

Point (Brooklyn), said (1875): “John Skillman, of N. J., from a place near a Theological Seminary (Princeton), a cousin of father, paid us a visit of a week once, and with him was his nephew, Dick, who was to be his heir, he said. This John was the son of the John Skillman who m. his cousin Nancy.” John W. Morrel was a grandson of Abm.<sup>3</sup>, b. 1704.<sup>5</sup>

The other half of the myth was in Francis Skillman’s earlier publication.

Of the six sons of Thomas<sup>2</sup> I will speak in order: John<sup>3</sup> went to New Jersey. His son [sic] John married his cousin Catharine Paynter, and had children, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Thomas, John and two daughters—one was Margaret.<sup>6</sup>

William Jones Skillman then merged the two, creating a Nancy Paynter as the wife of John<sup>4</sup> of New Jersey and stating she was a daughter of Hester<sup>4</sup> (Skillman) (Abraham<sup>3</sup>, Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Thomas<sup>1</sup>) and William Paynter. He named three siblings of Hester Skillman, but did not name Nancy nor any other children of William and Hester (Skillman) Paynter:

6 Abraham<sup>3</sup> Skillman (Thomas<sup>2</sup>, Thomas<sup>1</sup>), bap. April 18, 1704 . . . m. Margaret Fine of N.Y. City . . . Children of Abraham Skillman and his wife, Margaret Fine: i. Thomas: Some doubts occur here . . . ii. Hester, b. 1732; m. William Paynter . . . iii. Elizabeth, b. July 9, 1737; d. June 7, 1807; m. John Morrell . . . iv. Catherine, m. Isaac Messerole . . .<sup>7</sup>

There is no evidence that William Paynter and Hester Skillman had a daughter Nancy or that a Nancy Paynter existed. A file on the Paynter family compiled by Richard Gosman Debevoise,<sup>8</sup> presents the following family group, which does not include a Nancy or its variant Ann:

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| (1) William Paynter Sr b 1735 d Apl 1 1823 |  |
|  | m Hester Skillman Mar 20, 1764 b 1745 d July 3, 1827 |
| (2) William                                | m Oct 9, 1792 Catharine Miller                       |
| (3) Abraham                                | m Elizabeth Brinkerhoff                              |
| (4) Thomas                                 | m 1802 Sarah Greenock                                |
| (5) Elizabeth b June 22, 1769              | m June 1, 1786 Richard Bragaw                        |
| (6) Richard                                |  |
| (7) Margaret                               | Stockholm <sup>9</sup>                               |

A deed dated 22 March 1824 lists the heirs of William Painter, farmer of Newtown, and his wife Catharine [sic] as: Abraham and Elizabeth Painter; Thomas and Maria Painter; Elizabeth Bragaw, widow of Richard Bragaw; Richard Painter; Margaret Stockholm, widow of Aaron Stockholm; and William Painter, the “said Paynters and Elizabeth Bragaw, and Margaret Stockholm being his only children and heirs.”<sup>10</sup> Again, there is no Nancy or Ann.

<sup>5</sup> Skillman, “Skillmans of America” (note 1), RECORD 37(1906):173. Morrel is identified in Skillman, *Skillmans of New York* (note 2), 17, as a great-grandson, which is a better fit chronologically.

<sup>6</sup> Skillman, *Skillmans of New York* (note 2), 16. He mixed up several of the John Skillmans.

<sup>7</sup> Skillman, “Skillmans of America” (note 1), RECORD 37(1906):93–94. For Hester’s information, he cites “Skillman’s [sic] of N.Y., p. 18.”

<sup>8</sup> Debevoise spent years doing genealogical work on the Dutch and English families of New York, including compiling two manuscripts on the Dutch Reformed Church at Newtown (“Abstracts from the ‘Minutes of the Board of Elders of the Reformed Dutch Church’ of Newtown, Long Island, 1848–1910” and “Baptisms and Marriages of the First Reformed Dutch Church of Newtown,” both in the Long Island Collection of the Queens Borough Public Library, Jamaica).

<sup>9</sup> Richard Gosman Debevoise Collection, “Paynter Family,” (manuscript, NYG&B Library; presented by Mrs. Elinor Nostrand Debevoise Smith of Malverne, Long Island, 1976). The records are both handwritten and typed, unsigned, undated, and old, probably predating Debevoise’s death in 1935. The *Stockholm* notation refers to the second marriage of Margaret Paynter; her first husband was Elias Brevoort.

<sup>10</sup> Pitman, “Brokaw-Bragaw” (note 13) RECORD 86:166, citing Queens County Deeds S:321. William Painter’s wife Hester is named as Catharine in error (if Debevoise was correct that Hester lived until 1827)