

Bio: David Mathews jr
Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2018

David Mathews jr's presence in historical records is minimal. He was probably born between 1765 and 1770 at the Flatbush, New York home of his parents, David Mathews and Sarah Seymour. He was in his late childhood and early teen years during the American Revolution, and faced all the turbulence of his father's term as Loyalist Mayor of New York City, during the British occupation. David junior likely fled with his father's family to Nova Scotia in 1783-84. The Mathews family eventually set up housekeeping in the Loyalist colony of Cape Breton, and established a home across the harbor from the town of Sydney.

There is evidence that in 1795, the older David Mathews, as senior member of the council for Cape Breton, appointed his son David Mathews junior as acting Attorney General for the colony, in his stead. Cape Breton residents complained that David Mathews junior did not serve them appropriately. Shortly thereafter the Mathews family members were pushed out of their various offices by a rival faction. David Mathews senior died in July of 1800, and further evidence of David Mathews junior has not been identified.

Authors David and Pamela Newton, in their 2010 book, *They Came From Away: Yanks, Brits and Cape Breton*, relate an incident that reflects very poorly on David Mathews junior. He seems to have been a foolhardy and "coarse" young man - taunting and abusing his neighbors in the name of amusement. His brother-in-law Captain John Murray may have been his companion in these escapades.

The record of a baptism in the Cape Breton colony raises the question of whether or not David Mathews junior ever married, or had a child.

19 March 1793 read: Then baptized Wm a natural son of David Mathews Atty Genl and Mrs Docla Marshall.

There are varying opinions among researchers as to whether this refers to David Mathews junior or senior. Identifying "David Mathews, Atty General" in 1793 does suggest the older man; he would be almost seventy years of age in 1793. But, it seems possible that the younger David Mathews could have been referred to as the Attorney General as early as 1793. The term "natural son" was often used to intimate a son born out of wedlock, and the evidence of the mother's name does support this. A closer look at the baptismal record might reveal the mother's name as Docia, suggesting Theodocia Marshall as the name for the mother. Whether this a a maiden or married name is unknown.

Records to consider:

1795, June 1, Sydney; Mathews to Secretary of State (Portland). Macarmick sailed on the 27th May for Halifax to get a passage. Had transferred to him (Mathews) the Great Seal and all papers relating to the Government; he (Mathews) took the oaths of office on the 28th. Is supported by the Council, of which he send minute, and by all the officials and settlers. Refers to the Duke of Clarence for his qualifications. Has appointed his son, David Mathews, junior, to be Attorney General.

1797, January 25, Sydney; Ball to King . . . Renews his request to be appointed Chief Justice . . . Justice obstructed by the absence of the Attorney and of the Provost Marshall who neglects to attend the court. It is needless to apply to Mathews, as the Attorney General is his son and the Provost Marshal his son-in-law.

Further evidence of David Mathews junior would be received with interest.

Do you want to know more?

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

Biography of David Mathews jr; written by Pamela Hutchison Garrett for Markham of Chesterfield website; 2018.