

# Skipworths from around Spilsby, Lincolnshire

*by*

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## **Overview**

This chapter is one of a series tracing families of Lincolnshire Skipworths from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The project has involved extracting all instances of Skipworth and variants from indexes of baptisms, marriages and burials, census records, registrations of births, marriages and deaths, wills, and any other relevant lists. The facts have then been gradually fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle. Because of the relative rarity of the name, the completeness of the coverage, and the rural communities in which they lived, there have been very few instances where doubts about identification have arisen. Any remaining uncertainties are discussed at the relevant point in the text.

## **Relationship to Aristocratic Skipwiths**

All of the nineteenth century British Skipworths can be traced back to Lincolnshire, and evidence suggests that they have derived their name from the aristocratic family of Skipwiths, which had their principal seat at South Ormsby, Lincolnshire up till the seventeenth century. They in turn took their name from the manor of Skipwith, which lies just south east of York. Further information on their history can be found in various editions of Burke's Peerage, and in the book "A Brief Account of the Skipwiths ....." compiled by Fulwar Skipwith, 1867, available in the Society of Genealogists library, London. The meaning of Skipwith is given as "sheep farm" in surname dictionaries.

When the manors held by the South Ormsby Skipwiths in the seventeenth century are plotted on a map, there is a remarkable co-incidence with the villages where the forebears of the Skipworths appear in the 1600s. Whether they share a blood relationship or one of service is unknown.

Until about 1750 Skipwith was the preferred spelling but about that time it gradually changed to Skipworth, although the aristocratic family has generally retained Skipwith. The occasional Shipworth or Shipwith encountered in databases is usually found to be a misreading of the original record.

## **Emergence of Spilsby Skipworths**

In the following pages I will set out evidence suggesting that the Skipworth families of the Spilsby area descend from a common ancestor, Thomas Skipworth of Irby and Little Steeping. I have been unable to find any evidence linking them to the Caistor Skipworths.

## **Choice of Fore-Names**

John, Thomas, Samuel, William and George were the sons in the first generation, and these names were heavily used among the descendants. Now and again names taken from the Old Testament crop up, such as Samuel, Jabez, Manasseh, Esias (Isaiah), Azubah.

Compare this with the Skipworths of North Lincolnshire, around Caistor. Their landmark was the name Philip which occurred in every generation and all branches, but never once in the Spilsby group. The more obscure names from the Old Testament are never found among the Caistor Skipworths.

## Skipworths from around Spilsby

### First Generation

**1. Thomas SKIPWORTH** aged 80 was buried at Little Steeping on 4 Feb 1795, suggesting a birth year around 1715. His birth parish was probably Irby in the Marsh where the family seems to have been based until the early 1760s. There is a register for Irby (1540-1734) which I have not examined and which could contain earlier Skipworth entries.

A few records have been found which give glimpses of Thomas' life, though it is impossible to be sure they all apply to the same man.

1735 Thomas Shipworth is recorded as a weaver's apprentice at Britoft (Bratoft?). One of Thomas's grandsons was a weaver at Little Steeping (refer Thomas #3's paper), which links this record neatly to the following generations.

Between 1761 and 1766 family moved from Irby to Little Steeping (refer son George's entry)

1765 Thomas Shipworth, Master Joiner at Little Steeping, employing an apprentice.

This appears to have been a family with access to modest capital. The apprenticeship records were created because a tax was payable on the fee which Thomas's father would have had to pay for his 7 year training. Once trained he would have been able to set up his own business and employ other trainees. His move from Irby to Little Steeping may have been in connection with taking over a new business, leaving his second son Thomas to make use of his weaving equipment. Thomas was also able to pay for his eldest son John to be trained as a baker (refer John's story).

No will has been found for this Thomas, but it is worth noting that his eldest son John made a will in which he left small amounts of property to each of his three sons, and a grandson in another branch made a will dealing with his copyhold cottage.

