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Two Probates and Three Richards: Who Was Richard Bedell of Hempstead, Queens County, New York?

By Shannon Green, CG

Multiple probates and multiple families for Richard Bedell led to confusion, compounded by multiple same-named men. Thorough research separated the identities.

Richard Bedell's estate was administered in 1857. Richard Bedell's will was proved in 1878. Do both proceedings pertain to the same man, despite differing death dates and heirs-at-law? At the same time three adult Richard Bedells lived in Hempstead, Queens County, New York. Which was the testator? Proving the probates refer to the same decedent, then distinguishing the three Richards provided answers.

INTESTATE RICHARD

Richard Bedell died intestate on 22 December 1854.¹ He was buried in the Rushmore Addition to Hempstead's Old Town Burying Ground, lot thirty-two. His tombstone's inscribed age gives Richard a calculated birthdate of 1 March 1771. Two other Bedell men were interred in lot thirty-two: another Richard who died in 1867 and Joseph who died in 1869.²

The court granted letters of administration to Richard's son Charles more than two years after Richard's death.³ Beginning in 1830 New York law required probate

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1. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/usprobateny/>) > Queens > Administrations Records, 1855–1857 > image 428, Queens Co., N.Y., Richard Bedell estate, Charles H. Bedell, Application for Letters of Administration, 20 March 1857.

2. John Dean Fish, "Inscriptions from Hempstead's Old Town Burying Ground, the Rushmore Addition," *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 55 (July 1924): 245.

3. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/005526562>), digital film 005526562, image 474, Queen's Co., N.Y., Surrogate's Court, Richard Bedell estate, Charles H. Bedell, Letters of Administration, I:95, 30 March 1857.

petitions to name the heirs-at-law, even if no will existed.⁴ Charles Bedell identified intestate Richard's heirs-at-law: his widow Elizabeth and four children—Jordan Bedell, Augusta Southard, Mary Frost, and Charles H. Bedell.⁵ The one-hundred-dollar administrator's bond indicates Richard's personal estate was minimal.⁶ Surrogate court files contain no inventory or final account.⁷

TESTATE RICHARD

In 1878 Richard's son Charles presented his father's will for probate.⁸ Richard's will names his wife Elizabeth and children Jordan, Augusta, Mary, and Charles.⁹ The probate petition indicates Richard died in December 1851 and left a widow, Elizabeth, who had since died, and four children: Jordan Bedell; Mary Bedell, wife of Elisha Bedell; Charles H. Bedell; and Rosetta Fowler. The testator's daughter, Augusta Southard, had since died. The file notes no previous administration or explanation for the extended gap between the testator's death and the will's submission to the court.

TWO PROBATES, ONE DECEDENT

Comparison of heirs listed in the will and two probate petitions shows all three documents refer to the same family, aside from the curious addition of Rosetta

4. Gordon L. Remington, *New York State Probate Records: A Genealogist's Guide to Testate and Intestate Records*, 2nd ed. (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2011), 33–34. Also, Isaac Dayton, *The Office of Surrogate, Surrogates' Courts, and Executors, Administrators, and Guardians, in the State of New York*, 3rd ed. (New York: Banks & Brothers, 1861), 150–52, 242–43.

5. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry*, Queens Co., Richard Bedell estate, Charles H. Bedell, Application for Letters of Administration, 20 March 1857.

6. *Ibid.* > image 427, Richard Bedell estate, administrators' bond, 20 March 1857. The law at the time required a bond at least twice the value of the personal estate: Dayton, *The Office of Surrogate . . .*, 242.

7. "New York, Queens County Probate Records, 1785–1950," *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1916211>) > Inventories of accounting 1856–1857 and Inventories of accounting 1857–1858; no inventory was filed; author's image-by-image search. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/005526556>), digital film 005526556, images 311–603, Queens Co., Accounts of executors and administrators, vol. 2, 1857–1865; no final account was included; author's image-by-image search.

8. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* > Queens > Probate Records, 1878 > image 91, Queens Co., Richard Bedell estate, Charles H. Bedell, Petition for Letters Testamentary, 31 July 1878. In the form's preprinted text "year one thousand eight hundred and seventy ____," "seventy" is overstruck and replaced with "fifty." The word "four" is handwritten in the blank, overstruck, and replaced with "one," indicating death occurred in 1851. The "one" appears to have been written in different ink at a different time.

9. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* > Queens > Wills Records, 1877–1878 > images 473–76, Queens Co., Richard Bedell, will, written 2 August 1851, proved 23 August 1878.

Fowler in the 1878 petition. See table 1. Daughter Mary's first husband, Israel Frost, apparently died and she married Elisha Bedell in 1859, which explains her surname change.¹⁰

Table 1
Heirs of Richard Bedell

WILL WRITTEN, 1851 ^a	PROBATE PETITION, 1857 ^b	PROBATE PETITION, 1878 ^c
wife, Elizabeth	widow, Elizabeth	widow, Elizabeth, "since deceased"
child, Jordan Bedell	child, Jordan Bedell	child, Jordan Bedell
child, Mary, wife of Israel Frost	child, Mary Frost	child, Mary Bedell, wife of Elisha Bedell
child, Charles Henry Bedell	child, Charles H. Bedell	child, Charles H. Bedell
child, Augusta Southard	child, Augusta Southard	grandchild, Priscilla [Southard] Smith, wife of Abram Smith and dau. of Augusta Southard, deceased child, Rosetta Fowler

Sources:

a. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/usprobateny/>) > Queens > Wills Records, 1877–1878 > images 473–76, Queens County, N.Y., Richard Bedell, will, written 2 August 1851, proved 23 August 1878.

b. *Ibid.* > Administrations Records, 1855–1857 > image 428, Queens Co., Richard Bedell estate, Charles H. Bedell, Application for Letters of Administration, 20 March 1857.

c. *Ibid.* > Probate Records, 1878 > image 91, Queens Co., Richard Bedell estate, Charles H. Bedell, Petition for Letters Testamentary, 31 July 1878.

10. For Mary's first marriage, see "Married," *Long-Island Farmer and Queens County Advertiser* (Jamaica, N.Y.), 18 July 1843, p. 3, col. 3; Israel Frost to "Miss Mary daughter of Richard Beedle, Esq." For second marriage, see *ibid.*, 6 September 1859, p. 3, col. 1; Elisha Bedell of Hempstead to Mary Frost.

The Richard Bedell who died in 1867 and was buried with intestate Richard left a will identifying a brother, Joseph Bedell, and a sister, Rhoda Fowler.¹¹ The 1868 probate petition for his estate identifies half siblings Jordan Bedell; Mary Bedell, wife of Elisha Bedell; and Charles Henry Bedell and half niece Priscilla (Southard) Smith, daughter of Augusta Southard deceased.¹²

Joseph Bedell died in 1869, two years after his brother Richard. Joseph was also buried with intestate Richard who died in 1854. Joseph left a will bequeathing everything to his sister, Rozatta Fowler.¹³ The probate petition for Joseph's estate identifies the same half siblings and half niece as the probate petition for his brother's estate.¹⁴ Richard, Joseph, and Rosetta were, therefore, children from one marriage and the other children—Jordan, Augusta, Mary, and Charles—were from a different union.

Intestate Richard Bedell's death date on his tombstone, 22 December 1854, matches the death date reported in the 1857 probate petition. Testate Richard's son Charles reported his father's death as December 1851 when he petitioned the court to probate his father's estate in 1878. He likely misremembered the year his father died, a reasonable assumption given almost twenty-four years had passed. The death month is the same.

Intestate and testate Richards were one man with two different families. Evidence in town, county, and federal records shows which Richard Bedell of Hempstead he was.

