

## **Bio: Elizabeth "Betsy" Mathews (Speculative!)**

Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2018

Elizabeth "Betsy" Mathews was probably born near the middle of the long list of children of David Mathews and Sarah Seymour. She was likely born at the family home in Flatbush, New York between the years 1765-1770. Mathews' family genealogies usually identify her as Eliza, but there is some indication that she was called "Betsy". Those same Mathews family genealogies never give any information about Eliza Mathews beyond her name. Betsy was probably in her teens when, in 1784, her loyalist family fled from New York City, to the town of Halifax in Nova Scotia. Shortly thereafter, the family moved on to the "new" colony at Cape Breton.

Our picture of Betsy Mathews is "fuzzy" indeed. Very little evidence has been found of her life, or place in the Mathews family. She is named in a 1785 letter written by Penelope Winslow at Halifax Nova Scotia to her cousin Ward Chipman. In speaking of the social life within the loyalist community at Halifax, Winslow describes:

*Your other friends are all well, pursuing pleasure with ardour. Feasting, card playing and dancing is the great business of life at Halifax, one eternal round. The votaries of pleasure complain of being fatigued and want variety of amusements. The new imported ladies continue to be the belles. The Princes, Taylors and Haliburtons are totally eclipsed by the Millers. Betsy and Matty Matthews are the admiration of all the beaux.*

### **The question remains, "What happened to Betsy Mathews?"**

Scenario #1 -

Elizabeth "Betsy" Mathews may be the same as the daughter of David Mathews and Sarah Seymour who married Captain John Murray. This is not certain, and there are varying opinions related to such a marriage. To date, no actual record of a marriage between John Murray and a daughter of David Mathews has been identified. Evidence is surfacing to support the idea that John Murray married a Sarah Mathews. To consider this further - see the Bio of Sarah Mathews in this database.

Scenario #2 -

During my researches on the family of David Mathews and Sarah Seymour I have come across two women who have been suggested as possible daughters - "Miss" Mathews who married James Fowler, and "Miss" Mathews who married William Parker. Both women present possibilities, but I have not been successful in "defining" them, or

connecting them to the David Mathews' family. Elizabeth "Betsy" Mathews could be one of these "Miss" Mathews.

Scenario #3 -

On the ninth of February 1821, Harriet Mathews Green placed a "petition" in *The American*, a New York City newspaper. She was seeking members of her near family who would be involved in the division of property that had been bequeathed by her grandfather, Vincent Mathews in his 1784 Will. The name of Elizabeth Mathews does appear, and she is noted as living outside the United States. This Elizabeth Mathews in the petition could represent a grand-daughter of David Mathews, rather than a daughter. But, it does introduce the possibility that Elizabeth Mathews, daughter of David Mathews, remained unmarried. In 1821 she would likely be approaching the age of fifty. Did she follow one of her siblings to England, or the Bahamas? To consider this further – see the sketch titled, *Petition of 1821, David Mathews' Descendants*, in this database.

Many questions remain related to Elizabeth "Betsy" Mathews. Hopefully, future research will bring clarity.

Do you want to know more?

[Link to Elizabeth "Betsy" Mathews in database](#)

[Link to Sarah Mathews in database](#)

[Sketch: Petition of 1821, David Mathews' Descendants](#)

**Biography of Elizabeth "Betsy" Mathews; written by Pamela Hutchison Garrett for Markham of Chesterfield website; 2018.**