

Sketch: The Question of a Second Marriage for John Markham by Pamela Hutchison Garrett

There has long been a question in my mind as to whether Catherine Mathews Markham could have been the mother of all of John Markham's children. When John Markham died in 1770, his Will named nine children, but no wife. We have no hard evidence to give birthdates to these children, but a study of their lives suggest that six or seven children were born between 1737 – 1750, and three more were born after 1750, probably closer to 1760. This stretch of birthdates would work well for a mother who was herself born 1715-1720, but **there are several indicators that place Catherine Mathews' birth as 1705 or earlier.** A detailed discussion of when Catherine Mathews might have been born, married, and child-bearing is given in the sketch titled, [A Wife for John Markham](#).

The idea that John Markham had three children after 1750 is a theory, not a fact! The argument in favor of a second wife for John Markham finds its strength in the evidence that he had three children, between 1750-1760, when Catherine Mathews Markham was probably age forty-five to fifty-five.

Judith Markham and Rebecca Markham were unmarried daughters, at home, when their father died in 1770. Judith Markham married Archer Traylor in 1779, and Rebecca Markham married Nelson Patteson in 1783. If we estimate that they married around age twenty-two, then Judith would have been born 1757, and Rebecca 1761. Of course, they could have been older than twenty-two when they married. Rebecca Markham's husband, Nelson Patteson, was born in 1762. Was Rebecca older than her husband? Judith Markham Traylor's children were born between about 1780 and 1793, and Rebecca Markham Patteson's children were born between 1784 and 1795. If we stick with the 'married at age twenty-two' idea, then they would have been ages thirty-four and thirty-six when their youngest child was born. That leaves some room to consider whether they were older than age twenty-two when they married.

Archibald Markham, the likely youngest son of John Markham, has also been placed in the 'born after 1750' range. It was his given name that first caused me to consider whether John Markham had a second wife. Where did the name Archibald come from? It makes no earlier show in either the Markham or Mathews family. Was it a tribute to his near neighbor – Archibald Cary? Cary was an able gentleman of Chesterfield county – a wealthy man of business, committed public servant, and fierce patriot. His Amphill plantation was not far from John Markham, and the two men were probably friends, serving together in the courtroom, and acting together as witnesses to the transactions of their neighbors. Archibald Cary was probably ten years younger than John Markham. The name Archibald was not prominent in the Chesterfield community of the 1750's and 1760's, but Archibald Bolling and Archibald Brady are other men that could be considered. There is no indication that John Markham intermarried with any daughters or sisters of these men. Archibald Markham was living when his father wrote his 1770 Will, but he probably died before reaching adulthood.

There are two other families in the Chesterfield neighborhood that I have looked at, seeking a possible second wife for John Markham – the families of Pankey and Branch. Both had properties adjoining John Markham, and there are many evidences of friendship between them. But, to this point, nothing has surfaced to suggest that the Pankey or Branch families supplied a second wife for John Markham.

The **best evidence in support of Catherine Mathews Markham as the mother of all of John Markham's children** comes from the grandchildren. Eight of John Markham's children lived to adulthood, married and had children. Seven of those eight children named one of their own daughters Catherine. Vincent Markham had only one child, a daughter who was named after his wife Elizabeth. It seems that all of John Markham's children wished to honor Catherine Mathews Markham. Even Judith Markham Traylor and Rebecca Markham Patteson, who I have considered as possible children of a second marriage, named one of their own daughters Catherine. The names of their other children provide no clues for a second wife for John Markham.

Recently (November 2014) I have come across a new piece of information that might suggest Catherine Mathews Markham was born in the 1715 – 1720 time period, rather than 1705 or before. If this proves out, the idea of a second wife for John Markham becomes less necessary. More detail is found in the sketch titled, [A Wife for John Markham](#).

Do you want to know more?

[Links to John Markham's Story \(A Table of Contents\)](#)

[Link to John Markham \(database\)](#)

[Link to Catherine Mathews \(database\)](#)

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