

## Sketch: Jonathan Brooks, A Collection of Records

compiled by Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2018

*Understanding Jonathan Brooks has been a challenge. It has been especially difficult to sort out his wives, partner, and children. This sketch reveals my best attempt to set his family and descendants in order. It likely contains some incorrect assumptions, and I hope other, and future, researchers can provide further information, and correct any errors. Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2018.*

Jonathan Brooks was probably born about 1740-1750. Some researchers identify him as Jonathan Brooks who was born 1745 in Ridgefield, Fairfield county Connecticut, son of John (or Jonathan) Brooks. But, many questions remain, related to this identification.

Jonathan Brooks does appear in the 1790 census of Orange county New York, by which time he may have been forty or fifty years old. The census **suggests** a household of father, mother, two daughters, three sons under age sixteen, and four sons over age sixteen. It is certainly possible to interpret the census count differently.

Family researchers have long proposed that Jonathan Brooks was first married to Hettie Lewis, about 1770, and have cited five children from this marriage:

Anna Brooks (1770-1837) married Isaac Youngs, no children

Thomas Lewis Brooks (1772-1841) no wife or children noted

John I Brooks (1774-1852) married Hannah Denniston and Eliza Denniston

Jonathan Brooks (1776-1828) murder victim, no wife or children noted

William W Brooks (1780-1836) no wife or children noted

Researchers have also claimed that Jonathan Brooks was secondly married to Catherine Mathews, perhaps about 1795, and have cited two or three children from that marriage:

Fletcher Mathews Brooks (1795-1861) married Phoebe Bodine

Esther (Hester) "Hettie" Brooks (1795-1849), did not marry

Benjamin Franklin Brooks (1803-1888) sometimes listed as son of Jonathan Brooks and Catherine Mathews; more below

The three "younger" children that are listed as children of Jonathan Brooks and Catherine Mathews come from the 1811 Will of Jonathan Brooks. They are the only three children who receive an inheritance from their father at the time of his death. It is assumed that the older children, who are mostly in their 30's in 1811, have already been "cared for".

It seems worth considering whether Esther (Hester) "Hettie" Brooks might have been born earlier than 1795, and might be the daughter of Jonathan Brooks and his first wife Hettie Lewis, rather than the daughter of Catherine Mathews. But, it is possible that Catherine Mathews named a daughter Hettie in order to honor her husband's first wife.

Problems in sorting the mothers of Jonathan Brooks' children rest in the absence of dates. We do not know when Hettie Lewis Brooks died, when Jonathan Brooks married Catherine Mathews, or when Catherine Mathews Brooks died. It has been assumed, on very little evidence, that Hettie Lewis Brooks died in the early 1790's, that Jonathan Brooks married Catherine Mathews about 1795, and that Catherine Mathews Brooks died about 1799. Some, or all, of these assumptions could be incorrect. Most of the birth dates for his children are also assumed.

Jonathan Brooks' son Benjamin Franklin Brooks (1803-1888) is the character that brings up a major question. He is clearly identified as a son in the 1811 Will of Jonathan Brooks. So, who is his mother? As mentioned in the paragraph above, it has been assumed (with some supporting evidence) that Catherine Mathews Brooks died in 1799. The 1803 birth year for Benjamin Franklin Brooks is well supported. Besides being named as a son in the 1811 Will of Jonathan Brooks, Benjamin Franklin Brooks is also named as a son in the 1816/1821 Will of Mary Mathews, sister of Catherine Mathews Brooks. It has been speculated that Mary Mathews (who appears to be a single lady throughout her life) raised up her sister's child, but the dates don't support this, and there is the even more curious fact that, besides Benjamin Franklin Brooks, there are five other Brooks children named in Mary Mathews' Will.

I propose (without strong evidence) that the list below represents the late life children of Jonathan Brooks, by his sister-in-law Mary Mathews. There is no evidence that Jonathan Brooks and Mary Mathews were ever married, and the census suggests that they maintained separate households in 1810.

