

Sketch: John Markham comes to New York by Pamela Hutchison Garrett

John Markham first appeared in America, in the state of New York, in 1732. He was probably in his mid-twenties when he was appointed Lieutenant in the Company of Alexander Colden of Orange county New York. This interesting record appears in the British Historical Manuscripts in the Office of the Secretary of State, Albany New York (O'Callaghan):

17 January 1732, Military Commissions of Orange county New York. Alex Colden, capt; John Wilkins, Lt; Stephanus Christ, ensign; James McNeal, Lt; James Monel, ensign; John Markham, Lt; Cadwallader Colden Jr, ensign.

The above record does present problems. It is the only record I have found of John Markham in New York, as early as 1732. I continue to wonder if the dating on the record should be 1742. There are a number of records beginning in 1737 that give a clearer picture of John Markham in New York. But, a question remains as to whether John Markham was really in Orange county New York by 1732. It arises because of a deed that John Markham witnesses in 1736 in county Kilkenny Ireland. The deed is dated 22 December 1736 and is between John Markham's father, Bernard Markham, and John Markham's older brother, William Markham. All three men are identified as being of Fanningstown, county Kilkenny Ireland.

So, was John Markham in New York in 1732? Did he go back to Ireland for a time and then return to New York about 1737? This may be just what happened. His early explorations around 1732 may have been for the purpose of checking out the possibilities America might hold. Then he may have returned home to see what support he could glean from his father and brother. He must have been successful in securing means from his family, as he arrived back in New York with some financial resources. What might have enticed him to immigrate?

New York's British newcomers did not form part of any group migration predicated on idealistic motives. Nor did they travel en masse on ships for which passenger lists have been preserved. British migration to New York City in the years from 1700 – 1730 was essentially an opportunistic migration of individuals who sought to improve their economic position and consequently their status in society.

[source] Before the Melting Pot: Society and Culture in Colonial New York City; Joyce Goodfriend;

Shortly after his arrival, this interesting deed which appears among New York deeds deposited with the Secretary of State:

*This Indenture made the sixth day of October . . . 1737. Between Elizabeth Stollard (Stoddard) of the City of New York, spinster of the one part and **William Markham and John Markham of the City of New York Merchants** of the other part. Whereas by Letter Patent bearing date the 9th April 1719 King did grant unto John Haskall a certain Tract of Land in Ulster County part of Lands formerly granted to Captain John Evans . . . (then, John Haskell on) 13th Day June 1719 did for consideration therein mentioned give . . . to Elizabeth Stollard . . . said Tract of Land . . . (then, Elizabeth Stollard) for*

and in consideration of the Sum of One hundred and eighty pounds current money of New York . . . paid by the said William Markham and John Markham . . . doth fully freely and absolutely grant bargain . . . for one whole year by indenture . . . transferring of use unto . . . being part of the Tract of Two thousand acres in the above recorded Patent . . . six hundred and seven acres of land . . .

[source] New York Deeds deposited with the Secretary of State; Volume 15, page 54, housed at the State Archives.

John Markham was probably in his early thirties when he became the owner of 607 acres of Orange county New York property. It is wondered exactly what role William Markham played in the purchase. Is William Markham the older brother of John Markham? There is no evidence that John Markham's brother William ever came to New York. He married and raised a family on the Markham property in county Kilkenny Ireland. But, perhaps he joined his brother in a business partnership in order to help him along his way. Nothing further has been found related to "William Markham and John Markham of the City of New York Merchants". Did John Markham come into possession of some goods which he was able to sell to finance his land purchase? It doesn't appear that he remained in New York City long. Shortly after the October 1737 transaction, he was settled in Orange county New York.



Mounts Adam and Eve, Orange County New York; Cropsey, 1872.

