

# THE WIFE OF JOHN<sup>4</sup> SKILLMAN OF NEWTOWN AND NEW JERSEY—NOT THE ALLEGED NANCY PAYNTER

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FOR OVER A CENTURY, an extensive compilation in the RECORD has been the principal source of early history and genealogy for Skillman families. William Jones Skillman authored twelve quarterly installments from 1906 through 1908 on “The Skillmans of America and Their Kin.”<sup>1</sup> He built in part on a less extensive 1892 book, *The Skillmans of New York*, by Francis Skillman.<sup>2</sup> William Jones Skillman (1835–1914) and Francis Skillman (1817–1898) refer to each other in their respective publications, so it is clear they exchanged information. William Jones Skillman conducted further research and carried the family genealogy down additional generations. In many cases his information and conclusions contradict those of Francis Skillman. Both authors relied to a great extent upon the recollections of their informants, so their unsupported statements should be treated cautiously. Neither provided sources for the vast majority of their data. Recently William Alfred Skillman has extended the family for many generations, with some corrections to the earlier works.<sup>3</sup> None of these sources has the correct wife for John<sup>4</sup> Skillman (*Jacob*<sup>3</sup>, *Thomas*<sup>2</sup>, *Thomas*<sup>1</sup>) of Newtown and New Jersey.

## THE NANCY PAYNTER MYTH

William Jones Skillman presented the following sketch for John<sup>4</sup>:

17. John<sup>4</sup> Skillman (*Jacob*<sup>3</sup>, *Thomas*<sup>2</sup>, *Thomas*<sup>1</sup>), b. Feb. 15, 1733; m. June 15, 1753, Nancy Paynter (second cousin), dau. of Wm. and Hester (Skillman) Paynter. He removed from Newtown, L. I., to Kingston, N. J., preceding his father, and was both farmer and tanner, his home being in later years known as the Storey Place, then the Rutherford Place. Had ten children: [He names Margaret, Jacob, Abraham, Abraham, John, Thomas, Jane, Isaac, Samuel, Elizabeth.]<sup>4</sup>

The information for the fifth child provides half of the roots of the myth of Nancy Paynter:

v. John, b. April 26, 1762; never m.; inherited the homestead, which, at his death went to Dick, his nephew, eldest son of his own younger brother, Isaac. John W. Morrel of Green

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<sup>1</sup> William Jones Skillman, “The Skillmans of America and Their Kin,” RECORD 37(1906)–39(1908).

<sup>2</sup> Francis Skillman, *The Skillmans of New York* (New York: Jones & Co., 1892).

<sup>3</sup> William Alfred Skillman, “Skillman Genealogy Site” (members.aol.com/wskillman/gene.htm).

<sup>4</sup> Skillman, “Skillmans of America” (note 1), RECORD 37(1906):173.