Elizabeth Brooks (born c.1802) married John Downs Mather  
Benjamin Franklin Brooks (1803-1888) married Celia VanKleck  
Catherine Brooks (1806-c.1875) married Mister Hulse  
Henry "Harry" Brooks (1807-1834) married Almira "Almie" Bigelow  
David A Brooks (born 1800-1810)  
Elsworth Brooks (born 1800-1810)

Please note that associating these children with Jonathan Brooks and Mary Mathews is speculative! It is unknown why Jonathan Brooks would name only one of these proposed children in his 1811 Will. Many questions remain. The Markham of Chesterfield website has short biographical sketches, or notes, for all of the children and proposed children of Jonathan Brooks. Hopefully other researchers or family members can supply further information.

**Below is a miscellaneous collection of notes related to Jonathan Brooks.**

Jonathan Brooks . . was one of the prominent citizens in Orange county, and owned a large farm, which he cultivated until his death . . . was a member of the Committee of Safety and Observation for the precinct of Cornwall, New York (Orange County) in 1775.

1790 Census of Orange county New York: New Cornwall – Jonathan Brooks; 3m 0-16; 5m 16+; 3f; 1 other free person; 1 slave.

1797; The Elegant Imported Horses - Nestler and Little John - Will stand to cover the ensuing season at the stable of the subscriber at Mathews-field in the town of New Cornwall, county of Orange. Nestler is a bright bay . . Likewise the full-blooded horse Little John will stand at the above stable . . Little John was the winning horse at three different times on the New Market course [England]. Jonathan Brooks, 12 April 1797.

[source] Goshen Repository (Goshen New York); 20 June 1797.

1804; Dissolution of Copartnership - The partnership of Drake and Brooks is this day dissolved by mutual consent - Oliver Drake, Jonathan Brooks. Jonathan Brooks having taken into partnership Verdine E Beekman, will continue the Dry Good Business under the firm of Brooks and Beekman, at the store lately occupied by Archibald Curry, of 166 Broadway, where they solicit the favors of their friends and public in general. Jonathan Brooks, Verdine E Beekman. [source] American Citizen (New York City); 24 November 1804.

1800 Census of Orange county New York; New Windsor, page  
Jonathan Brooks; 1 0 1 0 2 - 1 1 0 1  
indicates: 1m0-10; 1m16-25; 2m45+; 1f0-10; 1f10-16; 1f26-44

1810 Census of Orange county New York; Blooming Grove  
Jonathan Brooks; 0 0 1 0 1 - no females  
indicates: 1m16-25; 1m45+  
nearby - John I Brooks

1810 Census of Orange county New York; New Windsor, page 289

Mary Mathews; 4 0 0 0 0 - 1 2 0 1 0

indicates: 4m0-10; 1f0-10; 2f10-15;1f26-44

neighbors - Clinton, Coleman, Jackson, Conklin, Burtis, Nathaniel Strong

1811; Will of Jonathan Brooks of Orange county New York; written 21 August 1811; probated 11 October 1811. New York Wills and Probate Records - Orange County.

Mentioned as heirs – “. . my sons Fletcher M, Benjamin Franklin and daughter Esther”; “I give my black man Abner his freedom . . “

1816; This Indenture made the twentieth day of February in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty Between Thomas L Brooks and John I Brooks and Eliza the wife of the said John I Brooks of the town of Blooming grove in the county of Orange and State of New York of the first part and Fletcher M Brooks of the town county and State aforesaid of the second part. Witness that the said parties of the first part for and in considerations of Four Thousand and two hundred Dollars to them in hand paid . . . have granted bargained sold . . . unto the Fletcher M Brooks and to his heirs and assigns . . All that equal undivided moiety or half part of that certain farm or plantation situated partly in the said town of Blooming Grove and partly in the town of New Windsor which upon the partition of the estate of Fletcher Mathews Esquire deceased by Commissioners for that purpose appointed was set off to the right of Catharine Brooks, the then wife of Jonathan Brooks deceased containing by estimation Two hundred and ten acres of land reference being had to the report of the said Commissioners on the record thereof the particular boundaries thereof will more fully appear which and equal undivided moiety or half part was conveyed to Thomas C Waters by Hester Brooks one of the heirs of the said Catharine Brooks by indenture leaving date the twenty first day of March one thousand eight hundred and sixteen and conveyed by the said Thomas C Waters to the said Thomas Brooks and John I Brooks by Indenture bearing date the thirteenth day of May one thousand eight hundred and sixteen, Together with all and singular rights . . . In witness whereof the parties to these presents have hereunto interchangeable set their hand and seals the day and year first above written.

