

Bio: Elizabeth Mathews

Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2018

Elizabeth Mathews was probably the first-born child of Fletcher Mathews and Sarah Woodhull. It seems likely that she was born about 1759 at the family home, Mount Pleasant, in Ulster (Orange) county New York. Little is known of her childhood, but her teen and early adult years must have been affected by the turbulent affairs of her loyalist father during the American Revolution.

From the Early Records of the First Presbyterian Church at Goshen, New York (Coleman, 2009) we learn that Elizabeth Mathews married Henry Abraham Williams on the 29th of July 1783. It is of interest to note that Elizabeth Mathews' new husband had fought alongside the "Revolutionaries" during the immediately preceding war years. How did the Mathews family interpret such divided loyalties?

There are some interesting records and stories related to a Henry A Williams in the area, but **it is uncertain whether they are all tied to the same man**. These records suggest that he came from a Long Island family, fought with the revolutionaries during the war, appeared around Ulster county New York long enough to marry Fletcher Mathews' daughter Elizabeth, and then took her off to New York City where he and his brother had a merchant concern. It seems likely that he is also the same man who was in debtor's prison around the time his wife died (1797-98), was eventually released and continued to pursue business in New York City, and then Albany New York up to the year 1825. If all of these records apply to the same man, he lived a pretty good life-span, and was an interesting character. No references have been found to a second wife or children for Henry A Williams.

Elizabeth Mathews and Henry Williams did not have children of their own. Possibly Elizabeth Mathews Williams did not enjoy good health following her 1783 marriage - she wrote her Will in the year 1790, but survived until 1797. The primary heir of her estate was her nephew Henry Williams Beekman, son of her sister Sarah Mathews Beekman.

Elizabeth Williams, wife of Henry A. Williams and daughter of Fletcher Mathews, Esq., deceased. To Henry Williams Beekman, son of Thomas Beekman and my sister Sarah, his wife, all my estate as well in houses as land which came or is coming to me by the death of my late father, Fletcher Mathews, Esq., or anything that may hereafter come to him by virtue of his estate; to my husband, the income, interest, and direction of my estate during the time he shall continue unmarried, in order to maintain, clothe, and educate my nephew, Henry Williams Beekman, if my nephew should die before he comes of age leaving no issue, then my will is in case my husband should be married to any other wife, that my mother be sole heir; to my sister, Polly Mathews, my negro girl named Rosannah, to have at her own disposal; my negro boy named Hank, to my husband, to be done with as he directs but never subject to the payment of any debts of his contracting. I appoint my husband, Henry A. Williams and my mother, Sarah Mathews, executors.

Dated March 5, 1790. Witnesses, Thomas Waters, Nathaniel W. Howell, attorney, of Ontario Co., N. Y., Jason Hand. Proved, January 9, 1797.

[source] Collections of the New York Historical Society . . . ; printed for the Society in 1907.

Sadly, Henry Williams Beekman (heir) died in a drowning accident in December 1798, at the age of seventeen. When Fletcher Mathews' primary property was divided in 1799, the portion allotted to Elizabeth Mathews Williams was further divided among her five sisters and (or) their descendants.

Do you want to know more?

[Link to Elizabeth Mathews in database](#)

[Sketch: Sketch: The Division of Fletcher Mathews' Estate, 1799](#)

Bio of Elizabeth Mathews; written by Pamela Hutchison Garrett for John Markham of Chesterfield website; 2018.