

Indications that James Mathews/Matthews is the Father of
Jesse, Joseph, John and George Washington Matthews
By David E. Condit (conditd@comcast.net), September 2013

My earliest research into my wife's ancestry occurred in the early 1990's and as I dug into her Matthews family I ran into a brick-wall with the parents of George Washington Matthews. I had early on discovered that George Matthews had three known brothers, Jesse, Joseph, and John. A family pamphlet passed down documenting the life of Mary Cicely Matthews, daughter of George, had mentioned several Aunts and Uncles, John Matthews, Jesse Matthews his wife Mary and their daughter Susan. I additionally identified a third brother, Joseph Matthews.

As many researchers do, I began looking for any family that might fit the bill as parents of George, Jesse, John and Joseph Matthews. Despite the fact that I knew George was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, I tentatively identified a Gilbert Matthews in Freehold, New Jersey as the parent of George and his brothers. I was nudged toward this by the following facts:

1. Matthews family lore had indicated the Matthews family was descended from the Gilbert family who were captured by Indians in Pennsylvania in 1780.
2. Matthews family information indicated that George Matthews had married an Elizabeth Gilbert and that Elizabeth was from a lost generation of Gilbert's. This was latter proved incorrect by finding the marriage of George Matthews to Elizabeth Thomas, a Quaker.
3. Matthews family lore included a "wedding plate" handed down from Rebecca Gilbert to the youngest daughter who passed it to the youngest daughter. This plate was passed from George Matthews or his wife to Mary (Matthews) Fowler, to Ruby (Fowler) Volz to Lillian (Volz) Griffith. It is supposed that George Matthews, being the youngest son in a family of no girls was passed the plate.
4. In attempting to make a Gilbert connection it was determined that Gilbert Matthews of New Jersey had a son Joseph, he was the only identified Matthews that seemed to fit, and it was a good working theory.

Unfortunately, I published this information to the web on the condit-family.com web site and it has subsequently proliferated across many genealogies despite any documentation proving it. This document is an attempt a proving the correct information to as many people as possible that I have misled with erroneous information.

I will prove with this document that the father of Jesse, Joseph, John and George Washington Matthews is actually a James Mathews/Matthews of Lancaster Co., Pennsylvania.

The earliest information I had indicated brothers Jesse, John and George Matthews so the census records were one of the first sources to search. Early research was done at the National Archives and I quickly identified the three brothers and an additional brother Joseph.

Church records indicated:

John Matthews was born 26 January 1813 in Lancaster, PA.

George Matthews was born 9 March 1816 in Lancaster, PA.

Census records indicated:

Jesse Matthews was born 1809/10 (1850-80 1811, 1809, 1810, 1810) in Pennsylvania.

Joseph Matthews was born 1807-1811 (1850-70 1808, 1811, 1807) in Pennsylvania.

Grave Records indicate:

The gravestone for Jesse Matthews indicates he was born in 1809 and died in 1884.

Census Records for the Matthews Brothers

Name	1840 Census	1850 Census	1860 Census	1870 Census	1880 Census
Jesse Matthews	Lancaster Co., PA	Chester Co. PA	Chester Co. PA	Lancaster Co., PA	Jefferson Co., KS
Joseph Matthews		Chester Co., PA living w/James	Hartford Co., MD living w/John	Hartford Co., MD living next door to John	
John Matthews	Chester Co., PA	York Co., PA	Hartford Co., MD	Hartford Co., MD	Lee Co., IA
George Matthews		York Co., PA	York Co., PA	York Co., PA	York Co., PA

My conclusion was that:

Jesse was the first child born about 1809 in Pennsylvania.

Joseph was the second child born about 1810 in Pennsylvania (may have been oldest).

John was the third child born 26 Jan 1813 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

George was the fourth child born 9 Mar 1816 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Subsequent identification of a James Mathews/Mathews as the father of these children led to review of James Matthews Census records:

Name	1810 Census	1820 Census	1830 Census	1840 Census
Jesse Matthews	Drumore, Lancaster Co., PA	Little Britain, Lancaster Co. PA	Little Britain, Lancaster Co. PA	Little Britain, Lancaster Co. PA
People in household	Two males < 10 Two males 26-44 One female 26-44	Two males < 10 Two males 10-15 One male 16-25 One male > 45 One female >45	One male 10-14 Three males 20-29 One male > 45 One female >45 (Should have been one male 15-20)	Two males 20-29 One female 50-59 Next door to James is Jesse Matthews with a male 50-59
Would match	Jesse and Joseph in household but who is the extra male?	Jesse, Joseph, John and George	Jesse, Joseph, John and George	Joseph and George
Jesse Matthews				Little Britain, Lancaster Co. PA
People in household				Two Males < 10 One Male 30-39 One Male 50-59 One Female 20-29
Would match				Gilbert, Samuel, Jesse, James and Mary Brogan Matthews

Initial information leading to identification of James Mathews/Mathews as the father of the four brothers came from an on-line entry of the Southern Lancaster County Historical Society (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~paslchs/poorchildren.html>) showing "Poor Children List" for Lancaster Co., Pennsylvania. This included the following entries:

Year	Parent	Name	Children	Age	Township
1823	MATHEWS	..	John	8 years	Little Britain
1819	MATTHEWS	James	Jno	6 years	Little Britain
1819	MATTHEWS	James	Jesse	9 years	Little Britain

Subsequent research turned up a similar listing in Chester Co., Pennsylvania in 1824.

