died in 1748. She was appointed administrator of his estate on 26

5 S. J. Axtell, "The Axtell Family in America," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* Vol. 53 (1899), p. 228.

6 *Vital Records of Grafton, Massachusetts To the End of the Year 1849* (Worcester, Massachusetts: Franklin P. Rice, 1906), p. 196; database with images, *Archive.org* (<https://archive.org/details/vitalrecordsofgr00graft/page/196> : accessed 23 Jan 2020).

7 Middlesex County Deeds, 41:144, dated 14 March 1738/39, Amos Davis to Zedekiah Drury "of Sutton," [image 84](#) online at *FamilySearch.org*.

8 *Vital Records of Bedford, Massachusetts, To the Year 1850* (Boston, Mass. : New England Historic Genealogical Society, 1903) p. 119; database with images, *Archive.org* (<https://archive.org/details/vitalrecordsofbed00bedf/page/118/mode/2up> : accessed 23 January 2020).

9 *Vital Records of Bedford, Massachusetts, To the Year 1850*, p. 72.

10 *Concord Massachusetts: Births, Marriages, and Deaths, 1635 - 1850* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1895), p. 123, online at *Archive.org* (<https://archive.org/details/concordmassachus00conc/page/122/mode/2up> : accessed 13 October 2021).

11 Middlesex County Deeds, 54:587, dated 4 April 1757, Peter Fassett to Zedekiah Drury, [image 302](#) at *FamilySearch.org*.

12 Edward F. Johnson, *Woburn Records of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, From 1640 to 1873*, 3 Volumes (Boston: Winship, Daniels & Company, 1891), Vol. 3, p. 220, online at *Archive.org* (<https://archive.org/details/woburnrecordsofb03wobu/page/220/mode/2up> : accessed 13 Oct 2021).

13 "Middlesex County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1648-1871," database with images, *AmericanAncestors.org* (<https://www.americanancestors.org/databases/middlesex-county-ma-probate-file-papers-1648-1871> : accessed 15 Jan 2020), case 7747, Ebenezer Flagg of Woburn, image 2; Middlesex County Probate and Family Court, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

December of that year.¹⁴ These records preclude the possibility that she married Zedekiah Drury anytime between 3 October 1733 and 26 December 1748.

Nor is there room for Hannah to have wed Zedekiah Drury after the 1748 death of her first husband. On 2 December 1749, she published intention to marry Nathan Simonds in Woburn.¹⁵ She died in Woburn on 2 October 1760, while still married to Nathan Simonds.¹⁶

The Death Date of Zedekiah Drury

The death date for Zedekiah Drury, Sr. is often given as 1776.¹⁷ To understand why that is incorrect, it is necessary to understand that he moved to Temple, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire, where land records reveal a more accurate bound on his death. A series of land transactions, described below, traces the moves of Zedekiah Drury from Bedford to Dunstable, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire, then to Temple.

By 25 March 1743, Zedekiah Drury had moved to Dunstable, New Hampshire. On that date, Zedekiah Drury, blacksmith, “of a place called Dunstable in the Province of New Hampshire” sold his Bedford land holdings.¹⁸ Dunstable was dissolved into several towns in New Hampshire, including Hollis, which received its charter in 1746.¹⁹ By 1745, Zedekiah Drury referred to himself as “of Hollis” in his land sales, and continued to do so until 1769, when he began to refer to himself as “of Temple.”²⁰ The 1775 census of Temple lists Captain Zedekiah Drury, Zedekiah Drury, Jr., and Gershom Drury - the latter two being children of Zedekiah Drury, both born in Bedford.²¹

