

THE  
SKILLMANS

OF  
NEW YORK.

COMPILED BY

FRANCIS SKILLMAN,  
OF ROSLYN, QUEENS CO., N. Y.

1892.

Converted to electronic version by  
William A. Skillman  
Linthicum, MD  
2004

COPYRIGHT, 1892, BY FRANCIS SKILLMAN

Press of JONES & CO.,  
48 Beaver Street,  
New York.

## PREFACE - 2004 Edition

This book is probably the first published genealogy of the Skillmans in America. The Introduction is dated Nov. 1875, but the Publication and Copyright date is 1892. It concentrates on the Skillmans in the New York area, where our immigrant ancestor, Thomas Skillman, settled down and began to raise a family. William Jones Skillman presumably used this book as a source when he wrote "Skillmans of America and their kin" which was published 1906-08. Francis mentions in the Introduction that he had corresponded with William J. Skillman sometime after 1875. Francis' (1817-1898) line is (Thomas, Francis, Thomas, Joseph, Thomas, Thomas) so he is the 4<sup>th</sup> great grandson of Thomas.

Several years ago I was given a reduced size copy of the book. I updated my Skillman file with this information. I attempted to convert it to electronic format by scanning and using OCR (Optical Character Recognition) The poor quality a small size of the copy caused an unacceptable level of typos. Recently, I purchased a CD of this book, and converted the PDF images of the pages to electronic text format. It still required significant editing to correct OCR errors. The basic format of the original has been preserved. I have carefully checked the spelling, but some subtle typos may have escaped me. Also, I have left unchanged numerous "misspellings" some of which reflect lack of uniformity in the spelling of surnames and alternate spellings used in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

I have added notes in the format [ed. note] for clarification in several places.

I would appreciate hearing from you about any corrections you may spot.

William A. Skillman, 7<sup>th</sup> great grandson of Thomas  
719 Maiden Choice Lane, Apt. BR630  
Catonsville, Maryland 21228  
410-242-5037  
February, 2012

[wskillman@aol.com](mailto:wskillman@aol.com)

My Skillman Web site: <http://SkillmansofAmerica.com>

## INTRODUCTION.

I remember when a boy to have listened in almost breathless silence, while my maternal grandmother and paternal great grandmother told of what they saw and what happened to their fathers' families and neighbors during the occupation of Long Island by the British, from 1776 to 1783. So fascinated was I with their narratives of the sufferings endured by the patriots, that as long as life lasts the memory of facts stated by them will be ever fresh.

Visits to my father's relatives, with long intervals between, gave me opportunities I did not know how to improve. All I done was to ask such few questions as might only be expected from a boy. During one of the visits made me by Samuel Griffing, I asked him to obtain from Abigail Skillman a statement of the Skillman family as correctly and as far back as she could give it. I received such statement in due time, and found it since to be entirely correct from Joseph<sup>8</sup> down, but she stated in it that, "Abraham was the father of Joseph," as the utmost limit that she could go back, and so I was given much trouble afterwards to find that Abraham had an only son Thomas, who died unmarried, and that Abraham and Joseph were brothers. This statement from my Aunt satisfied me at the time, and I felt thankful for it, but afterwards, as other points presented themselves, I found my craving unsatisfied. By that time my uncle and aunt paid the debt of nature, and I was left to devise other means of finding out what I wished to know.

In February, 1875, I determined that I would devote some of my time to collecting incidents relating to the different members of the family, and at the same time trace as far as possible its genealogy. I soon found that others had attempted this work, but for some reason had abandoned it. So successful was I, that after I had got some way into it, I began to hope I could trace the New Jersey families also, but I found a reluctance to answer my letters, and my infirmity was such that I could not stand on my feet to search the various county and other records in that State, and was compelled to abandon that hope. Afterwards I heard of and corresponded with the Rev. Wm. J. Skillman, of that State, and my hope revived, only to be cast down again. I trust that, as he is yet young, he may be able, not only to unravel the genealogy of the New Jersey Skillmans, and connect them with their ancestors who left Long Island, but to ascertain the source of the family in England. I am satisfied that a search of the State records in England would repay one, as from a few extracts from the Parliamentary rolls in London, in my possession, the family is an ancient one, going back to 1316, 1485, 1510-20-22 and 23, at which dates John and in others Henry Skilman (in one instance the name being spelled Skylman) are spoken of, the one as Lord of the Township of Wymondham, in County of Norfolk, the other as keeper of the King's Park at Eltham, Kent, &c. I am greatly indebted to the Honorable Francis Martin Skillman, and also to the Honorable Joseph Hudson Skillman, for information and assistance.

FRANCIS SKILLMAN.

ROSLYN, Nov., 1875.

## TRADITIONS.

The traditions of the family as collected by me are as follows:

John Skillman said: "The first Skillman, a Thomas, was very fond of music (or a great musician;) that he came to this country with Gov. Richard Nicoll in 1664, from England, and was a favorite of the Governor, who gave him a patent for land at Albany, and also for land at Bushwick; that the farm Lambert Wyckoff once lived on was the tract. He left an only son Thomas, but his wife soon married again. In some way his estate was so managed or left that the son Thomas had none of it while she had all."

Thomas Skillman 3d.<sup>19</sup>, said: "Thomas Skillman came here with Gov. Nicoll. He was from Glasgow, Scotland, and was a land surveyor. He died soon and left a son under age. Maiden name of his wife was Pettit, and she managed in some way to get the estate in her hands, and the son got none. He had a patent for land at Albany and also on Staten Island."

Francis Martin Skillman said: "He exchanged his land at Albany for land on Staten Island."

Martin Schenck, cousin of the above, said: "The first Skillman had a patent for half of Staten Island, like the Van Rensselaers."

Joseph Hazzard Skillman said: "The first Skillman, a Thomas, was a musician in the British army on service in this country. That he had a patent for land at Albany, and that his widow, by some means, got possession of his property, and the son had none."

William Paynter, aged 80, at about 1844 said: "Thomas Skillman and wife came from England and worked a farm on shares, and in 1688 bought a farm of 200 acres at Dutch Kills, the deed for which he has in his house." (This man's mother was Hester, daughter of Abraham Skillman.) His sister, Elizabeth Bragaw, said: "Thomas Skillman came from Barbadoes."

The earliest mention of the name of any Skillman that I find is in Thompson's History of Long Island, p. 138, 2d ed., vol. 2, giving a list of the inhabitants and probable freeholders of the town of Newtown in 1655-6. I have had no time as yet to verify the date, but as dates in Thompson's book are noted for unreliability, I attach but little importance to this extract, unless in the future I should meet with something to corroborate it. *Riker*, in his *Annals of Newtown*, p. 74 and appendix G, gives a list of freeholders, in which the name of Thomas or any other Skillman *does not* appear at that date.

## EXTRACTS FROM PUBLIC DOCUMENTS.

In the Department of Historical Records, Secretary of State's Office, New York:

Vol. 2, p. 250 and 254, 1668. —Orders, Warrants, Letters.—The name of Thomas Skillman appears in a list of names to whom Col. Nicolls had promised lands at Esopus.

Vol. 2, p. 254, 1668. —The name of Thomas Skillman with others is signed to an agreement to accept "Dividends of lots" in Esopus, whenever the Governor shall give order for laying them out.

Vol. 2, p. 390. —Court of Assizes. —Thomas Skillman included in a list of soldiers discharged, April 6, 1668.

The next in order of date respecting Thomas Skillman is an item in an account book of John and Samuel Bowne, of Flushing, in which they give him Feb'y, 1672, "Cr. by 3 days' work in April, 7s. 6d.," published in *L. I. Times*, Aug. 26, 1875\* [ed. footnote moved into body]:

---

[From the *L. I. Times*, August 26, 1875]

### \*ANCIENT FARMING IN FLUSHING.

BY HENRY ONDERDONK, JR., OF JAMAICA.

In 1789 the records of Flushing were burnt. This loss, so far as agriculture is concerned, is mitigated by the preservation of an old account book of John Bowne and his son Samuel, extending from 1656 to 1702. He was an enlightened, enterprising and thrifty planter, was County Treasurer, (1683) and once (1691) elected to the Assembly. He was systematic in his business, and noted down in his book many little items that others would have omitted. He seems also to have kept a country store, or else obligingly bought and sold for his neighbors. He kept up a kindly intercourse with the merchants at Manhattans, as New York was then called.

He kept horses, oxen, cows, sheep, bees, and swine. He raised wheat, buckwheat, rye, oats, barley, flax, peas, turnips, and tobacco. Farm hands and servants were "as precious as gold," and almost as scarce. Hence men were imported from Holland and Great Britain, whose passage was paid for by their being sold for a brief term of years to the planters. This class of servants were called *Redemptioners*, and many of them afterwards became respected citizens. Bowne, as his occasions required, bought negroes, and even Indians became servants and slaves. Bowne had orchards and made cider, which he sent to Manhattans.

1672, Feb. Reckoned with Wm. Smith, miller. Due me a quarter of veal, 3s; the use of a horse and plow 2 days; Thos. Skillman, cr. by 3 days work in April, 7s. 6d.

---

Doc'y History of N. Y., Vol. 2, P. 299, 1683.—Thomas Skillman's name appears on a rate list (with others) of New town, for 10 a. of land, 1 horse, 6 cows (kine), 3 being 3 years old and 2 of 1 year, and 2 sheep. As but 1 poll is set opposite his name, the presumption is fairly inferable that at that time his son was a minor.

By Gov. Dongan's patent for the town of Newtown, the name of Thomas Skillman appears as one of the patentees, 1686, Nov. 25th. The 5th May previous he bought lands of Wm. Alburtus, as noted hereinafter.

Doc'y History of N. Y., Vol. 112 and 113. (See also Vol. 3, p. 411, Col. Hist of N. Y.) To the 14th query ans'd by Gov. Dongan in his Report on the Province of N. Y., dated Feb'y 22nd, 1687, he says, concerning "the pasture at Albany": "It having been patented by Gov. Nicolls to several people and by them built upon, whose buildings have been carried away by the overflow of the River. It does not contain above fifteen or sixteen acres." It appears further by this paragraph that "the Ranslaers had the right to it." "Inhabitants live wholly upon trade with the Indians." "A barren and sandy spot." "I got the Ranslaers to release their pastures to the town

and sixteen acres into the country for commons to the King," &c. "After this I passed the patent for Albany, wherein was included the aforementioned pasture," &c.

Coll. His. of N. Y., Vol. 3, p. 143. Col. Nicolls to com. at Albany, says: "I could wish that all the land between the Fort and Town lay in common, so that the people who lost their houses may be recompensed up on the Hill with accommodation."

Capt. Thomas Skillman rec'd 14 oz. plate for services at Albany under Capt. Lewis, 1689-90. Copied from proceedings of Legislature, by H. Onderdonk, Jr.

The following items I have gleaned from the different volumes of the Coll. Hist. of New York, and insert them here, as they may be thought curious, especially by those who have no means of access to those books. The records and papers in the War Office in England will probably show whether he was a Musician or Soldier, and what company and regiment he belonged to, where and when he was enlisted, names of parents, birth-place, age, &c.

Vol. 2, p. 501-2 and 445-6.— "Col. Nicolls' ship, the Guiney (Guinea), 36 guns, there were four frigates, one of 36 guns, one of 30, one of 16 and the fourth of 10 guns. There were three companies of soldiers, 250 men. Nicolls and Sir Robert Carr's numbered 168—Sir George Cartwright's the remainder—of the first two marched into the fort, the last staid at the ferry; the smallest company went in the fort, the other staid at the gates"

Vol. 3, p. 65.—Of Col. Nicolls' voyage here, Samuel Maverick writes under date: "Piscataway (Maine), July 21, 1664."—"It's almost ten weeks since we came out of Portsmouth Roads; for the first 15 or 16 days we had as good wind and weather as could be desired, ever since which time we have not only met with cross winds but very bad weather, yet all our ships kept company till the 13th of this month, when by reason of very great fogs, we lost company of the Guiney, and since the 16th day we have not seen the Elyas. Contrary winds driving us on this coast, we were willing to put in here as well to recruit ourselves with water (which we began much to want), as in expectation to meet or hear of the rest of our fleet, who probably will come into this harbor. Yet if they come not suddenly our stay here will be but little, but shall hasten for Long Island."

"Col. Nicolls' ships were the Guiney, Capt. Hyde, Elyas (Elias), Capt. Hill. At p. 70 ship "Williams and Nicholas" spoken of. Vol. 3, p. 106, Col. Nicolls writing to the Duke of York says: "People of Long Island are very poor; labor only to get bread and clothing, without hope of ever seeing a penny of monies."

"His soldiers since he brought them out of England had not been between sheets or on any sort of bed but canvas and straw."

During Oct., 1666, Col. Nicolls writes: Generally every man hath a little house, a small parcel of land with some cattell, all not worth £5 in clothing in England."

[From the New York World, August 30th, 1881.]

Mr. Cyrus W. Field bought the famous old building on the northwest corner of Broadway and Battery place, known for many years as the Washington House and later as the Washington Hotel, at auction, at the Real Estate Exchange yesterday. The property was sold in consequence of the foreclosure of a mortgage, and the sale was conducted by Mr. Charles F. Brown, auctioneer. The first bid was \$50,000, which was promptly followed by a bid of \$60,000. The bidding continued briskly until \$160,000 was reached, after which it proceeded more slowly and was confined to two bidders. The property was finally knocked down to J. Bryant Lindley, agent for Mr. Field, for \$167,500. The purchase includes the plot of land, which measures 56 by 122 by 61 by 126 feet. Mr. Field has also bought from Mr. Astor the adjoining real estate corner of Battery place and Greenwich street, which will afford room to erect a building with a frontage of 171 feet on Battery place, 55 feet on Broadway and 65 feet on Greenwich street. The structure will be one of the finest in the city. A gentleman has offered a high rent for the three upper stories, which he wishes to use for a hotel. Thus the name Washington Hotel will be preserved. Mr. Field denies that

his purchases are in the interest of the New York Elevated Railroad Company. The Washington House took its name from the fact that on his arrival in New York after the evacuation by the British troops General Washington was there entertained by its then occupant. Early in this century it was purchased by the late Nathaniel Prime, the founder of the banking firm of Prime, Ward & King, and within its walls several of Mr. Prime's children were married. When he quitted it, the house was converted into a hotel. The site purchased by Mr. Field stood on the very shore of the North River in the early history of New Amsterdam and was directly commanded by the northerly ramparts of the old Dutch fort. The whole of Battery place, once known as Marketfield street, was afterwards created by filling in the land. Mr. Field's purchase stands where the garden and boat-landing stood of the first grant of land made on Broadway in 1643 to Martin Crigier, many of whose decendants still live in this city. His premises were near the northerly point of the present Bowling Green. During the Revolution the house was occupied by British officers.

In Queens County Clerk's Office, Newtown Records, Liber 1 of Deeds, p. 446, is recorded an assignment of a Bill of Sale of land made by William Albutis by Deed, dated May 5, 1686, whereby he "assigns set and makes over all my rights, title and interest of this Bill of Sale, with every part and parcel thereof or mentioned unto Thomas Skillman, of Maspatt Kills."

Gov. William Kieft, of New Amsterdam, granted in 1642 to the Rev. Francis Doughty a patent for 13.332 acres of land on which the little village of Maspeth was built. Mr. Doughty was a dissenting clergyman from Lincolnshire, England. The whole town of Newtown in which Maspeth village is, was known by the Indians as Mespat.

In Queen's County Clerk's Office—Newtown Records—in Liber 1 of Deeds, page 235, is recorded a deed made by Cornelius Briese and Sarah his wife, April 1, 1699, for and in consideration of a certain and vailble sum of money they convey to Thomas Skillman—both parties being of Newtown—"All the fourth part of the housing lands, meadows, and orchards, rights, profits, privileges, advantages, hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining to ye s<sup>d</sup> premises above s<sup>d</sup> y<sup>t</sup> was *bequeathed* to them by Thomas Skillman senior, deceased, of Maspeth Kills, unto the above s<sup>d</sup> Thomas Skillman, him, his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns forever."\*

\*Deed for other land bo't by Thomas<sup>2</sup> may be found recorded in Queens County Clerk's Office.—one from George Duncan and Frances his wife, in Liber B, p. 302, conveys dwelling house and outbuildings and 10 a. of land, dated May 30, 1707. (This deed is written on parchment, and I have had it in my possession).

Another, dated August 8, 1713, recorded in above Clerk's Office—Newtown Records—in Liber 4, at page 397, by which Johannis Opdyck, of Maiden Head, county of Burlington, N. J., conveys 50 a. at Maspeth Kills.

Another, dated Dec. 15, 1726, recorded in above Newtown Records, in Liber 5, at p. 321, by which Humphrey Hilliard conveys 26¼ a. north side Maspeth Kills creek.

Another is referred to in Liber 4, p. 169, in a deed from Benj. Skillman to Abm. Polhemus, by which Richard Betts, Jr., conveys. 4 7/8 a. of woodland at Newtown Springs.

I have been unable thus far to find any further record to support or invalidate the different traditions given me.

It seems fairly to be inferred that the first Thomas gave his property by will to his wife, as his son Thomas and grandson Joseph did, notwithstanding their leaving numerous children. It is very much the habit of the present day to be dissatisfied with and seek to set aside wills, alleging various reasons therefor. The son must have failed to comprehend the facts, or was unable to take the proper steps to set aside the will. That he was dissatisfied is evident from the tradition.

In respect to the patent for land at Albany, I find nothing more than is to be seen in the extract from Gov. Dongan's Report. No record of any is to be found in the office of the Secretary of State. Hence, if any existed, it was probably for so much land as his building covered and no more.

I have not been able to search the records of Staten Island with reference to this point, and I

have not felt much encouragement to make such search after seeing the following extract in either the Colonial or Doc. Hist. of New York: "*There were many patents granted at an early date for small quantities of land that were soon given up.*"

In respect to the farm at Bushwick, occupied by Lambert Wyckoff, I find nothing on record to confirm it. Opposed to this is the fact that Barnet Johnson told me that the farm Lambert Wyckoff lived on was the ancient Wyckoff place.

## GENEALOGY.

Eighty-one years have elapsed since the death of Abraham Skillman, and with him has passed away the name of Skillman from Dutch Kills. A few of the descendants of his daughters remain, but the information obtained from them shows that their knowledge of the earlier Skillmans is about lost. They seem to have no knowledge or tradition of there having existed two Thomas Skillmans, father and son, both, when spoken of to me, being coupled as one person. Nothing is more clear than that the Thomas who came first to this country had a son Thomas, as shown in the deed from Briese.

It is very certain that the first Skillman who came to this country was named Thomas, and that he was a musician or soldier under Gov. Richard Nicolls, and died prior to April 1, 1699, and that he left three children (if no more):

- I. Thomas<sup>2</sup>, who married Ann Aten.
- II. Elsie, who married Jonas Aten, and was a sponsor at baptism of Elizabeth and Peter, twin children of her brother Thomas, on March 4, 1694.
- III. Lysbet (Elizabeth), who was a sponsor at baptism of her sister Elsie's child, John, Sept. 21, 1701.

By the recital in the deed from Cornelius Briese and wife to Thomas Skillman<sup>2</sup>, he certainly left a will, which I have been so far unable to find. The destruction of the records of the town of Newtown by the British and by fire in 1729 may forever prevent its being found.

The will of Thomas<sup>2</sup> I find recorded in the Counties of New York, Kings and Queens. It makes no mention of two children, Elizabeth and Peter, twins, who, by the records of Brooklyn Dutch Church, were baptized twice in 1694; hence I infer that if he had other children than these twins and those named in his will, they did not survive him.

It will be noticed that his mark is made in subscribing the will, and is the only instance I have met with where the name is not written of any Skillman, but he was able to write, from the fact that he was one of the witnesses to the deed from his son Isaac to Samuel Albertus in 1729.

It is said of him that he began life poor and took 10 a. of land, which he was to have the use of for ten years for clearing it. That one day, while at work and with his coat lying on a pile of brush, by some means the brush took fire, and before he could rescue the coat, part of the sleeves were burned, but he had to continue wearing it until he harvested his crop of wheat, which, selling for a good price, so helped him that he was poor no longer; in fact, had no trouble in making money afterwards.

By the records of the town of Newtown, he held the office of Commissioner of Highways for the years 1714 and 1731. In 1721 he, with others, erected a school house at Middletown, a local name for a place near Dutch Kills; and again in 1735 his name appears as one of those who erected a school house at Hellgate Neck, the site of which could not be far from his residence.

By the records of the Dutch Church of Newtown it appears that he subscribed in 1731 the sum of £5 towards the erection of the church. In 1736 he was chosen one of the church masters, and his seat was No. 1 on the northwest side of middle aisle. That of his wife Ann was No. 12 on the southeast side of same aisle. His name in connection with the church disappears in 1738, but his wife's name appears as a communicant in 1741, and also on October 4 of same year as a witness to the baptism of Elizabeth, daughter of her son Benjamin, and then her name disappears.

The old neighborhood burying ground in which all the older Skillmans were buried, including Abraham<sup>4</sup>, second son of Thomas<sup>2</sup>, lies or is situate, as near as I could make out, between Gilbert St. and Pearsall St., and on each side of Bradley ave., at a place called Blissville, north of and near Calvary Cemetery in Long Island City. This burying ground occupied a knoll adjoining the

salt meadow, and is about one mile south of the Skillman farm. It was used by all the different families of that neighborhood. About 1855 it was graded and the grave stones used to underpin a barn near by!

His will, it will be seen, is an elaborately drawn document, and is, no doubt, the work of “Peter Berrien, who filled the Supervisorship of Newtown, and the Town Clerkship for several years; he lived at a period ending in 1737, when Newtown labored under the misfortune of *not* possessing one lawyer; all the deeds of that time are in his fine handwriting; he was a surveyor by profession, and the most useful scholar and man of business in his day.

To this Mr. Berrien the Dutch Reformed Church of Newtown village are indebted for the plot on which the present edifice now stands. Its first “Kerck Meisters” were Peter Berrien, Thomas Skillman and Petrus Schenck. These worthy men ordained the comfortable provision that every *one* be provided with *two* seats, and ‘when there shall be preaching, those who own seats shall move and give room for one another, the first seated moving and giving room for those that come after them, both males and females, in order to preserve love, friendship and politeness in our said church.’ A. D., 1736.”

All his children are named in his will as follows:

- I. John<sup>3</sup>.
- II. Abraham<sup>4</sup>.
- III. Isaac<sup>5</sup>.
- IV. Jacob<sup>6</sup>.
- V. Benjamin<sup>7</sup>.
- VI. Joseph<sup>8</sup>.
- VII. Mary, married John Bond.
- VIII. Mercy, married John Fine.
- IX. Ann, married Hendrick Vandewater.

To which I will add:

Twins, and were probably the first born, but died soon; were baptized 1694; are not named in father’s will.

- X. Elizabeth.
- XI. Peter.

Of the six sons of Thomas<sup>2</sup> I will speak in their order:

John<sup>3</sup> went to New Jersey. His son John married his cousin Catharine Paynter, and had children, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Thomas, John and two daughters—one was Margaret. Nothing is known of these children but Jacob, who moved from Kingston, N. J., to Union, Broome Co.,

N. Y., in 1805. He had two sons, Elias S. and John. Elias S., my informant, aged 83, in 1876 lived at Union. John moved to Dryden, Tompkins Co., N. Y., married there, raised a family, and died there. John W. Morrell said that a John Skillman, of New Jersey, used to visit Dutch Kills, and sometimes brought his nephew “Dick” with him. Mr. M. could not tell anything of this “Dick.”

