

An important update: After the completion of the sketch given below I came across a new piece of evidence related to Catherine Mathews, wife of John Markham. The sketch below is written from the point of view that Catherine Mathews is the likely daughter of Col Peter Mathews and his wife Bridget. It addresses concerns about the year of her birth, and whether or not she is a good candidate as the mother of all of John Markham's children. The new piece of evidence that has surfaced, suggests that Catherine Mathews might be the granddaughter, rather than daughter, of Col Peter Mathews. This idea needs further study. At the close of this sketch I have added some further discussion under a subheading titled, "Catherine Mathews – A fresh idea to explore."

Sketch: A Wife for John Markham by Pamela Hutchison Garrett



Dress of Colonial Virginia

Despite a diligent search, I have never found an original document or significant historical evidence of the wife of John Markham. In my own branch of the Markham family it has been readily accepted that her name was Catherine Mathews. Beyond the name, family "legends" vary considerably as to just who Catherine Mathews was. My personal search for a wife for John Markham has been fascinating. As I have studied and weighed the evidence I have decided to accept the family tradition that John Markham was married to Catherine Mathews. But – Who is Catherine Mathews?

In 1896 Mrs Flournoy "Liddie" Rivers, published her Markham Genealogy in the "Virginia Magazine of History". It includes the earliest statement I have found related to the wife of John Markham. She states, ". . . John Markham, of England, who came in 1720 to New York, married Catharine Mathews, daughter of the Governor of the Colony, afterwards settled in Virginia (Chesterfield county) . . . "

This brief statement opens up several avenues for research. It recounts two traditions related to John Markham's wife: Her name was Catharine Mathews and she was the daughter of the Governor of the Colony. It also suggests that John Markham and Catherine Mathews were married in New York and moved to Virginia. We will postpone the discussion about whether Catherine Mathews was the daughter of the Governor. For now it is helpful to note that Markham descendants had the tradition that John Markham's wife was named Catherine Mathews, and that she had connections to New York and a Colonial Governor.

In the past fifty years, researchers and family historians have identified Catherine Mathews as the daughter of Col Peter Mathews of Albany, New York. Evidence to support this idea is good. From the study of Wills and deeds we can clearly state that Col Peter Mathews and his wife Bridget had a daughter named Catherine Mathews. They also had a son Vincent Mathews

and a daughter Flora Mathews. Col Peter Mathews may have had an oldest son Fletcher Mathews, but some questions remain about him. The Mathews family had a familial relationship with New York Colonial Governor Benjamin Fletcher. More details on the Mathews family will be added to the database, and it will confirm that Col Peter Mathews had a daughter Catherine Mathews.

The idea that John Markham married Catherine Mathews, daughter of Peter Mathews, is not as easily proven. No marriage license has been found and the existing evidence is circumstantial at best. But, researchers can point to the naming of John Markham's children. In his 1770 Will, John Markham names nine children. Six of those children have names that come directly from the Markham family. But the names of his children Vincent Markham and Catherine Markham must surely come from the Mathews family as they had never appeared previously in the Markham repertoire. The names Vincent and Catherine carried down through the Markham family for several generations.

Another encouraging piece of evidence appeared in an article about the Parshall family which was written by Margaret Wallace and appeared in the Orange County Post (New York) in 1967. The article was shared with me by Elizabeth Finley Frazier. Jonathan Parshall came to the Little Britain area of Orange county New York in the 1730's and eventually purchased property from John Markham. In 1807, when members of the Parshall family were passing this property down within the family, they state, "... a certain tract of 607 acres formerly conveyed by John Markham and Catherine his wife to Jonathan Parshall..." They are referring to a much older transaction, probably about 1749, that names the wife of John Markham as Catherine. This is the only reference to a legal document I have found naming Catherine as a wife of John Markham.

A final bit of circumstantial evidence lends favor to the Markham – Mathews' alliance. It is not clear where Catherine Mathews was living after the death of her parents in 1719 and 1721, but her brother Vincent Mathews took up residence in the area around New Windsor and Little Britain in Orange county New York. He was a neighbor to John Markham. Another near neighbor, Cadwallader Colden, mentions Flora Mathews in his correspondence. Flora Mathews was Catherine Mathews' younger sister. Obviously these Orange county New York families were tied together by friendship. It would follow that the Mathews family was acquainted with John Markham.

