

## Sketch: Markham Brothers in the American Revolution

When John Markham died in 1770 Chesterfield county Virginia, he named six sons in his Will. We never find further mention of Archibald, the youngest son, and it is thought that he died before reaching adulthood. The other five sons – William, Bernard, John, Vincent, and George - all gave service during America's Revolutionary War. I have not been able to pin down years of birth, or birth order for the Markham brothers, but William Markham and Bernard Markham must have been the oldest of the brothers, probably born before 1740. And, George Markham seems to be the youngest surviving brother, possibly born about 1750. During the war years the brothers likely ranged in age from twenty-five to forty-five.

The Markham family was well regarded in Chesterfield county Virginia, and it is not surprising that they filled roles of leadership in the community. At the beginning of the war, in 1775, possibly all of the Markham brothers were in Chesterfield county Virginia. Following his marriage, about 1767, William Markham had moved west to Bedford county Virginia, but records suggest that he sold out his homeplace in 1774-75, and may have returned to Chesterfield county Virginia. During the course of the war, John Markham and Vincent Markham both moved a bit further afield – Vincent to neighboring Powhatan county Virginia, and John further west to Pittsylvania county Virginia.

There are clear indications of the Revolutionary War service of four of the five Markham brothers. Only William Markham is not well recorded. A statement by his great-granddaughter informs us, "Her father (William Markham) was a Revolutionary soldier, who sickened and died in Yorktown during the siege." Commentary on William Markham's likely service is found in the sketch titled, Siege of Yorktown - William Markham and Mary Wathen.



Soldier of the Continental Line

It would be hard to say which of the Markham brothers was first to act in the Revolutionary cause. Bernard Markham served on the Committee of Safety for Chesterfield county Virginia. He was among the justices who took a formal oath of allegiance following the declaration of independence:

*The Declaration of Independence, adopted on July 4, 1776, was officially communicated to the Chesterfield authorities on August 2, at which time a new oath of allegiance to the United States was taken by them. The justices immediately subscribing to the oath were Abraham Salle, Joseph Bass, Thomas Worsham, Jacob Ashurst, Robert Goode, Davis Holt, John Botte, Bernard Markham, George Robertson, Frances Goode, and Benjamin Branch.*  
[source] Lutz; *Chesterfield, An Old Virginia County*, page 108.

Brother John Markham may have been the first to venture out as a fighting soldier. John probably began his career as a leader of a Chesterfield county Virginia Militia unit as early as 1775. A number of later pensioners name him as their captain. His service was sometimes associated with the neighboring Amelia county district.

*Militia companies were being equipped and trained, but arms were not too plentiful. Col Cary's store at Warwick supplied colors and drums for the companies of Captains Ralph Faulkner and John Markham for 15 pounds each and two stands of colors for the Amelia militia battalion for 25 pounds.*  
[source] Lutz; Chesterfield, An Old Virginia County, page 108.

I have struggled to define the actual course of John Markham's service. In September of 1775, John Markham raised a company of troops in Chesterfield county Virginia, and marched them to Williamsburg. Later John Markham was described as Captain of the Chesterfield Minutemen. Eventually this company was absorbed into the Regular (Continental) Army forces and described as the First Virginia Regiment. In the Fall of 1775 the company was on duty around the town of Norfolk Virginia.

*Williamsburg, Sept 29 - On Tuesday last the Hon. Committee of Safety adjourned from Hanover town to this city, for the convenience of despatching the important business committed to their charge. Last Wednesday morning 100 volunteers from this city, under the command of major Eppes, marched for Hampton, agreeable to the recommendations of the Hon. Committee of Safety, to replace those formerly sent down, who are returned . . . A camp is now marked out behind the college, tents and other camp equipage, are getting ready with the utmost expedition, and the troops, from the different counties, are on their march for this city. The same day came in the Chesterfield company, under Capt Markham, who are a set of hearty clever young men. Mr Thomas Davis, of Fairfax county, is appointed adjutant to the first regiment of regular forces, with the rank of Lieutenant . . .*  
[source] The Virginia Gazette, 29 September 1775.