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- 14 "Middlesex County, MA: Probate File Papers, 1648-1871," database with images, *AmericanAncestors* (<https://www.americanancestors.org/databases/middlesex-county-ma-probate-file-papers-1648-1871> : accessed 15 Jan 2020), case 18572, Nathaniel Reed of Woburn, widow Hannah administrator of his estate, image 8; Middlesex County Probate and Family Court, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
- 15 Edward F. Johnson, *Woburn Record of Births, Deaths, Marriages*, Part 10, Marriage Intentions, *December 2, 1699 to December 31, 1890* (Woburn: E. L. Grimes, 1919), p. 142, Mrs. Hannah Reed and Nathan Simonds, both of Woburn; database with images, *Archive.org* (<https://archive.org/details/woburnrecordsofb01wobu/page/142> : accessed 21 January 2020).
- 16 E. F. Johnson, *Woburn Records of Births, Deaths, and Marriages From 1640 to 1873*, Vol 2., p. 177, death of Hannah Simonds, wife of Mr. Nathan, 2 Oct 1760; database with images, *Archive.org* (<https://archive.org/details/woburnrecordsofb04wobu/page/176> : accessed 21 January 2020).
- 17 See, for example, Spaulding, *An Account of some Early Settlers of West Dunstable, Hollis, and Monson, N.H.* (Nashua, New Hampshire: Telegraph Press, 1915), p. 33.
- 18 Middlesex County Deeds 47:149, dated 25 March 1743, Zedekiah Drury, of Dunstable, New Hampshire, to Amos Lawrence, [image 263](#) at *FamilySearch.org*.
- 19 Hollis Historical Society, <http://www.hollishistoricalsociety.org/history-of-hollis-new-hampshire.html>
- 20 At *FamilySearch.org*: Middlesex County, Massachusetts, Deeds, 58:102, [image 337](#), dated 12 November 1745, Zedekiah Drury of Hollis, blacksmith, to Enoch Hunt of Hollis, tract of land in Narragansett township 6, also 54:587, [image 302](#), dated 4 April 1757, Peter Fassett to Zedekiah Drury of Hollis, blacksmith, two tracts of land in Bedford, also 57:91, [image 49](#), dated 4 May 1757, Zedekiah Drury of Hollis, blacksmith, and wife Hannah, to Joseph Brown, two tracts of land in Bedford; Worcester County, Massachusetts, Deeds, 76:117, [image 323](#), dated 8 December 1761, Ephraim Blood of Hollis to Zedekiah Drury of Hollis, gentleman, tract of land in Narragansett township 6, also 78:302, [image 160](#), dated 24 December 1761, Zedekiah Drury of Hollis, gentleman, to William Fletcher, tract of land in Narragansett township 6; Hillsborough County, New Hampshire, Deeds, 5:94, [image 52](#), dated 29 November 1765, James Foster of Hollis to Zedekiah Drury of Hollis, tract of land in Peterborough Slip (now Temple), also 1:527, [image 281](#), dated 17 June 1766, Zedekiah Drury of Hollis, gentleman, to Samuel Hobart, pew in Hollis meeting house, also 3:604, [image 306](#), dated 13 Mar 1769, Zedekiah Drury of Temple, gentleman, to Town of Temple, 2 1/2 acres in Temple.
- 21 Henry Ames Blood, *The History of Temple, N.H.* (Boston : Geo. C. Rand & Avery, 1869), p. 101-2; database with images, *Archive.org* (<https://archive.org/details/historyoftemplen00bloo/page/100/mode/2up> : accessed 15 Jan 2020).

Zedekiah was active in the town affairs of Temple, where he and his wife Hannah raised their children. His son, Zedekiah, Jr., who had married Mary Wheelock in Charlton, Worcester County, Massachusetts,²² was a soldier in the Revolutionary War and had died before 27 November 1776, when his father and widow were appointed administrators of his estate.²³ This may be where the mistaken 1776 death date for Zedekiah, Sr. comes from. But a Hillsborough County, New Hampshire deed, signed by Zedekiah and his wife Hannah on 13 September 1790, proves that Zedekiah and his wife lived until at least that date. In this deed, Zedekiah Drury "of Temple" and his wife Hannah sold all their "right title interest and claim" to a parcel of land in Temple.²⁴

The whereabouts of Zedekiah after that date is uncertain. Neither death nor probate records have been found for Zedekiah or Hannah. Hannah has a rough gravestone in the Temple cemetery,²⁵ but no gravestone has been found for Zedekiah. According to Irene Cynthia Gould, he moved from Temple to Shelburne, Massachusetts.²⁶ The reasoning behind this claim is not stated, but perhaps further records of Zedekiah can be found there.

Sources

See also *Vital Records of Bedford, Massachusetts, To the Year 1850*, p. 21 for births of Zedekiah and Gershom.

- 22 "Massachusetts, Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988," database with images, *Ancestry.com* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/2495> : accessed 23 Jan 2020), Charlton Births, Deaths, Purpose of Marriage 1742-1801, Book 1, p. 111, "purpose of marriage between Zedekiah Drury of Temple and Mary Wheelock of Charlton," [image 67](#) of 1179; for marriage see Franklin P. Rice, *Vital Records of Charlton, Massachusetts, To the End of the Year 1849*, (Boston: F. H. Gilson, 1905), p. 151, [online](#) at *Archive.org*.
- 23 "New Hampshire County Probate Records, 1660-1973, Hillsborough County, 1771-1777, Vol 1-2," database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9WH-LQBQ> : accessed 25 January 2020), Zedekiah Drury administration of estate, vol. 2, pg. 473 and 509, 27 Nov 1776; Hillsborough County, New Hampshire deeds, Nashua.
- 24 Hillsborough County, New Hampshire, deed book 23, p. 369, Zedekiah Drury (with wife Hannah), of Temple, to Thomas Perkins, deed signed 13 Sep 1790, Registry of Deeds, Nashua, New Hampshire; "Hillsborough County, Register of Deeds," database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSRH-X3W9-D> : accessed 22 Jan 2020).
- 25 *Find a Grave*, database and images (<https://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 16 May 2020), gravestone photo for Hannah Drury, Find a Grave Memorial no. 51798734, Temple Village Cemetery, Temple, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire, maintained by Dale Gunn (contributor 47146701). Inscription reads "Hannah Drury wife of Zedekiah Drury."
- 26 I. C. Gould, "Christopher Woolley of Concord, Mass. and Some of His Descendants," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* Vol. 75 (January 1921), p. 31-2.