Rev. W. J. Skillman says: “John (Jan Dutch), baptized in New York June 24, 1696. No witnesses are given. About this John very little is known. His father bought land in New Jersey on the Millstone, near Rocky Hill (Peter and Lawrence Vandeverer place), about 500 acres of John Van Horn and Catharine his wife, deed dated Dec. 14th, 1729, for him, and his brother Isaac. His son John and Anna his wife sold his father’s allotment, containing about 253 acres, to Roelof Van Dyck April 30, 1768, and disappear; both f. and s. disappear.”

Abraham<sup>4</sup> was born 1704 and baptized April 18th of that year; he married Margaret Pine, of

New York city, by whom he had a son Thomas, who never married and was lost at sea, and three daughters: Hester m. William Paynter; Elizabeth, born July 9, 1737, died June 7, 1808, m. John Morrell; and Catharine m. Isaac Messerole, of Brunswick. He died during cold weather in the year 1794.

In the division of his father's land he had the north half of the homestead. He was indolent, spent his time mostly in the house, seldom went to church, and was reputed rich. He refused to say, "God save the king," when required by Andries B., and went to New Jersey until compliance with one of Lord Howe's proclamations permitted his return. How the tradition that Abraham was father of Joseph originated I am at a loss to conceive. I have spent much time, trouble and expense to ascertain the names of his children. The testimony of Mrs. Margaret Skillman Morrell Cumberson, aged 99, and a grand-daughter of Abraham, together with that of Major Wm. Bragaw, aged 85½ years, settles the names of Abraham's children; also that of John W. Morrell, grandson of Elizabeth. During the Revolution Abraham's well was poisoned. This was a great mystery. Of course no one done it, and perhaps to screen the Patriots it was laid to a negro. A number of Hessian soldiers, whose regiment lay on the farm, were poisoned by the water. His silver was concealed among the stones at the bottom of the well while the soldiers were there. His fine apple orchard was cut for firewood by the soldiers, and this he used to grieve about in after times.

There is nothing to show that he went to church but once, and that once was as a sponsor at the christening of one of his brother Benjamin's children, Elizabeth. His son-in-law Paynter came from Philadelphia, and was a Quaker, and this may account for Abraham's not going to church, in connection with the fact that he may have imbibed Quaker views, as many others of those times did. His wife lost her mind on account of a highway being laid through their farm. His son-in-law Paynter was said to be sharp and smart, and persuaded him into consenting to convey his farm to Paynter in 1788; this raised a feud between his family and the Morrell and Messerole families, culminating in a law suit to set aside the deed, but the suit failed, and the deed was held valid, as I have been told.

[From the Long Island City Star, March 28, 1879]

#### REMAINS OF ANCIENT NEWTOWN.

#### THE PAYNTARS.

The Payntars glided into Newtown sometime before the Revolution, without a pedigree; an inexcusable lapse in the estimation of the tourist; whence they came, he knows not, except from Pennsylvania. Nor do the Payntars much value a pedigree, save from the deed of 1788, wherein is recited that Abraham Skillman, in consideration of £767, conveyed certain lands on the Dutch Kills to William Payntar. This mysterious person had some twenty years previously invested his stock of untried affections on the daughter of Abraham Skillman, a lineal descendant from the original patentee of the Dutch Kills, under Governor Dongan of 1686 in the reign of James II The name of Skillman now disappears from the Dutch Kills and is succeeded by that of Payntar, similarly to the extinction of Praa from Greenpoint. The maidens of that period were wayward even to the romantic choice of strangers, and to this wise instinct we owe the present profusion of Meseroles and Payntars. The broad acres without a male heir, may have directed the unseen current of the female thought to some youth devoid of worldly treasure, but rich in the untold wealth of a pure mind—as we are taught from the Ledger and Weekly—but this is outside our province and nobody's business save those who are long since dead and gone. Many Payntars now came on the earth, one of whom was William, who, grown to maturity, developed the tendency of an operator in real estate, as it was understood in those primitive times.

This William at one period owned half of Ravenswood, and an extensive tract around Middletown, which properties he finally disposed of and bought up the plantation of Burger Joris and all the Payntar Estate on the Dutch

Kills. The old Abraham Skillman homestead still faces the south, inhabited by a Payntar. The remorseless steam shovel has not yet torn away the grassy slopes, where of yore the comely young stranger wooed and won the heiress of Abraham Skillman. The cottage stands on the opposite side of the ravine road from the public school. The Hessians, during the Revolution, had extensive camps around this region, and, as far as a hogshead of rum drunk every week could effect it, these inoffensive warriors were happy. Stretched on the shady declivity over the creek they viewed with hazy eye the bewitching landscape which had remained intact even to our time. Of their native home 'in Hesse they might dream, but not of a welcome from the Prince of Hesse. To him their non-return by the British Government secured one thousand dollars per man, as per agreement when he shipped his human cattle to maintain the throne in the Colonies.

The winding descent to the old dock on the creek below still reminds you of the market boats, but time has removed the busy mill which worked on the opposite side of the Kills, where now the iron track crosses the mill dam, still the only roadway from the public school to Jackson avenue. The "Stone House," of ancient celebrity (built by Thomas<sup>2</sup>) stood for generations on the roadside, a few yards north of Thomson avenue. It was removed some forty years ago, leaving its wooden extension still inhabited, but much bewildered by the Improvement Commissioners, who have worked defacement around it.

Monday, December 8, 1783, was a proud day for the stone tavern. Victory, peace and the consummation of independence were being celebrated there that whole day, and far into the night by the light of thirteen lamps—why thirteen we need not say. But let our contemporaries, when driving up Thomson avenue, turn their head to the left—that is the spot (sacred, perhaps, to some; of indifference to others; either way); this spring will see the grassy slopes swept out of existence and another souvenir of the Revolution extinguished. Passing over the site of the stone house on a northerly course, the Abraham Skillman homestead, perched on the highest point, gives name to Skillman avenue: but down the ravine on the rise to Jackson avenue stands a pure model of the old Dutch architecture, with plenty of Payntars inside—civil people and courteous to strangers attracted by the picturesque appearance of the old house and its surroundings so characteristic of former settlements. The old mill stood here; one of its grindstones forms the receiving foot-stone to the antiquated stoop of the house, with pleasing effect. The health-giving walk of twenty five or thirty years since ran round Hunter's Point, Ravenswood, by the house we stand at, and on through the Dutch Kills, and over the hilts to Penny Bridge and Williamsburgh. A dinner or supper although not composed of the most choice viands or recherche cuisine was an object to the homeward-bound pedestrian. Little cared he for the modern dishes; plenty, however, was actually indispensable. Once past Greenpoint there were no short cuts; Jackson and Thomson avenue were not then mapped out; Greenpoint was next to a waste, and Hunter's Point had but the old Hunter House on a site higher than Schwalenberg's flag staff. It was not a short walk; the scenery had too much attraction and stops were necessary—the longest one on the piles of the old mill where now runs the locomotive. Neither the Skillmans nor Payntars occupy much space in Newtown's history; it may be questioned if they ever experienced the throes of the Revolution, or ever knew of its existence. Thomas Skillman's name first appears on the Dongan patent of 1686; in 1721 we find his son in company with the Moores, Halletts and Bragaws, a joint owner of the Middletown School House, the only relic of colonial education now standing in Newtown.

In 1732 a committee consisting of Abraham Remsen, Isaac Bragaw, Joris Rapelje, Abraham Lent, Nicholas Berrien and Abraham Brinckerhoff, commenced on a capital of £277 to build in Newtown village the first Dutch Reformed Church of the township, on a plot donated by Peter Berrien, and the identical one on which stands the present edifice. When opened for divine service in 1736 Thomas Skillman<sup>2</sup> was a chosen "kerck-meester," and after the allotment of seats he and his two coadjutors made the regulation that the highest subscribers to its erection should have the first choice of seats and so down in the ratio of their subscription; with the peculiar proviso annexed that "those who own seats shall move and give room for one another, the first seated moving and giving room for those who come in after them, both males and females, in order to preserve love, politeness and friendship in our said church." Whether this rule, if adopted and carried out in our modern churches, would foster these desirable qualities may be questioned. Probably the octagon beehive order of architecture then in vogue with the Dutch Reform brethren might suit the rule of Thomas Skillman the kerck-meester of 1736. Perhaps the regulation ought to be revived.

The first Whitepot School House was founded in 1735 by Jacob Skillman<sup>6</sup> in company of such venerable names as Coe, Furman, Van Duyn, Remsen and Morrell, on land twenty feet square given by Jacobus Springstein, of immortal reputation for the good deed and because the same twenty feet square is still the Public School ground of Whitepot—unique in having preserved the first location to the present day for the same use.

(The following is also from the Long Island City Star of April 25, 1879.)

## SKETCHES OF ANCIENT NEWTOWN.

### THE BRAGAWS.

The Bragaws! The Bragaws of Dutch Kills; like Ajax of Homer the name by a natural onomatopoeia resounds their physical build and mental stature. Plucky sons of action; in war they will not be neutrals; without demonstration they obey the call to arms and retire from the conflict at its conclusion. Well fitted to endure hardship, this Huguenot race can abandon home without a pang, -sustain the hardships of military life, and return without emotion Daniel T. Bragaw, sergeant 4th N. V. Cavalry; Townsend Bragaw, 6th N. V. Cavalry; George McAlister Gossman, 15th N. Y. Engineers; E. T. Bragaw, John Goldsmith Bragaw, Edward G. Burnett and John G. Bragaw and brother, sons of Richard P. Bragaw, close an imperfect list of men, all immediate cousins from one family engaged in our great rebellion. Regard for contemporary patriotism has seduced the tourist to invert chronology; not, however, exempt from a silent misgiving of anticipated difficulty in the arrangement of abundant material pressing from back ages. Whence comes the family? Bourgon Broucard emigrated from Manheim on the Rhine in 1675 and after a few years' stay in Bushwick purchased a large tract on the Dutch Kills, into the heart of which the tide-water used in those days to ebb and flow; and here Bourgon Broucard built his house, dated, in large iron figures "1696" to stand for one hundred years; when having served as a birthplace to the late William Bragaw, its work was done and it fell to rise no more. The reader having passed Public School No.2 northerly a few yards will see the remains of its cellar dug into the sloping bank which, although denuded of its fruit trees, is still a calm retreat not devoid of beauty. Many a race of young giants have gamboled their athletic sports down its declivity while awaiting the then usual family development of six feet three; and the most gigantic of them has left us his will, yellowed with 142 years of time. It feels impressive to open the old probate with copy will of Burgoon Bragaw attached in 1742 when it was granted by His Majesty's Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of New York. The careful bands that tied the will to its probate by a knot of the proverbial red tape have long since lost their power; the three inches of red tape still survive and have a known location—but vain mortality, where on this broad continent is now thy place?

The will of Burgoon is ably drawn, and, omitting its religious hue, may still serve a precedent. The Hon. Alexander Hagner would pronounce his decision in favor of—

"In the name of God, amen; I, Burgoon Burga, of Newtown, in Queens County, on Nassau Island in the Colony of New York, yeoman, being sick and weak in body but of sound and perfect mind, memory and understanding (blessed be the Lord for the same,) but calling to mind the uncertain estate of this transitory life, and that all flesh must yield unto death when it pleaseth God to call; do make, ordain, constitute and declare this to be my last Will and Testament in manner and form following (that is to say): first and principally, I recommend my precious and immortal soul into the merciful hands of God, my Creator, hoping through the merits, death and passion of my Blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Christ Jesus, to have and receive full pardon and free remission of my manifold sins, and to inherit everlasting life, and my body to the earth from whence it was taken, to be buried in such decent and Christian manner as to my executors hereafter named shall be thought meet and convenient, and as touching such temporal estate as the Lord in his mercy far above my deserts hath been pleased to bestow upon me I give, devise and dispose of the same in the following manner and form: Imprimis, I will and order that all such debts and duties as I owe in law or conscience to any person or persons whatsoever be justly and truly paid within some convenient time after my decease, together with my funeral charges. Item: I will and order that all of my estate, both real and personal, be sold within some convenient time after my decease, and to that end I give unto my executors full power and authority, as far as in me lies, to sell and dispose of the same, and that a conveyance or conveyances under the hands and seals of them, or the major part of them, shall make the buyer or buyers an indisputable title in law in fee simple. Item: I give and bequeath to my son, Isaac Burga the sum of twenty-five pounds current money of the Colony of New York, to be paid to him by my executors when he arrives at the age of twenty-one, and so to remain to him, his heirs and assigns for ever. Item: After my debts and funeral charges are paid, the said legacy given to my son deducted. I give and bequeath all the rest and remainder part of my estate to my dearly beloved wife, Geredina Burga, my said son Isaac Burga, and my daughter, Naettie Burga, to be equally divided amongst them, and so to remain to them and each of them; their, and each of their heirs and assigns for ever, but if either of my children should die in non-age or without issue, then my will is that his or her part shall fall to the surviving and remain as above said. Lastly, I do nominate and appoint my beloved brothers, Roeleff Burga and Isaac Burga, and my beloved brother-in-law, Volkert Volkerston, executors of this my Last Will and Testament, desiring them to execute and fulfill and perform the same according to the true intent and meaning thereof. In witness whereof I have hereunto set

my hand and seal this eleventh day of September, in the sixteenth year of his majesty's reign and in the year of our Lord and Saviour, Christ Jesus, 1752, Bragan Bragan. Signed, sealed, pronounced and declared by the said Burgeon Burga as his last Will and Testament in the presence of the subscribers, Christofer Van-Der-Beeck, Joseph Burroughs, Cornelius Berrien Junior."

Doubtless the provisions of this will were often considered by Burgeon as he was used to saunter across the old mill dam, on which a boy he spent so many days. The causeway—let us people it again with its neighbors down later generations, even to the times of Richard Bragaw on their wagons going to the mill. Great conversations and profound disquisitions were held thereon. Romantic courtship also has diffused its charms over the Ravine Road, for a comely young widow owned the mill, the cottage and the farm; she too was wayward like her maiden sisterhood of the Kills in preferring strangers whilst she was the widow Polhemus. It may have been irksome to her never to have changed her name; she was a Polhemus from her birth, and thus was deprived of half a woman's destiny, until on the mill-dam she met the young James Larremore. He was a gallant young soldier from the opposite camps, and remained behind after his companions had marched away. The war was over; he thought King George had no further need of him. Eventually he gave his name to the handsome young Widow Polhemus, and she felt natural in the strange sound of Larremore. The mill was not excluded from the benefit of her fancy; it became Larremore's Mill, but her four young Polhemuses retained their own names, were well cared for, and became in due course very respectable citizens. She was not, however, found wanting to herself for young Larremores. The New York Bench is adorned by the name of Judge Larremore, grandson to the young widow of the Mill. Larremore was a prudent young man, the match was happy in all respects to the young widow—and Larremore amassed money. Up to a late period the young soldier was recognizable under the industrious miller on whom age sat gracefully.

But before this period, say May 12, 1776, Richard Bragaw had developed an extraordinary thirst for education under the eye of Professor Gilbert, who kept school precisely where No 2 now stands. Here he also lived and educated his daughter. The old causeway was not unfaithful, and the two were married. She departed pending the Revolution, leaving her widowed spouse to cross over to the opposite corner and seek consolation from the sympathizing soul of the bright-eyed Catherine Payntar. And still the old mill-dam was faithful to the trust reposed in it by young hearts; the pair were married January 21, 1786. The obituary notice of her eldest son, William, was written in these pages hardly a month since; while yet the tourist meets the retired merchant and courteous gentleman in her youngest son, John, who connects his parents with the present generation.

Mindful of the ravine where in childhood he played, and full of the emotional recollections we have touched on, Richard Bragaw granted the site of the old Dutch Kills School House by deed bearing date 20th December, 1805. An extract can hardly be refused

"Know all men by these presents that I, Richard Bragaw of Newtown, Dutch Kills, in consideration of the good will and affection I have and bear to my neighbors, namely Francis Duryea, Charles Debevoise, John Debevoise, Johannes De-Witt, Derick Brinckerhoff, Abraham Polhemus, William Payntar, Joseph Gosline, David Miller, James Blackwell, George Van Alst, Isaac Van Alst, James McDonough, William Parcels, John Debevoise, James Larremore, Richard Bragaw, Abraham Rapelye, Isaac Rapelye, Andrew Bragaw, Daniel Townsend, William March and William Payntar, and also for other divers and good causes and considerations, me, the said Richard Bragaw, hereunto moving, have given, granted and confirmed, and hereby give, grant, and confirm unto my said neighbors that certain piece of ground on which the School House now stands, to have, hold and enjoy with an addition of three feet on each side of said School House unto my said neighbors, their executors, administrators, and assigns, forever to be applied to the use of a School House, and for no other purpose whatever, with the proviso that I, the said Richard Bragaw, my heirs, administrators, and assigns, am to receive the ashes which shall from time to time be made in said house or in whatever School House may be erected on said ground, etc. In witness whereof, etc., Richard Bragaw, Elizabeth Bragaw. Signed, in the presence of William Gray."

The old School House itself was cremated a few years since. Whether or not the heirs of Richard were entitled under the terms of the deed to its ashes the tourist will not aver. W. Gray, the-witness, was the teacher. The foundation stones still mark the spot a few yards down the ravine from its brick successor, No. 2.

Behind it in the field once stood a fruit tree which had its uses, and was supposed to yield "good fruits" in the way of precept and example to young niggers, at a time when the colored population alone enjoyed the monopoly of chicken stealing. By prescriptive right this tree had become the regular whipping post for offenders against the law. Everything in those days partook of an Arcadian simplicity; the rules of evidence were direct to the point of extracting truth by an indiscriminate resort to direct and cross examination, mingled with the material evidence touching an undue quota of feathers not accounted for by the accused, Birchen rods grew in abundance, both for the use of the school and the tree, and tradition, personal and extant in mortal form to the present day, still testifies to their liberal application both inside the School House and outside at the Niggers' Tree.

Farewell, old causeway; farewell, old mill-dam! But before we leave you your title must be recorded. You are

not a thing to be cast aside by heartless innovators; you belong to old time, and to-pass over you was once a privilege. Heavy guns used to guard you and sentinels from the camps above demanded the counter-sign; the patrolling boats from the navy in sight below passed by night the word that all was well On the waters, and received in response that the important causeway was under British hands. Betimes, too, a navy officer would step ashore and receive the hospitality of his army brother, nor can it be imagined that the jolly tars were unmindful of what was a potent antidote against the damp fogs of Burger's Creek. The legal title from under the hands of Samuel Riker and Benjamin Coe, Commissioners of Highways, 1799, is very explicit:

"Beginning at the northern corner of the causeway as it now stands, and running thence along said causeway, and thence on a direct line to the corner of the fence at the School House, leaving for public use all the vacant ground between said corner and William Payntar's line down to the Creek, and continuing eastwardly from said corner at the School House to the road to the narrow passage, leaving said road at least three rods wide."

The roadway at the "Chestnut Tree" at Woodside is the "narrow passage" referred to; it was constructed by certain industrious beavers who lived there in the days of the red men—contemporary with the wolves of the "Wolf Swamp," mortally detested by them.

The ancient resting place of the deceased Bragaws is now a garden, but the mortal remains have been removed to the Presbyterian Cemetery of Newtown village. The old barn looks aged on the grounds of Mr. John Bragaw and is the sole representative of the first settlement of the family in this quarter. The Jones garden, with adjacent grounds, for years retained the name of

"Camps," the headquarters of the camp which commanded the ravine crossroads being there posted.

Richard Bragaw, an uncompromising patriot, at once took sides with his country by joining General Woodhull's Cavalry. He was taken prisoner at Hinchman's Tavern, Jamaica, at the time Woodhull was killed, and sent aboard the "Jersey" prison ship; but his strong constitution baffled the horrors of that floating pandemonium, and he finally made his escape to find his horses and farm stock confiscated and his other property pillaged. His Tory relative, Andrew Bragaw, was suspected of unfriendly feelings, - but probably without foundation, for we find both parties on very friendly terms after the proclamation of peace. One fellow named Titus, however, narrowly escaped a bullet from Richard, who encountered this over active Tory near Newtown village. Richard Bragaw was so highly esteemed as to be the general arbiter of disputes between neighbors. How large a circle enclosed neighbors in those days may be understood from the names recorded in the school deed of 1805. For that purpose they were so fully set forth, nor is the widespread scattering of their descendants out of Newtown a subject devoid of interest to us at the present day.

Leaving Richard Bragaw a prisoner on board the "Jersey," let us hasten past his unprotected house and proceed down the road to the narrow passage, to meet the advanced guard of the Light Brigade and Grenadiers of the British army victorious from the battle of Long Island, fought on the 27th of August, 1776, and now seeking cantonments on the Morrell farm. Intensely hot is the day; all is still and parched under the 'burning sun; that peculiar whirr or tingle denoting a scorching atmosphere warns all animal life into shade, save the Mother Morrell anxious for those of her kin gone to the war and involved in the defeat. Her eyes probably for the first time now light on the brilliant red uniform of the British army as a group on 'the gallop emerged from Woodside at the turn below on the Astoria road, and facing the sharp ascent leading to Dutch Kills the party dropped from their horses at her door in the farmyard. A thorough gentleman in feeling and manner is easily understood. Major March was of that type; his good reputation has survived one hundred years in the Morrell family.

"I am Major March, in command of the Advance Guard, First Division, under Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Clinton, who will soon be here with the main army; but first secure all your cattle and poultry, or I won't be responsible for them." Then pointing to the hill on which Susdoff's house now stands, the Major informed Mrs. Morrell that 10,000 men would pitch their camps there and around before sunset "And now, while I locate the positions will you prepare a good dinner for us, and I will pay you liberally, as we are hungry?" Then with a piece of chalk he wrote with a strong hand "Major March" on the inside of a closet door, where it remained quite legible until the old house was removed a few years since by the present John W. Morrell, Esq., of Greenpoint, who unfortunately neglected to preserve it.

Then remounting, the Major galloped up the hill to the cleared space and, having marked out the camping ground, he returned to eat his dinner. Mrs. Morrell, meanwhile, with the assistance of her younger children, had secured her stock under lock and key; her husband, John Morrell, with, his two sons, John and Abraham, were absent with the patriots being a very active family in the service of their country—a condition which Mrs. Morrell did not hesitate to confide to Major March. Nor was her confidence misplaced; his influence ever after protected the family against marauding Tories. The good lady was for utterly rejecting all compensation, on the ground that the timely information had saved her ten times the value of a dinner, but the Major would listen to nothing but the clink of the solid gold forced on Mrs. Morrell—which she had to receive to double the value of the dinner.

The glancing bayonets of the main division were now emerging from the shades of the Woodside forest; tired and weary from their long march from Brooklyn they turned from the Astoria road up the sharp junction towards Dutch Kills, and ten thousand British troops defiled through the Morrell gate, at that time west of the house, around which, winding and passing north of the barn through the orchard, the steel river of bayonets still flowed, rippling from the inequalities of the ground, until the heights of Shursdorf being ascended each regiment 'was told off by 'the steady British sergeant for miles through the woods, to remain for the night. Washington's youthful enthusiasm over the British Grenadiers, as their arms flashed in the sunlight a minute preceding the attack on Braddock may well describe the military review which passed before the eyes of Mrs. Morrell. The reader is reminded that the present road from Calvary Cemetery to the Morrell farm had no existence in 1776; the hale and venerable Father-of-Newton, George J. Rapelye did that work when Road Commissioner years after the Revolution.