*Extract of a letter from Col Woodford to the Hon The President of the Convention dated Norfolk, January 21, 1776*

*We have had a party, these ten days, upon Tanner's creek, who yesterday had a brush with a tender's boat attempting to land at Sprowle's plantation; they beat her off, and killed one man. 8 o'clock at night. About 4 this afternoon, another heavy cannonading began from the Liverpool and Otter, during which the enemy landed and set fire to some houses that remained unhurt, near to what is called Town Point Wharf. I sent strong parties to reinforce our water guards. We had three fine men killed with cannon shot, and one wounded, who it is thought will lose his arm. We have found one sailor and two negroes dead and suppose many others were killed and wounded, that were carried off in their boats. Capts Green and Markham arrived in the height of the fire.*  
[source] The Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg, Virginia); 26 January 1776.

Sometime in 1776 Captain John Markham was "shifted" from the First to the Second Virginia Regiment, and was promoted to Major. Then, upon the occasion of Col Francis Eppes death, 17 August 1776, John Markham was promoted to Lt Col of the Eighth Virginia Regiment. In January of 1777 the Eighth Virginia Regiment received orders to join George Washington's main army in Pennsylvania. Lt Col John Markham is identified among the officers.

On September 11, 1777 the Eighth Virginia Regiment participated in the Battle of Brandywine Creek at Chadd's Ford Pennsylvania. The regiment then moved on to battle at Germantown Pennsylvania on October 4, 1777. Germantown was a significant loss for the Americans, and it may have proved the downfall of Lt Col John Markham. Three weeks after the battle, on 26 October 1777, John Markham was "cashiered". When I first came across this entry I assumed it meant he was paid off and left the service. But, I eventually learned that to be cashiered means, "to dismiss (a military officer) from service, especially with disgrace."



Battle of Germantown; Christian Schussele (1824-1879); in the Public Domain.

Recently I came across a document titled, Arrangement of Virginia Continental Field Officers Winter 1777-1778. It has been transcribed and annotated by C Leon Harris from a copy that appears in the Fold3 records. Mr Harris states, "The first document is a draft arrangement for filling vacancies resulting from resignations and deaths of Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels. It is dated 15 October 1777 and probably drafted at Valley Forge . . . The following [second] arrangement is not dated, but it was probably compiled soon after the above [first] draft." This document clearly notes "Lt Col Markham's disgrace", citing that he was cashiered 26 October 1777, and was to be replaced by Major William Darke. The date of John Markham's disgrace could suggest a connection to the Battle of Germantown (October 4, 1777), but it may also relate to some incident in the weeks that followed.

I have come across some interesting controversy following the Battle of Germantown. Among the General Orders copied down:

*Head Quarters, At Wentz's, Worcester Township [Pa.]; October 19th 1777.*

*The Commander in Chief approves, the following sentences of a General Court Martial, held the 7th & 10th instant, whereof Col. Brodhead was president.*

*Capt: Crump of the 1st Virginia regiment charged with "Cowardice"—is found guilty, and sentenced to be cashiered—and his name—place of abode, and his punishment, published in the News-papers of the particular state he came from, or in which he usually resides—After which, it shall be deemed scandalous, for any officer to associate with him.*

*[source] Founders Online, website of the National Archives;*

*<http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-11-02-0562>*

John Markham does not appear to have received a court martial. After October 1777 there is no indication that John Markham served further in the American Revolution. Not long after he was "cashiered" he removed from his family in Chesterfield county Virginia, further west to Pittsylvania county Virginia. He was probably married about 1780. His disgrace may not have followed him home as he continued to be referred to as Col Markham by friends and neighbors. Many years later, Dr Thomas H Callaway made the statement that ". . . his maternal grandfather, John Markham, having been colonel of one of the gallant Virginia regiments in the Continental line."

Brothers Bernard Markham and George Markham worked actively with the Militia of Chesterfield county Virginia. The early years of the war did not see much activity in Virginia. In 1775 and 1776, Lt George Markham marched with troops to various locations in Virginia – mostly to perform guard duty or transfer supplies. It was not until the second half of 1780 that the local troops were called upon for active service. At this time numerous pension records mention service in the company of Captain George Markham. His older brother Col Bernard Markham is noted as commander of the regiment.



Colonial Minutemen

Pension application of John Bass, S6592:

. . . he entered service in the summer of 1777 in Chesterfield County in the militia company of Capt Bernard Markham in the regiment of Col Robert Haskins and marched through the counties of Charles City, James City, New Kent, to York, and then to Williamsburg where he was discharged after about three months . . .

