

WHO WAS JOHN PENRE, THE FIRST HUSBAND OF SARAH WENTWORTH?

Sarah Wentworth was the daughter of William and Martha (Armstrong) Wentworth, born April 8, 1744 in Norwich, Connecticut. Her birth is recorded in Norwich Town Records. On November 14, 1765, Sarah married John Penre (or Penry) in Canterbury, Connecticut. She was 21 years of age. A son, Ezra, was born January 14, 1767 in Canterbury, and a daughter, Joanna, was born the following year, 1768, in Lisbon, Connecticut. At some point between 1769 and 1778, John Penry died, because Sarah married Paul Palmer, son of Zebulon and Deborah (York) Palmer, on March 14, 1779.

In *The Wentworth Genealogy* (Wentworth, 1870), author John Wentworth records the name of Sarah Wentworth's first husband as *Ezra Penry*, however Wentworth possibly mistook his name for that of his son, Ezra, for whom several records exist in late 18th century Canterbury accounts. The name Ezra does appear in Sarah Wentworth's family; she had a brother, Ezra, baptized in Lisbon, Connecticut on April 23, 1738. He served as a major in the French and Indian War Campaign of 1758 and was listed among the hospital returns at Fort Edward between August 24 and October 20, 1758. Perhaps John and Sarah (Wentworth) Penry's son Ezra, born in 1767, was named after his uncle.

Aside from the marriage record of John Penre, there are no records for either John (or Ezra) Penry, born about 1740 or earlier, in Windham or New London Counties, although there are a number of records for the many descendants of John Penry of Canterbury. The Hale Collection lists Joseph Penry, born about 1748, who is buried with his wife Submit in Dawson Cemetery in Canterbury near Ezra Penry (born October 23, 1814) and his wife, Sally. However, the actual headstones of Joseph and Submit, as photographed at <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=pv&GRid=31617691&PIpi=31012156> show the surname is actually *Pellet*. The surname for Ezra Penry at Dawson Cemetery is correct, however this Ezra was born two generations after Ezra, the son of John and Sarah (Wentworth) Penry. Additional research shows he is a grandson of Ezra and a great-grandson of John.

The surname Penry has been spelled variously in the descendants of John Penry of Canterbury as Penry, Penre, Penra, Penury, Peniree, Pennary, Penere, Pennie and Penue, *The American Genealogical-Biographical Index* lists Thomas Penere born in Connecticut in 1730. This same Thomas appears in the list of *Connecticut Soldiers, French and Indian War, 1755-62*, having served in Captain David Wooster's company. However, no other record has been found of Thomas Penere.

Although Sarah (Wentworth) Penry didn't marry Paul Palmer until 1779, Sarah and John Penry had no other children after Joanna, born about 1768. Thus, John Penry's death could have occurred any time between 1769 and 1778. He doesn't appear in Revolutionary War records for Connecticut, indicating that he may have died closer to 1769 than to 1778. No death or burial records have been found for him. One possibility is that he died of smallpox and was buried in

an unmarked grave. Smallpox was prevalent in Connecticut during the Revolutionary War years. Pox cemeteries were often isolated and graves were frequently unmarked. (Monagan, 2000).

Owing to this lack of records for John Penry or his ancestors in Connecticut records, he possibly came to Connecticut from another state. There are a number of 17th and 18th century records for the surname Penry and Penery in Massachusetts town and vital records spread across the state, with clusters in Hampshire, Essex, Middlesex and Plymouth Counties:

1. Jone Penry, daughter of Thomas Penry, married Thomas Kente on March 28, 1658 in **Gloucester, Essex, MA.**
2. Medad and Experience Penry of **Northampton, Hampshire Co., MA.** had a son Joseph in 1672 (at least 1 generation before John Penry of Canterbury was born).
3. Anna Penery, daughter of Aaron and Anna Penery was born February 8, 1685 in **Ipswich, Essex, MA.**
4. Mary Penry married Samuel Vis on April 30, 1696 in **Boston, Suffolk, MA.**
5. Peter Penry of **Andover, Essex, MA.** died in 1756 at age 59, so he was born ca. 1697.
6. Ruth Penry married John Mott on November 1, 1705 in **Sandwich, Barnstable, MA.**
7. Eldad Penry was listed as a property owner in **Northampton, MA.** in 1713
8. William and Hannah Penry of **Harwich** had sons William and John in 1716 and 1720 respectively (about one generation before John Penry of Canterbury was born).
9. Elisha Penery, son of John and Rachel Penery, was born on January 28, 1720 in **Northampton, Hampshire, MA.**
10. Rachell Penery, daughter of John and Rachel Penery, was born on April 14, 1723 in **Northampton, Hampshire, MA.**
11. Elizabeth Penery married John Fisk on December 14, 1727 in Watertown, Middlesex, MA.
12. Hannah Penery married Amos Lomis on December 10, 1730 in **Northampton, Hampshire, MA.**
13. Thomas Penery made a payment to the treasury of the town on **Medford, Middlesex, MA.** on May 15, 1732.
14. Susannah Penery, daughter of Francis and Hannah Penery was born January 6, 1735 in **Halifax, Plymouth, MA.**
15. Joseph Penry married Elizabeth Kiney in **Walpole, Norfolk, MA** on August 25, 1736.
16. Asa Penery, son of Francis and Hannah Penery was born October 18, 1737 in **Halifax, Plymouth Co., MA.**
17. James Penery, son of Francis and Hannah Penery was born January 12, 1739 in **Halifax, Plymouth Co., MA.**
18. Rachel Penry married Johnathan Wardwell on April 5, 1748 in **Andover, Essex Co., MA.**
19. Mary Penry married Eliskin Wardwell on May 5, 1748 in **Andover, Essex, MA.**
20. John and Hannah Penry of **Sutton, Worcester, MA** who had daughter Sarah in born 1750 (she could have been a younger sister of John Penry of Canterbury).
21. Zacheriah Penry made a payment to the treasury of the town of **Chelmsford, Middlesex, MA.** on June 20, 1763.
22. Edward Penry made a payment to the treasury of the town of **Sherborn, Middlesex, MA.** on May 14, 1781.
23. Daney Penery, born about 1783, died November 9, 1853 in **Westfield, Hampden, MA.**