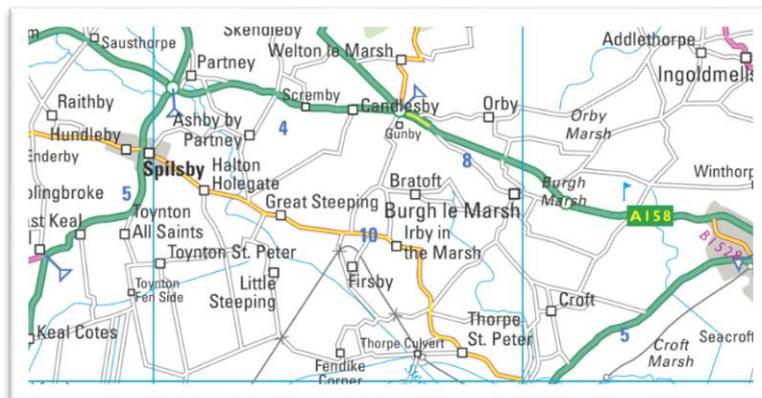
**Thomas SKIPWORTH** married **Alice EVISON** on 16 Apr 1748 at Irby in the Marsh according to the parish register. The date seems unlikely given that their son John was christened in 1745. Examination of the register for Irby in the Marsh gives the impression that for several years in the 1740s and 50s it was not properly maintained, but written up retrospectively from surviving notes. The number of entries is very small, they are sometimes out of chronological order, and they differ from the records in the Bishops Transcripts. In the case of this marriage I suggest that 1748 could have been a misreading of 1743. Thomas would have been aged about 28 at that date.

Alice Skipworth, widow aged 77, was buried at Little Steeping on 3 March 1800. She was probably the daughter of **John EVISON** and his wife **Alice CROW**, baptised at Bratoft on 19 March 1722.

Children of Thomas and Alice were:

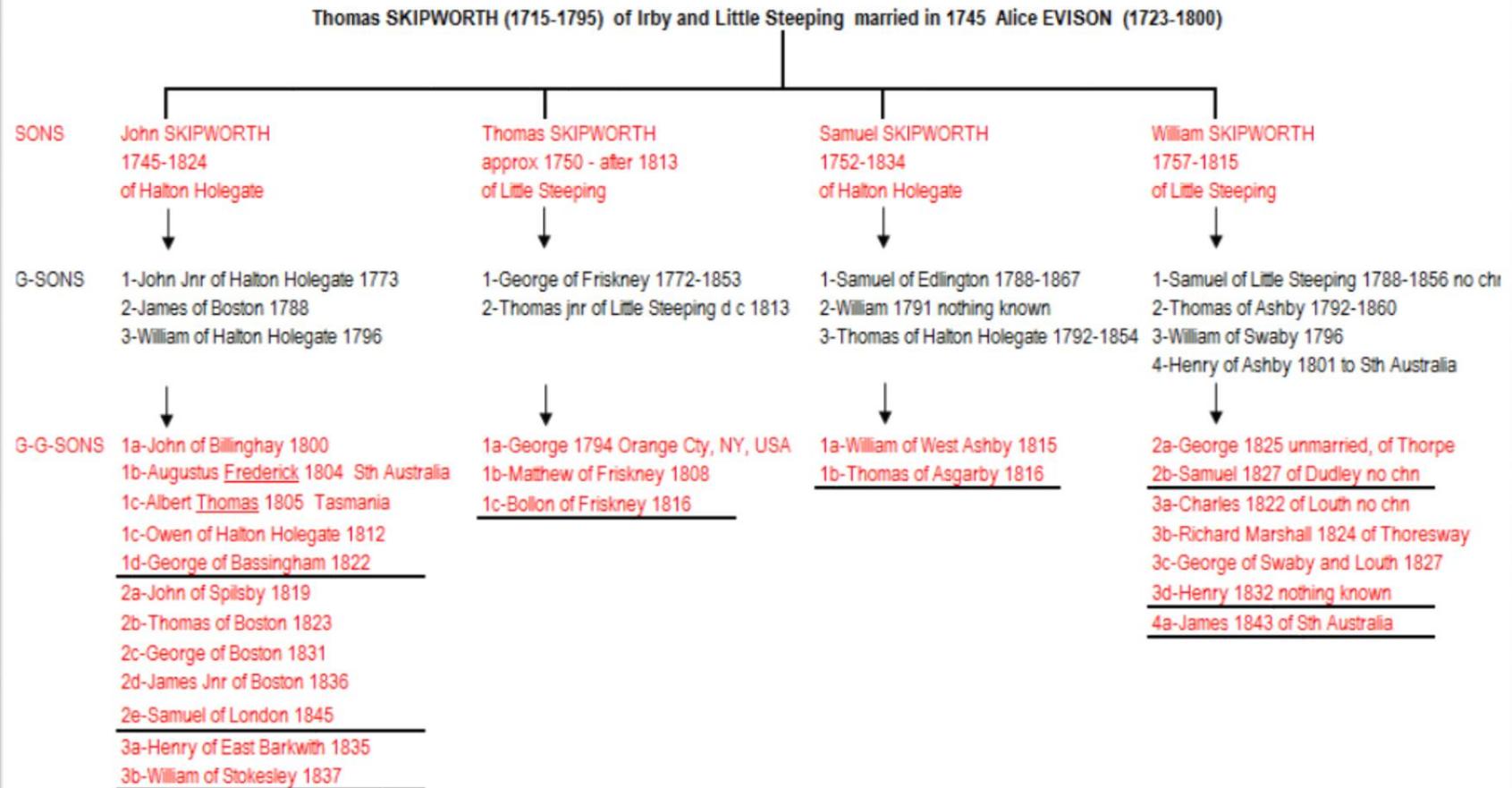
- |   |   |                        |
|---|---|------------------------|
| 2 | i. <b>John SKIPWORTH</b> of Halton Holegate 1745-1824           | <i>Refer to page 4</i> |
| 3 | ii. <b>Thomas SKIPWORTH</b> of Little Steeping c1750-after 1813 | <i>Refer to page 4</i> |
| 4 | iii. <b>Samuel SKIPWORTH</b> of Halton Holegate 1752-1834       | <i>Refer to page 4</i> |
| 5 | iv. <b>William SKIPWORTH</b> of Little Steeping 1757-1815       | <i>Refer to page 5</i> |
| 6 | v. <b>Ann SKIPWORTH</b> 1759-                                   | <i>Refer to page 5</i> |
| 7 | vi. <b>George SKIPWORTH</b> 1761- 1766                          | <i>Refer to page 5</i> |

The home parishes of these families are clustered in an area up to 10km east of Spilsby.



## SKIPWORTHS of Spilsby and Horncastle Districts - Overview

Only adult sons are included, full details in separate charts.



del. M Skipworth updated 2016

## ***Second Generation***

**2. John SKIPWORTH** of Halton Hologate 1745-1824, christened at Bratoft son of Thomas and Alice, married (1) Sarah SYLVESTER, (2) Ann TURNER, (3) Ann WHARFE.

Evidence that John is correctly placed in this family:

- He was christened in 1745 at Bratoft, parents Thomas and Alice. Bratoft was John's mother's parish and he may have been taken there for a naming ceremony (christening) after baptism (reception into the church) in his home parish of Irby though no record of a baptism has been found. It was unusual for parish records to use the term christening in place of baptism.
- In 1773 John was resident at Irby, where Thomas and Alice had baptised their children Ann and George in the 1760s, when he applied for a settlement certificate permitting him to move to Halton Hologate, his new wife's parish.
- John has a link to his brother William through William's son Henry emigrating to Australia on the same ship that carried John's grandson Augustus Frederick and family.
- John's three marriages were variously witnessed by his 3 brothers, Thomas Skipworth, William Skipworth and Samuel Skipworth.

