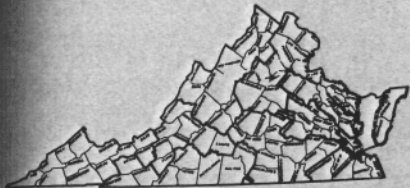


The Virginia Genealogist



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MATHEW SKEEN

OF AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Bt Phyllis J. Miller
San Mateo, California

man named John with value of \$180.00
of \$150.00.

widow of John Popham, Presley Brown,
and John [N.] Popham, son of John
of agreement to divide the land of John
deed provided Elizabeth Popham with
bordering lands of Smither and Co.,
wkins. Elizabeth Popham, John [N.]
ed with Daniel Snyder, James Rush and

his wife [Ann] Nancy of Culpeper Co.,
dower land, once in Culpeper but now
pham of Rappahannock County for \$6
River, the land bordered the lands of
Popham and the dower near a road to
wife [Ann] Nancy signed the deed with
justices of the peace for Culpeper Co.,
d her dower rights. The deed did not
Elizabeth Popham did not sign.

nty "Elisabeth" Popham, age 79 years,
ury War claim of Lucy Brown, widow
mark, Elizabeth Popham stated in her
a Brown. Presley Brown witnessed the

am and his wife Elizabeth Brown, as
, Va., land deed, and one probably
ulpeper County:

orn ca. 1796.

1800-10, died 1810-20.

a. 1804.

tinued)

70, recorded 19 Jan. 1829.

370-71, recorded March 1842.

William Brown, widow Lucy, loc. cit.

For many years it has seemed to researchers that Mathew Skeen must have
fallen from the blue into Staten Island, N.Y., where he is first found in a
baptismal record for his son Pieter¹ in 1732. In this record his name is spelled
"Skane" and his wife is given as Jannetje Tites. She was no doubt of the Dutch
Tines family found in both Long Island and Staten Island. He apparently left the
area owing money, as Mathew Scain is among the 52 names in the "book debts"
in the inventory of the estate of Cornelius Board of Bergen Co., N.J., dated 29
Jan. 1744/45.² By 1742 he was on the militia list of Augusta Co., Va., as an
ensign and again took the oath of office on 17 Aug. 1748.³ Mathew Skeen had
died by 15 Feb. 1748/9, as his widow, Jane, was granted administration of his
estate on that date.⁴ He was survived by his widow and three minor sons, John,
Mathew and Jacob, named in a land grant from Lord Fairfax.⁵ Mathew's widow
married William Draper by 19 June 1752,⁶ and they and her two youngest sons
moved to the Rowan and Randolph counties area of North Carolina.⁷ The eldest
son, John, remained in Shenandoah Co., Va. The son Pieter, baptized in 1732,

¹ New York Genealogical & Biographical Society, *Collections*, v. 4 (New York, 1909), p. 4.

² A. Van Doren Honeyman, ed., *New Jersey Archives*, 1st ser., v. 30 (n.p., 1918), pp. 49-50.
³ Augusta Co., Va., Court Order Bk. 2, p. 74, Family History Library film #30374; Lloyd
DeWitt Bickstruck, *Virginia's Colonial Soldiers* (Baltimore, 1988), pp. 4, 225.

⁴ Augusta Co., Va., Court Order Bk. 2, p. 68; Lyman Chalkley, *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlements in Virginia* (reprint, Baltimore, 1966), v. 3, p. 9.

⁵ Northern Neck Grant Bk. G, p. 230.

⁶ Augusta Co., Va., Court Order Bk. 3, p. 278; Chalkley, *op. cit.*, v. 1, p. 52. Chalkley read
her name as Scane, but I read it as Scain.

⁷ James S. Brawley, *The Rowan Story, 1753-1953: a Narrative History of Rowan Co., N.C.*
(n.p., 1953), pp. 352, 356 (tax list for 1759).

must have died young as he is not named in the Fairfax grant, above.