A description of the Haskell Patent is found in Rutenber and Clark's "History of Orange county New York". It does not identify John Markham's property ownership, but it shows how Elizabeth Stollard came into possession of the western part of the Haskell Patent and mentions her sale of 631 acres to John Crawford on the 18th of October 1737. This property may have adjoined, or been near, the 607 acres that she had sold to John Markham a few days earlier:

The patent granted to Col John Haskell was settled by himself in 1726. He erected a log house on what was afterwards known as the Dusenberry farm, and which is yet standing on land adjoining the farm late

of Ezra P Thompson. To this portion of the patent he gave the name of "The Hermitage", divided the whole tract into farm lots and remained in occupation of his original location until his death. Evan Jones, surgeon, was among the early settlers on the patent, having purchased and occupied lot number 3. His farm of 292 acres was sold by his heirs (1763) to Samuel Brewster, who erected (1768) what is now known as the Brewster house. The western part of the patent was conveyed by Haskell (13 Jun 1719) to Elizabeth Stollard, who sold 631 acres to John Crawford, weaver 18 Oct 1737, Andrew Crawford sold part of the purchase to Neil McArthur in 1763.

At this point, a brief history of the area would be helpful. Orange County was one of the first twelve counties established by the Province of New York in 1683. The area of the county wherein John Markham resided was, for a time, part of Ulster county. The small community of Little Britain was near John Markham's property, and the town of New Windsor was taking shape nearby. About 1725, a warehouse and dock was built along the Hudson River, at the point that would become New Windsor. The river landing allowed goods and passengers regular travel to New York City, about fifty miles downriver. The formal establishment of the village of New Windsor came around mid-century. Today New Windsor is a subset of the town of Newburgh.

New Windsor was at the northern edge of the Precinct of the Highlands. Along the Hudson River the highland hills rise up one thousand feet along either shore, and extend for about fifteen miles from Peekskill north to Newburgh.

I have not been successful in exactly identifying John Markham's property, but it would have been near today's intersection of Drury Lane (formerly Parshall Lane) and Highway 17k. This is about six to eight miles west of the Hudson River.

In October of 2000, my son and I had the opportunity to make a half-day visit to the area where John Markham lived. From my notes - "We drove around the area on a beautiful fall day and visited the Presbyterian Church and graveyard at Little Britain, near where John Markham lived. Because of the Stewart International Airport, we were not able to get into the specific area where we think our grandfather lived, but the general area was lovely."

From a deed recorded in 1750, we learn that John Markham's property was called 'Mount John', and was considered to be in Ulster county New York. A note from the Road Commissioner's records (1754) describes a road to be laid out between Goshen and the Paltz:

. . . northerly along said lane to the westward of said McClaghry's house towards the house late of Samuel Lucky then past said house along said road to the west of the house and fields late of John Markham til it passes a Little Bridge to the Northward of said Markham's house where the road turns northerly towards the house of Cadwallader Colden, Jr

[source] Transcriptions of Early County Records of New York State; Records of the Road Commissioners; 1754.

John Markham remained on his Orange county New York property for about twelve to fifteen years. He married around 1737-38, and his older children were certainly born there. Details about his wife are found in the sketch titled, [Sketch: A Wife for John Markham](#).

Records for Ulster and Orange counties in New York in the mid-1700s are hard to access. An extended trip to New York to search their excellent archives might prove very rewarding. But, for the present, we can take a glimpse into John Markham's life in New York. A series of records for New York can be found in [John Markham's Timeline](#).

After John Markham's purchase of property in 1737 Orange county New York, we find him again serving in the local Militia. He appears on the 1738 "List of Foot Company of Militia of the present Highland, under the command of Captain Thomas Ellison.

In 1738 [the] Ulster county regiment of militia was organized of which A Gaasbeck Chambers was Colonel, Wessel TenBroeck lieutenant-colonel, Conrad Elmendorf major, and Cornelius Elmendorf quartermaster. The regiment was composed of three companies in Kingston, one in Marbletown, one in Wallkill, one in Hurley, one in Rochester, one in New Paltz and one in the precinct of the Highlands, which then embraced, what is now New Windsor, Newburgh, Plattekill and Marlborough. The latter company was under the command of Captain Thomas Ellison of New Windsor, John Young ensign, David Davids, Patrick McClaughry and Moses Garrison sergeants, Jacobus Bruyn, James Stringham and Jonah Hazard, corporals and Charles Clinton, clerk. It numbered 86 men, rank and file. Thomas Ellison of New Windsor was one of the oldest merchant traders on the Hudson . .