Year	Parent	Name	Children	Age	Township
1824	MATHEWS	James	John George	10 years 8 years	

Why Joseph never showed up on the Poor Children lists is unknown but all the other sons showed up at various times and of the appropriate age except for John in 1823.

Finally I took the time to go to Lancaster County and search through the tax records from which the "Poor Children List" was extracted to see if I could find James Mathews and the four brothers. The results justified the time spent as I found the family.

James Matthews shows up on the Drumore Tax Lists from 1799 until 1807 as a Taylor (Tailor), single freeman. Assuming he was 21 or older when he first shows up on the Tax Lists means he was born about 1776-1778. The 1850 census for West Nottingham, Chester, Pennsylvania shows a James Mathews born 1776 with a wife Rebecca and son Joseph living with him.

James Matthews shows up on Drumore Tax Lists from 1808 until 1813 as a married man, still a Tailor. This would fit well with James getting married in about 1807-1808 and having his first child in 1808 or 1809.

James Matthews does not show up on either Drumore's or Little Britain's tax rolls between 1814 and 1818, but in 1819 James Mathews, Tailor, shows up in Little Britain on the Tax Lists, in 1819 with two children, Jno and Jesse on the Poor list. James Matthews again shows up on the Little Britain Tax Lists in 1820, 1821, 1823, and 1827.

On the 1831 Little Britain Tax Lists we have James Mathews, Tailor, and for the first time Joseph Mathews as a single man. Again, if Joseph first shows up on the Tax List when he is 21 that would mean he was born in 1810 or earlier since there are no Tax Lists in Little Britain for 1828-1830. James and Joseph continue appearing on the Tax Lists in 1832, and 1833.

On the 1835 Little Britain Tax Lists we have James Mathews, Tailor, and along with Joseph and we now have George as single man.

On the 1837 Little Britain Tax Lists we have James Mathews, Tailor, and Jesse Mathews, as a married man.

Finally on the 1838 Little Britain Tax Lists we have father and four sons. James Mathews, Tailor, Jesse Mathews, N. R. (unknown what it means), John Mathews, Collier (coal handler) but with land (unknown if he was married since with land he wouldn't be listed single), Joseph Mathews, Collier, single; and George, Collier, single.

James and the boys except for John continue showing up on the Little Britain Tax Lists after 1838. In 1843, George drops off the Little Britain Tax Lists. In 1844, James is on the Lower Oxford, Chester Co. Tax List along with John, neither with land, and John as a single man.

Although no female children show up in the census records it is possible that James and his wife had daughters that did not live for long and possibly even additional boys that did not live. What the above information does indicate is that James Mathews/Maththews and his wife had four boys between the date of their marriage and 1816, all of whom lived to become tax paying adults.

It is improbable that Rebecca, who is shown on the 1850 census for West Nottingham, Chester, Pennsylvania with James, is the mother of the four boys. In the 1810 census in Drumore, Lancaster county James has two males under 10, probably Jesse and Joseph, along with his wife between 26 and 44. In the 1820 census in Little Britain, Lancaster county James and his wife are over 45 with four males under 16, but with an unknown male 16-25. In the 1830 census of Little Britain James is listed as 50-59 supporting a birth in 1771-1780 while his wife is 40-49. Three males are listed as 20-29 where only two of his sons were that old and one male listed as 10-14 which would be George at 14. In the 1840 census in Little Britain James is shown as 50-59 again while there is no female in the family and two males are shown 20-29, Joseph and George as both Jesse and John have married by this time. Rebecca could be a second or even third marriage, or she could be the mother of all the boys and just absent in the 1840 census.

Whatever the cases, this proves conclusively that Jesse, Joseph, John and George Matthews were not the sons of Gilbert Matthews of New Jersey and that there is a very strong case that they were sons of James Matthews of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Questions that still need an answer:

1. Was Rebecca Matthews the mother of Jesse, Joseph, John and George Matthews?
Probably not but it is possible.
2. Is the Matthews family descended from the Gilbert family who were captured by Indians in Pennsylvania in 1780;? No connection has been found.
3. Who passed the Rebecca Gilbert's "wedding plate" to George Matthews, or did it come through his wife's side of the family?
4. Who is James Matthews father?

For those that didn't know, the Matthews family holds an annual Potluck lunch on the 4th Sunday of August every year. The 2014 lunch was the 68th year for their Annual get together.