MULTIPLE RICHARD BEDELLS IN HEMPSTEAD

Only one Richard Bedell appears in the Queens County enumerations of 1790, 1800, and 1810.¹⁵ Nevertheless, at least three adult men by this name had

11. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* > Queens > Wills Records, 1867–1868 > images 417–20, Queens Co., Richard Bedell, will, 23 February 1864, proved 21 May 1868.

12. *Ibid.* > Probate Records, 1868 > images 108–19, specifically 119, Queens Co., Richard Bedell estate, Joseph Bedell, Petition for Letters Testamentary, 7 May 1868.

13. "New York Probate Records, 1629–1971," *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1920234>) > Queens > Wills 1867–1871 vol 14–17 > images 507–8, will book 16:135–38, Joseph Bedell, will, 11 September 1869, recorded 11 January 1870.

14. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* > Queens > Probate Records, 1869–1870 > images 356–65, specifically 365, Queens Co., Joseph Bedell estate, Rozatta Fowler, Petition for Letters Testamentary, 14 December 1869. Records variously refer to Rosetta as Rosatti, Rozatta, and Rhoda.

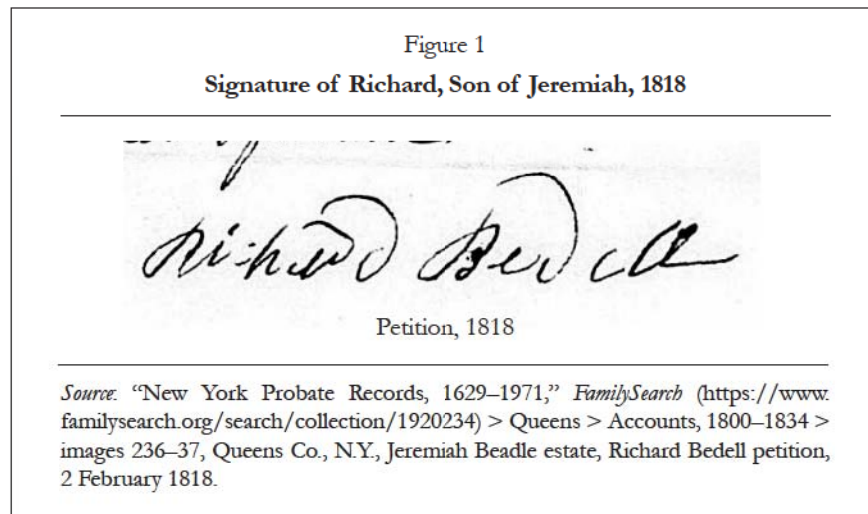
15. Hempstead was located in Queens County until 1899 when it became part of the newly formed Nassau County. See John H. Long, ed., *New York Atlas of Historical County Boundaries* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 153–55. 1790 U.S. census, Queens Co., N.Y., South Hempstead, p. 70 (penned), Richard Beedle; microfilm publication M637, roll 6; National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington, D.C. Also, 1800 U.S. census, Queens Co., N.Y., Hempstead, p. 564 (penned), Richard Beagle; NARA microfilm M32, roll 25. All Bedell families in town appear as "Beagle" in 1800 census. Also, 1810 U.S. census, Queens Co., N.Y., Hempstead, p. 412 (penned), Richd Bedell; NARA microfilm M252, roll 34.

connections to Hempstead. Which was the Richard Bedell who died in 1854, whose estate was administered in 1857, and whose will was probated in 1878?

Richard, Son of Jeremiah

Jeremiah Bedell married Mary Balden in 1745.¹⁶ He was still “of South Hempstead” and married to Mary in 1787 when he wrote his will, which included bequests to his son Richard.¹⁷ A published genealogy suggests he had ten children with Mary.¹⁸ Its list of children matches the names in his will but also includes children not named in the will.

Richard Bedell, son of Jeremiah, petitioned the court in 1818. He wanted an accounting from the surviving executor of his father’s estate.¹⁹ The response informed him of debt against the estate, so no inheritance was paid.²⁰ Although only one signature sample was found for Richard, son of Jeremiah, it distinctively differs from those of the other two Richard Bedells. See figure 1.