Pension application of Allen Whitworth, S6367:

. . . he volunteered as a private in a company of Militia commanded by Captain George Markham in Chesterfield County Virginia in the latter part of the year 1780. The Regiment to which the said company was attached was commanded by Colonel James Monroe, [John or James] Mercer was Lt Col, and Robert Goode Major of the said Regiment. The troops marched in various directions in the lower part of Virginia, was at Smithfield, Mackey's Mills and after serving a tour of about two months, were discharged at the Town of Petersburg.

That early in the year 1781 about the month of January during [Benedict] Arnold's invasion he was called out in a company of Militia commanded by the said Captain George Markham – Colonel Bernard Markham commanded the Regiment, the troops were marched through several of the counties in the vicinity of Richmond, then to the lower part of the State and after serving a tour of about one month was discharged at the town of Smithfield.

That very shortly after the discharge last mentioned he was again called out in a company of Militia commanded by the said Captain George Markham, was in the battle of Petersburg between Phillips' Army and the American Army . . .

Pension application of Thomas Anderson, S21603

. . . At another time he was called out as a Militia man, and met at Manchester when the British army entered Richmond and was said to have burnt the Rope works there . . from that time he believes he continued in the service until after the battle in Petersburg in which he was engaged [Battle of Blanford Hill, 25 April 1781]. It was his lot to be called out to attack the enemy in their boats whilst ascending the apomatox river on which Petersburg is situated. He can only recollect the name of one officer in this engagement whose name was Marcham [Capt George Markham] . . .

Pension application of Joseph Bass, W5765

. . . That the forth and last tour which he served was as Ensign, under Capt George Markam of Chesterfield, that the company marched first to Cabin Point on the James River, and thence up to Broadway where the company was at the time that the British with Phillips and Arnold came to Petersburg [April 1781] and burnt so much of it – on intelligence of their approach the company marched rapidly up on the north side of the Appomatox toward Petersburg and got to Baker's hill on the Chesterfield side, in sight of the town just in time to meet the Virginia militia retreating from there [from the Battle of Blandford Hill, [25 April 1781], with whom they proceeded on route to Richmond, to Randolph's Mill, whence after a halt of two or three days – they marched to Chesterfield Court House before it was burnt [27 April 1781]. That while there, some scouts sent out to discover the movements of the enemy and ascertain if they were approaching in that direction, met three British soldiers and supposing them to be the advance of a considerable force, gave the alarm, and the militia retired from the Ct House to Falling Creek Church and he is mortified to say the three British soldiers came and burned the Court house without resistance. About that time also Richmond was burned. From the church the troops marched to the Meadow Bridges – thence to Colo Byrd's ferry in Charles City, on James River – thence to McKey's Mills [Mackey's Mill below Smithfield] where he saw Baron Steuben, who was in command of that neighbourhood – thence to Cabin Point – thence to the Brick Church in Blanford about the time that their tour of duty terminated, and the second day after Lord Cornwallis surrendered at York [19 Oct 1781], the news of that event reached the militia at the old Church and they were discharged.

Pension application of Thomas Talbott, S31409

. . . in September of the same year [1781] he was drafted for three months, en entered the service in Chesterfield County under the command of Captain George Marcom and Francis [Robert] Goode who marched him thence to Williamsburg, where he joined the main Army under General Lawson . . he was then marched to Little York under his Captain Marcom, Colonel Goode staying behind, he was at the siege there and the capture of Cornwallis – after this he marched with some prisoners to Winchester Virginia where he was discharged in January 1782 . .

Pension application of Aaron Haskins, S18437

. . . In the latter part of the summer of the same year [1781], he again entered the service in the same County [Chesterfield], as orderly sergeant in the militia company commanded by Capt George

Markham, Robert Wooldridge and Luke Fowler being the subalterns, in the Regiment commanded by Col St George Tucker, marched down to the neighbourhood of Williamsburg and then to York; was present and engaged in the siege of that place; after the surrender of Lord Cornwallis's army [19 Oct 1781], attended the prisoners to Winchester, returned to the County of Chesterfield and was then discharged about the last of November, having served upwards of three months.

Note related to Aaron Haskins:

I have come across a document titled, Capt George Markham's Company of Chesterfield County Va Militia Sep 1781. It has been transcribed and annotated by C Leon Harris from a copy available in the Fold3 records. Mr Harris states, "In a statement in support of the pension application of John Condrey, Aaron Haskins described the following list as a muster roll of the company of Capt George Markham's militia company of Chesterfield County Virginia during a two-months tour at the time of the Siege of Yorktown (28 Sep – 19 Oct 1781) . . ."