John's life and his family are detailed in my paper "Descendants of John Skipworth of Halton Hologate".

**3. Thomas SKIPWORTH** of Little Steeping c1750-after 1794, no known baptism hence no proof of parents. He married Hannah JOHNSON and his descendants settled at Friskney.

Evidence that Thomas is correctly placed in this family:

- He was Thomas junior in his marriage record, as both father and son were living at Little Steeping at that time.
- He was probably the Thomas Skipworth who witnessed John's marriage to Sarah Silvester. Thomas senior would have been well into his fifties by that time, and the choice of a younger man seems more likely.
- We have no baptismal record for Thomas and he did not survive into the census period to state a birthplace, so there is no evidence from that quarter.
- Thomas had three sons, George, William and Thomas, and one of his grandsons was called Samuel, so there is some support from the naming evidence.

Thomas's life and his family are detailed in my paper "Skipworths of Friskney, Lincolnshire".

**4. Samuel SKIPWORTH** of Halton Hologate 1752-1834, no known baptism hence no proof of parents, married Rebecca SYLVESTER, and secondly Susanna HOFF

Evidence that Samuel is correctly placed in this family:

- He settled at Halton Hologate and he married a Sylvester, both of which he had in common with his brother John.
- John Skipworth was a witness at Samuel's two marriages.
- We have no baptismal record for Samuel and he did not survive into the census period to state a birthplace, so there is no evidence from that quarter.
- In 1841 a Susanna Skipworth aged 80, thought to be Samuel's widow, was living with John's granddaughter, Eliza Atkinson at Halton Hologate.

Samuel's life and his family are detailed in my paper "Descendants of Samuel Skipworth of Halton Hologate".

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## Skipworths from around Spilsby

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5. **William SKIPWORTH** of Little Steeping 1757-1815, no known baptism hence no proof of parents, married Jane BRIGGS.

Evidence that William is correctly placed in this family:

- He settled at Little Steeping where his parents had moved from Irby.
- As explained above, he is linked to brother John through their descendants' emigration.
- We have no baptismal record for William and he did not survive into the census period to state a birthplace, so there is no evidence from that quarter.
- He had a son and a grandson called Samuel.

William's life and his family are detailed in my paper "Descendants of William Skipworth of Little Steeping".

6. **Ann SKIPWORTH** was baptised at Irby in the Marsh on 18 Apr 1759, daughter of Thomas and Alice, according to the Irby Bishops Transcripts. This record is missing from the parish register.

Ann married **George VEARAH** (or VERAH) on 26 May 1784 at nearby Orby. George, a bachelor of Great Steeping signed the register, and Ann, spinster of the parish of Orby, made her mark.

George VERAH was buried at Orby on 8 Mar 1790, and Ann VEARAH, widow, remarried **William ATKINSON**, bachelor, at Orby on 16 May 1791.

7. **George SKIPWORTH** was baptised on 4 Apr 1761 at Irby in the Marsh son of Thomas and Alice, (from Bishops transcripts only), and buried, an infant, on 17 Jan 1766 at Little Steeping.

- George's birth was 18 years after his parents' corrected marriage date, not quite long enough for George to be a grandson, but useful in establishing that Alice's fertility continued (they also baptised a daughter in 1759). It is unlikely that there was a 16 year gap in the family, supporting the idea that the sons Thomas, Samuel and William, whose baptisms are missing, do indeed belong here.
- George's burial at Little Steeping narrows down the date when the family must have moved from Irby to Little Steeping.

I shall leave to the individual chapters any necessary discussion regarding proof that the various grandsons of Thomas and Alice are correctly placed.

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### *Sources*

Parish register scans at [www.lincstothepast.com](http://www.lincstothepast.com), Bishops Transcripts at [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)  
Apprentice and census records at [www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk) Civil registrations at [www.freebmd.org.uk](http://www.freebmd.org.uk)