

### The Life and Family of Revolutionary War Veteran William West of Lewes Delaware

William West exemplifies the patriot of the Revolutionary War period. He served in two Delaware Companies in his hometown of Lewes Delaware during the war. He raised a family in Lewes with his wife Esther Art. He was a harbor pilot, the prototypical occupation of an 18<sup>th</sup> century Lewes man. He was a member and an office holder of St. Peters Episcopal Church in Lewes. He died in Lewes c. 1812 and is buried in the St. Peters Episcopal Churchyard there.<sup>1</sup>

The children of William West and Esther Art are shown in the table below:

Children of William West and Esther Art of Lewes Delaware			
Name	Birth	Marriage	Death & Burial
Wrexham West	1765	Rebecca Conwell March 26, 1789	1815
Elizabeth West	March 13, 1771	Caleb Rodney Nov 30 1796	Dec 10 1812 burial St Peter's Church Lewes DE
William West	Oct 15, 1771	Mary Westley 1794	Dec 1 1816 burial St Peter's Church Lewes DE
Bailey A West	1772	unknown	unknown
Jacob West	1772	unknown	unknown
John M West	c. 1765	unknown	1845
Hester West	1775	John McMain Jan 14 1798	unknown
Sources: Delaware, Sussex County Files, File #RG 4545-009, file of West, William 1812-1813, 6 pages, Administration Account page 6, Delaware Public Archives (DPA), copy received via email from the DPA on June 12, 2024. Delaware, Marriage Records, marriage bond for Wrixam West and Rebecca Conwell, March 26, 1789, Public Archives Commission, Delaware Public Archives. Marriage Records, 1744-1912. Dover, Delaware: Delaware Public Archives. Record Group # RG 1325; Subgroup # 003; Series # 004.			

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<sup>1</sup> FindaGrave Memorial, St. Peter's Episcopal Churchyard, Lewes DE, headstone inscription: "William West born 29 February 1743 died 1812 Esther Art his wife died 1811", Findagrave.com.

Turner, C., Rodney's Diary and Other Delaware Records, Philadelphia: Allen, Kane & Scott, 1911, page 76, digital image, FamilySearch.org.

Delaware, Marriage Records, marriage bond of Caleb Rodney and Elizabeth West, November 30, 1796, Public Archives Commission, Delaware Public Archives. Marriage Records, 1744-1912. Dover, Delaware: Delaware Public Archives. Record Group # RG 1325; Subgroup # 003; Series # 004.

FindaGrave Memorial, Elizabeth Rodney, born March 13, 1771, died December 10, 1812, burial St. Peter's Episcopal Church Cemetery, Lewes DE, FindaGrave.com.

FindaGrave Memorial, William West, died December 1, 1816, age 45 years, 1 month, 16 days, burial St. Peters Church, Lewes DE, FindaGrave.com.

Barnes, Robert and Catherine, Records of the Eldest Branch of the West Family, Pennsylvania Genealogy Magazine, Volume III, Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing, 1982, digital images, image 284 of 1036, Ancestry.com.

FindaGrave Memorial, Bailey A West, born 1808, died 1872, St. Peter's Churchyard Cemetery, Lewes DE, FindaGrave.com.

US Census, 1840, Delaware, Sussex, Lewes and Rehoboth Hundred, household of John M. West, 1 male age 50 – 59, 1 male age 70 – 79, Year: 1840; NARA Publication Roll: 34; Page: 441; Family History Library Film: 0006434.

Delaware, Sussex County Registry of Deeds, volume 25, pages 7-8, September 11, 1845, deed of John M. West, executor of the estate of John M. West of Lewes to David J. Millis of Lewes, consideration \$520, lot of land in Lewes, digital images, images 332-3 of 616, Ancestry.com.

Bailey West is recorded in William West's 1812 estate administration account as an heir.<sup>2</sup>

Bailey A. West's name is inscribed on the same monument in St. Peters Churchyard as William and Esther West, with a birth year of 1808 and a death year of 1879. Esther Art's name is inscribed on that monument with only a death year of 1811.<sup>3</sup> A published source states that William and Esther West had a son named Bailey A. West.<sup>4</sup> No further evidence has been found for Bailey the son of William and Esther West. Bailey A. West born 1808 was likely a grandson of William and Esther.

