

Bio: Caroline Fleming

Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2017

Caroline Fleming was probably the first born of the four daughters of William Fleming and Elizabeth "Betty" Champe. She was born about 1769, probably in Goochland county Virginia, and may have been named for her father's sister. Little is known of life in the Fleming household, but evidence suggests that they were moderately wealthy, able to live comfortably. The daughters were all educated, and "accomplished". When Caroline was in her teen years, between 1780-1790, her mother died, and her continuing care and maintenance fell completely into the hands of her father - a job he performed admirably.

The Fleming "girls" received a generous inheritance from their uncle William Champe in his Will probated in 1784 in Culpeper county Virginia.

My will is that my nieces the daughters of Colo. Wm. Fleming now living have the tract of land in King George County known by the name of "The Farm" with all the slaves that was on the said land at my Father's death, & their increase together with the stock & Tools of all kinds, to be equally divided to them & Their heirs &c.

Throughout her life, Caroline Fleming remained in the home of her father - "Summerville". Her niece, Martha Markham, reported in a 1905 letter, "My oldest aunt Caroline Fleming never married." When Caroline's sister, Mary Bolling Fleming married Beverley Chew Stanard in 1798, the Stanard family also made their home at Summerville, and it seems likely that Caroline Fleming played a significant role in the life of that family. Mary Fleming Stanard died in 1812, leaving six young children. Her husband was remarried in the following year, and possibly the Stanard family established a new home at that time.

Caroline Fleming suffered, off and on, from mental health issues. In William Fleming's Will, written in April 1823, he makes reference to, "my beloved daughter, Caroline Fleming during her natural life, who at times is and for many years past has been afflicted with a mental malady that requires the particular . . . attention and kindness of all her friends." This comment becomes increasingly interesting when realizing that in 1823, William Fleming was about eighty-seven years old, and his "beloved daughter" Caroline was about age sixty-five. At the writing of this Will in April 1823, William Fleming left his beautiful plantation home of Summerville to his daughter Caroline Fleming, but a few months later, in June 1823 he prepared a Codicil, choosing to have the home sold, as it would be "too much for my daughter and six negroes to maintain." William Fleming died a short time after in February 1824.

The date of death for Caroline Fleming remains in question. Her probate records appear to be dated 1818, but all evidence points to the fact that she was still living at the time of her father's death in 1824. When considering the placement of Caroline Fleming's probate in the county records*, it seems more likely that she died in 1828, only a few years after her father.

At the time of Caroline Fleming's death, only her sister Lucy Champe Fleming Markham was still living. Because her father had given significant help and support to the Markham family, Caroline Fleming chose to leave the significant portion of her estate to the children of her deceased sister, Mary Bolling Fleming Stanard.

Will of Caroline Fleming; written 14 Apr 1818; probated 1818*; Chesterfield County Virginia.

I Caroline Fleming of Summerville in the county of Chesterfield, being in good bodily health and of sound mind, thanks be to Almighty God for the same, do make this my last will and testament in . . . following, to wit: I give and bequeath to my honored father, William Fleming, during his natural life, all my estate of whatsoever it may consist except my wearing apparel, to be disposed of as herein after mentioned and at the death of my said Father, I bequeath all my estate as given to him for life to be equally divided among five children of my late amiable and beloved sister, Mary Boling Stanard and the legal representatives of such of them as may be dead at the time of my decease. My estate consists chiefly in six negro slaves. To wit, Harry and Sally given to me by my said honored father, and by him conveyed to me by and about the year 1802 or 1803 and recorded in the county court of Chesterfield and the increase of Patty to wit: John Spencer, Peter and William(?) . . . my wearing apparel to be divided among my nieces Eliza IT Stanard, Mary L Stanard and Julia Ann Stanard at their descretion. If my said father shall survive me I constitute and appoint my friend Doctor Archibald Wooldridge and Edward A Moseley my executors and . . . in full confidence that they will see justice to my said legatees among whom I wish my said executors or the survivor of them to divide my small property without troubling and for that purpose and I desire that no security be required of either of them on the probate of this my will. I am not in debt and therefore my estate need not be appraised. In witness wherefore I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this 14th day of April 1818.

C Fleming

Signed sealed published and declared by the said testator as her last will and testament in presence of us who at her request subscribed our names in witness thereto.

Anthony . . . Christopher Branch

[source] Mixed Probate Records of Chesterfield county Virginia; Will Book 11, page 516; *dated 1825-1830; viewed at the Family History Library, film#30876.

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[Link to Caroline Fleming in the database](#)

Bio of Caroline Fleming; written by Pamela Hutchison Garrett for Markham of Chesterfield website; 2017 - 2018.