Extending from this point the entire road into the Dutch Kills for eight years became a regular garrison, either for passing troops or the invalids and wounded—but always in permanent occupation—the Skillman and Morrell farms forming the extremities east and west. By a little train of domestic life Mrs. Morrell, once Elizabeth Skillman, was connected by the deepest of ties with both homesteads. The old well first experienced the military occupation; the soldiers in their madness after water quickly broke the bucket ropes and then descended by the aid of spikes driven into the side of the well, and the water was handed up by relays of men until the supply was exhausted. The clear springs of the "Wolf Swamp" had then to be called into requisition, and their vicinity was doubtless one reason for the constant occupation of this section. Water must be had by an army at all hazards; it is an indispensable adjunct to the camp. The Morrell farm often surrenders to the plow relics of the former camp; Mr. Susdorff a few years since, rooted up the remains of a broken musket, doubtless buried by some soldier of the occupation. Near the juncture of Betts avenue and the Newtown road, immediately opposite the Kelly mansion, is still to be seen a singular mound of ring form, to which tradition assigns a date coeval 'with Captain Kidd, but in the absence of positive information we may theorize that a guard may have been stationed there on the junction of the two roads, always an important position to military men. Traces of embankments are said still to be found in those woods. Some of the orchard trees survive, most conspicuous among them the tree on which John Morrell was suspended—whether to punish the returned rebel or to extort his gold is not exactly to be determined, but he was saved by one of the officers quartered in the farmhouse, to die quietly in 1816 and be interred in the little family cemetery on the centre of the farm, a lovely and deserted spot to day, in the midst of strangers who now own the soil; but the stranger may without trespass visit the grave of John Morrell, the active partisan of the revolution.

The residence of Mr. Daniel Bragaw is another remnant well preserved of the Revolution, and stands on the opposite side of the road to the Kills; another Rebel house during the camp period, and much assigned for the billet both of privates and officers. In it is contained the oft-copied pane of glass inscribed "Finlay McKay, 1776." The garden on the roadside holds a boxwood growth of great age, without a rival in Newtown save that one on the Bowery Bay road in the garden of Miss Sarah Rapelye. The barn is of large proportions to garner in the products of the original large farm of the Brinckerhoffs. From this sturdy old stager the military drew heavy supplies of boarding for the permanent-huts then building, traces of which remain to the present day on the roadside. Thither let us repair until the division line between the Bragaw and Morrell farms is reached. A species of re-entrant angle let into the stone wall, which bounds the southerly side of the road, marks this interesting locality. Residents yet of the neighborhood, who were children fifty years ago, were wont to rendezvous for play - through the remains of the soldiers' huts, known to them by that name. Although grass-grown they are quite distinctly to be seen; one stone-faced well or pit was lately filled up with stones to prevent accidents to cattle. The position of these huts on the road side, while the main body were built inside of the field, denotes that here was located the commissariat and cooking departments; the angle in the stone wall is said to have answered for a cupboard to one of the buildings. The huts were fifty feet long, of rectangular shape, built of logs, with thatched roofs, and the outside wall sodded to the eaves; the entrance looked south open to the sun's rays for health's sake. They were no doubt very comfortable in winter; their arrangement included a large courtyard, well sheltered, for parade and military drill; the late Mr. Gosman had plowed up many army buttons and other pieces of military equipment, on the camp ground. The irritation attending the first burst of hostilities soon had settled down into a neighborly intercourse between soldiers and civilians; actual war was far removed, and it was clear to all parties that the final event could not be decided for years. The officers quartered in the farmhouses, paid liberally, lived well, and by their presence protected the inmates from robber soldiers—which considerations bad their usual weight. The house of John Bragaw, in which also lived his son Andrew, is now the residence of the Gosman family; the same race on the maternal side of the house. The structure is very ancient; probably it was built by Isaac, the first Bragaw born on American soil, and bequeathed by him to his son, Bergoon, whose will has just been read—a man of "towering stature and great physical strength," qualities which broke out again in his nephew, Andrew, and his three daughters, formerly residents of Newtown village. The

Gosman house from 1776 to 1783 was the lounging focus of the military community in its vicinity. Immediately in front of the kitchen and beside the old well, which, of course, is also to the front, is the seat of natural rock, fashioned into accommodation, on which the soldier savans reclined and discoursed of war, while they smoked their many pipes and copiously drank of the cider for which John Bragaw was famous; he leaned to Toryism, and died in 1782, leaving the suspicion of the same principles clinging still more strongly around his son, Andrew, who filled the place vacated by his father until 1828, when he also departed—the last of the family who had personal reminiscence of the great Revolution. The most notable British officers held quarters with John Bragaw. Captain Hildebrand Oakes, of the 33d Regiment, cantoned in the huts during 1780; he rose to distinction in after times, most likely in India under Wellington, who for years was Colonel of this same 33d Regiment. To roam through the once busy house, to sit in its rooms, to be reminded by the strong doors, through which so many men of note have passed to other climes and fortunes, is like the process of raising the dead to life. Here often entered the Lord Cornwallis, a young man then, but destined in after life to discharge many important functions in Europe, until he closed the scene when Governor General of India. His floating thoughts could hardly soar from that room in advance of eight years to suspect the surrender at Yorktown, of which he was the hero on the losing side; but he was a soldier, and had come to John Bragaw's house to see his old regiment. Sir Henry Clinton, too, has held conclave with Count Attenburgh and Lord Cornwallis in this same old parlor; while the sentry paced his to and fro walk that never ceased for eight years; groups of aid-de-camps and their orderlies were with their horses often congregated before the house of John Bragaw; all was the clangor of military equipments, with the splendid bugle call reverberating through the woods as the return call from the springs to the camp.

Great times they were for that mile of the Bragaw road, until the day when Andrew Bragaw gazed down its vista, becoming a more distant perspective as the rear and last guard of Britain vanished forever. Then Andrew re-entered his lovely rooms, and as he sat down he mused; the silence of death filled the atmosphere; the katydid and grasshoppers had resumed their ancient sway, since held undisputed for a good hundred years. The little round table which the drunken Hessian had sabred is still in place. The frail little souvenir of past habits is well cared for, as is also the desk of drawers with its many secret nooks wade to deceive such thieves as then flourished in the Dutch Kills. Andrew Bragaw was another of those large men, never seen now in Newtown. He and Colonel Blackwell were probably the last of such giants; they are extinct in the township. He died 1828 in the northwest corner of the room so long the military headquarters. He left twelve children, but the name through him does not flourish around the Kills. His brother Isaac died in 1830 and that solitary row of headstones under the fruit tree in the Episcopal schoolhouse in Newtown village denotes the resting place of him, his son Isaac and some grandchildren. The marble slabs suffer much from the village boys who cast heavy stones to fetch down the fruit from the tree overhead. His venerable wife rests beside him; they were married in 1773, and died within a year of each other's time, both past 80 years.

In the kitchen of the old house the arrangements are unaltered; the oven can still bake its bread, and the substantial chimney with capacious fireplace can burn its logs as of yore, when it warmed the soldiers who smoked their pipes at its comfortable hearth. Tunis Brinckerhoff of the very antique house farther up the road, had taken a daughter of the Bragaw house for his wife; and their homestead has had its full experience of military occupation as well as changes after its desertion by the Brinckerhoffs. A large collection of vellum bound books printed in Amsterdam about the year 1708 were here of late years abandoned to any one curious enough to ransack the deserted house of Brinckerhoff.

The name "Catharina Clopper," written in a fine, bold hand, would denote that one of these was the prayer book of Miss Clopper; it is entitled

"Stigtelyke Bedenkinge,  
Stigtelyke Tydkortinge."

Whatever these words may mean we know not, but "Edelmoedigheyd Achterklappers," set to music, evidently appertains to a sonorous hymn in praise of Admiral Van Tromp. The "Eynde," printed under a basket teeming with flowers, on the last page of the volume, will suit our last line, although the tourist has a slight misgiving that his basket will be an empty one.

[ed. the two lines above are Old Dutch for "Edifying thoughts, Edifying Spending of Time." The phrases frequently appear in so-called "Peaceful Wedding Songs Book" commonly used in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The phrase "Edelmoedigheyd Achterklappers" refers to "Backbiting people summoned to show some generosity." And finally, "Eynde" means "end."]

"Mrs. Margaret Skillman Morrell, relict of Thomas Cumberson, and daughter of Elizabeth Skillman, died at her son-in-law's residence, at 12 Schermerhorn street, Brooklyn, on Sunday, April 28, 1878, aged 101 years, 5 months, and 19 days. She enjoyed good health up to within a few days of her death. She was of the fourth generation born in

this country, being the granddaughter of Abraham Skillman, who was one of the six sons of Thomas, son of Thomas, who came to this country in 1664.”

On hearing of the death of Mrs. Cumberson, I wrote the above article for insertion in the Roslyn News. I visited her September 25, 1877, at her grandson’s house in Bridge street, Brooklyn. I felt very much impressed at seeing her. She told me she was 99 and enjoyed good health. I found her hearing but slightly impaired—a very small woman and thin in flesh. She was ironing clothes, without spectacles, and said she was fond of having something to do.

She told many things; among others “that her grandfather, Abraham Skillman, had only one son, Thomas, who never married, and was a pet in the family. Once went to sea on a pleasure voyage, and neither he or the vessel was ever heard of after. That Abraham, her grandfather, was a short and small man, pale and thin; was no church man; was slothful and rich, and seldom went out of the house, and laid abed most of the time.”

Mrs. C. said she was about 16 when he died, and remembers that the funeral took place during cold weather. His wife was a Margaret Fine, of New York City, and died a good while before him. I asked her for her photo, which, after some delay, I obtained.

All this is confirmed by John W. Morrell, Esq., and by Major Wm. Bragaw, who are also descendants of Abraham Skillman.

Isaac<sup>5</sup> sold his farm of 26 acres to Samuel Alburdis, Nov. 25, 1729, for £140. He is described therein as a cordwainer. His father, Thomas, was one of the witnesses to the deed. He went to New Jersey, and “was the head of the Harlingen or Somerset County Skillmans. He had at least three sons, Benjamin, Thomas and Isaac.”

The following extract is too good to be lost, and I know not whether Mr. S. was a descendant of Isaac or Jacob, so I place it here at a venture. It is taken from a religious newspaper known as the *Herald and Presbyter*, published at Cincinnati, and dated April 19, 1876:

#### THE REVIVAL IN KENTUCKY OF 1827-8.

MESSRS. EDITORS —In compliance with your kind request to furnish something concerning the Kentucky revival of 1827-8, I, as one of the “old men,” send you a very imperfect contribution. As preliminary to what I may say, pardon some personal allusions.

You state, as a reason for the request, that I was in Kentucky at the period of the revival. I would remark that I left Kentucky, my native State, in 1825, just two years before the commencement of the revival. At that period in Kentucky it was a very rare thing to find a youthful person a professing Christian. Sabbath-schools were just beginning to be established in the larger towns, and religion was in a deplorably low condition. My own mind was full of wild views, and my heart untouched by divine grace. Having secured the kind office of Mr. Clay, then Secretary of State, to procure me a cadetship, I left home to enter the military academy at West Point. My plan was to remain during the winter with relations, at Washington City, and go on to West Point in the spring. My friends at Washington were devout Christians. It was to me an entire new atmosphere I was introduced to the Sabbath-school for the first time. My friends induced me to take a class; and I soon began to feel the inconsistency of attempting to teach others the way to heaven while I was in utter ignorance of it myself. My conscience became troubled; my heart was broken in seeing God’s people commemorating the dying love of Christ, and I standing aloof, as if it were no concern of mine, I soon united with the church. My views and feelings were entirely revolutionized. I felt that my call was to the gospel ministry. I continued at the East pursuing studies with a view to the ministry until the spring of 1828. Meantime I had received frequent intelligence of the great revival in Kentucky, and of my parents and kindred becoming subjects of it. My heart yearned to be with them, and in the midst of the glorious work of grace. This brings me to the point of my personal knowledge of the Kentucky revival.

I reached Lexington in May, 1828, and found the revival in the full tide of spiritual power and success. How changed the moral aspect since my departure from home! Not only kindred, but acquaintances whom I had left entirely indifferent to the claims of religion, receiving me to their arms as a brother beloved in Christ. Households like our own, then without a single church member, now the majority of the family, and, in some cases, every

member, rejoicing in hope, and finding their delight in the service of God. The whole structure of society seemed changed. Religion was the absorbing theme. Whenever opportunity offered the churches were crowded. The people were hungry for preaching and *protracted* meetings were greatly in demand. Inclement weather, even in country places, seemed to have very little influence in diminishing the size of the congregations by day or by night. From the position from which I chiefly viewed the revival, one fact greatly impressed me, and it illustrates at the same time the profound impression made on the community at large by the work of grace in progress. I suppose it might be regarded as a kind of collateral influence of the revival. It is well known that Central Kentucky is, and has been from an early period, one of the great stock raising regions of the world. Large sums are invested in rearing fine blooded stock, and especially horses for the turf. The animated and deeply exciting scenes of the race course at Lexington are a part of my earliest recollections. It was a periodical gala season, always anticipated with great interest, attracting vast crowds—among them ladies of high social position, not only from the vicinity, but from every part of the State and even from distant States. During the revival season, and for some time subsequent, the race course was deserted. Some of the most distinguished persons engaged extensively in raising and running horses were converted, had abandoned the business and became zealous Christians. A feeling of solemnity appeared to rest upon the pleasure loving community, and the race course, as I was informed, had to be closed for several seasons, for want of patronage. And so, in a great measure, in regard to other forms of vice and demoralization, such as gambling and the free use of intoxicating liquors, unfortunately, at that day, prevailed to an alarming extent in what were called the best circles of society.

Others have mentioned the ability and zeal of the ministers both at home and from abroad, who were prominent in this work of grace; and in what they have said I fully accord. But no full and satisfactory history of the Kentucky revival can be written which leaves out of view the influence of the lay element, both male and female. The consecrated labors of one man especially, I have never seen equaled in all my experience. I refer to Thomas T. Skillman, an elder in the First Presbyterian Church, Lexington. A man of exceeding modesty and even diffidence; as gentle and affectionate, as a refined lady; with a simplicity and strength of faith, and a glowing love for Christ's cause and his people, it has never been my lot to see surpassed. Wise and judicious in council; restraining in his meek and unobtrusive manner, even ministers, sometimes, in their indiscreet zeal. It seemed as if God had raised him up to do a work, then and subsequently, which no other person could do so well. Though not a man of wealth, his contributions were promptly forthcoming for every good work, and his liberality so great, that it was not unusual for his brethren to remonstrate against his giving more than his due proportion. Well do I remember hearing him say his friends did not understand his case; there was no danger of his receiving any injury from giving, for just in proportion as he gave to the Lord he received an abundant return.

But there was a field especially occupied by Mr. Skillman which there was no one else to cultivate. Fifty years ago judicious religious books were very scarce in the West. This lamentable deficiency he was laboring to supply years before the beginning of the revival, to the utmost of the limited means at his command. And who will venture to say what influence this may have exerted in promoting the work of grace which followed? Mr. Skillman was not a writer, but had a clear, discriminating mind. By profession a practical printer, he had a well-appointed office for that day; published a number of judicious books; and established a system of colportage, a novelty then in the West. His colporteurs, laden with these precious volumes, and giving religious instruction to the people, were well known in Kentucky and some of the adjacent States. Some of these books, such as "Doddridge's Rise and Progress," "Edwards on the Affections," "Life of Mrs. Graham," "McChord's Sermons," etc., may yet be found in the houses of some of the older people. In addition, he established, several years before the revival, the *Western Luminary*, a weekly paper; also subsequently he published a temperance periodical. The writer has definite knowledge on this subject, being associated with him in conducting these papers during and after the revival. Mr. S. finished his work at the comparatively early age of forty-seven. He died of cholera at Lexington, in June, 1833, soon after his return from the meeting of the General Assembly.

JOHN F. COONS.

Jacob<sup>6</sup> married Jane Van Alst, daughter of John and Altie, of Dutch Kills. He erected buildings on his father's land at Hempstead Swamp, as it was then called about two and one-half miles south of Newtown village.

By the records of the Dutch Church of Newtown it appears that he contributed £2 15s. in 1731 for the erection of the church, and the seat assigned him was No. 10 and that of his wife No. 13, On the northwest side of middle aisle. He also had a seat, No. 10, on the southeast side of same aisle. On, the record of baptisms of this church his daughter Leya (Leah) was baptized

1742, the parents being sponsors. On same record of Flatlands Dutch Church is set forth the baptism of another daughter, Jane, May 31, 1732.

January 8, 1757, his seat in the church was transferred to William Van Dine. He went to Kingston, New Jersey. Who he sold his farm to, and when, I have not been able to ascertain, the deed not being of record. "His grave is in Kingston graveyard."

"He had at least one son, John, said to be the eldest, who married his cousin Anna or Hannah, daughter of Benjamin<sup>7</sup>. Their child, Magritta, was baptized at New Utrecht January 27, 1754. Parents spoken of in record as of Bushwick. This baptism, no doubt, done on L. I. for a purpose."

Could it be this John that Mr. J. W. Morrell alluded to as visiting 'Dutch Kills with his nephew "Dick"?

[From the Long Island City Star, July 18, 1879.]  
REMAINS OF ANCIENT NEWTOWN.

#### THE TERRITORY EMBRACING LONG ISLAND CITY.

Long Island City, of late years sliced off Newtown, was not originally within the limits of that ancient township as defined under the original patent granted, in barbarous Dutch Latin, to the Reverend Francis Doughty, by Governor Kieft; at New Amsterdam, under date the 28th March, 1642.

The plantation of Richard Brutnall was the present Blissville and the boundary line ran from the cork-screw bridge to Jackson's Mill, where Henry the Farmer, ancestor of the Riker family, had his plantation, being the first white man that turned a furrow on Bowery Bay. He had been an armorer in the Dutch Army and had started the manufacture of steel tomahawks in competition to the stone articles then manufactured at Bowery Bay by the native stone dressers; the enterprise, however, was a failure in consequence of one of the Indians very abruptly having sunk a steel tomahawk in Henry's own head; since which period a blacksmith's shop was never seen in that section.

The margin of land between the western line of Newtown and the East River was denominated the Out Plantations; the title to each plantation being founded on Ground-Briefs from the Dutch Governors Kieft and Stuyvesant to the original planters. Pending the interval between 1642 and 1654 Ground Briefs were issued to Joris Stevenson de Caper, the founder of the Van Alst family—a sailor—hence the addition "de Caper." To Richard Brutnall, Tymen Jansen, and Jan Jansen, from Ditmarsen, in Saxony, whence the family of Ditmars. To Burger Joris, William Hallett and several other small proprietors, who afterwards, in 1665, sold their claims to the Lawrence family; and to Captain Thomas Lawrence was granted a patent for the island now called Berrien's Island. Within these boundaries, which include our city, there is ample scope for detail to be taken up seriatim from Hunter's Point, already described. The Van Alsts have little history of their own; still it must not be smothered by Union College absorbing the family acres, which originally stretched from the Dutch Kills creek to the Harris property. Or more particularly, so much of said farm as lies on the southerly side of the old Ridge road and is bounded easterly by a small creek, as it turns and winds to its mouth, southeasterly and southerly by the Dutch Kills, and westerly by a branch of Jack's creek, separating the premises from the Hunter farm and the lands of John S. Harris. Joris Stevenson Van Alst, the ancestor of the name well known among us, had settled at Dutch the Kills and received his patents in 1670, and died in 1670. The blood of old Peter Praa circulates in their veins, through a marriage with the granddaughter of that estimable landowner, and for similar reasons they are engrafted into all the old families on the Dutch Kills. Half a page of history, relative to the robbery of some fowl by Dutchmen disguised in Indian uniform, comprises the Colonial record of the Van Alsts, and there is total silence during Revolutionary times; which period to them does not seem to have been the "time that tried men's souls." Such being the case we have the more liberty to forge the links vesting the title in Union College.

No. 1—William Kieft, Governor, to Tyman Jansen. Patent July 13th, 1643. Grants and conveys 44 acres with meadow, adjoining thereunto, the same including part of the premises in question.

No. 2—Richard Nicholls, Governor, to Govert Loockerman. Patent March 23, 1666. Recorded in Secretary of State's office. Recites death of Jansen, and Loockerman's seizen on his intermarriage with Jansen's widow confirms the premises to Loockerman.

No. 3—William Kieft, Governor, to Jan Juan Von Ditmarson. Patent March 23, 1647. Grants 59 acres of land at Newtown.

No. 4—Francis Lovelace. Governor, to Joris Van Alst or George Stevenson. Patent December 16, 1670. Recorded Secretary of State's office. Confirms 15 acres to Joris Van Alst, which he has held several years from Von Ditmarson.

No.5—Joris Van Alst to Johannis Van Alst. Warrantee deed, December, 1704. Consideration £300. The title to all the premises in question, with other lands, passed by this deed to the grantee, who enjoyed his grant 45 years and then died leaving six children; all whose names appear in the following deed:

No. 6--George Van Alst, Jacob Van Alst, John Parcell, and Leah, his wife, Abraham Rycken Geeshie, his wife, Jacob Skillman and Janetie, his wife, to John Van Alst. Warrantee deed. Consideration \$883.63. Dated 1749.

No. 7—John Van Alst died, leaving him surviving John and George Van Alst, who inherited all the premises jointly until 1797, when they made division, each one releasing the other. George Van Alst then became owner of the deed.

No. 8—John Van Alst to George Van Alst. Release, April, 1798. Consideration £10. Conveys westernmost divisions of their joint lands, containing 69 acres.

No. 9—George Van Alst dies in 1813, leaving neither widow nor will, but one child, John G. Van Alst, who remained in possession until his death in 1851.

No. 10—John G. Van Alst dies in 1811[ed. 1851?], which inevitable act forms the tenth link in the title chain, and opens the way to most important consequences.

No. 11 Will of John G. Van Alst. Citation and probate, October, 1851. Will authorizes and empowers the sale of all the real estate, the proceeds to be equally divided between the children and the grandson, viz.: James L. and John W. Van Alst, Gertrude Van Derveer, Margaret Hendrickson, Eliza Duryea, and George J., son of the testator's deceased son, George.

No. 12. Agreement dated May 8th, 1852, recorded in September, 1852; between the executors to convey the Van Alst farm, containing 131 acres, to Jonathan Crane, for the sum of \$50,000.

No. 13—John W. Van Alst, James L. Van Alst and John Van Derveer, executors, to Jonathan Crane and Charles Ely. Executors' deed May 12th, 1853. Liber 106, page 443. Consideration \$50,000.

No. 14—Alletta Van Alst, widow and relict of John G. Van Alst, John W. Van Alst, James L. Van Alst, John Van Derveer and Gertrude his wife, Martin Duryea and Elizabeth his wife, and Oldfeld Hendrickson and Margaret his wife, to Jonathan Crane and Charles Ely. Deed May 12, 1853. Consideration \$45,000. Recorded Liber 108.

The venerable old homestead of the Van Alst family, built in 1766 by Johannes Van Alst, still stands very prominently, with its gable, on the edge of Jackson avenue, not far from the Canning factory which was burned down a few nights since. The old hall door, in two sections, still retains the aristocratic brass knocker of Colonial days; but although the premises are occupied by some member of the family, still there is the waning decay which forbodes ultimate destruction. Neglect is all around, and has long since desecrated the family graves, which lie a few yards below on the edge of the rail track.