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<sup>2</sup> Delaware, Sussex County Files, File #RG 4545-009, file of West, William 1812-1813, 6 pages, Administration Account page 6, Delaware Public Archives (DPA), copy received via email from the DPA on June 12, 2024.

<sup>3</sup> FindaGrave Memorial, Bailey Art West, born 24 November 1808, died 22 February 1869, burial St. Peter's Churchyard, Lewes DE, FindaGrave.com.

FindaGrave Memorial, Esther Art, wife of William West, died 1811, burial St. Peter's Churchyard Cemetery, Lewes DE, FindaGrave.com.

<sup>4</sup> Barnes, Robert and Catherine, Records of the Eldest Branch of the West Family, Pennsylvania Genealogy Magazine, Volume III, Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing, 1982, digital images, image 284 of 1036, Ancestry.com.

Elizabeth West's husband Caleb Rodney served as Governor of Delaware in 1822-3.<sup>5</sup>

Caleb Rodney's father John R. Rodney and William West were members and office holders of St. Peter's Church together in 1783. William West owned a share of pew no. 2 in the church in 1789.<sup>6</sup>

William West purchased a house and lot at the corner of Mulberry St. and 2<sup>nd</sup> St. in Lewes in 1767.<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, this location is across Mulberry Street from what is believed to be the oldest house in Delaware standing on its original foundation: The Ryves Holt house.<sup>8</sup> William West purchased a second lot on Mulberry St. in 1770.<sup>9</sup> This second deed identifies William West as a pilot.

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<sup>5</sup> National Governors Association, Caleb Rodney, Governor of Delaware, April 23, 1822 – January 21, 1823, [www.nga.org](http://www.nga.org).

<sup>6</sup> Records of the Parish of St. Peter's Church, Lewes Delaware, transcribed by the Works Progress Administration, microfilmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, page 18, image 108, minutes of May 5, 1783, John Rodney Church Warden, William West vestryman, page 19, image 108, minutes of June 10, 1789, William West and Thomas Walker shared ownership of pew no. 2, FamilySearch.org.

<sup>7</sup> Delaware, Sussex County Registry of Deeds, volume 4, page 295, May 4, 1767, consideration £80 5 s., Deed of Rhoads Shankland, High Sheriff of Sussex County DE, and William West of Sussex County DE, lot and house in the Town of Lewes, "binding on Mulberry St. and Second St.", Digital images, image 409 of 446, Ancestry.com.

<sup>8</sup> Lewes Historical Society, Ryves Holt House Museum, [www.historiclewes.org](http://www.historiclewes.org).

<sup>9</sup> Delaware, Sussex County Registry of Deeds, volume 5, page 98, August 3, 1770, consideration £17, deed of Samuel Paynter Jr. of Sussex County, Carpenter, to William West of Sussex County, Pilot, lot on Mulberry Street, digital images, image 69 of 576, Ancestry.com.

William West appears as a Sergeant in a Muster Roll of Captain Latimer's Company at Lewes Delaware dated April 29, 1776.<sup>10</sup> He also appears in an undated record as a Sergeant in Captain Peery's Company, stationed at Lewes DE in the period 1776 - 1777.<sup>11</sup>

The muster roll of Captain Latimer's Company contains 32 names, including the commander, Captain [George] Latimer, who was appointed by Caesar Rodney, Esq, "President and Commander in Chief of said State", as a Justice of the Peace in New Castle County in 1778.<sup>12</sup> Two of the men in Latimer's company were, like William West, pilots in Lewes. Simon Edwards was identified as a pilot in a deed where he purchased a lot in Lewes in 1780.<sup>13</sup> Richard Westley was identified as a pilot in a deed where he purchased lots in the Town of Lewes in 1768.<sup>14</sup> Richard Westley's daughter Mary married William West's son William Jr.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> U.S., Revolutionary War Rolls, Muster Roll of Captain Latimer's Company Stationed at Lewes Delaware, dated April 29, 1776, William West, Sergeant, enlisted March 15, 1776, NARA Microfilm Publication M246, War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records, Record Group 93; The National Archives in Washington, D.C. Digital images, image 311 of 658, Ancestry.com.