Another interesting twist to the story of Catherine Mathews is the discovery that she was married before 1730 to a New York mariner named James Eustace. In the New York Colonial Patents there is a deed, dated 30 September 1730, which names the following children of Col Peter Matthews and Bridget his wife, both deceased: Vincent Matthews, only son and heir at law and Cathalina his wife; James Eustace, late of New York mariner and Katherine his wife and Flora Matthews. The deed is signed by Flora Matthews, James Eustace and others. Then in the 1735 Will of Elizabeth Deene, close friend and possible relative of the Mathews family, one of the witnesses is Katharine Eustace. Elizabeth Deene was another Orange county New York

neighbor to John Markham and Vincent Mathews. The fact that Katharine Eustace witnessed her will suggests that she was "in the neighborhood" in 1735.

I have not found further records of James and Katherine (Catherine) Eustace. I speculate that James Eustace died and Catherine Mathews Eustace was secondly married to John Markham. From the deed mentioned above, we know that Catherine Mathews was married to James Eustace before September 1730, but we do not know whether James Eustace was alive in 1735 when Katherine (Catherine) Eustace witnessed the Will of Elizabeth Deene. Catherine Mathews Eustace was probably married to John Markham sometime between 1735-1737.



To this point the information available about Catherine Mathews gives good support to the idea that she married John Markham. But, for me, there is one remaining issue that places the Markham – Mathews marriage on shaky ground. The question is – When was Catherine Mathews born? This becomes a very important question in determining whether she could be the mother of John Markham's nine children. There are no birth records for the early 1700's in New York and no Bible Record has ever been found for the Mathews family, so we are left to speculate on Catherine Mathews' birthdate.

The first piece of evidence is the 1703 Census of the City of New York. It places three male and two female children in the household of Capt Matthews. If the two female children are Catherine Mathews and her younger sister Flora Mathews, then it is likely that Catherine Mathews was born by or before 1700. Of course, Peter Mathews and his wife Bridget could have had other daughters after the 1703 census.

The second piece of evidence is the Will of Bridget Mathews, widow of Peter Mathews. She died about January 1721 in New York. Her Will names three children - ". . . my only son, Vincent Matthews; my eldest daughter Catherine; my daughter Flora". She leaves to her daughter Catherine a negro girl and to her daughter Flora a negro girl and a negro boy. She also leaves to her daughters some wearing apparel, jewels and household stuff and mentions that they have already received some small pieces of plate and other small wares. There is really nothing in the wording of the Will to help us determine the age of these daughters but it might be thought that they were above the age of twelve. If we speculate that Catherine Mathews, the oldest daughter, is about sixteen that would give her a birth year of about 1705.

The third piece of evidence is a deed dated May 1723 which describes Catherine Mathews and Flora Mathews as spinsters. Generally that would suggest that both young women were age eighteen or older. But, occasionally the term spinster might be applied to a girl as young as

fifteen. If we speculate that in 1723 Catherine Mathews is eighteen and her sister Flora is fifteen or sixteen, we would again have a birth year around 1705 for Catherine Mathews.

A 1705 birthdate for Catherine Mathews is better than a birthdate of 1700 or earlier. The 1705 date would suggest that she was not born when the 1703 census was taken; that she was about fourteen when her father died and sixteen when her mother died; that she was about eighteen when she was called a spinster in 1723; that she was married to James Eustace before or by the age of twenty-five; and that she was secondly married to John Markham when she was in her early thirties.

Birthdates in the 1700's are often difficult to establish. We do not have definite birthdates for the children of John Markham, but we can estimate that his nine children were born between 1735 and 1760. A discussion of each child's estimated birthdate would be too lengthy for our purposes here, but it might be helpful to point out that John Markham appears to have six older children born by 1750 and then three younger children, born closer to 1760. This could possibly suggest two wives. Please note that this picture of John Markham's family is highly speculative. A more detailed discussion can be found in the sketch titled, **The Question of a Second Marriage for John Markham**. If Catherine Mathews was born about 1705 and gave birth to six children between about 1735-1750, she would have been about age forty five when her youngest child was born. If John Markham had two or three children around the year 1760, then Catherine Mathews, daughter of Col Peter Mathews, would be a poor candidate for their mother.