This small amount of data is all that can be proven about Mathew Skeen. Some of his descendants have decided that he was born about 1677, a son of John Skeen, the Quaker Deputy Governor of West Jersey from 1685 to 1688,⁸ whose 1690 will names only his "eldest son Alexander" and the "other five" children.⁹ Quaker records in Scotland give the birth records of three daughters, Katharine, Liliias and Christian.¹⁰ Since his will calls Alexander the eldest son, not the elder, that implies two other sons. The naming of the first son and first two daughters follows the Scotch pattern which leads us to believe that the second son would be named John for his wife's father, John Fullerton. There was a John Skeene who died intestate in Burlington Co., N.J., in 1704. Administration was granted to Thomas Kendall, his chief creditor,¹¹ and no heirs were named. In the Scotch naming pattern the third son would have been named for the father of the child, but the name John served for both the mother's father and the father himself. Thus the pattern would go to the next step and the son would have been named for the father of the child's paternal grandfather; in this case that was Robert.¹² Burlington County records include a Robert Skeen.¹³ Thus we have a very probable list of children of Deputy Governor John Skeen: Katharine, Liliias, Christian, Alexander, John and Robert. From this we conclude there was no son named Mathew in Governor Skeen's family.

The next step was to see what Mathews were to be found in the International Genealogical Index (IGI) for Scotland. Disregarding the undocumented and unlikely 1677 entries, we found that Mathew was a name the Skeen family did not use. The only actual record of a Skeen named Mathew between the mid-1500s and 1790 was the baptism, 15 Aug. 1701, of Mathew, son of John Skeen and Marjory Black at South Leith, Midlothian, Scotland. This date fits the known facts for Mathew Skeen of Augusta Co., Va. In America the earliest

documented Mathew Skeen was in 1742. There was only the one documented Mathew Skeen in America. A reasonable conclusion is that they were the same person.

He was of an age (in his forties) to have been in the 1742 and 1748 and should have been 65 to 71 years of age and an ensign, carrying the standard.

Applying the Scotch naming pattern to the very first child, Pieter, is a problem. Pieter is a daughter of Syrach Titus and Aelt, Jamaica, Long Island, in 1710, who disappears from records, so perhaps Pieter as an exception to the naming pattern is his father's father, John, and the mother's father, John.

To follow up on the IGI record for Scotland was read and gave us a new Mariner in Leith & Marjory Black born ye 8 & baptised ye 14 August 1701. Leith sponsor witt: Richard Dickson [abbreviation for Edinburgh].¹⁴ These records. Since it is almost a century to the parents of the child, this index

No link was found to Jasper F. Richard Dickson, witness, had Donaldson,¹⁶ whose surname before marriage date would place him as a

John Clark, the second witness in Midlothian, marriage records, 17 August to unqth [i.e., deceased]

⁸ *New Jersey Archives*, ser. 1, v. 1 and 2, a number of pages, see indexes.

⁹ *New Jersey State Archives*, Trenton, N.J., Unrecorded Wills, v. 4, p. 637.

¹⁰ Archibald S. Maxwell, *Register of births, proposals of marriage, marriages and deaths, 1647-1878* (n.p., n.d.).

¹¹ Burlington Co., N.J., Wills, Liber 1, p. 38.

¹² William Forbes Skene, *Memorials of the Family of Skene of Skene* (Aberdeen, 1887), pp. 75-78.

¹³ Report from Department of Records, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, 8 June 1960, gives a 1707 court action by a Martha Dummer against Robert Skene in the Burlington Court.

¹⁴ *New York Genealogical & Biographical*

¹⁵ South Leith Parish baptisms, Edin.

¹⁶ International Genealogical Index (IGI), Midlothian, Scotland.

¹⁷ South Leith Parish, Midlothian, S

ed in the Fairfax grant, above. It can be proven about Mathew Skeen that he was born about 1677, a son of nor of West Jersey from 1685 to 1688,¹ st son Alexander" and the "other five" give the birth records of three daughters, e his will calls Alexander the eldest son, is. The naming of the first son and first tern which leads us to believe that the wife's father, John Fullerton. There was rington Co., N.J., in 1704. Administra- his chief creditor,¹¹ and no heirs were he third son would have been named for n served for both the mother's father and uld go to the next step and the son would hild's paternal grandfather; in this case records include a Robert Skene.¹³ Thus dren of Deputy Governor John Skene: John and Robert. From this we conclude vernor Skene's family. eys were to be found in the International l. Disregarding the undocumented and athew was a name the Skeen family did skeen named Mathew between the mid- ug. 1701, of Mathew, son of John Skeen idlothian, Scotland. This date fits the gusta Co., Va. In America the earliest

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documented Mathew Skeen was in 1732, the father in a baptism, see above. There was only the one documented Mathew Skeen in Scotland and only the one documented Mathew Skeen in America. The time period fits; therefore, the reasonable conclusion is that they were one and the same man.

