

Bio: Sarah Mathews

Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2018

Sarah Mathews was probably born during the early 1760's at the home of her parents, Fletcher Mathews and Sarah Woodhull of 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.

Family tradition claims that Sarah Mathews married Thomas Beekman, a younger son of John Beekman and Elizabeth Ellsworth. Thomas Beekman's older brother, Theophilus Beekman, was married to Elizabeth Mathews, half-sister of Sarah Mathews' father. The idea that the marriage of Sarah Mathews and Thomas Beekman produced four children by 1786, suggests that the marriage likely took place around the year 1780. No record of the marriage has been found.

The stance of the Beekman family during the Revolutionary War is unclear. Near family members were aligned on both sides. Thomas Beekman's name appears with the New York Militia unit tied to Captain Lasher and sometimes referred to as the New York Grenadier Company. Near the beginning of the Revolution, in 1776, the New York Militia units stood in support of the British Governor Tyron. But, as things developed, Captain Lasher's regiment joined in the Patriot cause. Thomas Beekman went on to serve as Cornet in the Second continental Dragoons in early 1777, and resigned from service in 1778.

Several records suggest that Thomas Beekman and Sarah Mathews made their home in Ulster county New York, but the exact location has not been determined. During a marriage of perhaps five or six years, they produced four identified children - Fletcher Mathews Beekman (married Phebe Hathaway), Verdine Ellsworth Beekman (married Cornelia Miller), Henry Williams Beekman, and Sarah Beekman. Thomas Beekman died sometime between Dec 1786 and April 1787, and it appears that his wife Sarah Mathews Beekman had predeceased him, as she is not mentioned in his Will written 30 December 1786. An abstract of Thomas Beekman's Will appears in a Calendar of Wills compiled by Fernow in 1967.

Abstract of the Will of Thomas Beekman written 30 Dec 1786 and probated 5 Apr 1787; Thomas Beekman of Ulster co, gentleman, to nephew Thomas Beekman, to children Fletcher E Beekman, Verdine Ellsworth Beekman, Henry W Beekman and Sarah Beekman. Real and personal property (gold sleeve buttons marked TB). Executors, brothers James and Theophilus Beekman, both of New York City. Witnesses: Henry Williams, Cathalina Matthews, Fletcher Matthews of Willkill Precinct.

It is uncertain who took in the orphaned Beekman children. They are mentioned in several Wills of their relations over the following years.

From the Will of Elizabeth Mathews Williams, written 5 March 1790, proved 9 January 1797: *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
..

Sadly, young Henry Williams Beekman died in a drowning accident in the year following his aunt's death:

Harry Beekman, nephew of Alderman Beekman, of this city, was drowned in Freshwater Pond, on Wed the 5th instant, when he broke through the ice in attempting to rescue his friend, Jimmy Nesbitt, son of Dr James B Nesbitt.

[source] Newspaper Extract; 8 December 1798.

from the Will of Verdine Elsworth of New York City, written 7 May 1805, proved 5 June 1810.
... *My Tea Table Sett of plate . . unto Elizabeth Beekman daughter of Theophilus Beekman Esquire; . . . Verdine Elsworth Beekman, son of Thomas Beekman; . . . my relations Theophilus Beekman Esquire, and Samuel Gale of the City of New York . . all my lots houses and appurtenances situate in Maiden Lane in the City of New York, in the possession of Thomas Western and James Jarvis.*

Codicil to the Will of Verdine Elsworth, written 27 January 1807, proved 5 June 1810.
Adjusts will after the death of two of the Legatees, Theophilus Beekman, and Verdine Elsworth Beekman, leaving their shares to their wives, heirs and assigns . . and The legacy given to . . Verdine Elsworth Beekman to be given to the child or children of the said Verdine Elsworth Beekman (if more than one) with which his widow is now pregnant, and failing that to Verdine Beekman's brother Fletcher.

Do you want to know more?

[Link to Sarah Mathews in database](#)

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

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