Thomas L Brooks, John I Brooks, Eliza Brooks; In the presence of Thos O Brewster, Wm W Brooks

[source] Orange County New York Deed Book 40, page 48.

Town of Hamptonburgh - Decker's - This is a small settlement in a beautiful part of the country, on the road from Washingtonville to Goshen. At this place the Messrs. Decker have had a cloth manufactory for many years. The locality and vicinity were settled as early perhaps as 1730; for shortly after that time, in 1744, it was a missionary station, under the care of the London Missionary Society, with New Windsor and St. Andrews. We refer the reader to our history of St. Andrew's Church. At that time it was called "St. David's Corners," that being the name of the Episcopal Church there. The building was put up after 1770, but never finished, and during the Revolutionary war was used as a hospital by the Americans. Shortly after that it was partly blown over, and permitted to go to decay and was never rebuilt. The church authority is still in possession of the location and burying ground. Vincent Matthews, Esq., was an early patron of this church, and after him, Mr. Jonathan Brooks performed many kind and beneficial offices to preserve and perpetuate the establishment, by the payment of its debts, etc. These gentlemen lived in that vicinity. The name of the former has nearly run out in the county, while the descendants of the latter are numerous and respectable. Messrs. John I. Brooks of Bloominggrove, and Fletcher M. Brooks of this town are of this family.

1825; Sheriff's Sale - By virtue of two executions to me directed, I shall expose to public sale, for cash, at Mr John Felter's Inn, in the village of Montgomery, on Saturday the 7th of May next . . . all the right title and interest of Gabriel Jackson, in and to the following described lands and tenements, situate in the towns of Blooming Grove, and New Windsor, bounded as follows, to wit: On the north by the lands of Daniel Brown; on the east by the lands of John and Fletcher Brooks; on the south by the Highway, and on the west by the lands belonging to the heirs of Mary Matthews, deceased. Dated 22 March 1825. AL Ball Sheriff.  
[source] Orange Farmer (Montgomery New York); 9 April 1825.

1838; Notice is hereby given that an application will be made to the legislature of the state of New York at their next session, for the passage of an act authorizing the wardens and vestry of St David's Church of Hamptonburgh in the county of Orange, to convey to the wardens and vestry of St James' Church of Goshen in said county, a certain lot of land situated in the town of Hamptonburgh, aforesaid, commonly called the church lot, bounded by the lands of Fletcher M Brooks, the public highway leading from Goshen to New Windsor, and another highway leading from the one aforesaid to the mills of Thompson and Brooks. Dated Goshen, Orange county, 3 November 1838.  
[source] Albany Argus (Albany New York); 11 December 1838.

Orange, New York Will Book Testators Indexes

note – “36” represents Orange Co; Volume #; page #

Benjamin F Brooks; NY-36-51-414; 1888

Fletcher B Brooks; NY-36-40-177; 1877-78 (son of John I Brooks)

Fletcher M Brooks; NY-36-Z-671; 1859-1862

Hester L Brooks; Hamptonburgh; NY-36-Q-43; 1849-1851

Jonathan Brooks; Blooming Grove; NY-36-D-457; 1807-1813

Thomas Lewis Brooks; Blooming Grove; NY-36-M-169; 1842-1845

Do you want to know more?

[Link to Jonathan Brooks in the database](#)

[Link to Catherine Mathews in the database](#)

[Will: Jonathan Brooks](#)

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