He was of an age (in his forties) to have been in the militia in King George's War in 1742 and 1748 and should have been strong enough to carry the standard of the group, which was the ensign's job. Had he been born in 1677 he would have been 65 to 71 years of age and would not have been in the militia, much less an ensign, carrying the standard.

Applying the Scotch naming pattern to Mathew and Jane Skeen's children, the very first child, Pieter, is a problem.. However, Jane Titus the probable daughter of Syrach Titus and Aeltje Web(b) had a brother Pieter¹⁴ baptized at Jamaica, Long Island, in 1710, who would have been close in age to her and who disappears from records, so perhaps died. If so, that would qualify the name Pieter as an exception to the naming rule. Then the second son was named for its father's father, John, and the third son for its father, Mathew.

To follow up on the IGI record, the microfilm of the Old Parish Records of Scotland was read and gave us much interesting information. "John Skeen Mariner in Leith & Marjory Black his spouse had a S[on], N[amed]: Mathew born ye 8 & baptised ye 14 August 1701: Jasper Fairservice Cairter [carter] in Leith sponsor witt: Richard Dickson & John Clark merts [merchants] in E— [abbreviation for Edinburgh]."¹⁵ Witnesses and sponsors always were men in these records. Since it is almost a rule that witnesses and sponsors were related to the parents of the child, this idea was explored.

No link was found to Jasper Fairservice the sponsor.

Richard Dickson, witness, had married, 6 Oct. 1699 in Edinburgh, Sibilla Donaldson,¹⁶ whose surname became of interest later in the search. This marriage date would place him as a probable peer of John Skeen.

John Clark, the second witness, provided the key. In the South Leith, Midlothian, marriage records,¹⁷ "John Clark Mert in E— & Mary Skeen Daughter to umqth [i.e., deceased] Andrew Skeen of pitmuckstine (being

¹⁴ *New York Genealogical & Biographical Record*, v. 105, p. 97.

¹⁵ South Leith Parish baptisms, Edinburgh, FHL film #1067771, p. 72.

¹⁶ International Genealogical Index (IGI), Edinburgh Parish Marriages, Edinburgh, Midlothian, Scotland.

¹⁷ South Leith Parish, Midlothian, Scotland, FHL film #1067771, p. 65.

proclaimed three severall sabath days in order to Mariage) were maried 22 December 1799."

On the very next double page of the marriage records was "Andrew Skeen Sone to umqth Andrew Skeen of pitmuckstine & Margaret Kirtoun Daughter of umqth Andrew Kirtoun mert in E— (being proclaimed three severall sabath days in order to Mariage) were maried ye 6 January 1701."¹⁸

The two children of Andrew Skene of Pitmuxton in the same parish with our John Skeen seemed to be more than just coincidence, especially in view of the fact that John Clark, husband of Andrew's daughter, was a witness to the baptism of John Skeen's child. Next *Memorials of Skene of Skene* by the celebrated historian and genealogist William Forbes Skene was consulted and Andrew Skene of Pitmuxton was found on page 149 with a "wife Isobel Donaldson by whom he had two children, Andrew and Mary who married John Clark, merchant of Edinburgh." No son John was given, which was disappointing. However, when the films of the actual records were read we found that on 25 Dec. 1673, "Andrew Skene younger had ane son baptised by Mr patrick Sibbald (begotten in fornication with Margrat Simson) called John. John Summer and James King ye godfathers."¹⁹

The next record found was the marriage less than two years later, on 2 Sept. 1675, of Andrew Skene of Pitmuxton to Isobel Donaldson.²⁰ This is followed by the baptismal record of their first child on 6 June 1676, "Andrew Skene of pitmuxton — and Isobel — his spous had a son baptised called Andrew," rest illegible.²¹ According to *Memorials of Skene of Skene* Andrew of Pitmuxton was the son of Andrew of Rudrieston, and thus was often referred to as "Andrew Skene, younger." He was in Holland from sometime in 1677 until 1680,²² when his daughter Mary was most probably born, as no record of her birth is found in Scotland.

