

## Sketch: Identifying Francis Smith

Just a few years before the clash and tangle of the American Revolutionary War, Francis Smith married Catherine Markham. No details, not even a date, remain to mark the occasion.

Catherine Markham was the oldest daughter of John Markham and Catherine Mathews of Chesterfield county Virginia. Francis Smith Jr was the son of Francis Smith Sr and his wife Elizabeth Waddy, in neighboring Hanover county Virginia. We begin with a few notes on his ancestors . . .

The Smith surname is often difficult to track in genealogy. Fortunately, the family group to which Francis Smith Jr belongs has been researched in detail over many years, and we are able to come up with a fairly accurate picture of his ancestors. Much information can be found in the Edward Pleasants Valentine Papers and credit for this ancestral story is owing to a wide variety of researchers and descendants.

Major Lawrence Smith is the earliest, clearly identified, ancestor of this family in America. He was an Englishman, possibly from County Devon. He began to appear in the Virginia records about 1675 where he served as a troop commander and later a general surveyor. Lawrence Smith was a large landholder in the areas of Gloucester and York counties in Virginia and died in that area about 1700. He was the father of several children, including a son William Smith.

William Smith lived around the counties of Gloucester and King William in Virginia and married Elizabeth Ballard of York county, Virginia. He died about 1734 in Spotsylvania county, Virginia. Among his children was probably Francis Smith, who we will refer to as Francis Smith Sr of Hanover county, Virginia.

Francis Smith Sr was born about 1710-1715 and first appeared in Hanover county, Virginia about 1745. Apparently he remained in that county throughout his adult life. About 1735 he married Elizabeth Waddy. They were the parents of nine identified children: Susanna Smith (m. William Preston); Thomas Smith (m. Tabitha Smith); \*Francis Smith (m. Catherine Markham and Elizabeth Lewis); Ballard Smith; Elizabeth Smith (m. Edward Johnson); John Smith; Parke Smith; William Smith; Granville Smith (m. Ann Pasteur).

Most of the children and grandchildren of Francis Smith Sr and Elizabeth Waddy remained in Virginia, spreading out to the counties of Chesterfield, Powhatan, Louisa and Montgomery. Some played key roles in the development of Virginia, serving in important government and military positions. Two Smith granddaughters married future Virginia governors (Gov John Floyd, Gov Wyndham Robertson) and two Smith grandsons married daughters of another Virginia governor (Gov James Pleasants).

Francis Smith Jr, son of Francis Smith Sr and Elizabeth Waddy, is the line that we follow. He was born about 1742 and grew up in the home of his parents in Hanover county Virginia. He had two or three older siblings and five or six siblings who were younger. It was a busy

household! We have no references to his childhood and youth, but we might surmise that he received a typical Virginia education – a combination of private tutors and local schools. His younger brother, Granville Smith, was a student at William and Mary College in the 1770's. Francis Smith Jr may have attended there also.

A stray mention in his Revolutionary War Pension papers gives a clue to his occupation:

*. . . he was Born and raised in Virginia, & never resided Elswhere. Leut Smith, when a young man, was not rich, when he married, he re'd. by his wife a tract of land in Chesterfield, on it, he resided he was by Trade a Carpenter, and after the war was over, for many years followed his trade, although he became rich by inheritance & labour, he kept his work bench in his yard to the day of his death . .*

*[source] Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters; Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris; <http://revwarapps.org/index.htm>.*



Records of Francis Smith Jr's marriages have not been located, so we must rely on family notes and other supporting data. Questions remain! Both Markham and Smith family records make the claim that he was first married to Catherine Markham and secondly to Miss (Elizabeth) Lewis. In the 1770 Will of John Markham of Chesterfield county Virginia, he names his daughter Catherine Smith. This makes it clear that Francis Smith Jr was married to Catherine Markham by or before 1770. This fits well with the fact that in 1771, when the estate of John Markham was being settled, Francis Smith Jr purchased a portion of John Markham's property and became a resident of Chesterfield county Virginia.

A variety of records support the idea that Francis Smith Jr settled near the town of Manchester in Chesterfield county Virginia. His property was probably a portion of the older John Markham estate, as it bounded the property of his brother-in-law, Bernard Markham.

At the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War the Smith and Markham household was young, and probably consumed with the raising of children. Francis Smith was in his early thirties, just the right age to be called out as a soldier. His pension records provide clues to his service:

*Lieut. Francis Smith, was an officer in the war of the revolution . . was a Liutenant in the Virginian Continental line, that he served in said War, and in said line from the 1st day of February 1777 to the 24th day of December 1782 . . . that he may have been, and believe he was Adjutant of the army in Virginia in 1780 . . . that he actually served six years & nine months, to near the close of the war . . .*  
*[source] Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters; Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris; <http://revwarapps.org/index.htm>.*

According to DAR records, his primary service was with the Cavalry Unit for Hanover County Virginia. Later he served as Adjutant, a military officer who acts as an administrative assistant to a senior officer. Francis Smith's pension records refer to him as Lieutenant, but several post-war documents use the title Captain. According to his pension records, in the years following the war he received 2666 acres of bounty land and \$1600 in commutation pay.