<sup>11</sup> U.S., Revolutionary War Service Records, William West, Captain William Peery's Independent Company Stationed at Lewes Delaware, no date given, 2 digital images, Fold3.com. The records for the commanding officer of this company indicate that it existed from December 1776 to June 1777. U.S., Revolutionary War Service Records, William Peery, Captain, Peery's Independent Company, Muster Roll, service period December 18, 1776 to June 8, 1777, digital images, image 2 of 5, Fold3.com.

<sup>12</sup> Delaware, New Castle County Registry of Deeds, volume 11, page 12, August 29, 1778, Letter of Caesar Rodney, Esq., President and Commander in Chief, to George Latimer et al, appointing Justices of the Peace for New Castle County, digital images, image 165 of 740, Ancestry.com.

<sup>13</sup> Delaware, Sussex County Registry of Deeds, volume 5, page 346, February 3, 1780, consideration £370, Deed of Prettyman Stockley of Sussex County to Simon Edwards, Pilot, of Sussex County, land in the Town of Lewes, digital images, image 459 of 576, Ancestry.com.

<sup>14</sup> Delaware, Sussex County Registry of Deeds, volume 4, pages 318-9, May 3, 1768, consideration £15, Deed of Elizabeth Simpson of Sussex County to Richard Westley, Pilot, of Sussex County, lots in the Town of Lewes on Ship Carpenters St., digital images, image 422 of 446, Ancestry.com.

<sup>15</sup> Delaware, Sussex County, Probate Records, Card Index to Wills and Administrations, volume 107, page 3, Richard Westley, Pilot, of Lewes Hundred, probated March 9, 1784, Executor Ann Westley, "Note: Arch. Vol A, page 3 mentions minor children: - Mary, George, and Richard Westley." Delaware Public Archives (Repository), Digitized by FamilySearch International, 2016.

William West was taxed in the Lewes and Rehoboth Hundred in 1778, 1779, and 1780.<sup>16</sup>

William West appears in the 1790 reconstructed Census of Delaware as a resident of the Lewes and Rehoboth Hundred. He is recorded in the 1800 census as a resident of Lewes & Rehoboth.

In 1810, the census records of several hundreds in Sussex County are intermingled; William West appears in the group of hundreds that included Lewes and Rehoboth.<sup>17</sup>

The administration bond of Jacob West for the estate of Jacob West was dated February 25, 1812. inventory of the estate of William West of Lewes completed by Isaac Turner and John Rodney on March 4, 1812 showed a total value of \$158.45. The administration account of the estate of William West completed by Jacob West on December 2, 1813 showed a distribution to the heirs of \$14.66 each.<sup>18</sup>

The evidence that supports the conclusion that the William West who lived in Lewes is the William West who served as a Sergeant in Latimer's Company and in Peery's Company is as follows:

1. William West is recorded in multiple documents as having lived in Lewes from the time he purchased a house there in 1767 to his death c. 1812.

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<sup>16</sup> Delaware, Sussex County, Levy Court, Minutes/Proceedings (Supply Tax), William West taxed in Lewes & Rehoboth Hundred: £3 in 1778, £6 in 1779, and £6 in 1780, Dover, DE: Delaware Public Archives, pdf file, images 7, 38, and 70 of 92.

<sup>17</sup> DeVallinger, Leon Jr. State Archivist of Delaware, Reconstructed 1790 Census of Delaware, Lewes & Rehoboth Hundred, West, William, National Genealogical Society Publication, 1964, page 76. U.S. Census, Delaware, Sussex, Lewes and Rehoboth, household of William West, NARA Publication Series: M32; Roll: 4; Page: 411; Image: 218; Family History Library Film: 6413. U.S. Census, 1810, various hundreds in Sussex County Delaware, household of Wm C West, Year: 1810; Census Place: Baltimore, Dagsboro, Indian River, Lewis, Rehoboth, and Broadkill, Sussex, Delaware; Roll: 4; Page: 420; Image: Dem252\_4-0222; FHL Roll: 0224381.