16. Benjamin D. Hicks, “Records of St. George’s Church, Hempstead, L.I., from June 5, 1725—Marriages,” *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 12 (April 1881): 82. Jerimiah Bedle Jr. and Mary Balden married 26 April 1745.

17. “New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999,” *Ancestry* > Queens > Wills Records, 1787–1795 > images 111–13, Queens Co., Jeremiah Bedel, will, 2 June 1787, proved 16 March 1789.

18. Mary Powell Bunker, *Long Island Genealogies: Families of Albertson, Andrews, Bedell, . . . Wright, and Other Families Being Kindred Descendants of Thomas Powell, of Bethpage, L.I., 1688* (Albany, N.Y.: Joel Munsell’s Sons, 1895), 173–74.

19. “New York Probate Records, 1629–1971,” *FamilySearch* > Queens > Accounts, 1800–1834 > image 236–37, Queens Co., Jeremiah Beadle estate, Richard Bedell petition, 2 February 1818.

20. *Ibid.*, images 230–31, Queens Co., Jeremiah Beadle estate, Thomas Clowes, Account of administration on the estate of Jeremiah Beadle, 12 February 1818.

Before February 1818 Jeremiah's son Richard moved from Hempstead to Saratoga County, New York.²¹ This was possibly Richard Bedell, born 10 April 1762 in Hempstead, and died 20 December 1851, who is buried with his wife, Ruth (Clements) Bedell, in Watervliet, Albany County, New York.²² No probate was found for Richard or Ruth.²³

Richard, Son of Joseph

Richard, son of Joseph, received personal and real estate by Joseph's 1784 will. Among other bequests, Richard and his brother Silvester were to share a piece of land.²⁴ Only one Richard Bedell appears in the 1790 Hempstead census, just three households from Silvester. They were likely Joseph's sons.²⁵

One Richard Bedell was enumerated in the 1800 census. Only one was assessed tax on real and personal estates 1799–1803. Richard's real estate was worth significantly more than Silvester's.²⁶ This difference agrees with the terms of their father's will, which gives more real and personal property to Richard than to Silvester. No evidence shows Richard sold the land he inherited from his father before 1820, so the census and tax records likely refer to Richard, son of Joseph.²⁷ Similarly, the lone Richard Bedell in the 1810 Hempstead census is likely Joseph's son Richard.²⁸

21. "New York Probate Records, 1629–1971," *FamilySearch* > Queens > Accounts, 1800–1834 > image 237, Queens Co., Jeremiah Beadle estate, Richard Bedell petition, 2 February 1818.

22. "Menands, New York, Albany Rural Cemetery Burial Cards, 1791–2011," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/albanycemburialcards/>), entry for Richard Bedell, died 20 December 1851. *Ibid.*, entry for Ruth Clements Bedell, died 18 December 1854.

23. "New York Probate Records, 1629–1971," *FamilySearch* > Albany > Wills and Administration index 1787–1895 > image 15, chronological list by first letter of last name for wills. Also, *ibid.*, image 136, chronological list by first letter of last name for administrations.

24. "New York County, New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1658–1880 (NYSA)," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/general-60387/>) > J0043-92: Record of Wills and Probates, 1664–1799 > Vol 035–039, 1782–1787 > images 171–72, New York Co., N.Y., Joseph Beadle, will, will book 36:247–48, 15 January 1784, proved 10 February 1784.

25. 1790 U.S. census, Queens Co., N.Y., South Hempstead, p. 70 (penned), Sylvester Beedle, Richard Beedle.