A little clue to his domestic life is found in Benjamin Weisiger's "Old Manchester and Its Environs". Apparently Francis Smith enjoyed frequenting a local tavern.

*In 1779 Moses Tredway obtained a license to keep an ordinary at this house. He had problems with customers' debts, which all tavern owners had in those days. Capt Francis Smith ran up a big bar and meal tab between 1781 and 1786 for "grog, tody, wine, sangree and dinners." Tredway's heir finally sued Smith for the 13-plus pounds in 1791.*



**A Tavern Interior; John S C Schaak, about 1762.**

We are fortunate to have two very good records for Francis Smith Jr - his Will of 1833 and a Pension Application by his granddaughter in 1854. They are very helpful in identifying his children who survived to adulthood. But, they provide few clues to the identity of the mothers of those children. Both documents identify the same eight children. It is very likely that some are the children of Catherine Markham Smith, and others are the children of Elizabeth Lewis Smith. After careful consideration, I have come to the tentative conclusion that the children, Rebecca Smith, Francis Smith III, Catherine Smith and Ballard Smith belong to Catherine Markham Smith. And, Sarah Smith, Lewis Smith, William Smith, and Joseph Smith are the children of Elizabeth Lewis Smith. Other researchers may conclude differently! I continue to ponder the maternal connection for the Smith children, especially Ballard Smith and William Smith. In this database their individual biographies might shed further light.

I speculate that Catherine Markham Smith died about 1785 and Francis Smith was, shortly after, married to Elizabeth Lewis. The identity of Elizabeth Lewis has not been confirmed. She may be the daughter of Joseph Lewis whose Will is probated in neighboring Powhatan county Virginia in 1800. In his Will, Joseph Lewis names two sons, four daughters and three grandchildren. He does not name a daughter Elizabeth Lewis Smith, though I believe she is still living. He does name grandchildren, Francis Smith and Sarah Smith. Are these the children of Francis Smith who married Markham and Lewis? It is of particular interest to note that Joseph Lewis's son, Francis Lewis, married Elizabeth Markham, daughter of Vincent Markham of Powhatan county Virginia. There was a web of kinship between the Markham, Smith and Lewis families.

The following item appeared in the Richmond Enquirer of 24 July 1816: *"Died July 18th, age 64, Mrs Elizabeth Smith, wife of Capt Francis Smith of Chesterfield."* It seems likely, but not certain, that this is Elizabeth Lewis Smith. By 1816, all of the Smith children had reached adulthood, probably ranging in age from about 20-45.

We need to address one further question relating to the wives of Francis Smith. Who is Miss Price? In Francis Smith's pension file there is a statement that Francis Smith married Miss Price. I have not seen the document in the pension file, and I do not know the exact context of this statement. I believe it appears in support documentation, rather than in the actual pension application. Is the statement correct? Did Francis Smith have a third wife? I have come across a random mention that William Smith, son of Francis Smith, married Mary Lewis Price, daughter of Major William Price. This idea is not well supported, but leaves me wondering about a Smith – Price connection.

Francis Smith outlived his wives by many years. The latter years of his life were spent enjoying his children and grandchildren who remained, primarily, in Virginia. The Court Records of Chesterfield County Virginia record several "gifts" he made to his descendants between 1800 – 1830. These gifts were mostly slaves. In 1831, shortly before his death, he gifted his home to his widowed daughter, Sarah Smith Roddy. She was probably the caretaker of her aged father, and was assisted by her unmarried sister, Rebecca Smith, who was also in the household.

A few years earlier when Francis Smith was eighty-three years of age, he was counted among the ". . . Revolutionary Officers who met at Richmond on 26 Oct 1824 to welcome General Lafayette."

Francis Smith was past the age of ninety when he died in April 1833, an extraordinarily long life for the time. His Will was of record in Chesterfield county Virginia, identifying numerous children and grandchildren. Research suggests twenty-one grandchildren, though some questions remain. His sons were able businessmen and leaders in their communities. His granddaughter was the wife of a Virginia Governor. Their legacy of service to Virginia was laudable.

Do you want to know more?

[Link to Francis Smith](#)

[Bio: Catherine Markham \(wife of Francis Smith\)](#)

**Sketch: Identifying Francis Smith; Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2014.**