Some twenty years since and the small circular knoll, green, grassy and well planted, was a fitting place for, the dead, as it stood like a little island growing out of the marsh. Now there is wanton destruction to headstones, and it is surrounded by the refuse of the neighboring tin factory on Jackson avenue. The last copy made of the remaining headstones gave: Isaac Van Alst, died 1803; Ellen Van Alst, 1818; Joseph Van Alst, 1821; John William Hunter, 1842; Cashie Parsell, 1809; William Parsell, 1807. The ground is well studded with rude boulder stones, each one marking the repose of some ancient Van Alst, whose bones have passed into oblivion; but even so they have stood the shock of modern improvement, while the cows, horses, pigs and wanton boys have been destroying their companions, more artistic with cut inscriptions.

This neglect of the last resting place does not look like civilization. Some provision ought to be made for the, removal of the ancestral remains to the larger cemeteries, where, perchance, protection is guaranteed to the defenceless dead. The site of the first homestead of the family is on the edge of the marsh, a few yards southeast of the house built in 1766, but none of this property is included in the Union College domain. The homestead which once governed the acres of John G. Van Alst originally stood near the present Court House, and does yet, but on the other side of Jackson avenue. It is now the engine house of the "Improvement," and at noon one of the little locomotives may be seen running into it. Thoughts on the strange turns of fortune may be indulged in when one climbs through the ancient garrets and a few rooms still remaining. Here is the deserted home of a domestic age which little anticipated the whirlwind of Col. Rexford and his ruthless steam shovels; bedrooms partitioned off for sleep not to be disturbed by the hoarse steam whistle; that function being then deputed to the roosters; the cozy fireplace's welcome defence from the howling wind and the driving snow; with corners of rooms wherein the concluding drama of some Van Alst was mourned over, with perchance some bridal chambers formerly sacred to glowing lovers. The present representative of the family may safely be recorded in Peter G. Van Alst, Esq., the most accurate of surveyors, whose extensive practice enables him to mark the position of every stone on the surface of the Dutch Kills; a professional so devoted to the use of his eyes as to have in a measure neglected the exercise of his ears, which have become impaired from want of use; his whole expression is that of a walking theodolite and spirit level. Any stake with a nail in its head set by Peter G. Van Alst is the symbol of accuracy, and succeeding generations will be entirely guided by the square white stones set by him, which now, through the fields and

elsewhere, mark the streets of Long Island City.

Benjamin married Margaret Coe, daughter of Samuel Coe and Margaret Van Zandt. Had two daughters, if no more, and is believed to have had no sons, as none of the old people that I have talked with remember to have heard of any, but do remember hearing the expression "Uncle Ben's gals."

By the record of baptisms of Newtown Dutch Church, their daughter Elizabeth was baptized Oct. 4, 1741, by Dominie Goetshius; the sponsors were his brother Abraham and mother Ann.

By the records of the town of Newtown, as now to be seen in Queens County Clerk's office, it appears that he conveyed his farm at Dutch Kills, 78 a., to Abraham Polhemus, on the 11th April, 1764. His nephew Thomas, son of Abraham, was one of the witnesses to this deed. Shows that he was not "lost at sea" up to that date. Wm. Paynter said he went to New Jersey.

In the division of his father's land he had the south half of the homestead, on which stood the farm buildings. The house was built of stone, one and one-half stories in height, and when the highway, which was the old Dutch Kills Road, (now School street) was widened, the northwest corner stood in the road. It was erected by Thomas and was taken down a few years since. It stood upon ground 15 to 20 ft. above, and close by the salt meadows, and not more than 60 ft. distant. During the Revolution it was used as a tavern, and when peace was declared the neighbors met in it and celebrated the event. The houses of all the inhabitants stood on the high bank skirting the east side of these meadows.

His daughter Ann (Nancy) or Hannah, married her cousin John, son of Jacob, her father's brother.

His wife, Margaret Coe, was a gt. gt. gd. daughter of Robert Coe, who, according to Riker, came from England in 1634, whose son Robert and grandson Capt. John, was father of Samuel, who was the father of Margaret.

The following is from the Long Island City *Star* of January 9, 1880:

#### REMAINS OF ANCIENT NEWTOWN.

We reproduce the old mills of ancient Newtown and the farm houses for which they ground; we conduct the tourist to their picturesque sites, as we travel over the country encircling them; we promise the explorer views of romantic scenery; we give the history of the old mill owners; under the influence of silent association, we unfold the thoughts which occupied us, as we heard the mill-stream still murmuring the same sound heard by the past generations; by which we felt ourselves linked to them, the founders of Newtown.

The short tour through neighborhoods pregnant with history becomes deeply interesting, when the tourist has secured a beforehand acquaintance with the localities. Shall the position of the old mills be sought for in detail? Shall the railway depot at Hunter's Point be the starting point? Granted. Then disembark from the train at Corona for a pleasant walk. A few yards down the old Dutch Lane (now called Corona avenue,) the first mill of Newtown is met. The first mill must have, with its founder, the first place in this memoir, while the tourist is fresh from its old foundations, and the historic house of the miller, Capt. John Coe—a great man in the national events of 1664, which brought Newtown under the rule of Charles II., King of England. Some distance up Corona avenue stand two large—very large—buttonwood trees; observe them with attention; they are eighty years planted there— authentic history for two great trees grasped around by the hands of George J. Rapelye, Esq., who in his sixteenth year saw them planted by Mr. Burroughs, the father of the respected gentleman whose gate they now ornament. Apropos to October, '79, Mr Rapelye was planting a young tree as the tourist passed up the road. He has planted all the trees along that part of Corona avenue. He never stops planting trees. Corona avenue now enters the primeval forest, where the red men were used in by-gone years to dwell, and where nought remains of their extinct race save an old tomahawk occasionally unearthed, and the everlasting rocks of ages on which the surly chief of the wigwam was accommodated with a seat. The opening expanse of view on the other side of the woods offers a magnificent prospect immediately beyond Shady Lake ice pond.

Right and left, the eye educated to scenery may range unobstructed for miles bordering on and bounded by the marsh and bay of Flushing, from Yonker's Island on the north to where Ascan Backus on the south, sits enthroned, the greatest farmer in Newtown. In the bosom of that deep recess lies the "Head of the Vleigh," one of the most important military positions during the Revolutionary war, and with good reason, for, an army breaking up their cantonments at Astoria had to take up the line of march through Middletown and Newtown villages, by doubling the Head of the Vleigh to reach Flushing or Jamaica. It was, consequently, always guarded by a strong encampment of British soldiers, and was the last military post evacuated on the ever memorable evacuation of Newtown in 1783, when the Hessian Regiment of Knobback made their last halt, and took their last drink at the old corner house in Newtown village. In those days, nor for a long period after, did a solitary road cross the marsh at Flushing bay. From Shady Lake down to the marsh is a rapid descent of Corona avenue, where a triangular intersection of roads meets the traveler; that on the left is Strong's bridge and causeway; that on the right leads to the horse brook which of yore turned the wheel of Captain John Coe's mill. In this fine position he had built the first mill ever erected in Newtown, and that such a head of water power is not now made use of is a strong proof of the industrial apathy of modern Newtown, leading to the conclusion that we want some modern John Coes among us at the present time. This deserted spot was once the focus of Newtown's political activity—the familiar ground of Robert Coe, Thomas Hazard and Edward Jessup—a triumvirate strong in resolve and full of conspiracy against old Stuyvesant. Did they not stamp around in their indignation against him, on the very ground you now walk on, so lonely that your presence begets suspicion, so unusual is the sight of a stranger where for years there came the daily throng. All is now still as death save the rush of the Horse brook turned into foam over the moss grown boulders which have defied time, and hold position as John Coe laid them; but examine the timbers of the old dock, and walk over the foundations of the burnt mill, partly new and partly venerable, reminding one of the past, with the timbers of the worn out schooner that has sunk at its post of duty beside the old mill as the Roman sentinels were found in skeleton on the gates of Pompeii waiting these two thousand years to be relieved by the guard which never came to reveal the countersign. In sight of the aged house which from the lofty bluff overlooks the brook, can we not resuscitate the living household of John Coe, his wife, children, the slaves who dwelt in the basement, and the little niggers who basked under the lofty stoop? How many voices of anxious mothers, both white and black, have issued from over and under that stoop to save the incipient race of humanity from drowning their little bodies in the waters of the Horse brook yet so dark in its capacity for such cruel work; and wherefore all the anxiety of their natural feeling to preserve their race from extinction—gone as if in exile, to be succeeded by other races of exiles careless and ignorant even to the name of their predecessors. The house is in its decay, too capacious for any family that would at the present day wish to dwell therein; it will of necessity soon succumb under the influence of neglect and final desertion. Bricks were imported from Holland to build its substantial chimneys and fireplaces; while the seasoned beams and timbers speak well of the Newtown forest. The axe cuts denote the period when saws were little used, and we can use them as an alphabet to read the thoughts of the stalwart pioneer hewing his way along the fallen trunk. Here he was in full vigor, and struck deep; gradually he relaxes until he rests; the cuts became fainter, and he went to dinner. We have no doubt as to his appetite, the salt marsh alone had furnished that condiment. He had companions and fellow workers to help the "shoulder lift" of the beam into its place. Why did they not carve their names for their own immortalization at the hands of the future antiquary? Some pioneers of Newtown have been thoughtful enough to do so; and have received honor one hundred years and more after date of inscription. The Coe house is an historic house, and the Coes were of the stuff that make their mark by changing a dynasty; their particular job in this respect having been the ousting of the Dutch and the introduction of the English; the stifling of old Stuyvesant and, the advent of Governor Nicolls—all of which was accomplished 'by those hearty men in twelve years—from 1652 to 1664. But before taking a retrospect of those great events we must parade the chief actors in the drama, dressed in their three cocked hats, leather small clothes, with buckles on shoes, and the capacious vests of the period. The retrospect will be confined to the settlers of that section of country included by the road which started from the nucleus of the settlement, the Presbyterian Church, Newtown village, and thence up the Dutch lane through Corona avenue down to the old mill, crossing the Horse brook arid winding back to the church by the shortest roads you can find; this point of the Hoffman boulevard opposite the old corner house and around the Presbyterian Church being the position of the original thatched cottages built in 1652 by the English founders of Middleburgh under permit from Governor Stuyvesant. By the in-gathering of the first harvest the Dutch Governor had learned to hate the new settlers, and they had returned the feeling and interest. They were English to their core, and hated the Dutchmen; and he, Dutch to his core, hated the Englishmen, because both parties felt it in the air that the clash for empire was not far off. These Puritan Englishmen had come to Newtown via New England, where they had rested for a few years to receive some more lessons in liberty of conscience; and mayhap to learn the dogma that the first duty of a reformer is to stop all future reform; they were ripened into a frame of mind quite suitable to irritate the intolerant temper of the irascible "Director" under whose jurisdiction they had settled; It did not take them long to find out each other.

Jonathan Fish, Edward Jessup, Thomas Hazard, John Burroughs, Richard Betts, Robert Coe, and his son, John Coe, the miller, with William Palmer, were sturdy men who had “traveled” and were ready to resist what they only waited for—the first onset from old Stuyvesant, which, to do his consistency full justice, was not long delayed. It came on the 29th April, 1653, when all the cowards fled from the settlement, on the intimation covertly conveyed from Stuyvesant to make it the more frightful that the probabilities were that he would include all the English settlement in a grand massacre by the Indians, whose assistance he had secured for that paternal purpose. It grieves the tourist to have to record that it was a Blissville man from the Second Ward of Long Island City who was deceived into being the instrument of Stuyvesant’s manœuvre to clear the settlement of its Englishmen. The rumor of a general rising of the Indians under Dutch pay was started in far off Hempstead and carried to Newtown by Richard Brutnell, an Englishman, the first proprietor of Blissville, who had formerly resided where Pratt & Co. are now planting their six new tanks of ninety feet each in diameter, Then might be seen a flight of craven fear from the old town dock that effectually rid the township of all timid men for all future time, and landed them in Connecticut.

*Dageneres animos timor arguit*, says Virgil, but a burnt child dreads the fire; the destruction and massacre by the Indians of Maspeth in 1643 still held place in popular recollection. The mill was running all this time under Captain John Coe, son of Robert Coe; both of them first settlers of Middleburgh—a father and son— both equally impelled by the powerful spring of the passions not to sustain any form of passive resistance to attack; perfectly disciplined by nature to the order of Frederick the Great: “Any officer who awaits the enemies charge will be cashiered.” Robert Coe and Edward Jessup were quickly off for Boston to interview certain Commissioners there assembled; war had broken out between England and Holland; the Middleburghers sought instructions with war material, and Robert Coe and Edward Jessup were to return with an answer to their demand for help to Middleburgh. Richard Betts, Jonathan Fish, Thomas Hazard, John Burroughs, John Coe, William Palmer, Richard Gildersleeve, William Wood, William Herrick, Ralph Hunt and the two delegates, formed the bulwark of the settlers, and were a group of determined men whose danger formed their courage. They stood on the dock at the old mill and gave the concluding advice to the travelers as they sailed away on the important mission. To many of them this expedition was the pioneer of a series of personal enterprises to be continued without intermission until finally they brought Middleburgh under the rule of Great Britain. And still that family have passed away. Oft has the tourist met old Samuel Coe, a solitary wreck and the last of his energetic race, in Newtown; this lineal descendant must be now in his eighty-fifth year; deep sympathy for misfortune was entirely on the side of the tourist—the aged man felt none for himself; the inflexible courage of his forefathers still gleamed from eyes that told of a man fit to lead an army; such was old Sam Coe, with his Herculean stature and features—a study for phrenologists—we believe he is yet alive but not residing in Newtown.

The delegates returned from Boston, Mass., declined to fight, and thus that flurry passed over only to be revived in another form. Distrust of the Indians now began to invade the Dutch settlers; the Indian seemed more inclined to sink his tomahawk in a Dutch head by preference to that of an Englishman’s; or, to say the least, he was not particular enough in his selection, as experienced in former massacres had abundantly demonstrated. The Dutch villages accordingly joined in with the English, and after a preliminary meeting at Flushing, delegates were elected on writs issued reluctantly by Stuyvesant. And assembled at the City Hall, New Amsterdam, on the 10th December, 1653. Robert Coe and Thomas Hazard represented Middleburgh, and fortified by the approbation of all its residents gathered around the mill, they again departed on their mission.

The convention of the delegates representing all the villages from Flushing to Gravesend which assembled in the City Hall of New Amsterdam on the 10th of December, 1653, is so memorable as to be engraved on time, and to be particularly marked by the student. It was legally constituted by the writs of election issued under the hand of the Dutch Governor. It was the first ever held, and for its importance was never excelled in Colonial times. The leading spirits who governed its deliberations were the two English delegates, Robert Coe and Thomas Hazard; but they had combined the interests of the Dutch and English settlers with such consummate wisdom that the utmost harmony prevailed; its sittings lasted many days, and its inception, progress and results meant revolution, without the disadvantage of that leading idea obtruding its hydra head over the surface. It was Oliver Cromwell, the protector of England pitted against Petrus Stuyvesant, Governor of New Amsterdam. The English fleet was crowding on its canvass for Boston; no signals of its mission, were hoisted in the amicable convention, but the steady gaze of Robert Coe and Thomas Hazard entered the glaring eyes of old Stuyvesant, which looked the impotent rage of a surfeited anaconda. The eye of defiance accompanied the tongue of official respect. The withholding both to villages and to private parties the promised and pledged patents for their lands was the grievance placed on the table before the convention, and Robert Coe and Thomas Hazard formed it into their engine to work their purpose of revolution. They caused it to turn the wheels of two mills; one a remonstrance to the Governor and Council of New Amsterdam—the other an address to the State’s General of Holland, both detailing the same complaint, that the promised patents had not been granted by the Governor, and moreover that the Indians not having been paid for their lands,

were about to commence legal proceedings and seek legal redress by the action of burning, devastation and massacre. This latter delineation effectually secured the lively cooperation of the Dutchmen, exempt from any poetical feeling of admiration for the red men. To emblazon their well worded grievances before Europe had to be effected by muddling the brain of old Stuyvesant with his constitutional fury, and by exciting it the English delegates looked to the abrupt dismissal of the council, thus leaving to them the only alternative of a recourse to the State's General in Holland. The Governor had only to read the remonstrance to fall into the snare laid for his unfortunate temper by Coe and Hazard. He branded the English delegates as "instigators" and "leaders," winding up the observation that if any settler wanted a patent for his land "let him *come* for it—that it never would be *sent* to him." On the receipt of this reply Messrs. Coe and Hazard applied the match to the powder train, and on the threat of an appeal, Stuyvesant dispersed the assembly. The adroit statesmanship of the English delegates could not have been excelled; the remonstrance was forwarded to Holland and England as if the work of Dutchmen; and when Robert Coe and Thomas Hazard were receiving their ovation on their return to the old mill, preparations for the invasion of the Manhattans were in progress by the English colonies.

Peace, however, was proclaimed between the two mother countries, England and Holland, which event left the children no excuse to fight each other. The parlors of the old house are cognizant of the war-like preparations and belligerent propensities of the Coes, who awaited the coming of New England troops and the fleet from Boston with much anxiety. The proclamation written with ardor had to be laid aside, and it only remained for them to gloat over the altered tone of old Stuyvesant, whom events had thoroughly humbled.

The remonstrance had been refused in words, but had been complied with in reality; patents in profusion were showered all around by Stuyvesant to all the individual holders of the out-plantations from Flushing Bay to Hallett's Cove, and the lands of that tract are now held under that title. The Governor had sought for help to meet the threatened invasion, but had found naught but opposition; he now was using the small stock of conciliatory powers of his nature with the hope of averting other troubles that had embarrassed his administration. He had barely departed to chastise the Swedes in Delaware, for an encroachment on some imaginary boundary, when the Indians, on the morning of September 18th, 1655, burst into the city of New Amsterdam, and to the number of about two thousand warriors were plying the tomahawk and scalping knife with unction on the Dutch inhabitants. Repulsed from the neighborhood of the present Wall street, the warriors dispersed themselves all over Staten Island and Pavonia, wherever a Dutchman's head was available, and during the space of three nights the skies were illuminated from burning plantations.

But three Englishmen were obnoxious to the savages; they were Edward Jessup and two Newtons, who had assisted to repel the assault on the city of New Amsterdam, where they by accident happened to be sojourning on that eventful night. The scalps of these Middleburghers were demanded with all due formality; to be added to the long array of similar decorations which they threatened to obtain, until every Dutchman was extirpated from Long Island. The Englishmen, however, were firm, and protected both their own countrymen and the Dutch settlers from the artless Indians, a name which with some misgivings we give them on the high authority of Riker, the annalist of Newtown. It must, however, be stated that the term "artless" is afforded by Mr. Riker to the Indian at the interesting moment when he was selling his land in fee at the rates of six pence British for two acres English of Newtown land; which bargain we are assured was struck "on the same principles of justice towards the artless savage which has given the name of William Penn an eternal fame."

As several of our ancestors of Newtown had secured an "eternal fame" equal if not greater than that of Wm. Penn, it is but justice to them, adds to own respect, and enhances the reputation of the Indian to record the list entitled the "Indian rate" of 1656, four years after the first sod of Middleburgh was turned. Disdaining to demand a town patent which they knew old Stuyvesant would never give, the Sachems Rowerowestco and Pomwankon were applied to for a deed of conveyance of all their lands in Newtown, excluding Long Island City. The annalist of Newtown indulges in a sophism based on this title in equity which he avers "had afforded the comfortable reflection to the purchasers that their land title was of the best possible character, because derived from those whom the Great Spirit had constituted the true proprietors of the soil." Apart from the idolatrous complexion of the last line, page 42 of the "Annals," the Indians had no power to sell. The charter of freedoms and exemptions granted in 1640 by the Dutch Government had guaranteed to all settlers as much land as they could cultivate on the obligation of paying its tenths after the lapse of the first ten years of their settlement on the land, and conformably to this guarantee and subject to its provisions. The title to Newtown was vested in the Rev. Francis Doughty under a patent from Governor Kieft, for and on behalf of the high and Mighty Lords, the Lords' State's General of Holland, bearing date, 1642, and recorded in Liber G. G., page 49 of patents, Secretary of State's office, Albany, where it can still be read by any one industrious enough to read its barbarous Latin. The pretended purchase from the Indians was merely an adroit piece of pool-selling, manipulated with consummate skill by the Coes and their associates to irritate the irascible Stuyvesant by a small money payment for lands on which they had already located without qualms of

conscience as to the rights of the “artless” Indian or his “Great Spirit.” The settlers had already agreed with Stuyvesant to hold their lands under the charter of 1642, free for ten years, at the end of which period they were required to pay the tenth part of the produce of the land. That Stuyvesant was not forgetful of his tithes the following letter will be sufficient evidence. His greeting by letter to those he hated was always “To his loving friends.” With a pen dipped in gall the Director wrote: “Loving friends—Whereas, the time of ten years, and also the freedom of tenths is expired, these presents do order the magistrates, and also all the inhabitants of the town of Middleburgh, and all the other plantations in Mespat Kills, that none of them shall presume or undertake to remove their fruits or increase, as corn, maize, tobacco, &c., before they have agreed for the year about the tithes, with the Governor General and Council, or their Commissioners, upon forfeiture of fifty guilders. Done in Port Amsterdam, in New Netherlands, on the 3d of July, 1662. P. Stuyvesant.”

The celerity with-which the town meeting was called three days after date of this caustic order, and their promptitude in dispatching three Commissioners to “agree with the Director for the titles of the present year” very clearly dissipates any pretensions to Indian title so poetically drawn by the annalist.

However, it will serve a historical curiosity to read the names of the pool-sellers of 1656, and the stake they each threw.

[ed. Table omitted as not relevant to Skillman genealogy]

The sum total subscribed amounted to about thirty-four pounds British, and in consideration of that paltry sum the annalist of Newtown has thought fit to waste much time and sophistry into deceiving himself and his readers. The sale cut Stuyvesant to the quick; the shadow of such contempt darkened his administration—it was the handwriting on the wall—the beginning of the end—designed in the spirit that the Roman Senate had sold by public auction the camp of Hannibal, and had found purchasers—so history repeats itself in good order from the banks of the Tiber, through Babylon, to the old Coe mill. The Coe mill had proved a remunerative concern; it did not excite rivalry, but it excited the feelings of Edward Jessup to extend the usefulness of a similar institution; that horrible idea of modern competition had not then crept into Newtown, nor in fact has it even now much developed itself in the township. Mr. Jessup drew up a petition to the council under date January 15, 1657, for liberty to erect another mill to be turned by the waters of Sackhickneyah creek, which yet drains Train’s Meadow. The petition concluded in the following strain of brotherly love: “It is not my desire to be a hindrance to any man, or any prejudice to my loving and respected friend, Mr. Coe, but so far as I apprehend, as yet his mill is overwrought, and the country may well employ two mills and both have work enough.” Stuyvesant, of course, refused the “easement” of the Sackhickneyah to his arch enemy, Edward Jessup. The names of the triumvirate, Coe, Hazard and Jessup, have no living representatives now in Newtown; but they lived to witness the final wrath of Stuyvesant over the transfiguration of Middleburgh into Newtown, and New Amsterdam into New York. The old Coe house, under the Coe dynasty, never possessed the fascinating attraction of female loveliness; the everlasting theme is for the first time denied the tourist; be assured that its omission is not his fault. Had it even once existed it would have been worked into the universal shape, always new and forever old, but it requires a girl of some kind for a model, and there never was a girl in the Coe family, but plenty of boys, brave, manly fellows, who became fine men outside of Newtown. The eye strays from off its work to the *World* of 6th of October, ’79, and reads: “Professor Edward Benton Coe, the newly ordained minister of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church, at Forty-eighth street and Fifth avenue, preached his initial sermon yesterday morning before a very large congregation. Dr. Vermilye accompanied the young divine to the pulpit. The sermon had all the fire and vigor of an extempore address, and Professor Coe’s clear enunciation enabled every person in the large church to hear every word of it.”