There are many more pension applications that give detail of Capt George Markham's leadership. They suggest that he was consistently in charge of a company of Chesterfield county Virginia Militiamen throughout the War. He was probably present at the Battle of Blandford Hill in Petersburg, 25 April 1781, and the Siege of Yorktown, 28 September 1781 to 17 October 1781.

Col Bernard Markham began his career early in the war as a Captain of a Militia company, but was eventually promoted to "command of the regiment". It is not clear how much time he actually spent in the field with his men. Virginia's revolutionary pension applications give several references to a Captain Barnett Markham and I have long wondered about this. See further discussion in the sketch titled – Is Barnett Markham a misspelling of Bernard Markham?

We don't find any evidence of brother Vincent Markham's participation at the beginning of the war. Sometime between 1775 – 1778 he set up his household in neighboring Powhatan county Virginia. In June of 1778, Vincent Markham, "gentleman", was appointed First Lt in Captain Edward Mumford's [Munford] Powhatan county Company of Militia. In June of 1781 he was promoted to Captain, taking over the company that was "formerly commanded by William Mayo". The Powhatan Militia toured to various locations in Virginia, primarily observing British movement and guarding citizens and stores.

There are records detailing the contributions of supplies for the war effort made by the Markham families:

1783, 18 Sept, Court; The Commonwealth to Vincent Markham Continental use for 105 Pickled Pork 7 Bushells of Wheat & Bushells of Oats to ditto Carriage of Wheat thirty shillings and five pence, Moving Country flour thirteen shillings and Eleven pence, fifteen and a half Bushills of wheat Six ditto fifteen and a half Bushells ditto Carriage one Shilling and ten pence Two Cows Eight pounds four Shillings one and a half Bushells of Wheat, Waggoning Twenty Tinies of Taffa Eighteen shillings and five pence half Penny. [source] Powhatan County, Virginia; Misc. Abstracts from Order Book 1 (1777-1784); page 311.

I am curious about those Tinies of Taffa!

Bernard Markham by Fran Smith, Commissioner; Sept 1781; beef 400#

Bernard Markham by Militia in service 1781; cash paid for fodder for horses

Bernard Markham by Armands Legion; Apr 1781; corn 45 bushels

Bernard Markham by South Carolina officers; Jul 1781; cart hire, carrying baggage 4 days

George Markham made several claims for provisions he gave to the Revolutionary cause in 1780-1781, 30 bushels of wheat, 850 pounds beef, and 30 pounds bacon.

Claims presented by John Markham of Pittsylvania county Virginia in 1782 and 1783 – Waggon and team, 40 pounds bacon, 1 bu corn, flower, 300 pounds beef.

[source] Virginia Publick Claims; Abercrombie, 1992; from a series at the Virginia State Archives.



We applaud the service of the five Markham brothers to the American Revolutionary cause. Certainly their wives and children supported them and made their own personal sacrifices. Only Bernard Markham has been entered as a Revolutionary Patriot in the records of the DAR. Fifteen of his female descendants have honored him with their membership. I hope this article might encourage descendants to mark and honor the service of the Markham brothers.

Do you want to know more?

[Sketch: Siege of Yorktown – William Markham and Mary Wathen](#)

[Sketch: Is Barnett Markham a misspelling of Bernard Markham?](#)

[Link to John Markham Sr \(father of the Markham brothers\)](#)

Recommended Reading:

Chesterfield, An Old Virginia County, Volume 1; Francis Earle Lutz, 1954. Chapter 11 – Gathering War Clouds. Chapter 12 – The Redcoat Invasion.

Virginia militia in the Revolutionary War: McAllister's data; Joseph Thompson McAllister; 1913. Available online.

To have served under General Marquis de Lafayette; Blog article by historian John Cashon; Nov 2013.

<http://johncashon.wordpress.com/tag/siege-of-yorktown/>

Interesting account based on the Pension Application of David Cashon, who was a member of Capt George Markham's Company of Chesterfield County Virginia Militia.

Photo Credit:

Colonial Minutemen; Lossing (2), Benson J. Harper's Encyclopedia of United States History. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1912. Available via U.S. History Images by Karen J. Hatzigeorgiou; <http://ushistoryimages.com/>

**Sketch: Markham Brothers in the American Revolution; Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2014.**