26. 1800 U.S. census, Queens Co., N.Y., Hempstead, p. 564 (penned), Richard Beagle. "New York, Tax Assessment Rolls of Real and Personal Estates, 1799–1804," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/nytaxassessment/>) > Queens > 1799 > Hempstead > image 4, Sylvester Bedell, and image 5, Richard Bedell. *Ibid.*, 1800 > Hempstead > image 4, Sylvester Bedell, and image 5, Richard Bedell. *Ibid.*, 1801 > Hempstead > image 4, Sylvester Bedell and Richard Bedell. *Ibid.*, 1802 > Hempstead > image 5, Sylvester Bedell and Richard Bedell. *Ibid.*, 1803 > Hempstead > image 5, Sylvester Bedell and Richard Bedell.

27. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008122285>), digital film 008122285, images 368–78, Queens Co., Grantor index B, 1686–Nov 1871; no listing for Richard Bedell as grantor 1784–1820; author's image-by-image search.

28. 1810 U.S. census, Queens Co., N.Y., Hempstead, p. 412 (penned), Richd Bedell.

Meanwhile, Richard Bedell took a prominent role in Hempstead's governance. He served as town clerk for one year beginning 7 April 1795.²⁹ He was elected town supervisor from 1802–1810 and again 1812–1818.³⁰ He was justice of the peace in 1814.³¹ In these capacities he left examples of his distinctive signature, encompassing the years 1795–1826. His 1814 oath before a Queens County surrogate calls him “Richard Bedell, Esq of Hempstead in the sd. County yeoman”—a description consistent with land ownership and respect within the community.³²

In 1810 Richard Bedell was appointed guardian of the late Zophar Hawkins's minor son.³³ Two years later, Richard sold a portion of Zophar's estate in Rockaway, Queens County, presumably acting as guardian.³⁴ The 1812 deed identifies Richard's wife as Mary; his signature on the guardian record connects him to the Richard Bedell who was active in government. See figure 2.

Ages reported on census records suggest a birth range of 1756–1765.³⁵ Richard Bedell married Mary Pearsall in 1784 at St. George's Church, an Episcopalian church in Hempstead.³⁶ This record likely pertains to Joseph's son Richard because the date aligns with his reported age and the wife's given name matches that in the 1812 deed. His birth-year range is also consistent with someone who served as town clerk and town supervisor.

29. Town of Hempstead, N.Y., Indentures – 1788–1797, p. 17 of “Town Records” [each section restarts pagination], for Richard Beadle elected as town clerk; Town Hall, Hempstead.

30. Ibid, p. 41 of Town Records, for Richard Bedell elected as supervisor in 1802. Notations of town supervisor appear throughout this book. Also, “Town of Hempstead Elected Officials,” spreadsheet prepared in Town Clerk's Office; Archives, Town Hall, Hempstead.

31. “New York, Queens County Probate Records, 1785–1950,” *FamilySearch* > Inventories of accounting 1814–1817 > image 45, Queens Co., William Pettit estate, oaths of Samuel Elderd and Barnabas Pettit, 14 April 1814.

32. “New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999,” *Ancestry* > Queens > Wills Records, 1812–1817 > images 259–60, Queens Co., Phebe Smith, will, 3 August 1813, proved 13 October 1814.

33. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008350235>), digital film no. 008350235, image 142, Queens Co., Surrogate's Court, Guardian Proceedings, vol. 1, 1803–1823, loose papers (rough date order), Richard Hawkins, petition for a guardian, 25 July 1810.

34. Ibid. (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008627615>), digital film no. 008627615, images 68–69, Queens Co., Deed book 179:169–71, Richard Bedell to Henry Hewlett, 13 April 1812, rec. 4 June 1860.

35. 1790 U.S. census, Queens Co., N.Y., South Hempstead, p. 70 (penned), Richard Beedle. Also, 1800 U.S. census, Queens Co., N.Y., Hempstead, p. 564 (penned), Richard Beagle. Also, 1810 U.S. census, Queens Co., N.Y., Hempstead, p. 412 (penned), Richd Bedell.

36. Hicks, “Records of St. George's Church, Hempstead, L.I.,” *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 15 (October 1884): 176. Richard “Bedel” married Mary Pearsall 22 February 1784.