It is quite manifest that the young divine springs from the Newtown family; the *clear enunciation* is a family legacy from the turbulent mill stream from the Horse Brook which necessitates a loud voice to overcome it—in the roar of the waters Demosthenes had acquired that marvelous eloquence, which placed him on the pinnacle above all orators, ancient or modern. Old Robert Coe had finally settled in Jamaica, and his influence there was of an equally commanding character to that he had previously exerted in Newtown. He was High Sheriff of Jamaica from 1669 to 1672; he had then reached his 77th year. He left three sons, John, Robert and Benjamin. The son John is the Captain John Coe, the builder of the mill, and his father, the chief antagonist of Stuyvesant; his actions cover every page of Newtown’s history from 1660 to 1664, when Charles the Second obtained complete possession of the country. The two latter years were but a series of expeditions and journeys for this active conspirator against the Dutch power. A second triumvirate, composed of John Coe, Richard Betts, and Ralph Hunt, had followed on the heels of the first one, whose mission it was to finish the work commenced by the first organization. They were able men, deeply imbued with their English sentiment, and fully determined to realize its practical embodiment.

Captain John Coe had sons, Robert, John, Jonathan, Samuel and David, but no daughters; a detail sufficient to account for the rays of romantic sentiment not shining on the venerable homestead when visited by the tourist. No doubt but that the gallant young sons of John Coe were able to offer a feeble substitute in the respectful manner in

which they helped the daughters of other farms to mount their pillions, when they came of errands to the mill, a duty often incumbent on the feminine department of Newtown before the dawn of the present refinement in dress and manners. A row of the favorite poplar trees ornamented the roadside in old times, and are not forgotten in the picture of the premises, painted some forty years back for Mr. Andrew Lawrence, of Newtown village, where it is religiously preserved. The British tumbrel of Revolutionary days was well known for its punctual attendance before the door of the old mill, and by evening shade the straggling soldiers were oft recalled by the magnificent bugle call rising high in lofty air, and falling in showers of sound around the shore of Flushing creek to warn the soldier into camp. The marsh rats indigenous of the soil have survived the vicissitudes after being badly treated by all—even by their contemporaries, the red men—who fought with them for the possession: of the clams; they still preserve in their families the beautiful tradition of the plenty formerly found by their ancestors under the foundations of the Coe mansion; they hailed with joy the advent of Hitchcock as their coming Messiah of plenty in young chickens; and they realized the advance of civilization by devouring a hecatomb of them stored in the basements of the old homestead where formerly the family slaves were used to dwell. Hitchcock came and went, a real estate meteor like his brother of the sky, but it must be admitted that his “Corona Park” was a magnificent conception. The scenery here is a combination of the Shenandoah Valley and the Mississippi River, for the Horse Brook, winding through the marsh between the ridges, has serpentine turns enough to vie with those of the “Father of Waters.” The Corona Park at the present hour is suggestive of melancholy, but in better times the Hitchcock idea may be carried into maturity.

Captain Coe and his mill have left behind them a precedent in criminal jurisprudence as carried out in 1660, when a thief detected stealing corn from the mill was condemned to walk a certain distance, with two rods under each arm, to the sound of the official drum beaten before him. But more serious work than catching a thief had now to occupy the thoughts of Captain John Coe and his compeers in the vicinity of his mill; the work of his father Robert had to be resumed against Stuyvesant, and he must be credited with multiplying expedients to foster the growing discontent. The Director had introduced the lively subject of regulating the Puritan conscience by Dutch maxims, and on the complaint of that learned Dutch divine, Johannis Megapolensis, the Director emitted some - theology highly inflammable when applied to the Puritan mind. He stigmatized conventicles as hotbeds of discord, confusion and disorder in the church and state of Middleburgh village, and complimented those “who deigned to explain the holy word of God without being enabled to by any *political* or ecclesiastical authority” with being the originators of calamities, heresies and schisms; winding up the denunciation with a declaration of a fine against those who should officiate as preachers, readers, singers, or be attendants at such unlawful assemblies. Defiant psalms and hymns of praise now ascended through the rafters of the old house, and three triumvirates were organized, with John Coe, Richard Betts, Edward Jessup, Ralph Hunt, Samuel Foe, John Layton, Francis Swayne and John Burroughs for active members, to watch the Governor in his new role of a religious persecutor. Neither on his part was Stuyvesant idle; he of necessity like the rat must have something to gnaw on, to wear down the ever-pressing growth of the tusks. He was founding the French village of Bushwick, and must needs destroy the Dutch village of Aernhem on Furman’s Island lest the further development of that village should retard the growth of a new village which he himself had founded for a few Frenchmen around the corners of the present North Second street and Bushwick avenue, Williamsburgh, and to which favorite settlement, after a good lunch in the Conselyea House, on Humboldt avenue, he himself had christened “Boswyck.”

The foolish old man, having now effectually irritated all the Dutchmen, and all the Englishmen save one in Middleburgh, His Excellency received from that remaining friend a letter with news in it enough to open his eyes. “Right Honorable, the Lord Stevesant(sic): The cause of my presenting these few lines to your honor is to let you understand what traitors there are in Middleburgh. John Coe, Edward Jessup, Ralph Hunt, Richard Betts, Samuel Foe, John Layton, Francis Swayne, went to Westchester in the night, and brought Panton with a company of men over to beat arms against the Dutch, and have taken a copy of Panton’s commission to kill and slay any that opposeth him. He beats up the drum under a color to train, and when the town has come together, he plots against your Honor. These seven men set almost the whole town against your Honor; *they call private meetings*, and there they conspire against you, and have put the town in an uproar. And Richard Betts said he would spend his life and estate in this cause, and John Layton abused your honor, and said you are a devil, a wooden-leg rogue, and a picaroon, and rails against your honor that it is a shame to hear him. Edward Jessup hath been a traitor for a long time; he went to New Haven to see to put the town under them, and I never knew it till they came for money as would go for his charges. If some come, be not taken with them, they will never be at rest, but always a doing of mischief. So, having no more to trouble your honor, I rest your true and faithful subject, John Laurensen.”

The artful writer had inserted quite enough to arouse the apprehensions of the Governor, and the well-timed allusion to the tender subject of his wooden leg was always certain to bring on a vigorous stamping of that heavy implement; the letter, however, contained the truth of a dangerous conspiracy against the Dutch rule. The

conspirators had be taken themselves to the study of geography with remarkable results; they made the discovery that Long Island was “adjacent” to Connecticut, and therefore to be included under the charter of Charles II., which confirmed to that colony the adjacent islands. On October 27, 1662, intelligence was sent to Middleburgh that she was “annexed to the other side of the Sound.” This was the first appreciation received by Stuyvesant in acknowledgment of his action for the suppression of conventicles and unorthodox preaching in prayer meetings. The old mill house had bravely done the work of its promoters.

Captain John Coe, in October—the old house remembers it well—sailed from the mill dock to Hartford to meet General Court, there assembled. The Captain was a direct, business-like man; he had felt on his iron hand the grasp of iron men as he had cast loose the painter of his periauga [ed. pirogue: narrow canoe made from single tree] from the old dock. The proposition he bore was a revolution—a transfer of an empire—and the Captain put the very direct question to Connecticut: “It had pleased the highest Majesty to move heart of the King’s Majesty to grant unto your colony such enlargements as comprehends this whole island, thereby opening a way for us as we hope from bondage, to such liberties and enlargements as we are informed your patent affords.”

The indomitable mill owner thereupon received for answer from the Colony of Connecticut: “As the lines of their patent extended to the adjacent islands, they accepted these towns under their jurisdiction.” Captain Coe then returned home fully empowered to annex Middleburgh to Connecticut, which power, at the head of eighty armed men, he most effectually made use of, by removing all the Dutch magistrates and by substituting others who took the oath of allegiance to Connecticut. The name of Middleburgh was effaced, and the name of Hastings written over it, in order to perfect the resemblance of the events to the Norman conquest; a truce was arranged between Stuyvesant and Connecticut, which in due course culminated in the surrender of all the Dutch colonies to Charles the Second.

The new name of Newtown superceded the short-lived Hastings, and after the Convention of February, 1665, held in Hempstead, at which Captain John Coe and Captain Richard Betts attended as delegates, the old mill and its owner fell into their ordinary path of life, well satisfied that their ambition had handed their names down to posterity.

The services, sacrifices and deaths of the Con family occupy a foremost position in the Revolutionary struggle; the apostolic tongues of patriotic fire burned brightly on their heads during the mighty contest. Benjamin Coe, John Coe, Samuel Coe, Jonathan Coe, Robert Coe, Benjamin Coe, Jr., had promptly responded to the call for the election of a deputy from Newtown to the Philadelphia Convention. One hundred voters at the town election of April 3, 1775, selected Colonel Robert Blackwell to represent Newtown in the coming Convention, and the unextinguished historic honor belongs to Newtown, that she alone of all the towns in Queens County was powerful enough to carry that ticket against the Tory opposition of the day. The town vote of every other town was cast against the decisive action of sending deputies to the National Convention to be held for the purpose of choosing delegates to a second General Congress. But the Coes carried their vote into the field; the Newtown troop of light horse had for its officers Daniel Lawrence, Samuel Riker, Jonathan Coe, Peter Rapelye and Thomas Betts; and at the same time we find Captain Benjamin Coe in command of another company under the Remsens of Middle Village, where Providence seems to have grown them in opposition to the Van Duyns. Jonathan Coe was taken prisoner immediately after the battle of Long Island, and died in Flatbush Jail, but what he suffered there during his last sickness is known only to his jailers, who refused to restore his remains to his relatives, and this patriot lies in an unknown grave.

When a few months since the old Bushwick grave yard was being cleared out, the headstone of “Captain Lawrence Coe, died August 24, 1780,” was one of the few slabs that unprotected for years had bravely withstood the assaults of the cattle and rude boys of Bushwick; and it is well to add that Isaac DeBevoise Jr., has carefully deposited the remains in a separate box in the vaults of Bushwick Church.

The two troopers, Benjamin and Jonathan, were brothers, Benjamin the eldest, having for a long period enjoyed a seat in the State Senate, died in 1821.

The brave name of Coe is now submerged, but let it be remembered with respect when produced in print.

Joseph<sup>8</sup>, the remaining son, married Sarah Messerole, daughter of John and Elizabeth Messerole, of Bushwick. Being lame from a stiffness of the muscles of one of his heels, he was kept in by his mother and learned to do work in the house. He was an expert in spinning flax, and it is said of him that, becoming dissatisfied with the amount of work done by his servants, he, one day, spun twenty-six skeins of thread to show them what could be done.

He lived and died on a farm at Bushwick, which by his will he gave to his son John, and is now, or such part as may not be sold, in the possession of the descendants of this John, who was

called and known in his lifetime as Judge Skillman. Some other lands held by him at Bushwick he gave to his 2d son, Joseph.

His will was admitted to probate April 18, 1772. His family Bible is said to have been destroyed by a gt. gd. child, from his being allowed to get possession of it. (Mr. Church told me that his wife wanted the Bible, but her brother John would not let her have it. Mrs. Caroline Skillman says her husband tore out the record to wrap garden seeds in! Mrs. Halliday says her father would take out leaves to light his pipe with!)

From the fact of his decease before the Revolution, he could have had no side to take in the political troubles of that period. His remains were buried at Bushwick Church.

The family of Skillmans thus far were noted as being gunners and singers; were strong Presbyterians of the "Blue" stripe, though in some persons it was toned down somewhat by a fondness for mirth, while with some others their fun loving propensities took a practical turn.

My visits to Bushwick resulted in obtaining names, dates of birth, &c., of John<sup>11</sup> and his descendants only. I had expected to obtain the date of birth, marriage and death of Joseph<sup>8</sup> and all his children. At one visit I was told of their being a Dutch Bible, but that the records had been torn out; at another visit that it had been taken to England by Mrs. Halliday. On her return I called on her, December 18, 1882, and was shown the Bible, or, rather, the remains of it. The front cover and clasp and the leaves to the XXX. chapter Exodus were gone. The Apocrypha is in back part and follows the New Testament. The back cover measured 14 ½ inches by 9 ¼ the covers of which were protected by the usual brass plates. The title page preceding the New Testament bore date 1716 and purported to be published at Dordrecht by Pieter Keur, and at Amsterdam by Pieter Rotterdam. The Bible contains a map of the Holy Land and many pictures.

Facing the 26th chapter of Matthew is the following record:

John Skillman	was born	April 19, 1750.
His wife Hannah	"	June 17, 1768.
Sarah Skillman	"	March 26, 1770.
John	"	Feb'y 19, 1773.
Joseph	"	July 27, 1776.
Jane	"	Sept. 3, 1779.
Deborah	"	Oct. 3, 1783.
John	"	May 30, 1787.
Ellinor	"	March 6, 1798.

Facing 1st chapter of Luke is the following:

Hannah Skillman	was born	April 25, 1807.
Abraham	"	Feb'y 6, 1809.
John	"	Oct. 12, 1810.

John Skillman married Susannah Gardner, of New York, Aug. 10, 1813.

Ellinor Skillman married to Bernard Messerole in Bushwick, Kings County, Dec. 15, 1818.

Being all the records I found. They don't agree entirely with the dates given me by the family and set forth in the proper place further on.

Stile's History of Brooklyn, vol. 2, p. 308 says Jean Messerole, of Picardy, France, came here in 1663 in the "Spotted Cow," with his "wife (Jonica) and sucking child;" wife was given all his property. He had an only son, Jan Jr. His son Jan Jr. married Marritje Covert and left two sons, John 3rd and Cornelius. His will was made in 1710 and proved in 1712. His daughters were Margaret Devoe, Deborah Cotts (Van Cott?) and Jane Messerole. John 3rd married Elizabeth and had sons, Peter, John, Abraham and Isaac, and several daughters; Sarah was one

and she married Joseph Skillman.

His children were:

I. Thomas<sup>9</sup> born March 13, 1736, died March 3, 1814; married 1st, Jane, daughter of Francis Titus, of Bushwick, April 11, 1761, 2d, Jemima Wells of Aquebogue

II. Joseph<sup>10</sup> born..... By records of Episcopal Church of Hempstead, he married Catharine Pratt May 11, 1774. She died Aug. 27, 1821, aged 72.

III John<sup>11</sup> born April 19, 1750; baptized May 13, 1750, died Nov. 21, 1827; married 1st, Debora Conselyea, June 17, 1769; 2d, Hannah Van Cott, who was born June 17, 1768, and died Oct. 9, 1843.

IV. Elizabeth born.....; married Albertus Van De Water May 28, 1762.

V. Ann Maria born.....; baptized October 22, 1752; married Benjamin Brush Sept. 1, 1773, of Huntington.

VI. Sarah born.....; married 1st, John Hubbard Oct. 13, 1762; 2d. Richard Smith March 26, 1773; 3d, James Brush March 23, 1776. *Spinster* License taken out by John Skillman and John Hubbard; he is a farmer, New York. Thomas and John S. took out License *Widow*; he is a farmer of Queens Co. Spinster Jaconiah Brush and John S. took out License; he is a weaver of Huntington. How can this be, yet John S. was a party to all?

There seems something strange as to this Sarah's marriages. No doubt exists in my mind of the name standing for one and the same person; one or the other, or both brothers, Thomas and John, subscribed the bond, and in two she is spoken of as a Spinster, and the one of a date subsequent to the other two. Possibly two of the licenses failed to be followed by marriage, or a careless clerk wrote spinster when he should not.

VII. Mercy born.....; married Wm. Conselyea June 19, 1773, and staid at Bushwick.

Thomas lived during the Revolution at Bushwick. He and his brother John were of the militia and took some part in the battle of Long Island, Thomas as Lieutenant and John as Ensign. Thomas was taken prisoner Sept. 15, 1776, on York Island, in a house near Kip's Bay, and put in Provost. His father-in-law Titus, being a Tory, interceded for him and got him out, and he was compelled to take the oath prescribed in Lord Howe's proclamations of July 14th and Sept. 19th, 1776. It seems that Titus had been locked up by the patriots before the British got possession of Long Island, for being conspicuous in his zeal for the King, and Jane Titus his wife was, according to Bergen, a gt. gt. gd. daughter of Capt. Titus Syrach de Vries, who was part owner of a grist mill at New Utrecht in 1660, and died in Flatbush in 1690, and was father of Syrach and Tunis Titus. Tunis went to New Jersey and Syrach was father of Francis Titus, who settled at Bushwick, His son-in-law, T.S. got him released; married Antie Fontyn, and founded the Dutch family of Teetus. Their son Francis married Ida Debevoise, and was father of Jane, who married Thomas Skillman, and Christina, who married Abraham Polhemus.

His grandchildren say that he owned a farm at Bushwick; one of them says he sold it to Gen. Johnson for \$3,000 and moved to Red Hook, now Vernon Valley, 1½ miles east of Northport. The Johnson family know nothing of this, and Kings county records do not show it. Neither do the records of Suffolk county show ownership or occupancy of the Northport farm. It seems that he bought a house and a few acres of land on the southeast corner at Red Hook, and also a large tract (50 acres, Thomas says) ½ mile further south, of most beautiful and fertile land known to some as black sand, in order to start his son Joseph in business at keeping store, but who, being too liberal, soon failed and seriously embarrassed his father, who then moved, there to make the best of the property. While this was going on, and after, he would buy standing wood and timber, and freight it on his sloop Lucretia to New York for sale. He sold all his Red Hook land, and in

1797 bought a large tract of land at Aquebogue of Isaac Wells—200 acres—and paid £1,100, as appears by Suffolk county records, and from this time everything is plain. His wife, Jane, and mother, Sarah, died at Red Hook, and were interred in a little burying ground on the farm tract.

A grandson, Thomas, son of Joseph<sup>12</sup> aged 6 months, was buried there also. I visited the place in 1875 and 1876 to see the graves. One grave is east from the other, as if buried in adjoining rows, and the length of the graves are east and west, as was usual. The graves are close to the fence on top of bank. It is not known when they died, but Jane died first, and Sarah when her great grandson Thomas was 8 or 10 years old, who remembers her, and that she had the palsy. A stranger would never suspect the presence of these graves if visiting the spot. The stones that indicate the graves look like common round ones.

One of his grandsons describes him “as a man that stood in his own boots; was a Democrat and a man of consequence; was a Whig of the Revolution, 5 feet 10 inches in height, weighed 160 pounds, black eyes; was a great reader of the Bible and member of the Presbyterian Church; was very good-looking, a sensible and smart man; he was sick about one year, and died of old age.” After removing to Aquebogue he married Jemima Wells, of whom and her son he bought the farm. His remains lie interred at Aquebogue, south of the old church, and his gravestone, with that of his son Joseph and daughter Sarah and second wife, I saw in 1859 and since.

A “Pass” permitting him to take some things from New York to Bushwick, and dated December 17, 1779, shows that he lived at Bushwick at that date.

In June, 1876, I visited Chenango county, to see his Dutch Bible. I found it in the possession of Hon. Joseph H. Skillman, near Smithville, and bears date 1718, Amsterdam print. I found it contained the date of his birth and that of his children, but nothing of his parents or wives, either births, marriages or deaths.

June 13, 1882, I visited the library of the L. I. Historical Society to see Stiles’ History of Brooklyn, and at page 311, Vol. 2, “Thomas Skillman, in 1785 sold to Charles Titus a farm of 28 acres.” Charles Titus was Supervisor, Town Clerk and Justice of the Peace and had sons, Folkert and Charles. Charles took the Skillman land, while Folkert lost his property and died unmarried. Charles, who bought the Skillman land, was son of the elder Francis Titus. Vol. 1, p 283, Lieut. Thomas Skillman of Capt. John Titus’ Company, in 1776 reports:

“A strong column menaced Fort Putnam (now Fort Greene city of Brooklyn); they threw up a redoubt on Aug. 29th, 500 yards off to the east, from which they fired on the fort; (this day Gen. Woodhull was captured); a few British officers reconnoitered the American lines, one of whom being in advance of the others, and William Van Cott, of Bushwick, shot him. A rifleman went out and took the officer’s sword, watch, hat and cash.”

Vol. 1, p. 292, tells us how Thomas Skillman was taken prisoner by the British:

Sept. 15, 1776, three British frigates, the Phenix, Duchess of Gordon and Rose, and some batteaux, passed up from New York and anchored in Kip’s Bay (foot 34th street). At 7 A. M. they opened a heavy fire, &c. Thomas Skillman, of Bushwick, John Vandervoort and Jacob Bloom, of Brooklyn, with their families, were at Kip’s Bay, in the house of Mr. Kip, when the cannonading commenced the balls were driven through the house. They took to the cellar for safety. After the British landed the men were taken prisoners and sent to New York, and their families returned to Long Island.” Gen. Johnson witnessed the cannonading.

A foot note refers to Gen. Johnson’s Reminiscences, as published in the *Williamsburgh Gazette* April 3, 1839. A file of this paper should be seen.

When the British troops landed on York Island after the battle of Long Island, it was at Kip’s Bay, at 34th street, with the view of taking the American army in the rear, and with the hope of capturing the whole.

On the breaking out of the Revolution Abraham<sup>4</sup> appears as a Patriot; left his home and went

to his friends in New Jersey to escape the fury of the Tories and British. His brother Joseph (my great great grandfather) was then deceased, but his sons, Thomas (my great grandfather) and his brother, John were of the militia at the battle of Long Island, and were of those who escaped to New York. Very shortly after this, Gen. Jeremiah Johnson says, "Thomas was taken prisoner in a house at Kip's Bay, York Island, with some others, and put in prison by the British." His father-in-law, Francis Titus, being a Tory, interceded, when he and his brother John took advantage of Lord Howe's proclamations of July 14th and Sept. 19th, 1776, as did also Abraham, their uncle, and so far as I know, they were not in their persons molested afterwards

I have lately ascertained, that my great grandfather O.[ed. his mother was Catherine Onderdonk, see below], notwithstanding he took the same oath, it did not save him from the Provost Prison, and his patriotic course is beyond doubt. "After the battle of Long Island the Patriots were abandoned to the tender mercies of the British and Tories, and were forced by brutal treatment to make their peace with the King's Commissioners, and many thus took the oath of allegiance to the King under Howe's proclamation. Some were forced into a semblance of submission by the armed occupation of their firesides, but there is no evidence that any Skillman was Tory by choice, but the contrary."

A "Permit" allowing Thomas to take home with him to Bushwick certain goods reads as follows, and was given me by Joseph H. Skillman, Esq., of Smithville:

"Pursuant to His Excellency Sir William Howe's

"Proclamation of 17th July, 1779,

"Permission is hereby given to Thos. Skillman to carry to Bushwick seven yds cloth, seven p<sup>d</sup> sugar, one p<sup>d</sup> tea, two yds stuff, he having complied with the Directions contained in the above mentioned Proclamation.

