

THE 1813 WILL OF DANIEL SKINNER SR.

A Comparative Discrepancy Register & GPS Evidentiary Evaluation

I. Evidentiary Classification under GPS Rules

Under the rules of the **Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS)**, historical and legal records must be carefully evaluated for their custody, physical provenance, and informational proximity to the event in question. Applying these strict rules to the Daniel Skinner Sr. probate file yields two distinct record categories, which must be treated with varying levels of authority.

1. Document A (The Original Courthouse File - WCCH): Classified as an **Original Source** containing **Primary Information**. It was executed on February 22, 1813, signed with the actual hand of Daniel Skinner ('Dan Skinner'), and probated on March 1, 1813, bearing the genuine signatures of witnesses (Allen, Luty, Seaman) and the executorial oaths of Rosabella Skinner and Nathan Skinner.

2. Document B (Contemporaneous Register-Certified Copy): Classified as a **Contemporaneous Certified Copy** (technically a **Derivative Source**). Although written by the exact same government officer (Eliphalet Kellogg) on the exact same day of probate (March 1, 1813), and validated with an original official red-wax state seal, it is legally and genealogically a **transcribed duplicate**.

***The GPS Proximity Rule:** While both documents were executed or certified within the same week-long window in early 1813 by the same public official, the **Original WCCH File** remains the superior authority. Contemporaneous copies, no matter how official, are subject to manual transcription slips. Highlighting these discrepancies preserves the exact boundaries of Skinner's estate and corrects long-standing errors.*

II. Textual Discrepancy Register

The following analytical register maps every textual variation between the Original Will (Document A) and the Register-Certified Copy (Document B), assessing the grammatical, spatial, and legal weight of each change:

Item / Bequest	Original Will (WCCH File)	Register's Certified Copy	GPS Analysis & Legal Significance
First Wife's Furniture	unto my Daughters Lilly Land and Sarah Conklin	unto my Daughter Lilly Land and Sarah Conklin	Grammatical/Singular Omission: Kellogg dropped the plural 's'. This grammatically renders the sisters as a single unit rather than individuals.
Mansion House & Flats	where I now live and improve	when [sic] I now live and improve	Critical Spatial/Temporal Slip: Kellogg wrote 'when' instead of 'where'. Legally, 'where' defines the physical geography of the homestead; 'when' is a temporal nonsense slip.
Executor Appointment	Executors of this my last Will	Executors to this my last will	Prepositional Shift: A standard clerical stylistic modification during manual transcription.
Signature Representation	Dan Skinner {Seal}	Daniel Skinner {Seal}	Normalization Error: Skinner signed his legal name as 'Dan' in a tight, compact script. Kellogg expanded this to 'Daniel' on the copy, obscuring the physical autograph.

Item / Bequest	Original Will (WCCH File)	Register's Certified Copy	GPS Analysis & Legal Significance
Ann Street Newburgh Real Estate	situate in the Village of Newburgh	situate in the Village of NewBurgh	Orthographic Capitalization: Reflects Kellogg's personal spelling habit, utilizing a distinct mid-word capitalized 'B'.
Remainder of Daniel Jr.'s Lot	the residue or remainder	the remainder or residue	Word Order Transposition: Transposes exact legal synonyms without changing the substance of the land partition.
Note of Hand Bequest	William H. Skinner ... three hundred ... fifty ... one hundred	William H. Skinner ... Three Hundred ... fifty ... One hundred	Orthographic Inconsistencies: Normalization of capitalization for numerical currency amounts.

III. Analytical Evaluation of Crucial Deviations

While minor orthographic shifts (like hyphenating 'New-York' or transposing 'residue or remainder') do not affect the execution of a will, three discrepancies carry massive legal, graphological, and historical weight:

1. The Spatial Boundary Crisis: 'Where' vs. 'When'

In real estate conveyancing and dockets, spatial qualifiers are sacrosanct. The Original Will accurately bequeaths the mansion house and buildings '**where I now live**'. By transcribing this as '**when I now live**', the certified copy syntactically untethers the bequest from its physical locus. If challenged in an early 19th-century court of equity, this clerical error would introduce fatal ambiguity, requiring the presentation of the original will to re-establish the spatial boundary and true intent of the testator.

2. Graphological Erasure: Autograph vs. Normalized Notation

A person's signature is a vital link to their identity and physical state. In the original docket, the testator shakily signed '**Dan Skinner**'—the compact, abbreviated hand of an eighty-year-old pioneer nearing death. Kellogg's certified copy flattens this evidence into a clean, cursive '**Daniel Skinner**'. To an archivist or forensic genealogist, the copy completely erases the graphological markers of age and authentic signature habits, proving why Document B is strictly a derivative, normalized representation.

3. Syntactic Ambiguity: 'Daughters' vs. 'Daughter'

By omitting the 's' in 'Daughters' on Page 2, the certified copy grammatically renders 'Daughter Lilly Land and Sarah Conklin' as a single joint entity. In historical estate litigation, such clerical slips often led to prolonged lawsuits over whether a bequest was a joint tenancy (with rights of survivorship) or a tenancy in common. The original text clearly protects their individual rights as 'Daughters' to an equal division of their mother Lillie's furniture.

IV. Archival Handling & Preservation Standards

Because both documents are written on early 19th-century handmade cotton and linen rag paper using iron gall ink, they are exceptionally durable but remain vulnerable to mechanical stress and environmental pollutants. The following standards should be observed for your personal research filing box:

- **The Bare-Hands Rule:** Avoid using white cotton gloves when handling these original sheets. Clean, dry hands provide superior tactile feedback, preventing micro-tears and corner creasing that gloves frequently cause.
- **Polyester Mylar Housing:** Keep each sheet stored individually in inert 4-mil polyester (Mylar D) or archival polyethylene sleeves. Never use standard PVC plastic, which releases harmful plasticizer gases.
- **Environmental Buffering:** Store the sleeved sheets flat inside a buffered, lignin-free archival box. Cotton and linen fibers benefit from alkaline buffering agents (e.g., calcium carbonate) which neutralize migrating environmental acids.
- **Microclimate Controls:** Keep your storage vault at a stable temperature (60-68°F) and a relative humidity of 35%-50% to prevent dry fiber-shattering on one end and mold growth or iron gall ink bleeding on the other.