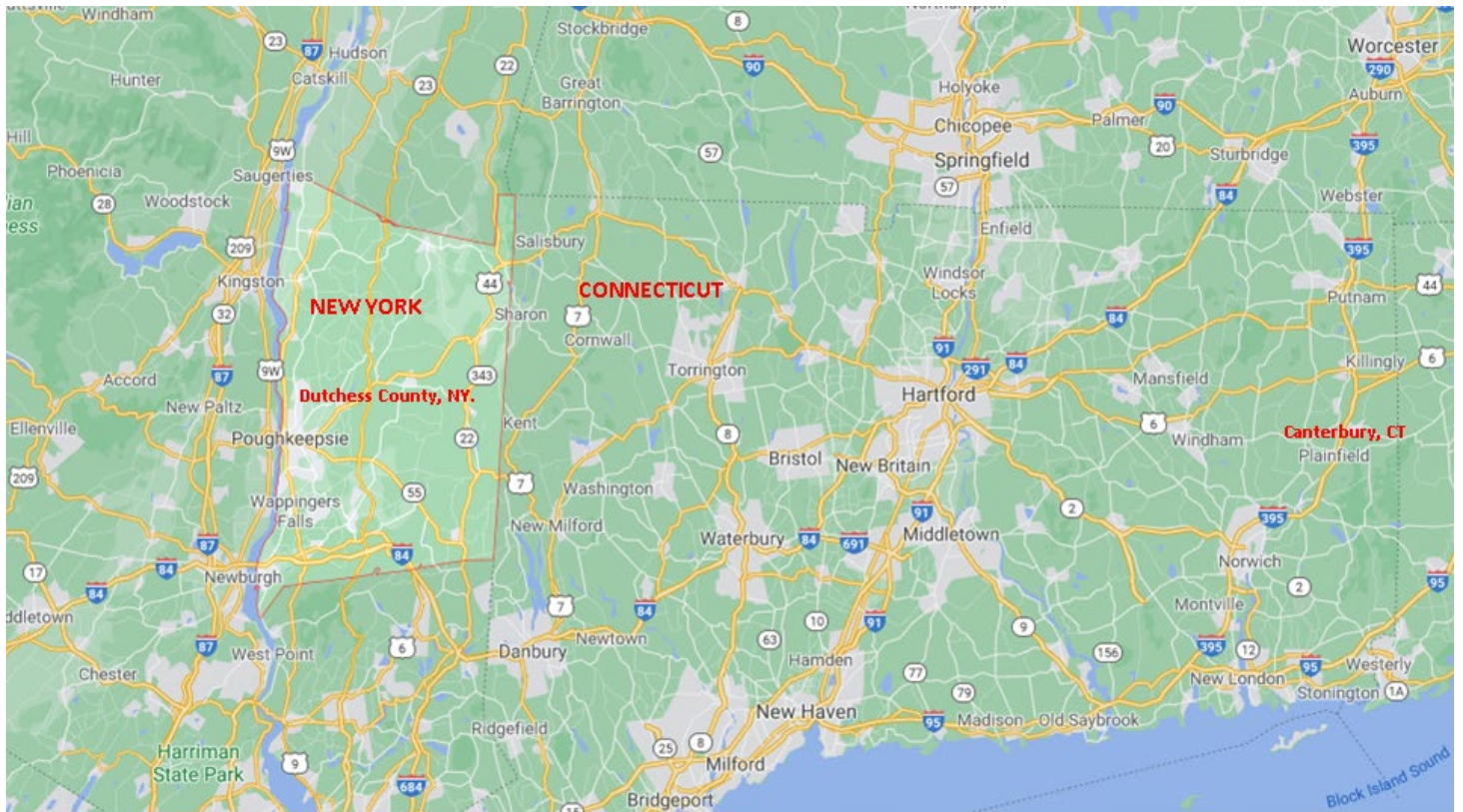
Name	Event	Date	Father	Mother	Spouse	Town	County	Notes
John Penry	Birth	1/15/1720	William Penry	Hannah Penry		Harwich	Barnstable	
William Penry	Birth	5/27/1716	William Penry	Hannah Penry		Harwich	Barnstable	
Ruth Penry	Marriage	11/1/1705			John Mott	Sandwich	Barnstable	
Peter Penry	Death	11/23/1756				Andover	Essex	He was age 59 at death so was born in 1697
Rachel Penry	Marriage	4/5/1748			Johnathan Wardwell	Andover	Essex	
Mary Penry	Marriage	5/5/1748			Eliskin Wardwell	Andover	Essex	
Jone Penry	Marriage	3/28/1658			Thomas Kente	Gloucester	Essex	
Anna Penery	Birth	2/8/1685	Aaron Penery	Anna Penery		Ipswich	Essex	
Daney Penery	Death	11/9/1853				Westfield	Hampden	He was age 70 at death so was born about 1783
Eldad Penry	Misc	1/1/1713				Northampton	Hampshire	Listed as property owner
Elisha Penery	Birth	1/28/1720	John Penery	Rachel Penery		Northampton	Hampshire	
Hannah Penery	Marriage	12/10/1730			Amos Lomis	Northampton	Hampshire	
Rachell Penery	Birth	4/14/1723	John Penery	Rachel Penery		Northampton	Hampshire	
Joseph Penry	Birth	6/12/1672	Medad Penry	Experience Penry		Northampton	Hampshire	
Zacheriah Penry	Misc	6/20/1763				Chelmsford	Middlesex	Made payment to town treasury
Thomas Penery	Misc	5/15/1732				Medford	Middlesex	Made payment to town treasury
Edward Penry	Misc	5/14/1781				Sherborn	Middlesex	Made payment to town treasury
Elizabeth Penery	Marriage	12/14/1727			John Fisk	Watertown	Middlesex	
Joseph Penry	Marriage	8/25/1736			Elizabeth Kiney	Walpole	Norfolk	
James Penery	Birth	1/12/1739	Francis Penery	Hannah Penery		Halifax	Plymouth	
Susannah Penery	Birth	1/16/1735	Francis Penery	Hannah Penery		Halifax	Plymouth	
Asa Penery	Birth	10/18/1737	Francis Penery	Hannah Penery		Halifax	Plymouth	
Mary Penry	Marriage	4/30/1696			Samuel Vis	Boston	Suffolk	
Saran or Sarah Penry	Death	8/18/1837	John Penry	Hannah Penery		Sutton	Worcester	She was age 87 at death so was born in 1750

Unfortunately, none of these records offer up one that might be John Penry of Canterbury, Connecticut.

Possibly Our John Penre?

The most provocative record comes from *New York Colonial Muster Rolls 1664-1775*. In “*A Muster Roll of the Men Raised and Past Muster for Dutchess County for Capt Isaac Ter Bush’s Company 1762*” (State Historian of the State of New York, 1898) is the record of a John Penree, age 20, born in Wales, who enlisted on April 1, 1762 (so he was born about 1742). He is the right age to have married Sarah Wentworth, who was born in 1744, and the spelling of his name in the enlistment record is very similar to the spelling in the marriage record (Penree, Penre).

But how and why did he make his way to Canterbury? A map (below) of Dutchess County shows it borders the state of Connecticut on the west. The fact that Canterbury was about 100 miles away indicates the need for more research to understand why a young man would travel there between 1762 and 1765 when John Penre married Sarah Wentworth. However, this John Penree is our best candidate so far.



Works Cited

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