"New York, Superintendent's Office, 17 Dec., 1779.

"To the Officers attending.

"LAMB<sup>t</sup> MOORE, Dept. Sup."

(This pass is believed to be the only one now in existence in Queens county, except possibly one issued to a widow Hegeman, of Oyster Bay.)

Such are the meager details of my ancestors' Revolutionary experience. Bushwick and Dutch Kills being so near New York that every sort of suffering must have been endured, but no one now lives to tell me of it.

I remember bearing my father say that his grandfather, Martin Schenck, during the Revolution used to sell his butter—"done up" in one pound rolls—in New York, and "at one time he sold it for one dollar a pound as fast as he could hand it out and take the money"—of course in coin. The following extracts from *Harper's Weekly* of Jan. 10, 1880, bears this out. The article is under the caption, "New York in 1780:"

"The winter of 1779-80 was one of the coldest ever known in New York. The harbor was closed by ice from Hell Gate to Staten Island. Fires had destroyed half of the city. Famine reached even to the wealthiest; firewood seldom to be purchased, and so scarce that the Baroness De Riedesel gladly accepted the gift of a few fagots. Incendiarism added to the general terror. Food rose to extraordinary prices; fifty dollars would scarcely support a family for two days. The Patriots intercepted supplies, as did also the privateers. The city seemed besieged by the elements and by smallpox and other diseases, as well as by the Patriots. Snow fell to the depth of eight feet. The British sentinels watched incessantly lest the Patriots should cross on the ice from Paulus Hook and capture their last stronghold. Of the people of the city a large part had consented to take the oath of allegiance; they even paraded in the provincial regiments and assumed the royal uniform; But their hearts were with Washington and his patient soldiers," &c.

The following I cut from a newspaper relating to Bushwick of Jan. 16, 1881, or that part now called "Dutch Town" from its German residents:

"Jan, the Swede was soon followed by other settlers, who throve despite the sometimes more than feeble incursions of their savage neighbors, and during the long conflict between the people and the various governors of the province, whether under English or Dutch rule, the settlers, almost to a man, were steadfast to the cause of the people. During the Revolution, after the battle of Brooklyn, which took place in August, 1776, British and Hessian troops were billeted on the farmers and inhabitants of the neighboring hamlet of Bushwick, and the inhabitants suffered greatly from the depredations of enforced guests until the close of the war. Some of the farmers and their sons joined the militia company of Captain John Titus, and were with General Washington's army during the battle of Brooklyn, and when it escaped its pursuers."

The children of Thomas Skillman and Jane Titus were:

I. Joseph<sup>12</sup>, born January 7, 1763, married Mary, daughter of John Scudder of Red Hook, near Northport, January 28, 1790; he died at Aguebogue October 26, 1809, and buried there near Northport.

II Francis<sup>13</sup>, born December 13, .1764, married Anne, born May 7, 1768, daughter of Martin Schenck, of Wallabout, May 7, 1785; both buried in Greenwood; he died October 3, 1826; she died August 28, 1828.

III. Sarah, born August 21, 1766, married Martin Schenck October 3, 178, brother of Anne, above; she died May 14, 1829; both buried at Bedford; he died December 9, 1823, aged 58, 2, 6.

IV. Thomas<sup>14</sup>, born July 17, 1770, married Jerusha Rogers,....1788; died November 4, 1833; buried near Smithville, Chenango Co.; she died February 21, 1850, aged 78, 11, 21.

"Joseph<sup>12</sup> was started in business at Red Hook, now Vernon Valley, near Northport, L. I., by his father, who sent him there from Bushwick. He was too liberal and 'trusted' too much, and when he failed it involved his father, who then moved there to make the best of the property." This was told me by a nephew.

A niece of his told me: "Uncle Joe was a large, tall man, full of fun; would make verses without study and utter them in conversation. He was a tall man and had to stoop coming in the door." His descendants in 1864 were living at Greenport and Hartford, Conn.

Their children were:

I. John Scudder<sup>15</sup>, born March 18, 1791; died September 10, 1836; married Mehitable Fanning December 26, 1810; she was born January 15, 1789; died September 15, 1834; both are buried, at Aguebogue, W. of the church.

II. Thomas, born May 28 and died September 13, 1793; buried at Red Hook.

The children of John<sup>15</sup> S. and Mehitable were:

I. Ida Harris, born July 17, 1811; married George Lee April 2, 1830.

II. Joseph Hazzard<sup>16</sup>, born November 30, 1813 (lived at Greenport); died 1868; married Emeline Chase.

III. John Scudder<sup>17</sup>, born June 9, 1816; he died February 17, 1887 (lived at Hartford); wife died March 15, 1869; she was Nancy Hunt; married October 3, 1837.

IV. Mary Jane, born September 27, 1818; married Rev. William Tobey May 18, 1842; no children.

Children of Joseph Hazzard<sup>16</sup> and Emeline Chase:

I. Harriet Adelaide, born....

II. Ida Emma, " .....

III. Margaret Isadora, " .....

IV. Thomas William, born March 4, 1854.

The children of John Scudder<sup>17</sup> and Nancy Hunt are:

- I. John Hunt, born December 2, 1838; married 1st, Florence King September 7, 1865; she died June 15, 1869, by whom a son, Harry King, born December, 1867, now of Leadville, Col.; 2d, Marie Palmer.
- II. Mary Jane, born May 28, 1842 married James H Terry, of Windsorville, Conn., May 28, 1862.
- III. Frances Ann, born June 1, 1844; married 1st, Harry Knight September 22, 1868; 2d, John B. Bartlett November 6, 1889.
- IV. Joseph Hazzard, born June 5, 1848; married Alice Estelle Rogers; she died December 18, 1888.
- V. Hiram Seigler, born August 28, 1856; married Annetta Brillinger; she died December 18, 1888.
- VI. Mehitable Fanning, born March 6, 1859.

The children of Francis<sup>13</sup> and Anne were:

- I. Jane, born Nov. 8, 1786, died Feb. 12, 1839; married Samuel Griffing; he was born Dec. 24, 1788, died Oct. 24, 1856.
- II. Martin, born March 10, 1789, died with yellow fever Aug. 6, 1809.
- III Thomas<sup>18</sup>, born Sept. 29, 1791, died Sept. 14, 1841, and buried at Smithville, in the Skillman burial ground; married Catharine Onderdonk Oct. 13, 1816; she was born Sept. 18, 1792, and died Nov. 9, 1868.
- IV. Abigail, born May 29, 1794, died, unmarried, Aug. 16, 1861.
- V. John<sup>19</sup>, born March 2, 1797, died June 10, 1865; married 1st, Catharine Newberry March 13, 1828, who was born July 30, 1794, died Feb. 1, 1838; 2d, Mary K. Duffield Nov. 26, 1839, who was born May 8, 1808, died Feb. 18, 1883.

Of Francis, one of his nephews said: "He was a good old man." He was a member of the Joralemon Street Dutch Church, and one who remembers it told me that "when a boy he used to hear him read, in a sonorous voice, a chapter from the Bible on Sundays." This it seems was the custom in the Dutch Church at that time, and he was the Elder appointed to do it in the proper order of the service on Sundays. In his family the Bible was the book on Sundays, and he would sometimes doze in his chair with it on his lap. I remember enough of him to know that he was a church going man; that he could scold, and that he also showed a great fondness for pleasantries. He did not go eastward with his father. He was what in the Dutch language was called a *Voorlezer*, or in English a *Reader*. Some would interpret it as the leader of the singing in the church, and also act as a sort of assistant minister by reading portions of the service, as the Commandments, Creed, &c. and during the absence of the pastor at other of the collegiate churches read a sermon to the assembled congregation.

His wife, Anne Schenck, daughter of Martin Schenck and Ida Suydam, was of the fifth generation from Joris Jansen De Rapalie, and she inherited 60 acres lying on the eastern part of the large tract, 335 acres; that Rapalie bought of the Indians at Wallabout, and at her brother Lambert's death became owner of his part (60 acres) also, which lay on the western side. This last farm I was born on. The house stood between Schenck and Steuben streets, and when Flushing avenue was widened the house was partly in the street and was taken down, and on my grandmother's death it was sold to Samuel Jackson, and is now notorious as "Jackson's Hollow." It seems that her grandfather, Martin Schenck, married Antie Rapalie, daughter of Jeronimus, who owned the whole tract his ancestor bought of the Indians, and when his son Jeronimus lost his only boy the father conveyed the farm, about 1755, to his son-in-law, Martin Schenck, and

his son Martin devised 60 acres each to his sons Lambert and Martin and their sister, Mrs. Skillman; other acres were sold, I believe. Lambert died unmarried 1815, falling in a fit too near the fire. Martin died 1823. The homestead part of his farm now has the Naval Hospital on it. I remember going to see his remains with my father. I also remember the vendue held to sell his farm and effects.

Francis lived and brought up his family on this farm, and on his widow's death their son John became owner of it. Prior to this their son Thomas lived on the farm once of Lambert Schenck, up to the time of its sale to Jackson, in 1828. Some time after this, in 1835, Thomas bought a farm in Chenango county, and went there to live. He died at McDonough, and lies buried near Smithville in the Skillman burying ground; he was at one time a deacon of the Joralemon Street Dutch Church.

According to *Stiles*, vol. 1, p. 409, Francis Skillman was appointed Ensign March 23, 1796, Captain April 7, 1807, and a Major May 10, 1815. At p. 453 of vol. 1, appendix, "the Bushwick and Wallabout companies of the 64th regiment were consolidated under Captain Skillman of the latter company;" gives names of 42 men. Joseph Conselyea and Daniel Lott were the lieutenants. By p. 408 Major Francis Titus, commanding 64th Regiment, in camp at Brooklyn, 1814.

His family was the last of the Long Island Skillmans to talk Dutch, all his children priding themselves on the purity with which they spoke that language. They were without exception highly intelligent and well educated. He was an assessor of the Town or Village of Brooklyn, as appears by the following extract from a Brooklyn paper of April 23, 1881:

#### AN OLD DOCUMENT.

Mr. Wm. B. Sprague, of the Board of Education, while at the City Hall recently, exhibited an original assessment roll of the village of Brooklyn, dated June 20, 1810. It was signed by Henry Stanton, Abraham De Bevoise, Noah Waterbury, Francis Skillman and Jeremiah Brower. The heaviest taxpayer on it was Joshua Sands, who paid on \$40,000 of real estate and \$1,500 personal property. Mr. Sprague found the document among the effects of his grandfather. He was advised to deposit it in the Long Island Historical Society.

Dr. Vermilye, in his address at the recent two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in New York, said:

"The colonists of Manhattan Island belonged to the ruling classes of Holland. They were not fugitives from persecution, like the Huguenots, who came later, and the Puritans, whom they sheltered and taught ecclesiastical polity. In 1626 two schoolmasters were sent over by the company. Their duty was not only to attend to the instruction of the young, but to comfort the sick and dying, to read sermons on Sunday, and to give instruction in the Heidelberg Confession of Faith, as adopted at the Synod of Dort. From a Letter discovered by Mr. Motley, it appeared that the Rev. James Michaelis arrived here in 1628, and founded the first Protestant church in the colony. The governor of the colony was one of the elders ordained under that organization. According to the old Dutch polity, the ruling power of the church was vested in the Consistory. It was the duty of the elders to assist the pastor in certain pastoral duties, to expound the Scriptures, and to perform other work of a ministerial kind; but they could not speak from the pulpit. They sat on the right. On the left sat the deacons. The Consistory had control of the temporalities as well as of the spiritual affairs of the Church."

The following is from the Long Island City *Star* of Friday, October 8, 1880  
ANCIENT BUSHWICK.

#### INCIDENTS OF REVOLUTIONARY TIMES.

The remains of ancient Bushwick cluster around the Dutch Reformed Church on the confines of North Second and Humboldt streets, Brooklyn, E. D., where the animosity of Governor Stuyvesant planted them in 1661, to gratify his hatred against the English Kills of Newtown. On March 14th, 1661, he probably emerged from the old

Conselyea House on Humboldt street—irascible old man that he was—supporting a heavy dinner on his historic wooden leg, rather unsteadied from heavy lager, and pronounced and christened the new village “Boswijck” Boswijck, of which the moderns have made Bushwick, was the Low Dutch name for heavy woods; and as the primeval forest obstructed his view of the hated Newtown, the belligerent old fellow felt grateful to the trees for their service of obstruction and complimented them, accordingly by making trees immortal under the name of Bostwijck, now Bushwick. The venerable homestead of the Conselyea family stands angle-ways to Humboldt street, with its front looking as of yore on old Bushwick Church, its rear to Jackson street. It is worth a visit for two reasons; first, it is of old time, and secondly, its present owners are good natured, respectable people, who will not consider the visit an intrusion, which latter, by the way, is a singular advantage, as the tourist has had experience to the contrary in other places; but to Bushwick’s credit be it spoken that her people enter with the spirit into investigations of her ancient history. Note the hewn beams of the old house; see the great old lock; made by hand from sheet iron; try and find out the name of the skillful locksmith who flourished in those by-gone days; think how long it took to make it. Part of the building has been lately cut away, and having introduced the visitor to the remainder, he will please indulge in his own reverie, and recall the several generations of the Conselyeas who were born, married, lived and died in its rooms, the last of the name being “Aunt Katty,” widow of Andrew Conselyea. This venerable relict refused during her lifetime to break up her connections with the old house in which she had spent 53 years of her married life. She died in 1873 and the family of Conselyea departed with her coffin through the old portals of the homestead, never to return. A writer of that day thus describes the rooms left vacant: The window sills are of sufficient capacity to seat three men comfortably, and are each one foot in depth; the window sashes are the same as were originally placed here, with nine small 6x7 panes of glass in each sash. The ceiling of this room is particularly worthy of notice. It is supported by five ponderous beams that measure 14½x7½ inches in thickness and are twenty feet long. They are painted brown and give the room rather a gloomy appearance.” The flooring is of boards that are 17 inches in width, and these broad boards always mark a house as very ancient. The old cupboard of 150 years was removed to Jamaica and is now preserved in the house of John Conselyea of that township; it was and is yet an ornamental piece of furniture, and its age confers repute on the family. Tradition through “Aunt Kitty” has filled the large parlor with the presence of Washington, who once dined there, but he must have dined there before the battle of Long Island or after the evacuation, as the British soldiers held possession during the long interval between these events. A visit to the kitchen below will recall the many generations of slaves who sheltered themselves under the large chimney and watched the process of drawing the bread from the two ovens which opened into the fireplace. By some reverting process of mind these old hearths always recall the memory of the family slaves—they have passed away without a name even rudely cut on a boulder over their unknown graves. There is a pleasant axiom that “truth will prevail and that right will be vindicated.” It is better to deny this at once—the Conselyea slaves will never receive their rights; the history of all oppressed people generally proves the other way, and with this touch of spleen against axioms, the town of Bushwick will be resumed.

But the reader must not expect chronological order from the tourist; he did not walk his many hot miles through Bushwick on that system. Holding on the arm of the surviving Supervisor of the township, Charles I. DeBevoise, both stood near the two hydrants and the pump near the corner of Withers and Humbolt streets. From here the village spring ran down to Bushwick creek. In its rivulet has bathed the Indian maiden, as maidens should bathe under the silvery moon, who had no bathing dresses.

“The chariest maiden is prodigal enough  
If she unmask her beauty to the moon.”

The Indian days have vanished, and so, too, have the French settlers whom Stuyvesant introduced into their place on the landscape; so, too, has the last generation of boys and girls who were used to rundown the beaten path from the church school to drink and play at the village spring—all are gone, save the hale and hearty ex-Supervisor, who on the 26th August, 1880, would have taken a cool drink with as much gusto as in his school boy days; if the careful City Fathers had not so jealously covered it with the romantic fire hydrant of modern invention. It is but right to be so careful of the springs; the Ridgewood may run dry some of these days, and the position of those native springs indigenous to the geology of Bushwick, may be sought for in vain if not now recorded. Apropos of one of them cognizant to the tourist some thirty years since on the corner of Fifth and North Eighth streets, six steam pumps were tried in vain to empty its reservoir; and a gasometer was finally put over the springs—for there were several bubbles—to preserve their purity.

The personal recollection may serve the Brooklyn Common Council, lately discussing the feasibility of averting a water famine to their city. However, we must not now convert these memoranda into a treatise on hydraulics, but resume our walk under guidance of Mr. DeBevoise, who is conducting us to the Van Randst homestead, the military

headquarters of the corps of spies in British service during the Revolutionary war. The exhaustive pages of Stiles must now be produced in order to whet the interest towards the neighborhood of Humbolt, Graham, Withers and Frost streets.

“A battalion of guides and pioneers, composed of three companies, were quartered in the town of Bushwick from 1778 to November, 1783 They were a set of notorious villains, collected from almost every part of the country, and organized under the command of Captains McPherson, Williams, Van Allen and Purdy. Williams and Purdy were from Westchester County, Van Allen from Bergen County, N. J., and McPherson from the South. This command supplied the British army with guides and spies for every part of the country, and whenever an expedition was organized to attack any place, drafts were made on this battalion. After the peace these men dared not remain in this country and were not wanted in Britain. Nova Scotia was their only place of refuge, and thither they went, where proper provision was made for them by the British authority. After the provisional treaty of peace, these guides returned to quarters at Bushwick. They numbered about 150 under command of Captain McPherson, and were encamped on the farm of Abraham Van Ranst, then in exile. *The dwelling, which stood about 150 yards northward from Bushwick Church*, was occupied by the Captain himself, who kept a guard of honor, and a sentinel constantly stationed at his door. In this connection we may relate the following anecdote, as given in the manuscript recollections of General Johnson:

In the month of August, 1783, on a fine evening, seven young Whigs were together along the shore opposite to Corlear's Hook, the tide then being quite high. Two British long boats had drifted on shore, where they had lain for some time. It was proposed to take the boats up Bushwick Creek and lay them on the meadow of John Skillman as prizes, which was forthwith done. A few days afterwards, in the month of September, several of the party being at the Fly Market in New York, were told that Captain McPherson had caused the boats to be removed to his house and had purchased paint and other material with which to put the boats in order for his own use. It was immediately resolved to remove the boats that night from the Captain's quarters. A gallon of shrub, some crackers and a salmon were purchased for the expedition; a small bill on John Skillman's land was designated as the place of rendezvous, and nine o'clock was named as the hour. Three of the party brought up a boat with oars to row away the boats with, and at the appointed time the whole party, consisting of William Miller, Joseph and Francis Skillman, John Bogart, John Conselyea, Francis Titus and Jeremiah Johnson, the writer, were assembled at the appointed place. It was a moonlight evening, and the soldiers were playing about the fields. The little party of Whigs regaled themselves with their provisions until about ten o'clock, when two of their number ventured to reconnoitre, and returned with the report that the boats lay near the house, that a party were dancing and rollicking there, and a sentinel was at the door. Meanwhile a dark cloud was rising in the west, foreboding a violent storm. It came on, and then we went, took up the boats, carried them over a stone wall, and dragging them about 150 yards, launched them into Skillman's creek. When we took the boats the sentinel at the door deserted his post. So violent was the lightning and the rain that we did not see a living person besides ourselves before we were out of Bushwick creek with the boats, which we took up the river to John Miller's, opposite Blackwell's Island, and left them in his barn, returning to Francis Titus's in our boat at sunrise. In passing down Bushwick creek one of our prizes filled with water, but we did not abandon her. On our arrival at the mouth of the creek the storm was over, the moon shone brightly again, and we were bailed by a sentinel who threatened to fire upon us, but we answered roughly and passed on our way. The next day all Bushwick was in an uproar. The Yankees were charged with infringing the treaty of peace; the sentinel and guards who lay in Mr. Skillman's barn, within fifty yards of the place where the boats were launched, were charged with unwatchfulness. It was not known who took the boats before November 25th, 1783. The act was caused by the feeling of resentment which the whole party had against Captain McPherson. He was a bad man, and when his soldiers were accused by neighbors with thefts and other annoyances, retorted upon their accusers with foul language.”

General Johnson's manuscript bears date January 14, 1847, and he states that he alone at that date was the survivor of the party who carried off the boats.

The old Skillman house, which may be considered to have been the headquarters of the expedition, is still standing, in Frost street between Lorimer and Union avenue. Its exterior is altered from the old Dutch pattern to modern shape, but the interior is characteristic of the first settlement. Thirty years since and the eye of the tourist has often taken pleasure in viewing the fine old house of former days, standing as it then did on a grassy knoll well planted with large trees; at that period the spring tides used to cover the marsh up to the garden of the house, and by sunset at such times the landscape shone with the splendor of primitive time. But sad is the change for the landscape; more or less the salt meadows are being filled in and the spring tides visit it no more. The back of the house now fronts on the street, and the old hall door in two sections now guards the rear entrance. Roaming through the old rooms, the thoughts instinctively recall the stealthy tread of the boat conspirators, and the anxiety of the fam-

ily that all might end well; the weather-beaten chimnies that have sucked up the whispers of the group are still in place, and according to the traditions in the mind of the last Supervisor of Bushwick, whispers of a softer feeling have often ascended the same chimnies—they stand it bravely; but alas all the whispers of that circle have departed save the Supervisor himself, and he don't seem to have indulged in such relaxation in the Skillman House; or if he did, he is as silent as the chimnies on the interesting subject. Of the Van Ranst homestead nothing remains but the foundations still to be seen on lots No. 245 and 247 Withers street, near Kingsland avenue, five blocks away from the Skillman House. The headquarters of McPherson and his spy battalion were until their removal two years since the guard lodge of the Cannon Street Baptist Cemetery. Here indeed were entombed many dark secrets—here were concocted many crimes. Desperate men to whom fear was unfelt had here their: wardrobe of ready disguise; they came and went in darkness, some never to return, being detained by the hangman's rope always dangling for the military spy. But they lived sumptuously at the Van Ranst farm on the produce of a productive neighborhood; neither was it safe for neighbors to refuse supplies to the mysterious men whose presence lay like an incubus over Bushwick. Late in 1783 they took their leave without much leave-taking, and left all the girls behind them, for tradition asserts that not one of them decoyed a wife from Bushwick to Nova Scotia. Lying flat in the old cellar among the foundations is throne a tombstone of some neglected relic of mortality from among the Baptists. "Hanah Louiza, wife of John B. Wells, aged 33, died November, 1847." Poor Hanah Louiza what was your short history? We fail to supply it. No husband, no children, no brother or sister are near, either to tell your fate or plant your tombstone.

The above Francis was my grandfather and Joseph was his brother.

The children of Jane and Samuel Griffing were:

- I. Oscar, born September, 1815; died an infant.
- II. Ann Skillman, born Dec. 26, 1816; died Sept. 24, 1862; married Edward E. Prindle.
- III. Phebe Jane, born August 7, 1818; died April 12, 1865; married Albert O. Waterbury.
- IV. Francis, born February, 1821; died an infant.
- V. Abigail, born June, 1822; died March 10, 1838.
- VI. Mary E., born October, 1825; died Sept. 15, 1841. She was a handsome and lovely girl.