Figure 2

Signatures of Richard, Son of Joseph, 1795–1826

 A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rich^d. Beadle Town Clerk". The signature is written on a light-colored, slightly textured paper.
Town Clerk, 1795^a

 A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rich^d. Beadle Guardian". The signature is written on a light-colored, slightly textured paper.
Guardian, 1810^b

 A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rich^d. Beadle Justice of the Peace". The signature is written on a light-colored, slightly textured paper.
Justice of the Peace, 1814^c

 A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rich^d. Beadle Late Supervisor". The signature is written on a light-colored, slightly textured paper.
Late Supervisor, 1826^d*Sources:*

a. Town of Hempstead, N.Y., Indentures – 1788–1797, p. 16 of “Indenture Records” [each section restarts pagination], for Richard Beadle as Town Clerk; Town Hall, Hempstead.

b. *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008350235>), digital film no. 008350235, image 142, Queens Co., N.Y., Surrogate’s Court, Guardian Proceedings, vol. 1, 1803–1823, loose papers (rough date order), Richard Hawkins, petition for a guardian, 25 July 1810.

c. “New York, Queens County Probate Records, 1785–1950,” *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1916211>) > Inventories of accounting 1814–1817 > image 45, Queens Co., William Pettit estate, oaths of Samuel Elderd and Barnabas Pettit, 14 April 1814.

d. Town of Hempstead, Indentures – 1788–1797, paper receipt inserted between pp. 76 and 77 of Town Records. This is an 1826 approval of expenses from 1816 for Richard Bedell as Late Supervisor.

Richard, Son of Abijah

Richard, son of Abijah, was executor for three relatives' estates. Richard's signature in these probate files links them:

- Uriah Bedell, will proved 1816, his probable uncle³⁷
- Abijah Bedell, will proved 1817, his father³⁸
- Abijah Jr., will proved 1824, his brother³⁹

Uriah Bedell's estate settlement led to a partition suit in 1821 between Uriah's daughter and four minors represented by their guardian, Richard Bedell: Rosetta Bedell, Amos Bedell, Richard Bedell Jr., and Joseph Bedell.⁴⁰ The following information suggests the minors were children of Richard, son of Abijah:

- "Rosattie" Bedell, born 28 December 1804 and the daughter of Richard Bedell and Mary Smith, was baptized along with her parents in Christ's First Presbyterian Church of Hempstead.⁴¹ Nineteen years later "Miss Rhoda Bedell, daughter of Richard Bedell, Esq." married Felix Fowler in Hempstead.⁴²
- Amos Bedell died intestate in 1830 and Richard Bedell was administrator of his late son's estate.⁴³
- Richard Bedell Jr. died on 3 October 1867. His probate petition for his estate identifies Rhoda Fowler as a full-blooded sister; therefore, his parents were also

37. For role as executor, "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* > Queens > Wills Records, 1812–1817 > images 360–64, Queens Co., Uriah Bedell, will, 18 April 1813, proved 26 March 1816. For probable uncle, Henry Alanson Treadwell Jr., "Robert Bedell of Hempstead, Long Island, and His Descendants," *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 72 (April 1941): 147. Also, both Uriah and Abijah Sr.'s wills include land in the Hicks Neck part of Hempstead. They both chose the same executors: Reuben Pine and Richard Bedell.

38. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* > Queens > Wills Records, 1812–1817 > images 496–98, Queens Co., Abijah Beedle Sr., will, 15 March 1817, proved 16 April 1817. The will specifies their relationship.

39. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* > Queens > Real Estate Wills, Vol E, 1821–1827 > images 121–22, Queens Co., Abijah Beadle, will, 14 July 1823, proved 21 June 1824. The will specifies their relationship.

40. "Queens County Common Pleas," *Long Island Farmer* (Jamaica, N.Y.), 13 December 1821, p. 3, col. 5.

41. John Dean Fish, "History and Vital Records of Christ's First Presbyterian Church of Hempstead, Long Island, New York," *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record* 53 (October 1922): 388. The baptisms took place 8 September 1805.