The surname Donaldson occurs in relation to the baptism of John's child Mathew Skeen in 1701, in the maiden name of Isobel, wife of John's father Andrew Skene, younger, and Catharine Donaldson was the wife of Robert

Skeen,²³ the grandparents of Andrew. The much coincidence, a strong relationship certainly is indicated, and the name Mathew is common to both families.

At this time and earlier in Scotland, where the name Mathew was common among cousins. In the baronial families of the time, children seem often to have been taken from one family to another as a Donaldson relative. It is not likely that John Skeen and Marjorie Black were seen from a 1698 birth brief found wherein Gilbert Black, Marjorie's father, was named as one of his deceased parents and those of his deceased mother was Margaret Skene, daughter of our John Skeen's third-great-grandfather. Their common ancestors were Alexander de Skene, Marjorie's mother, Isobel Duncan, wife of Alexander de Skene, and Isobel Donaldson, daughter of James de Skene.

After 1701 no further records in Scotland were found for John's son Mathew Skene. Since John was at sea. The next record found is the baptism of John's son, Mathew, in the Island, N.Y.

In light of the established fact hypothesis as to the parentage and name of John's son, Mathew, Va., is correct.

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¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

¹⁹ St. Nicholas Parish, Aberdeen, Scotland, baptisms, FHL film #991135, page numbers illegible.

²⁰ St. Nicholas Parish, marriages, FHL film #991138, page numbers illegible.

²¹ St. Nicholas Parish, baptisms, FHL film #991135.

²² Skene, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

²³ Old Parochial Records, St. Nicholas Parish, Aberdeen, Scotland, baptisms, FHL film #991135, page numbers illegible.

²⁴ Francis McDonnell, *Birth Briefs of A. J. McDonnell*, Md., 1998, pp. 2-3.

²⁵ Skene, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-30, 82.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-27.

²⁷ McDonnell, *loc. cit.*

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Skene,²³ the grandparents of Andrew the younger. Again we have a little too
much coincidence, a strong relationship between the Skenes and Donaldsons
certainly is indicated, and the name Mathew is found in the Donaldson family.

At this time and earlier in Scotland, marriages were often arranged to
enhance estates, there was a good bit of illegitimacy and much intermarriage
among cousins. In the baronial families, including Skene, the illegitimate
children seem often to have been taken care of by someone in the father's family.
We do not know who took care of the child John, but it may have been a
Donaldson relative. It is not likely that John would have named a son Andrew.

John Skeen and Marjorie Black were third cousins twice removed, which can
be seen from a 1698 birth brief found in the Aberdeen Propinquity Books,²⁴
wherein Gilbert Black, Marjorie's father, gave the names of his parents and
grandparents and those of his deceased wife, Isabel Duncan. Gilbert Black's
mother was Margaret Skene, daughter of Patrick Skene who was a younger
brother of our John Skeen's third-great-grandfather James Skene.²⁵ Their
common ancestors were Alexander de Skene and Elizabeth Forbes.²⁶ In addition,
Marjorie's mother, Isobel Duncan, was the daughter of John Duncan and Isobel
Donaldson, daughter of James Donaldson and Isobel Forbes,²⁷ another
Donaldson link.

After 1701 no further records in Scotland are found for either John Skene or
his son Mathew Skene. Since John was a mariner, he might well have been lost
at sea. The next record found is the 1732 baptism of Mathew's son on Staten
Island, N.Y.

In light of the established facts given, it is highly probable that this
hypothesis as to the parentage and ancestors of Mathew Skeen of Augusta Co.,
Va., is correct.

²² Old Parochial Records, St. Nicholas, Aberdeen, baptisms of three siblings of Andrew,
younger; Skene, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

²⁴ Francis McDonnell, *Birth Briefs of Aberdeen 1637-1705* (Fife, Scotland, 1995; reprint
Westminster, Md., 1998), pp. 2-3.

²⁵ Skene, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-30, 82.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-27.

²⁷ McDonnell, *loc. cit.*

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