Samuel Griffing was from Cutchogue, L. I., and told me that "he felt that some of the boys should leave home, as all could not stay, so he commenced teaching school, and being employed at the Wallabout school, made the acquaintance of his wife. After a time, feeling that he could do better than teaching, and having carefully saved his earnings, he hired a building on South street, corner of Catherine, (up town side,) and commenced keeping a grocery store, and finding it to be a good place for business, he leased the lot and put up a new building. He and a boy clerk lived alone for some time in this way, a woman coming often to put things to rights, when, feeling that he was likely to be able to support a family, he married." Since my memory he was in this store; long after he was with one Read, in the lumber business, further up town. His prudence made him a successful businessman. I never heard his property estimated, or took any trouble to ascertain its amount, as it always seemed sufficient to love and respect his worth. He, was careful of his diet, and used to talk much of food and its abuse to health, and told me that "Capt. Isaac Harris used to laugh at me for being careful; but Harris is in his grave and I am here yet." It would be difficult to say too much in his praise. His heart seemed free from guile, and full to overflowing for the welfare of others. All named above are buried in Greenwood Cemetery.

The children of Thomas<sup>18</sup> and Catharine are:

- I. Francis<sup>20</sup>, born Sept; 1, 1817; married (1) Sarah Ann Schenck June 9, 1842, who died March 16, 1864; (2) Josephine D. Onderdonk May 16, 1865. His only child, Elizabeth O., born Oct. 19, 1871.
- II. Eliza Belinda, born May 7, 1820, died July 31, 1827; buried at Bedford.
- III. Joseph Onderdonk, born April 26, 1825, died Oct25, 1825; buried at Bedford.
- IV. Joseph Onderdonk<sup>21</sup>, born Sept. 19, 1827, died Nov. 5 1872; married Gertrude Van

Sicklen March 17, 1858. Their children are: Maria Catharine, born Dec. 21, 1858; Ida Kouwenhoven, born Oct. 8, 1860, died Dec. 5, 1879; Joseph Hegeman, born July 16, 1863. All deceased of this branch, except as noted; are buried at Manhasset.

Francis<sup>20</sup>, the compiler of these pages, was born at the Wallabout, and in his twelfth year went to live with his grandfather O., at Manhasset. In 1841 was elected Captain of the Hempstead Troop of Horse, having previously served as Cornet and Lieutenant. In 1842 he married, and his grandfather settled him on a farm at Roslyn, where he has since resided. He was for twenty-four consecutive years a Justice of the Peace, from April, 1851. In 1861-2-3 was Justice of the Sessions, and was a Member of Assembly in 1867 and 1868.

The following are a few complimentary notices clipped from the Queens county, papers:

[From the Flushing Journal, October 1, 1866.]

The First Assembly District Convention was held at Roslyn on Tuesday, composing Democratic delegations from each of the towns of the District. Townsend D. Cock, Esq., presided, assisted by Charles H. Brewer and David D. Kirby as Secretaries. The programme of nomination was pretty well settled before the organization was effected, so that when the Convention assembled pretty much all that there was to do was to unanimously nominate Francis Skillman, Esq., of Roslyn, as the Democratic candidate for Member of Assembly, and James W. Covert, Esq., of Flushing, as Commissioner of Schools. Both the candidates are respectable and highly estimable gentlemen, and will probably secure the full vote of their party.

[From the Flushing Times, October 4, 1866.]

ASSEMBLY.—We are pleased to announce the nomination of our Friend Francis Skillman, Esq., of Roslyn, for Member of Assembly from this District. Mr. Skillman was the unanimous choice of the Democratic Convention, which assembled at Roslyn on Tuesday. Mr. S. has held many positions of trust in our county, and is highly esteemed by all who are acquainted with him. He will make an honest and able representative for the First District—a better nomination could not have been made.

Elias. J. Beach, through the Glen Cove *Gazette*, says Oct. 6:

“THE NOMINATIONS.—The nominations of both parties for County Officers have been completed, as will be seen by reference to the proceedings in another column.

In this District the Democrats present the name of Francis Skillman of Roslyn, for Member of Assembly. The nomination is not so popular a sit might be, although Mr S. is personally unexceptionable. It is looked upon by some as an unwelcome intrusion in the field from a quarter wholly unexpected and least desired, and as crowding out Jas. B. Pearsall of this town, whose nomination would have been equivalent to an election. The assumption does injustice to Mr. Pearsall, who always said that, inasmuch as the nomination belonged to North Hempstead, if that town presented a candidate he would not allow his name to be used; and. two or three weeks since learning that Mr Skillman was pressing his claims, promptly gave out that he would not be a candidate for the position. Mr. Skillman has been one of the Justices of the Peace in North Hempstead for quite a number years, a political pupil of the Sage of Mineola, a Democrat of the anti-war stripe, of good character and enjoys a fair degree of popularity at home, which will insure him a full vote.”

[From the Long Island Democrat, Jamaica, N. Y., October 8, 1866]

#### FIRST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT.

The Democrats in this District, consisting of Flushing, North Hempstead and Oysterbay, have presented a most excellent ticket.

For Member of Assembly, they have nominated Francis Skillman, Esq. of North Hempstead. This nomination was the unanimous choice of the convention, and was made without the formality of a ballot. He is a gentleman of

excellent character, clear-headed, and will make an honest and faithful representative. We congratulate the District upon the nomination, as it ensures them at Albany a representative of whom they may be justly proud.

[From the Long Island Democrat, Jamaica, N. Y., October 30, 1866.]

FRANCIS SKILLMAN,

the Democratic candidate for the Assembly in the Towns of Flushing, North Hempstead and Oysterbay, will no doubt poll a full vote He is a good man and is acquainted with the wants of the people, and will carefully guard the rights of his constituents. It is said that his competitor Col. Downing has withdrawn and has so notified the Republican Central Committee. He is not a believer in the doctrine of being put up merely to be knocked down.

THE ASSEMBLY.

Let every conservative voter, strive to elect the right kind of men to the Assembly—men who will sustain and uphold the hands of Hon. John T. Hoffman, the next Governor of the State. Both districts in this County are Democratic, and we want to elect men who believe in the binding force of the Constitution and who recognize a Union of thirty-six States. Such men are to be found in the person of Francis Skillman from the 1st District, and William B. Wilson of this District. See to it, friends, that they are elected.

[From the Flushing Times, November 1, 1866]

THE ELECTION.

On Tuesday next our annual election for State and County officers will be held. Both parties have nominated, very good men for the respective offices, and therefore not as much interest seems to be taken in the result as heretofore. As for ourselves we have taken no active part in the campaign, believing our readers have sufficient good sense to cast their votes understandingly without advice from us; yet we cannot refrain from expressing our desire to see Francis Skillman, Esq., of Roslyn, elected Member of Assembly from this District, knowing him to be competent to represent the District with credit to his constituents and honor to himself. We do not know Mr. Cromwell, his opponent but we do know Mr. Skillman, and believe he will be found to be “the right man in the right place.” His election we consider sure—his majority we hope will be large.

“The Union at all hazards.”—*McClellan*.

DEMOCRATIC AND NATIONAL UNION NOMINATIONS.

For Governor, John T. Hoffman.  
For Lieutenant Governor, Robert H. Pruyn.  
For Canal Commissioner, William W. Wright.  
For State Prison Inspector, Frank B. Gallagher.  
For Representative in Congress, Stephen Taber.

COUNTY NOMINATIONS.

For County Treasurer, Charles A. Roe.  
For Superintendent of County Poor, Thomas Pettit.  
For Justice of Sessions, Robert Burroughs.  
For Coroner, Charles Watts.

DISTRICT NOMINATIONS.

For Members of Assembly, 1st - District, Francis Skillman; 2d District, William B. Wilson.  
For School Commissioners, 1st District, James W. Covert; 2d District, Isaac G. Fosdick.

Joseph<sup>21</sup> in 1858 bought a farm in Black Stump, L. I., on which he was successful.

He was a member and Deacon of the Reformed Dutch Church at Jamaica; was strict in his attendance at church with his family, and when his children were old enough went with them to an Episcopal Church near by, that they might have religious instruction, this school being within half a mile, while that of his church being three miles, he could not get home from morning service in time to get back again for the school of the Dutch Church. He was a consistent Christian, and an honest, sincere and upright man.

He was cut off in his prime, and his funeral was largely attended by the Episcopalians, who took great pains to manifest their appreciation of his worth, and their participation in the services at the house made the funeral a very impressive one. At a meeting held by them the following proceedings took place, and was published in the Flushing papers:

IN MEMORIAM.

Nov. 5th.—Entered into rest after a lingering illness, Joseph O. Skillman, aged 45. On the announcement of his decease by the Rev. Joshua Kimber, at a meeting of St George's Brotherhood, Flushing, the following minute was, as with one voice, adopted:

FLUSHING, Nov. 8, 1872.

“St. George's Brotherhood” having heard with much regret of the death of

MR. JOSEPH ONDERDONK SKILLMAN,

wish to express their sympathy with his family and friends, and their sorrow in learning the great loss they have sustained.

We have heard of Mr. Skillman's earnest labors in the Sunday school at Union Place; how he has been continually serving the Lord in his untiring efforts.

We have listened to the sad account of his sufferings, and how he had often been present at his post of duty even when almost prostrated by disease.

We feel that in his loss one of our co-workers in Christ's vineyard has been taken away from among us in the midst of his labors, and that although his usefulness here has been shortened, we know that he has gone to receive his reward for his good deeds, which have been recorded above, and that he will live forever with those who have loved *their Saviour and God*.

For the Brotherhood,  
W. Elliman, Sec'y.

An appropriate discourse to the scholars and others was delivered by Rev. Mr. Kimber in the Chapel of the Brotherhood, on Sunday afternoon last, wherein the character and services of the deceased were set forth and words of solemn exhortation and warning addressed to the living. Hymns suitable to the occasion were sung by the school.

The children of John<sup>19</sup> and Catharine Newberry are:

- I. Boy died in birth Nov. 29, 1828.
- II. John Moon, born March 29, 1831; died at Mobile July 13, 1865, of dysentery; was Paymaster in U. S. Navy.
- III. Anna, born March 3, 1833; died February 22, 1865; married Rev. Van Geisen; she died at Claverack.
- V. Mary Emily, born February 14, 1835; died February 14, 1841.

The children of John and Mary K. are:

- V. Catharine Newberry, born September 19, 1840; married Henry M. Curtis.
- VI. Ellen Maria, born May 16, 1842; died May 10, 1870.
- VII. Mary Duffield, born August 25, 1844; died November 7, 1848.
- VI. Francis, born September 5, 1847; died August 9, 1849.

All deceased persons of this branch are interred at Greenwood.

John<sup>19</sup> was eminent for piety and love for the church (Joralemon Street Reformed Dutch) of which he was from his youth a member and for a long time an officer, both as Deacon and Elder. So strict was he, that when I, a little boy of eight years, was playing about my grandfather's house one Sunday afternoon, he asked me, “What day is to-day, Francis?” He, was thoroughly conscientious and consistent, and, after making up his mind, never wavered. I always felt a sincere respect for him. He was brought up a farmer and inherited the homestead at the Wallabout, which he sold somewhere about 1835, for a large price per acre, and, unlike many others who sold their farms during the same period of high prices, it did not spoil him, but he pursued the same course of life to his end. He assisted in organizing the City Bank of Brooklyn, and was its first President. He was averse to holding office, and was at one time spoken of as a suitable man for the office of County Treasurer, but he refused the use of his name. I believe he

never held office unless in the militia, of which I have a very indistinct recollection. He told me once that “candidates for office were generally so well abused, that he preferred the quietness of private life.” He was fond of reading, and once told me, after selling his farm, that “he had hoped he would have plenty of time to read, but found that he had not.” He built a residence in Remsen street, Brooklyn, where he resided the rest of his life.

The children of Thomas<sup>14</sup> and Jerusha were:

- I. Thomas 3d<sup>22</sup>, born Dec. 12, 1789; married (1) Abigail L’Hommedieu Nov., 1813; she was born May 23, 1791, and died, Aug. 19, 1847; (2) Rosanna Barber Sept., 1848; she was born Sept. 12, 1825, and died March 20, 1859.
- II. Rachel, born Jan. 3, 1792; married Daniel Hudson, who died Aug. 12, 1875, aged 96; she died May 21, 1876.
- III. Josiah<sup>23</sup>, born Oct. 30, 1794; married Catharine A. Thomas Sept. 15, 1819; she was born March 1802, died Jan. II, 1866; he died May 1, 1854.
- IV. Sarah, born March 25, 1797; married Isaac Sweezy late in life, and died Aug. 26, 1847.
- V. Joseph<sup>24</sup>, born April 8, 1802; married Miranda Carpenter 1828; he died Sept. 4, 1875.
- VI. Maria, Twins, born Sept. 24, 1804; married Elisha Green 18—.
- VII. Jane, Twins, born Sept. 24, 1804; married F. T. Spees 1827.
- VIII. Elsey, born Feb. 23, 1808, died unmarried Feb. 25, 1837.
- IX. Francis Martin<sup>25</sup>, born Nov. 23, 1812; married Julia A. Chappell Sept. 14, 1837; he died May 27, 1886; she was born Nov. 2, 1815, and died Sept. 7, 1879.

Rachel married and stayed at Aquebogue or Northville.

Sarah was a business woman, a dressmaker, and made money; she taught her sisters Maria and Jane that trade, and died at Riverhead, highly esteemed by all who knew her.

Maria lives at McDonough, Jane at Oberlin, Ohio, Francis M. at Mazeppa, Minnesota, all the rest, so far as I know, are in Chenango county, but Josiah’s family, who are in Baltimore and elsewhere in Maryland.

Thomas Skillman<sup>14</sup>, son of Thomas Skillman<sup>9</sup> and Jane Titus, was 5 feet 7 inches in height, and weighed about 175 pounds His four sons, Thomas, Josiah, Joseph and Francis M., varied only a half inch either of them from the same height and were all about the same weight. He was a farmer by occupation; and held the commission of Major in the Military and made a fine appearance on parade.

A short race he once had with two well-conditioned dogs. A gray squirrel was in a tree. Robin, the Negro slave of his father, went up the tree to shake the squirrel off; when it struck the ground it had about two rods the start of him, and he a little the start of the dogs, (descending ground) he put his heel on the squirrel as it approached another tree, the dogs still in the rear, while the Negro in the tree was laughing at the top of his voice to see the race, and in telling of it afterward used to say, “De dogs didn’t gain much in dat race.”

When the grist mill at Riverhead was raised, 500 persons were supposed to be there. After the frame was up, a man stepped out on the common and said, “Gentlemen, if there is a man here that thinks he can lay me on my back I shall be happy to take hold of him,” when Joseph, his brother, said, “Who is this that is bragging so?” One said, “It is Isaac Reeves. Dare no man take hold of him? No, Tom can throw him,” said he. “Who is he? and where is he?” was the enquiry. The result was that after a struggle the champion of Riverhead lay on his back. The crowd shouted and Reeves ever after stopped bragging.

In 1824 he sold his farm at Aquebogue and moved to McDonough in Chenango County, N. Y.,

and bought another farm of 100 acres, on which he spent the balance of his life, and died a member of the M. E. Church.

Thomas, his son, known as Thomas Skillman, 3rd<sup>22</sup>, when of age worked 3 years for his grandfather, and after this bought part of his farm in Aquebogue, Suffolk County, L.I., sold it in 1823 and moved to Chenango Co., N. Y., and bought another farm of 100 acres, and as his means increased, bought new land, till he had a farm between 300 and 400 acres, and stocked with cows, and usually sent his butter to N. Y. City, for a market.

He has been known to raise 84 pounds, with one hand, from the ground, at arm's length, over his head, and when 80 years old could jump on a horse's back without touching a hand, and mowed in the field with a scythe, leading his men when 85 years old.

Josiah<sup>23</sup> learned the carpenter's and joiner's trade in N. Y. City, moved to Chenango, about the year 1820, bought a farm of 100 acres, and worked it and at his trade. Sold it and moved to Utica and worked at his trade; on account of his health, was advised, by his physician to move, and went to Baltimore, where he died.

Joseph<sup>24</sup> learned the carpenter's trade of his brother Josiah; bought, some time after, 50 acres of land, which he improved, and also worked at his trade; as his family increased he bought more land, till he had a farm of 200 acres and a saw mill, when he ceased to work at his trade. He was at one time captain of a rifle company. He was a good singer, and used to take the lead of the choir in the Baptist Church of which he was a member, and occasionally taught singing school.

Francis M.<sup>25</sup> was twelve years old when his father moved from L. I. to Chenango. The following spring, while boiling sugar, he cut a small gash in his left knee joint, which was the cause of the loss of that joint the remainder of his life.

After his father died in 1833, he bought the homestead, taught school winters and worked the farm. In 1856 he moved to Mazeppa, Wabasha Co., Minn., and settled on a quarter section (160 acres) of Government land in the then township of Bear Valley, now Chester. Was elected a member of the board of County Commissioners in 1858, and also elected a member of the State Legislature at the fall election the same year, and re-elected the following year. He occasionally wrote articles for publication in the newspapers.

Children of Thomas 3rd<sup>22</sup> and Abigail are:

- I. Jesse Carr<sup>26</sup>, born Sept. 13, 1814; married Anna Youngs May 16, 1837; she was born Aug. 1, 1818.
- II. Benjamin L' Hommedieu<sup>27</sup>, born Nov. 9, 1816, married Lucy L. Nichols June 13, 1838; she was born May 23, 1819; died May 26, 1873.
- III. Albert R.<sup>28</sup>, born July 12, 1819, married Cordelia Beckwith March 28, 1843; she was born, Dec. 20, 1824.
- IV. Sarah, born April 15, 1822, married Samuel Beckwith March 29, 1843; he was born Jan. 20, 1819; she died November, 1856.
- V. John<sup>29</sup>, born March 25, 1827, married Clarinda Philley Jan. 5, 1854; she was born March 3, 1836.
- VI. Josiah<sup>30</sup>, born Oct. 12, 1830; died Oct. 20, 1864; married Harriet Fairchild.
- VII. Mary, born Aug. 8, 1833, married Harmanus Beckwith.

Children by Rosanna are:

- VIII. Rachel, born June 26, 1851.
- IX. Thomas W.<sup>31</sup>, born June 20, 1852.

X. Nancy, M., born May 22, 1854.

XI. Alfred, H.<sup>32</sup>, born June 13, 1857.

Of the above children, Jesse lives at Troupsburgh, Steuben county, N. Y.

John at Zumbrota, Minnesota.

All the others, so far as I know, are in Chenango county.

The children of Jesse C.<sup>26</sup> and Anna are:

I. Martha M., born June 18, 1838, married F. M. Smith March 18, 1855.

II. Charles C.<sup>33</sup>, born Nov. 10, 1840; married (1) Phebe April 11, 1863, she died Oct. 23, 1873; (2) Mary Smith, March 1, 1874; who was born Sept. 27, 1854.

III. Franklin<sup>34</sup>, born Jan. 13, 1843, married Miranda \_\_\_\_\_, July 3, 1865; she was born Feb. 17, 1845.

IV. David Sylvester<sup>35</sup>, born, Sept. 14, 1845, married Mary Ann Day, 1869.

V. Deborah, born Feb. 26, 1848, dead.

VI. Elsie J., born Jan. 1, 1850, married Thomas Dean, Aug. 16, 1869.

VII. Deborah, born Nov. 8, 1852, married Roscoe Plaisted March 23, 1870.

VIII. Esther, V. born Feb. 18, 1856; married Thomas Day, May 6, 1872.

IX. Nancy L., born Dec. 25, 1858.

VIII. Alice, born April 13, 1861.

The children of Charles C.<sup>33</sup>, and Phebe are:

I. Myra, born Jan. 25, 1864; died June 30, 1864.

II. David S., born Jan. 20, 1866.

III. Jesse C., born May 1, 1868.

IV. Edward, born April 19, 1870.

V. Delila, born Oct. 18, 1873.

Children of Charles C.<sup>33</sup>, and Mary are:

VI. Sarah, born March 25, 1875.

Children of Franklin<sup>34</sup> and Miranda are:

I. Willie C., born Jan. 9, 1870.

II. Nellie F., born Sept. 14, 1873.

Children of David S.<sup>35</sup> and Mary Ann are:

I. John, born July 23, 1871.

IX. Alice, born Aug. 4, 1873.

The children of Benjamin L.<sup>27</sup> and Lucy are:

I. Cummings P.,<sup>36</sup> born March 12, 1840; married Janet Isbell Feb. 5, 1862; she was born Aug. 17 1842.

II. Lambert N., born Nov. 15, 1841; died Sept 13, 1859.

III. Martin K., born June 11, 1843; died Sept. 13, 1863, and buried in the mud at the mouth of the Mississippi river; he was a volunteer, and died in U.S. service.

IV. George W., born July 25, 1845; died March 1, 1859.

V. Harris, born May 22, 1847, died Dec. 6, 1854.

- VI. Byron C.,<sup>37</sup> born Oct. 30, 1849; married Elmina Smith Sept. 5, 1870.
- VII. John D.,<sup>38</sup> born July 13, 1851.
- VIII. Frylon B.,<sup>39</sup> born July 3, 1853.
- IX. Mary A., born April 1, 1855; married George A. Purdy, Dec. 4, 1872; he was born July 30, 1849.
- X. Elsie D., born Feb. 17, 1857.
- XI. Albert G.,<sup>40</sup> born July 21, 1860.

Children of Cummings P.<sup>36</sup> and Janet are:

- I. George, born Nov. 27, 1864.
- II. Owen, born Feb. 7, 1869.
- III. Martin, born Sept. 5, 1870.
- IV. Laura, born July 9, 1872; died Dec. 5, 1872.

Children of Byron C.<sup>37</sup> and Elmina are:

- I. Carrie, born Aug. 9, 1872.
- II. William, born May 2, 1874.

The children of Albert R.,<sup>28</sup> and Cordelia are:

- I. Thomas B.,<sup>41</sup> born April 15, 1844.
- II. Harmanus,<sup>42</sup> born Jan. 31, 1847.
- III. Elsie J., born June 22, 1853.

The children of John<sup>29</sup> and Clarinda are:

- I. Sarah Melinda, born April 9, 1855.
- II. John Franklin<sup>43</sup>, born Dec. 24, 1856.
- III. George W.<sup>44</sup>, born May 1, 1859.
- IV. Benjamin Martin<sup>45</sup>, born Jan. 21, 1864.
- V. & VI. Lambert<sup>46</sup>, and Delbert<sup>47</sup>, born April 25, 1868.
- VII. Sherman L.<sup>48</sup> born Sept. 9, 1874.

The children of Josiah<sup>23</sup> and Catharine are:

- I. Griffith Thomas, born Sept. 13, 1820, died Feb., 1855, at Baltimore; never married.
- II. Jane, born April 3, 1822, died 1860; married Geo. Brunson, of Oswego.
- III. Joseph Francis<sup>49</sup>, born Feb. 5, 1824; married Lucretia Welch Sept. 24, 1849; he died in Baltimore Dec. 4, 1873; his family moved to Magnolia Station, Harford County, Md.; she was born Jan. 11, 1832.
- IV. Hannah Maria, born Sept. 27, 1825; married Samuel C. Hush June 10, 1845.
- V. Josiah, born Feb. 5, 1828, died an infant.
- VI. Franklin DeWitt, born Nov. 14, 1829, died an infant.
- VII. Abigail, born Jan. 1, 1833; died an infant.
- VIII. William, born Sept. 27, 1835.
- IX. Caroline, born June 18, 1840; married John A. McPherson Sept. 2, 1857.
- X. Catharine, born Jan. 14, 1841, died an infant.
- XI. Horace, born Sept 14, 1842, died an infant.
- XII. Sarah, born Jan. 28, 1846; married Noah Underwood June 8, 1863.

All living in Baltimore except as stated.