42. "Married," *National Advocate* (New York, N.Y.), 23 January 1823, p. 2, col. 5. Records variously refer to her as Rosattie, Rosetta, Rozatta, and Rhoda.

43. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* > Queens > Letters of Administration, Vol C–G, 1815–1847 > image 455, Queens Co., Amos Bedell estate, Richard Bedell, Letters of Administration, 2 March 1830.

Richard Bedell and Mary Smith.⁴⁴ His age at death calculates to a birthdate of 7 May 1808.⁴⁵

- Joseph Bedell died on 17 November 1869. The probate petition identifies Rozatta Fowler as a sister and others as half siblings.⁴⁶ Therefore, his parents were also Richard Bedell and Mary Smith. His gravestone indicates he was born on 3 January 1811.⁴⁷

This list of children matches that from the first marriage for the Richard Bedell whose estate was probated twice. The signature on the will presented for probate in 1878 is similar to the signatures attributed to Richard, son of Abijah. See figure 3.

Richard, son of Abijah, likely lived with his father until his father's death in 1817, explaining Richard's absence as head of a census household before then. In 1810 Abijah's household included a man and woman age forty-five and over—likely Abijah and his wife. Others in the household could be Richard, his wife, and three children born before 1810.⁴⁸ In 1820 five Richard Bedells appear in Queens County, but only one household includes a man forty-five and over. His name appears on the same page as Felix Fowler, a future son-in-law of Richard, son of Abijah, suggesting this could be he.⁴⁹

Richard, son of Abijah, had connections to Christ's First Presbyterian Church of Hempstead. He, his wife, and daughter Rosattie were baptized there in 1805.⁵⁰ Identified as Rhoda, his daughter married at the church in 1823.⁵¹ Richard's first wife likely died, as Richard married second Elizabeth Elsworth in 1820 in the same church.⁵²

44. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* > Queens > Probate Records, 1868 > image 119, Queens Co., Richard Bedell estate, Joseph Bedell, Petition for Letters Testamentary, 7 May 1868.

45. Fish, "Inscriptions from Hempstead's Old Town Burying Ground, the Rushmore Addition," 245. Richard died 3 October 1867 at 59 years, 4 months, and 26 days.

46. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* > Queens > Probate Records, 1869–1870 > image 365, Queens Co., Joseph Bedell estate, Rozatta Fowler, Petition for Letters Testamentary, 14 December 1869.

47. Fish, "Inscriptions from Hempstead's Old Town Burying Ground, the Rushmore Addition," 245.

48. 1810 U.S. census, Queens Co., N.Y., Hempstead, p. 281 (penned), Abijah Bedell.

49. 1820 U.S. census, Queens Co., N.Y., population schedule, [no town stated], pp. 5-A, 12-A, 13-A, 68-B (all penned), for Richard Bedell households; NARA microfilm M33, roll 78. *Ibid.*, p. 23-A (penned) for Richard Bedell and Felix Fowler households. The Queens County census was not divided into townships.

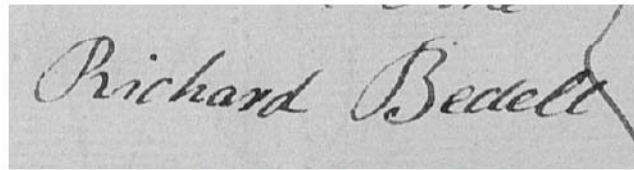
50. Fish, "History and Vital Records of Christ's First Presbyterian Church of Hempstead, Long Island, New York," 388.

51. *Ibid.*, vol. 53 (July 1922): 244.

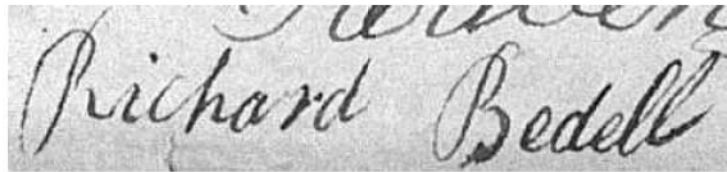
52. *Ibid.*, 243.