[source] Militia; New York State's Provincial and Revolutionary Military Organization; Benjamin Myer Brink, 1998.

There is evidence that John Markham acquired indentured servants, probably to work his farmland. On the 27th of February 1738-39, he advertised in the New York Gazette: *John Hickey, an Irishman, age c.18, runaway from John Markham, living in the Highlands near Goshen, NY.* Indentured servitude was a labor system where by young people paid for their passage to the New World by working for an employer for a certain number of years. The employer purchased the indenture from the sea captain who brought the youths over. It was a legal system that was enforced by local courts.

About twelve years after John Markham's settlement in Orange county New York, when he was probably in his early forties, we find him named as Road Commissioner for the Highlands in adjoining Ulster county New York. The highland areas of Orange and Ulster counties were sometimes grouped together with a common description – The Precinct of Highlands. In 18th century New York the roads were built and cared for by the people who used them. John Markham would have overseen the maintenance of established roads, and the construction of new roads.

John Markham's friends and neighbors in Ulster and Orange counties in New York are of interest. A few might actually be relations, but the scarcity of records makes that hard to prove. Some neighbors might provide clues to questions like - Why did John Markham settle in Orange – Ulster counties of New York? How did he meet Catherine Mathews? Why did John Markham leave New York for Virginia? Some further discussion can be found in the sketch titled, [Sketch: John Markham meets Catherine - Friends in the Neighborhood](#).

The exact timing of John Markham's migration to Virginia remains elusive. It must have been sometime between 1749-1752. I believe that John Markham sold his 607 acres to John Parshall in 1749. But, two entries in the Grantee Card Index for New York Colonial Patents leave me confused:

6 October 1737; recorded 16 March 1750; Elizabeth Stoddard to John and William Markham; Book 15, pg 54. Description - Orange county New York New Windsor; Tract of 607 acres out of Patent of 2000 acres to John Haskall.

8 March 1749; recorded 11 March 1750; William Markham to John Markham; Book 15, pg 53. Description - 607 acres of land near Little Britaine called Mount John, in Ulster county New York.

The first entry refers to the deed (shown above) for the initial sale of the property by Elizabeth Stoddard (Stollard) to John Markham. I was unable to locate the second deed. Perhaps in 1749, as John Markham was contemplating the sale of his property, the mysterious William Markham turned over his interest in the property to John Markham. I have not been able to locate a deed showing the sale of the property to the Parshall family, but these accounts are of interest:

. . . In 1807 he (David Parshall) deeded his farm . . . a certain parcel of land in Little Britain, part of a certain tract of 607 acres formerly conveyed by John Markham and Catherine his wife, to Jonathan Parshall, father of Jonathan and David Parshall.

[source] Big Little Britain: The Parshalls of Parshall Lane; by Margaret Wallace.

References to the Drury and Parshall families speak of a tract of land, probably near New Windsor in Orange county New York, stating:

Jonathan Parshall . . . purchased six hundred and seven acres of land belonging to the Markham tract in 1737. He paid for the land in installments, and did not receive the deed for it until 1753 . . .

[source] History of Orange County New York; Rutenberg and Clark; 1881.

I don't believe the exchange between Markham and Parshall occurred in 1737. A date around 1749 seems more likely. But, these notes make it clear that 'John Markham and Catherine his wife' sold their property to the Parshalls sometime before 1753. This lines up well with the Road Commissioner's record of 1754 (mentioned above).

Now a new question surfaces - Is the John Markham who sold his property in Orange county New York about 1749, the same John Markham who first appears of record in Chesterfield county Virginia in 1752? I say yes! For further discussion see the sketch titled, [Sketch: John Markham moves on to Virginia - Where is the Evidence?](#)

Do you want to know more?

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

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

Photo credit: Jasper Francis Cropsey (1823–1900) – American Hudson River School painter; his Mounts Adam and Eve, oil on canvas, painted in 1872, is housed at the Reynolda House Museum of American Art in Winston Salem, North Carolina.

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