<sup>18</sup> Delaware, Sussex County, Estate Case Files, estate of William West, 1812-1813, Dover, DE: Delaware Public Archives, images 236 – 241 of 609, [www.FamilySearch.org](http://www.FamilySearch.org).

2. William West was a pilot in Lewes, as were at least two other members of Latimer's Company. Pilots were critical to protecting Lewes during the war, and were targets of the British to commandeer them to pilot British ships up the Delaware Bay.
3. William West's daughter Mary married the son of Richard Westley, one of the pilots who lived in Lewes and who was also a member of Latimer's Company.
4. William West's daughter Elizabeth married John Rodney's son Caleb. William West and John Rodney were both vestrymen at St. Peter's Church in Lewes in 1789.

William West was a respected citizen appointed to serve as a sergeant in two of the military companies assigned to protect his community of Lewes Delaware. He was a member and an office holder of St. Peter's Church in Lewes. His grave in St Peter's Churchyard does not as of this writing have a grave marker acknowledging his service in the Revolutionary War.<sup>19</sup> Hopefully that will be rectified in the future.

**Grave Monuments of William West and John R. Rodney in  
St. Peters Episcopal Churchyard Lewes DE June 12, 2024**

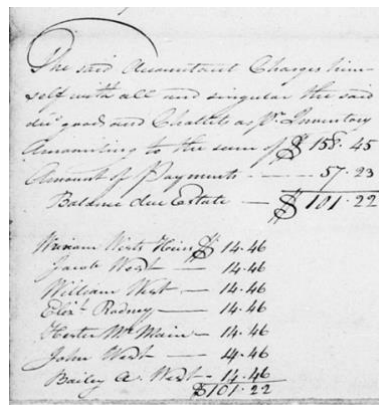


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<sup>19</sup> The author visited St. Peter's Churchyard Cemetery on June 12, 2024. No SAR or DAR marker was found by the monument that includes William West 1743 – 1813. There is an SAR marker on the grave of John Rodney.

## Postscript

In order to become a member of either of the two major lineage societies for Revolutionary War Patriots - the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) – a review of evidence for both service and a proven line of descent from the veteran to the person requesting membership in the lineage society must occur. As it happens, John R. Rodney, the father of Caleb Rodney, husband of Elizabeth West Rodney, is a patriot who has a proven line of descent through his son Caleb that has been accepted by both the SAR or DAR.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, this line of descent works equally well for William West. The key piece of evidence for this is in the Administration Account of the estate of William West.<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth Rodney is listed as one of the heirs of the estate along with the other children of William West as shown in the excerpted image below:



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<sup>20</sup> Moody, Martha, Daughters of the American Revolution, Lineage Book, volume LIII, lineage of Mrs. Amy Plumber Hedrick, descendant of John Rodney, Great Great Granddaughter of Caleb Rodney and his Wife Elizabeth West, Washington, D.C., 1905, page 327.

U.S., Sons of the American Revolution Membership Applications, Delaware Chapter, Application of Charles Louthier Moore, descendant of John Rodney through his son Caleb, SAR Membership #14383, Sons of the American Revolution Membership Applications, 1889-1970. Louisville, Kentucky: National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. Microfilm, 508 rolls. Digital images, images 519-520, Ancestry.com.

<sup>21</sup> Delaware, Sussex County Files, File #RG 4545-009, file of West, William 1812-1813, 6 pages, Administration Account page 6, Delaware Public Archives (DPA), copy received via email from the DPA on June 12, 2024.



## Muster Roll of Latimer's Company Stationed at Lewes DE dated 29<sup>th</sup> April 1776

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## Service Record William West Capt. Peery's Company Stationed at Lewes DE 1776-7

W | Capt. Peery's Co. | Del.

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William West  
Sgt , } Capt. William Peery's  
Independent Company.  
(Revolutionary War.)  
Appears on a

LIST

of officers and soldiers, belonging  
to Capt. William Peery's Independent  
Company lately stationed at Lewes,  
who are sharers in four guns taken  
from the Sloop Pembroke.  
List not dated.

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Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Swain  
Copyist.