

Sketch: Thoughts on a Father for Peter Mathews (jr)

by Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2015

When Peter Mathews (sr) died in 1719, he left his estate to his wife Bridget. No children or grandchildren were named in his Will. A few years later, in 1721, Bridget Mathews died. Her Will began:

In the name of God, Amen. I, Bridget Matthews, of New York, widow. I give to my grandson, Peter Matthews, my late husband's silver watch, and his writing desk, which now stands in my parlor, I leave to my only son, Vincent Matthews, 5 pounds over and above what I shall hereinafter leave to him. Whereas my late husband did give to my son Vincent at his marriage, a considerable sum of money, as part of his portion: now I equalize the said sum unto each of my other two children, which was my husband's intention . . .

Mathews family history suggests that the grandson Peter Mathews (jr) is the son of Fletcher Mathews, but questions remain. I have long considered whether the younger Peter Mathews might be a son of Vincent Mathews, Fletcher Mathews' younger brother.

About the same time Bridget Mathews was writing her Will, this record appears:

Letter. Vincent Mathews to Isaac Bobin, relative to preparing a petition for a grant of land to himself or his son Peter. June 1720.

[source] Calendar of historical manuscripts in the office of the secretary of state, Albany, N.Y. (1865)

Based on what we know of the Mathews family, Fletcher Mathews' position as oldest son of Peter Mathews (sr) and his wife Bridget, makes him the best candidate as father of Peter Mathews (jr), but several existing records seem to point to Vincent Mathews as the father. The situation is that we don't really know when, or where, any of the early members of the Mathews family were born. If we did, the arrangement of the "characters" might be clearer. For now, I have given speculative birthdates in this database:

Peter Mathews (sr), born 1660 - 1670

Fletcher Mathews, born 1685 - 1690, probably the son of Peter Mathews (sr)

Vincent Mathews, born about 1695, son of Peter Mathews (sr)

Peter Mathews (jr), born 1710 - 1720

A number of factors figure into assigning these birthdate estimates. More detail appears in individual bios in this database. We do know that Fletcher Mathews was "of age" by 1710, but

Vincent Mathews was too young to accompany his father on an expedition to Canada in 1709. It seems likely that the Peter Mathews (jr) who is named in the 1720 letter and the 1721 Will of his grandmother is the same who appears alongside Vincent Mathews as witness in records of 1733 and 1739. His signature as a witness in 1733, even if he was only age eighteen, pushes his birthdate back to 1713. This seems very early for a son of Vincent Mathews.

It has been noted that Vincent Mathews married Catalina Abeel about 1721, but no exact date for the marriage has been found. Bridget Mathews' Will, as recorded in the Collection of the New York Historical Society, shows the Will was written 8 January 1721, and proved 27 January 1722. This leaves some question as to when she died, but suggests that it might have been around the same time as her son Vincent Mathews' marriage to Catalina Abeel. Did Vincent Mathews have an earlier marriage, or did the Mathews - Abeel marriage happen earlier than suggested? Bridget Mathews' Will states: "Whereas my late husband did give to my son Vincent at his marriage, a considerable sum of money . . ." Her husband, Peter Mathews (sr), died in 1719. An earlier marriage for Vincent Mathews – perhaps in 1718-1719 - seems to open up the possibility that he might be the father of Peter Mathews (jr).

As stated above, we know almost nothing about Peter Mathews (jr). No evidence has surfaced beyond the several records given as a timeline below. I am continuing to look at a Peter Mathews who appears around the Wyoming Valley of New York and Pennsylvania just before the Revolutionary War. I suspect that he is somehow related to Vincent Mathews' family, but I need to learn more.

Records to consider:

1720; Letter. Vincent Mathews to Isaac Bobin, relative to preparing a petition for a grant of land to himself or his son Peter. June 1720.

[source] Calendar of historical manuscripts in the office of the secretary of state, Albany, N.Y. (1865)

1721; Will of Bridget Matthews; In the name of God, Amen. I, Bridget Matthews, of New York, widow. I give to my grandson, Peter Matthews, my late husband's silver watch, and his writing desk, which now stands in my parlor, I leave to my only son, Vincent Matthews, 5 pounds over and above what I shall hereinafter leave to him. Whereas my late husband did give to my son Vincent at his marriage, a considerable sum of money, as part of his portion: now I equalize the said sum unto each of my other two children, which was my husband's intention. I do give to my eldest daughter Catherine, a negro girl and to my daughter Flora, my negro girl named Dinah, and my negro boy called Galloway. I leave to my two daughters all my wearing apparel

and jewels and household stuff, except the plate. All the rest of my estate I leave to my son Vincent and my two daughters Catherine and Flora. And whereas my daughters have some small pieces of plate, and other small wares, which have hitherto been given them, they are to enjoy the same without any contradiction. I make my three children executors; dated 8 Jan 1721. Witnesses, Joseph Wright, William Sharpas, John Chambers. Proved 27 Jan 1722(?) [source] Collection of the New York Historical Society; Book 9, pg 282.

1733; Indenture, 9 March 1733, between Nathaniel Foster of Ulster County New York and Rebecah his wife of the one part and Joseph Sotherland of Orange county (property on Murtherers Creek) . . sealed and delivered by the within Rebecah Foster in the presents of use Isaac Henion, Peter Mathews. Recorded by Vincent Mathews. (Goshen, Lib B, page 383) [source] Sutherland Records; Tobias A. Wright, 1918.

1739; In the name of God, Amen. I, Tunis Tallman, of Nayack, in Orange County, being in perfect health. I give to my eldest son, Dowe Tallman, 5. My wife Margaret is to have the full income of all my estate during so long as she remains my widow. After my wife's decease I leave all my estate to my ten children, Daniel, John, Tunis, Harmanus, Greetye Blauvelt, Antye Hennion, Derriche Van Dolpherse, Maria Smith, Breghe, and Yanitie Blauvelt; Witnesses, Vincent Matthews, Peter Matthews, Klaas Yansen Cuyper. Proved in Orange County, before Henry Ludlow, Esq., Surrogate, July 28, 1739. [source] New York City Wills, 1730-1744; page 244.

Closing Note –

At present, I am placing Peter Mathews (jr) in the database as a son of Vincent Mathews and his wife Catalina Abeel. This may need to be reconsidered in the future. I have not recognized further records related to Peter Mathews (jr) after 1739. But, I am continuing to look at a Peter Mathews who appears around the Wyoming Valley of New York and Pennsylvania just before the Revolutionary War. I suspect that he is somehow related to the Vincent Mathews family, but I need to learn more.

Do you want to know more?

[Link to Peter Mathews \(jr\) in database](#)

[Link to Fletcher Mathews in database](#)

[Link to Vincent Mathews in database](#)