Children of Joseph F. and Lucretia are:

- I. Franklin D.<sup>50</sup>, born Aug. 10, 1850.
  - II. Josiah<sup>51</sup>, born June 16, 1852.
  - III. Joseph F.,<sup>52</sup> Jr., born Oct. 15, 1854.
  - IV. Lucretia A., born April 26, 1857.
  - V. John Edward<sup>53</sup>, born Oct. 9, 1860.
  - VI. Thomas Henry<sup>54</sup>, born Dec. 19, 1862.
  - VII. Alfred E., born May 9, 1865, died Sept. 17, 1867.
  - VIII. William N.<sup>55</sup>, born Oct. 26, 1867.
  - IX. Arthur A.,<sup>56</sup> born June 11, 1870.
  - X. Emma A., born Jan. 10, 1872.
- No one of these were married October, 1875.

The children of Joseph<sup>24</sup> and Mianda:

- I. John Carpenter<sup>57</sup>, born Nov. 14, 1829; married Mary B. Philley Oct. 4, 1854.
- II. Jerusha E., born Dec. 6, 1831; married Theodore H. Fitch March 16, 1857.
- III. Elsie A., born July 14, 1833; married Ephraim Loomis Oct., 1862. She died June, 1869, childless.
- IV. Frederick A.<sup>58</sup>, born Jan. 10, 1835; married Eglantine Wait Feb. 3, 1858.
- V. Joseph Hudson<sup>59</sup>, twins; born Feb. 18, 1838; married Lettie B. Cline Jan. 1, 1866.
- VI. Josiah, born Feb. 18, 1838; died March 4 1838.
- VII. Francis M., born Nov. 20, 1840; died Oct. 19, 1864, of wounds received at battle of Winchester, Sept. 6, 1864.
- X. William H. <sup>59½</sup>, born May 29, 1846; married \_\_\_ ; lives in Leavenworth, Kansas; have no children.

Children of John C.<sup>57</sup> and Mary:

- I. Florine, born Oct. 22, 1856; married Stephen O. Purdy Jan. 6, 1875.
- II. Clara, born....
- III. Helen, born....
- IV. Lucy, born ....
- V. John Francis<sup>60</sup>, born .....
- XI. Nellie May, born .....

Children of Frederick Augustus<sup>58</sup> and Eglantine are:

- I. Elmer A. <sup>60½</sup>, born May 12, 1861.
- XII. Frank M.<sup>61</sup>, born Dec. 16, 1866.

Children of Joseph H.<sup>59</sup> and Lettie are:

- I. Ida May, born Feb. 18, 1867.
  - II. Henry Elwyn<sup>62</sup>, born Jan. 27, 1870.
- John C.<sup>57</sup> is a very able farmer, and has been successful in life, he lives near McDonough.  
Frederick<sup>58</sup> likes machinery and is very able that way.  
Joseph H.<sup>59</sup> has been Supervisor of Smithville, near which village he lives, and has

represented his county in the Assembly. I saw these three men in June, 1876, and was favorably impressed by their apparent good sense.

The children of Francis Martin<sup>25</sup> and Julia are:

- I. Evander<sup>63</sup>, born May 12, 1838; married Electo Lent Aug. 1, 1865.
- II. Elsie, born Feb. 5, 1840; married J. O. Wilcox Nov. 11, 1857; he died a volunteer 1864; she then married T. F. Sturtevant in 1869.
- III. Milton<sup>64</sup>, born March 4, 1842; married Mary Southwell July 18, 1867.
- IV. Frank L. <sup>65</sup>, born Jan. 25, 1844; married Lizzie Hopkins July, 1867.
- V. Phil<sup>66</sup>, born Oct. 27, 1845.
- VI. Sarah, born June 8, 1847; married S. O. Lent 1868.
- VII. Ida M., born Jan, 18, 1850, died April 13, 1871.
- VIII. William<sup>67</sup>, born Dec. 5, 1851; married Mary E. Annible June 10, 1878; have one child, Charles A., born April 8, 1879.
- IX. Charles N.<sup>68</sup>, born April 14, 1855.
- X. James H.<sup>69</sup>, born Sept. 17, 1859.
- XI. Nellie S., born May 13, 1862.

Of the above William visited me on Dec. 7, 1877, and again in 1880.

Children of Evander<sup>63</sup> and Electo are:

- XIII. Francis E.<sup>70</sup>, born April 28, 1867.
- XIV. Murray<sup>71</sup>, born Feb. 10, 1871.
- XV. Philander<sup>72</sup>, born June 22, 1873.

Children of Milton<sup>64</sup> and Mary are:

- XVI. Herbert<sup>73</sup>, born May 4, 1872.

Children of Frank L.<sup>65</sup> and Lizzie are:

- I. Maud, born Nov. 13, 1869.
- II. Grace, born Oct. 10, 1871.
- XVII. Ida Belle, born Dec. 3, 1873.

Joseph<sup>10</sup>, it is said by more than one, "done poorly." William Paynter said he was a tailor by trade, and went at one time to live on Plain Edge, near Jericho. By Episcopal Church records of Hempstead, L. I., his marriage is given. New York City directory speaks of him as a waterman and also as a dock builder (and as a butcher?) See directory for years 1796 to 1810, &c.

"His brother John assisted him," I have been told.

Thomas Skillman 3d, of Chenango Co., told me that "he never heard of this Joseph<sup>10</sup> having but two sons, and that they often came to Aquebogue visiting and gunning. That their names were Thomas and Jonathan, and never heard of there being any other boys. That Jonathan was a butcher and a successful business man." Francis Martin Skillman said that, "when his father took his family to Chenango from Aquebogue, in 1824, they staid over night with Jonathan's family, and that his two eldest children were girls; the third child was a babe in the cradle." It is believed that be, Jonathan, had no sons.

His name appears in New York City directory from 1807 to 1825, &c. In 1828 he bought of the executors the Burroughs farm in Newtown for \$5,000, but sold it in a year or two. Major Wm. Bragaw said a Jonathan Skillman was a butcher at Fly Market, and that he sold him a calf

once.

Jonathan<sup>74</sup> was older than Thomas<sup>75</sup>. Mrs. John Skillman, of Bushwick, told me that a daughter of Jonathan is now living, and very wealthy, but did not know her address, although she had received visits from her.

The Thomas S., of Chenango, also said: "Thomas was not a business man;" "he walked the streets;" "stuttered in speech." From this I think it fairly inferable that this Thomas was an office holder of some kind. His name appears in the directory of New York City as a shoemaker and butcher in 1807-9, and in 1810 as a butcher, and so on.

He married 1st Mary Delancey; 2d, Ursula —, who is spoken of in N. Y. City directory as a widow and seamstress, 1818 to 24.

By the first wife, Isaac, who was lost at sea, and daughters, Ann and Margaret.

By the second wife, Joseph<sup>76</sup>, who was a carpenter or builder, born in New York City and died there August 28, 1852. His wife was Catharine Brower, who died Sept. 2, 1849.

The children were:

I. Thomas, born July 25, 1797; died Dec. 24, 1852, unmarried, in New York City. He kept a hardware store there.

II. Jacob, born June 13, 1799; died a child.

III. Ann, born June 18, 1807; died June 25, 1809.

IV. Margaret, born. . .; died a child.

V. Mary Elizabeth, born March, 1801; died April, 1827; married Samuel J. Raymond; had one daughter; married Robert J. Brown.

VI. Catharine, born 1803; died Jan. 25, 1839.

VII. Isaac, born July 31, 1809; died June 25, 1830; unmarried. He kept a hollowware store in Greenwich street, N. Y. City.

VIII. Joseph<sup>77</sup>, born Sept. 24, 1805; married Maria L. Anderson, 1832. They live at Scotch Bush, Montgomery County, N. Y.

Their children are Catharine J., who married John B. Hyatt,

Josephine, married Charles Lockwood and lives in Montgomery Co.

Joseph is single, lives in Brooklyn.

IX. Abraham B.<sup>78</sup>, born Jan. 8, 1806; married Catharine Heroy; live in N. Y. City; hardware dealer.

Their children are Martha B., born. ....; died Oct. 6, 1875.

Isaac Brower.

George Augustus.

James Henry.

John<sup>11</sup> had the ancestral farm, and which is now included in the limits of the City of Brooklyn. The old house is now standing on Frost street, between Union Avenue and Lorimer street. He was a Justice of the Peace and Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Kings County, and man of prominence. He was an Officer in the Bushwick Company of militia about the commencement of the Revolution.

He, too, had to take advantage of Lord Howe's proclamation. His remains and those of family, except Deborah, his first wife, who lies with the Conselyeas, have been removed from Bushwick to Mount Olivet Cemetery.

His children were, by Deborah:

I. Sarah, born March 26, 1770; married.... Hazzard.

- II. John, born Feb. 19, 1773; died young.
- III. Joseph, born July 27, 1776; died young.
- IV. Jane, born Sept. 4, 1779; married .... Van Ranst.
- V. Deborah, born Oct. 3, 1783; married Bernard Bloom
- VI. John<sup>79</sup>, born Aug. 13, 1787, died Dec. 1, 1849; married (1) Jane Messerole, died Oct. 14, 1810; (2) Susannah Gardner Aug. 10, 1813; born Aug 13, 1795, in New York City, died Dec. 21, 1822; (3) Sarah Ann Minuse, died Aug. 17, 1842.
- VII. Eleanor, born March 6, 1798; married Bernard Messerole, of Brunswick Dec. 15, 1813.

John<sup>79</sup>, spoken of in New York Directory 1802 to 1815, the last as a grocer, was a Justice of the Peace, and so came to be called Judge, as was his father. He was a great singer, and was at one time chorister of the Reformed Dutch Church at Bushwick.

His children by Jane were:

- I. Hannah, born April 25, 1808 (one account says 1807); married George Young, and died Nov. 25, 1848.
- II. Abraham, born Feb. 6, 1809; died young.
- III. John, born Oct. 12, 1810; died young.

By Susannah were:

- IV. Susannah, born Dec. 25, 1814; married Charles M. Church March 14, 1837, and died May 25, 1871; he died...., 1889.
- V. John<sup>80</sup>, born March 21, 1819; married (1) Sarah Ann Devoe Oct. 20, 1840; (2) Caroline Devoe Dec. 3, 1846, whose stepfather was a cadet by name; kept bookstore in New York in 1842; see Directory of that year.
- XVIII. Mary Ann, born Oct. 29, 1821, died July 28, 1843.

By Sarah Ann were:

- VII. Joseph, born June 10, 1834, died Aug 29, 1834.
- VIII. Joseph Henry<sup>81</sup>, born Dec. 19, 1837; married Anna Stebbins; he died May 2, 1890.

The children of John<sup>80</sup> and Sarah Ann were:

- I. Susan Frances, died an infant.
- II. Sarah Ann, born Sept. 30, 1841, died June 6, 1868.

By Caroline were:

- III. Caddie, born May 5, 1848, died Sept. 28, 1867.
- IV. Susannah Gardner, born Dec. 10, 1849, died Feb. 7, 1851.
- V. Susannah Church, born Feb. 14, 1852; married Edgar Halliday April 24, 1872.
- VI. John Henry, born Dec. 2, 1855, died by drowning Jan. 5, 1864.

The children of Joseph Henry<sup>81</sup> and Anna Stebbins are:

- I. Henry Christopher, born July 23, 1874.
- II. Edwin Joseph, born July 5, 1876.
- III. May, born June 14, 1883; died June 2, 1884.
- IV. Ethel, born Feb. 4, 1885.
- V. Ralph Francis, born May 17, 1889.

## APPENDIX.

I think it of sufficient importance to add the wills of Thomas<sup>2</sup> and his son Joseph<sup>8</sup> for the curiosity of those whose distance from the Surrogate's office forbids their reference to the record.

In the name of God, Amen ! I, Thomas Skillman, of New Town, in Queens County, on Nassau Island, in the Colony of New York, Yeoman, being at present sick and weak in, but of sound and perfect mind, memory and understanding, (Blessed be the Lord for his mercy,) but calling unto mind the uncertain state of this transitory life and that all flesh must yield unto death when it pleases God to call: "Do make, ordain, constitute and declare this my last Will and Testament in manner and form following, that is to say: First and principally, I commit my precious and immortal Soul into the Merciful hands of God, my Creator, hoping through the Merits, Death and passion of my blessed Saviour and Redeemer Christ Jesus to have and receive a full pardon and free Remission of my manifold Sins and to inherit everlasting life, and my body to the earth from whence it was taken, to be buried in such Christian and decent manner as to my Executors hereafter named shall be thought meet and convenient, and as touching such temporal estate which the Lord in Mercy (far above my deserts) hath been pleased to bestow upon me, I give, devise and dispose of the same in the following manner and form:

Imprimis. I will and order that all such debts and duties which I owe in law or conscience to any person or persons whatsoever, as also my funeral charges, to be well and truly-satisfied by my Executors within some convenient time after my decease.

Item. I give and bequeath unto my dearly beloved Wife Ann Skillman all my estate both real and personal (except my Negro man Sam and my Negro woman Dorcas), to be possessed and enjoyed by her during, her widowhood, but if she happens to remarry, then I will and order that she shall have only twenty Pounds current money of the Colony of New York paid her out of my estate by my Executors within three months after such remarriage, and that it shall be in lieu and stead of her dower.

Item. I give and bequeath unto my son John Skillman the sum of Ten Shillings current money aforesaid, to be raised out of my estate and paid unto him within three months after my wife's decease or re-marriage, and that for his birthright.

Item. I give and bequeath unto my Sons Abraham Skillman and Benjamin Skillman, and to their heirs, each the sum of fifty Pounds currant money as aforesaid, to be raised out of my estate, and paid unto them within a twelve month after my said wife's decease or Re-marriage, and so to remain to them and their heirs. I also give and bequeath to my said sons Abraham and Benjamin and their heirs all my horses, waggons, ploughs, harrows and other utensils of Husbandry, to be possessed and enjoyed immediately after my wife's decease or re-marriage, Or at such time she is willing to acquit them.

Item. After my wife's decease or re-marriage I give and bequeath all the remaining part of my real estate to my sons by name John Skillman, Abraham Skillman, Isaac Skillman, Jacob Skillman, Benjamin Skillman, and Joseph Skillman to be equally divided amongst them, and so to remain to them and each of them, their and each of their heirs and assigns forever. And I do give full power to my Executors to sell my Negro man Sam and my Negro woman Dorcas, as soon as convenient after my decease, to discharge my debts and funeral charges, and what debts shall still remain I will and order that my said sons shall pay in equal proportion amongst them, that is to say: John a sixth part, Abraham a sixth part, Isaac a sixth part, Jacob a sixth part, Benjamin a sixth part and Joseph a sixth of all such remaining debts, anything herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding. I also will and order that before any division be made of my real estate, that the hundred Pounds given to my sons Abraham and Benjamin be first allowed to them out of my said Real Estate.

Item. I give and bequeath to my daughters and granddaughters, after my wife's decease or re-marriage, all my moveable Estate (except what is herein before given and bequeathed), that is to say: To my daughter Mary, now the wife of John Bond, two-sevenths of my said moveable Estate to her and her heirs and assigns; to my daughter Mercy, now the wife of John Fine, I give and bequeath the profits and incomes of two-sevenths of said moveable estate to be paid her, yearly after my wife's, decease or re-marriage by my Executors, but if her husband, the said John Fine, happens to depart this life before my said daughter Mercy, then my will is that she shall receive the said two-seventh part of my said estate moveable into her own hands, and for her own use, but if my said daughter Mercy shall depart this life before her husband, the said John Pine, then my will is that the said two-sevenths of my said moveable estate shall be divided amongst the children of my said daughter Mercy, both male and female, in equal proportion, and so to remain to them, and each of them, their heirs and assigns. And to my daughter Ann, now the wife of Hendrick Van Dewater, I also give two-sevenths of my said moveable Estate after my wife's decease or re-marriage and to my granddaughter Ann Van Dewater now the wife of Jonas Martin, I give one-seventh of my said moveable Estate, to have and to hold my said moveable Estate, to my said daughter and granddaughter in

proportion as aforesaid to them, their heirs and assigns. And whereas my son Jacob has at his own cost and-charge built a house on my plantation at Hempstead swamp, in the Limmit of New Town, I will and order that that after my wife's decease or re-marriage there shall be indifferent men chosen to value said house, and that he shall have so much paid him out of my real estate, as said house shall be valued at. And whereas I have a conveyance of John Van Horne and Catherine his wife for a certain tract of land lying at Rariton, in New Jersey, and my son John Skillman and Isaac Skillman have paid part of the consideration money, my will and order is, that if they shall pay the remaining part thereof so as I and mine are fully discharged therefrom and acquitted thereof, that then my other sons, by name Abraham, Jacob, Benjamin and Joseph Skillman, shall release the same unto the said John Skillman and Isaac Skillman and to their heirs and assigns, and further I do give full power and authority to my Executors (after my wife's decease or re-marriage) to grant, bargain, sell and convey all my real estate, wheresoever it be or is to be found, and that their conveyance or conveyances shall make the buyer or buyers an indefeasible title in the law for the same, to the end that what is above written may be done.

Lastly. I do nominate, constitute and appoint my beloved sons Abraham Skillman, Jacob Skillman, and Benjamin Skillman Executors of this my last Will and Testament, desiring them to execute, fulfill and see the same performed according to the true intent and meaning thereof.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal the twenty-third day of February in the thirteenth year of His Majesties reign, and in the year of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus one-thousand seven hundred and thirty nine.

Thomas T(his mark) SKILLMAN [L. S ]

Signed, sealed, published, pronounced and declared by the said Thomas Skillman as his last Will and Testament, in presence of us, the subscribers, Barnardus Van Zandt, John Rapelie, Cornelius Berrien, Junr.

Then and there Bernardus Van Zandt and John Rapelie appeared before me, John Robinson, being thereunto appointed and made oath that they saw Thomas Skillman seal, sign, publish and declare the above writing as his last Will and Testament, and that he then was of sound mind and memory to the best of their understanding, and that they also saw Cornelius Barrien, Junr., sign his name as witness thereto in conjunction to them, in the Testator's presence.

Memd<sup>m</sup>. That at the same time Abraham Skillman, Jacob Skillman and Benj. Skillman, the Executors named in the above Will; likewise appeared before me and took the oath for the due Execution thereof.

Will admitted to probate, 4th July, 1740.

-----

In the name of God, Amen! I, Joseph Skillman, of Bushwyck, in Kings County, on Nassau Island, in the Province of New York, yeoman, being sick and weak in body, but of a perfect, sound and disposing mind and memory, thanks be to God for the same, do make this my last will, and testament, in manner and form following, that is to say:

Imprimis—I commend my soul into the hands of Almighty God, who gave it me, and my body to the earth, to be buried at the discretion of my Executors hereinafter named; and as for that worldly estate wherewith it hath pleased God to enrich me (my just debts and funeral expenses being first deducted and paid), I will, devise and bequeath the same in manner and form following:

First—I give, devise, *devise* and bequeath unto my eldest son, Thomas, the sum of twenty shillings before any division be made of my estate.

Item—I give, devise land bequeath to my dear and loving wife, Sarah, all my estate, both real and personal, to be by her used, occupied, possessed and enjoyed, and to take the rents, issues and profits thereof for and during and so long as she shall remain my widow. But in case she should happen to marry, then and in such ease I give, devise and bequeath unto my said wife the sum of one hundred pounds lawfull money of the Province of New York aforesaid, and also a bed and furniture, and also the use of my negro Tom to wait on her during her life, in full satisfaction and in lieu and stead of all dower and pretensions whatsoever which she shall, can or may have in or to my estate.

Item—I will that all my under-aged children be brought up and educated out of my estate before any division be made thereof, until they arrive to the age of eighteen years.

Item—I give, devise and bequeath unto my son Joseph, after the death or remarriage of my said wife, all those certain tracts, Pieces or Lots of ground situate, lying and being in Bushwyck aforesaid, known by No.8 in the clear land and by No.2 in the woodland, and the tenth part of the meadow which fell to the share of my said wife Sarah out of the estate of her Mother, Elizabeth Miserol, the wife of John Miserol, deceased, to have and to hold all and singular the said lots and meadows, with their and every of their appurtenances, unto him, the said Joseph, his heirs and assigns forever; chargeable nevertheless with the payment of the sum of five hundred pounds lawfull money

aforesaid, in manner and form following; that is to say, the sum of fifty pounds to my said wife immediately after her remarriage, but in case of her death, then the said sum of fifty pounds shall be paid to my Executors, to be by them divided between all my sons equally, share and share alike, and the further sum of fifty pounds within one year after the death or remarriage of my said wife, unto my said son Thomas, his Executors, Administrators or Assigns, and the further sum of fifty pounds unto the said Thomas yearly, and every year thereafter, until he be paid the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds, and the further sum of two hundred pounds residue, to be paid unto my Executors, in yearly payments of the sum of fifty- pounds, to enable them to pay my daughters their legacies to them hereinafter bequeathed and devised.

Item—I give, devise and bequeath unto my son John all that certain tract of land situate, lying and being in Bushwyck aforesaid, whereon I now live, together with all and singular the rights, members and appurtenances thereunto belonging, or in any wise appertaining as the same is now by me possessed and enjoyed, to have and to hold the aforesaid last mentioned tract of land and premises, with the appurtenances, unto my said son John, his heirs and assigns forever, from and after the death or remarriage of my said wife, chargeable nevertheless with the payment of the sum of eight hundred pounds lawfull money aforesaid, to be paid by my said son John, his executors, administrators or assigns in manner and form following, (that is to say) the sum of fifty pounds to my said wife immediately after her re-marriage, but in case of her death then the sum of fifty pounds shall be paid unto my Executors, to be by them equally divided between all my sons, share and share alike, and the further sum of fifty pounds unto my said son Thomas, within one year after the death or remarriage of my said wife, and the further sum of fifty pounds unto the said Thomas yearly, and every year thereafter, until he be paid by my said son John the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds, and the further sum of five hundred pounds residue, to be paid unto my Executors in yearly payments of the sum of fifty pounds, to enable them to pay my daughters their legacies to them hereinafter devised and bequeathed.

Item—I give, devise, and bequeath unto my daughters Elizabeth, the wife of Albutus Vandewater, Ann Maria, Sarah and Mercy, and to each of them, the sum of one hundred pounds lawfull money aforesaid, to be paid to them severally by my Execu'rs, as the aforesaid several sums hereby made payable unto them shall become due and payable by my said sons Joseph and John, beginning from Elizabeth, my eldest daughter, unto Mercy my youngest daughter.

Item—All the rest and residue of my said Estate I give, devise, and bequeath unto all my said children, to be equally divided between them, share and share alike. But in case any of my said children should happen to die before they come of age, or married leaving no lawfull issue, then, and in such case, my will is that his, her, or their portion or shares bequeathed and devised unto them shall be equally divided between the survivors of my said children or the heirs, Executors or Administrators of such survivor or survivors, share and share alike.

And Lastly—I do hereby nominate, constitute and appoint my said wife Sarah, my brother-in-law Jacob Misserol and my friend Theodorus Polhemus, of Bushwyck, aforesaid, Executors of this my last Will and Testament.

In Witness Whereof, I, the said Joseph Skilman, have hereunto set my hand and seal the first day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven.

JOSEPH SKILLMAN. [L. S.]

Signed, sealed and published by the Testator in the presence of William Craambos, Peter Vandewater, Jno. Roosevelt.

Will admitted to probate 18th April, 1772.