

## **Bio: Sarah Mathews (Speculative!)**

Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2018

Mathews' family genealogies don't usually include the name of Sarah among the children of David Mathews and Sarah Seymour. She is included in this database as a new possibility. The evidence of her existence is minimal, but worth considering.

On the ninth of February 1821, Harriet Mathews Green (daughter of David Mathews and Sarah Seymour) 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 petition mentions a **Sarah Murray, living in Savannah, Georgia**. Her identity is unclear. Is Sarah Murray the daughter of David Mathews and Sarah Seymour, and the widow of John Murray?

A second piece of evidence to consider comes from the Public Archives of Canada, a Report published in 1896, gives this record, dated to 1797:

*20 November 1797; Sydney; David Mathews to Secretary of State (Portland). Death of Murray, Provost - Marshal, leaving a widow unprovided for; has appointed his son, Tryon Mathews, to succeed, so that he may assist the widow, who is his sister.*

So, who is John Murray? The answer to that question remains uncertain. In this database, see the sketch titled, *John Murray, A Collection of Records*. These records suggest the following scenario. John Murray was a British soldier, a member of the 63rd (West Suffolk) Regiment. Whether he was born in England or America is unclear. Records hint that he may, as a young man, have joined the British regiment after its arrival America. For a time, during the American Revolution, his regiment was stationed in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In the fall of 1781, John Murray was injured in a military action. Following the war he remained in Canada, trying to secure a job in New Brunswick with the British government. By 1790 he was in London seeking a pension for his war wounds. Finally, in April 1793, he returned to Canada, where he had managed to secure a "job" as the Provost Marshall of the Cape Breton colony.

It is not certain at what point John Murray might have married a daughter of David Mathews. There are several possible scenarios for a marriage between 1785-1795, likely in Nova Scotia. The marriage ended with the death of John Murray about November of 1797. No evidence of children has been found.

Recognizing a Sarah Murray, living in Savannah Georgia around 1821 proved challenging, but a Georgia newspaper collection has provided clues. Between 1812 and 1818 several Savannah newspapers include the name Sarah Murray on their "Letters Waiting at the Post Office" lists. She appears on the "letters" lists again in 1826. Finally in 1838:

*Died - On the morning of the 9th inst, after a short and sudden illness, Mrs Sarah Murray, aged 78, born in the city of New York, but for many years a resident of Savannah.*  
[source] *Daily Georgian (Savannah, Georgia), May 9, 1838.*

From the Burial Records of Savannah Georgia:

*Sarah Murray, age 78, New York (b. 1760); affection of lungs, died suddenly, resident of Hull Street, Jackson Ward; buried 9 May 1838.*

Many questions remain related to Sarah Mathews, Sarah Murray, and John Murray. Another daughter of David Mathews and Sarah Seymour, Elizabeth "Betsy" Mathews, has also been considered as a wife for John Murray. Hopefully, future research will bring clarity.

Do you want to know more?

[Link to Sarah Mathews in database](#)

[Link to John Murray in database](#)

[Sketch: John Murray, A Collection of Records](#)

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

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