Sometime between 1748-1752, John Markham moved his family from Orange county New York to Chesterfield county Virginia. Earlier in this sketch a deed was mentioned wherein "John Markham and his wife Catherine" sell their New York property to Jonathan Parshall. I have never seen the deed and remain confused as to the exact dating, but I think that it refers to a transaction that was made in 1749. If that is correct, then we could assume that John Markham's wife Catherine was alive in 1749 and was probably contemplating the move to Virginia along with her husband. But, I have never found any further record of John Markham's wife Catherine after that time. Nor have I found any mention of a second wife for John Markham.

I favor Catherine Mathews, daughter of Col Peter Mathews and his wife Bridget, as the wife of John Markham. Placing her birthdate around 1705 and identifying her as the mother of the six older Markham children seems feasible. But, I will put forth two other possibilities, in the form of questions, which I will continue to consider:

Was Catherine Mathews, daughter of Col Peter Mathews, born as late as 1710-1715, and was she the mother of all of John Markham's children?

Was John Markham's wife a different Catherine Mathews, perhaps the niece or granddaughter of Col Peter Mathews? There are records of a Fletcher Mathews in 1710 and 1714 in Albany,

New York. It has been difficult to determine whether he is a brother or son to Col Peter Mathews. Fletcher Mathews probably died before Col Peter Mathews death in 1719. Most researchers believe that it is Fletcher Mathews' son, Peter Mathews, who is named in the 1719 Will of Col Peter Mathews. Did this Fletcher Mathews have a daughter Catherine Mathews, perhaps born between 1710-1719? If so, could she have been the wife of John Markham?

Catherine Mathews – A fresh idea to explore (an update as of Jan 2015)

When John Markham moved to Orange county New York, sometime during the 1730's, he became friends with his neighbors, Vincent Mathews and Cadwallader Colden. Find more on these relationships in the sketch titled, John Markham meets Catherine - Friends in the Neighborhood. As mentioned above, I have long believed that John Markham married Vincent Mathew's sister, Catherine Mathews. But, recently I have come across a new piece of evidence that suggests John Markham may have married Vincent Mathew's daughter.

Cadwallader Colden is a prominent figure in New York history, and many of his letters and papers have been collected. In November 2014, I discovered a letter written by Vincent Mathews to his neighbor and friend Cadwallader Colden on the 12th of March 1757. Mathews mentions a letter that has arrived from Mr (John) Markham. Vincent Mathews states,

.. he (John Markham) writs they are all well but that the Wen Groes out again on my Daughters face.

I am still contemplating the possibilities for this sentence. I don't know what a "Wen" might be, but would suspect it might be a growth or skin rash that has been treated or removed, but is returning. More important to this discussion, I can't be certain to whom Vincent Mathews refers when he says "my Daughters face". It seems like a good possibility that Vincent Mathew's "daughter", is Catherine Mathews, the wife of John Markham.

Vincent Mathews and his wife Catalina Abeel did have a daughter Catalina (Catherine) Mathews who was baptized on the 18th of August 1723. Of their four identified children, Catalina, also known as Catherine, is the only one for whom there is no further information beyond her baptismal record. Is she the wife of John Markham?

In the above sketch titled, A Wife for John Markham, I have struggled with the timing of Catherine Mathews birth – concerned that she was born too early to be a good candidate as the mother of all of John Markham's children. I have discussed this further in a sketch titled, The Question of a Second Marriage for John Markham.

Placing Catherine Mathews' birthdate closer to 1723 opens up a completely different discussion. The 1723 date makes her very young to be the mother of John Markham's oldest children – several of whom are thought to have been born between 1735-1740. As I look at this further, I may be reconsidering the birthdates of John Markham's children.

I suspect that I will eventually re-write this entire sketch. I need time to carefully consider the possibilities of this new information about Catherine Mathews. I would enjoy hearing from others who might have thoughts, or further information to share. I plan to add my work on the Mathews family to the website during 2015. As I review and prepare my research for upload, I will be exploring the Catherine Mathews connection further.

Do you want to know more?

[Links to John Markham's Story \(A Table of Contents\)](#)

[Link to John Markham \(database\)](#)

[Link to Catherine Mathews \(database\)](#)

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