Figure 3

Signatures of Richard, Son of Abijah, 1816–1851



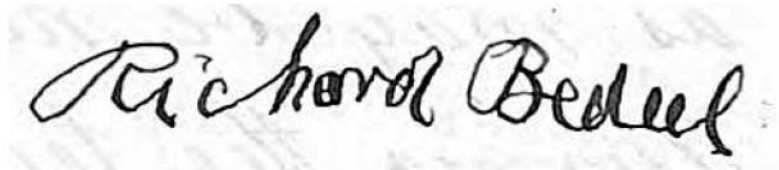
Uriah Bedell Estate Inventory, 1816^b



Abijah Bedell Estate Inventory, 1817^a



Abijah Bedell [Jr.] Estate Inventory, 1824^c



Richard Bedell's Will, 1851^d

Sources:

a. "New York, Queens County Probate Records, 1785–1950," *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1916211>) > Inventories of accounting 1814–1817 > image 335, Queens Co., N.Y., Uriah Bedell estate, inventory, 27 April 1816.

b. *Ibid.* > Inventories of accounting 1817–1820 > image 112, Queens Co., Abijah Bedell estate, inventory, 16 October 1817.

c. *Ibid.* > Inventories of accounting 1899–1852 > images 270–77, Queens Co., Abijah Bedell [Jr.] estate, inventory, 29 June 1824.

d. "New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/usprobateny/>) > Queens > Wills Records, 1877–1878 > images 473–76, Queens Co., Richard Bedell, will, written 2 August 1851, proved 23 August 1878.

Signatures Comparison

The signatures of the three Richard Bedells are distinctive, while other records do not characterize the men. No middle initial, occupation, or other note distinguishes the men in town and court records.⁵³ Both Richard, son of Joseph, and Richard, son of Abijah, married women named Mary. Both used the notation “Esq.” at times.

Other distinctions, however, emerge among the three men. Richard, son of Jeremiah, relocated from Hempstead. Richard, son of Abijah, affiliated with the Presbyterian church, whereas Richard, son of Joseph, married in the Episcopalian church. Richard, son of Joseph, was involved with town governance; Richard, son of Abijah, was not. Signatures on extant documents connect the records and allow three identities to emerge.

CONCLUSION

Multiple probates and multiple families for Richard Bedell led to confusion, compounded by two other adult Richard Bedells in Hempstead. Thorough research, including signature comparisons, separates their identities.

- Two probates usually indicate separate individuals. Comparison of heirs-at-law, however, confirmed the proceedings of 1857 and 1878 pertained to one Richard who died in December 1854.
- Charles Bedell did not comply with the law when he omitted three surviving children from Richard’s first marriage as heirs-at-law in his 1857 petition for administration.
- The list of children for Richard, son of Abijah, correlates with children from the first marriage of the Richard who died in December 1854.
- Richard’s signature from his 1851 will appears similar, although in a shakier hand, to his earlier signatures.

Richard Bedell whose estate was probated in 1857 and 1878 is one man—Richard, son of Abijah Bedell.

53. Town supervisor records, which might contain distinctions are no longer extant for the time period: Thomas Saltzman, Hempstead Town Historian, interview by Shannon Green, 23 October 2018; notes held by interviewer. Town meeting records for the time period 1787–1820 provide no distinctions: Town of Hempstead, *Indentures – 1788–1797*, page-by-page search; Town Hall, Hempstead. This bound volume contains a variety of records, including the original town meeting notes, which cover 198 pages. The town records portion of this book was numbered separately from the rest of the book and the pagination added at a later date. There are several references to “Richard Beadle,” all without distinguishing characteristics. Therefore, it is impossible to say which Richard Bedell they refer to, except where signatures accompanied a role such as town clerk, town supervisor, or justice of the peace.