



The Mystery of Sarah Magruder and Mary Pottenger

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The Mystery [Link/URL](#)

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When [Samuel Magruder](#), married to [Sarah](#), wrote his will^[1] in 1710, he named his two Magruder brothers as overseers -- and also his "brother" John Pottenger, married to [Mary](#). In the centuries that followed, attempts to identify the wives of Samuel Magruder and John Pottenger have revolved around this phrase. The phrase documents a kinship between the the families -- but how?

Who was Sarah Magruder, wife of Samuel? And who was Mary Pottenger, wife of John?

The Beall Sisters: A Prevalent Legend [Link/URL](#) [\[edit\]](#)

Elements of the Legend [Link/URL](#) [\[edit\]](#)

For over a century, the conventional answer was that Sarah and Mary were Beall or Bell sisters. At its core, the legend is comprised of five elements:

Element #1: Ninian Beall had two daughters, Mary and Sarah, with his first wife in Scotland, Elizabeth Gordon.

While it is possible that Ninian Beall, born about 1625, was married in the years before he left Scotland in 1652, no reliable documentation has been found for the existence of an Elizabeth Gordon or the births of any children of such a marriage in the years before 1652.

Samuel Magruder married his wife Sarah in 1686. If his Sarah was this Sarah Beall, born, say, 1650, she would have been aged 36 on her wedding day and proceeded to give birth to 12 children, the first in 1687 when she was aged 37, and the last in 1710, when she was 60. This seems to be a clear impossibility.

In fact, there's no evidence Ninian Beall ever had a daughter Sarah, yet even Edward Papenfuse of the Maryland Archives stated that "Samuel married Sarah (?-1734), daughter of Ninian Beale (ca. 1625-1717/18) and wife Ruth Moore. [\[2\]](#)

Serious researchers have debunked the speculation that Sarah was the daughter of Ninian Beall, because Ninian Beall's will does NOT list any bequests to Sarah Magruder, wife of Col. Magruder, nor to any of their children. Ninian's children are listed in his will [\[3\]](#) and there is no Sarah among them.

Ninian Beall did indeed have a daughter, Mary, but Mary was born in, say, 1690, more than a generation after Ninian left Scotland in 1652, and she married Andrew Hambleton, not John Pottenger.

Element #2: Alternatively, Mary and Sarah were not daughters of Ninian Beall, but nieces or other relatives.

In addition to genealogies showing Mary and Sarah as the daughters of Ninian, there are reports of [Sarah Beall](#), born 1658, son of James, who in turn was born say 1634, of Largo, Fife Co, Scotland. No documentation has been found for this Sarah, and she is not the Sarah who married Samuel Magruder.

Brice Clagett commented, "the notion that they were his nieces is pure guesswork. [\[4\]](#)

Element #3: Ninian Beall had access to a yacht, which brought kinspeople as immigrants. Mary and Sarah arrived on one of these trips, in 1690 along with Rev. Nathaniel Taylor, whom Ninian Beall sponsored

Mike Marshall provides a quote, source unknown, "When Capt Ninian Beall was Captain of Lord Baltimore's yacht, he was able to bring over several hundred kinspeople, many of them named BEALL. (Originally BELL in Scotland; the "A" was added here.) Mary and her sister Sarah were specifically named with about 25 other people broughtover at the time Ninian brought over Rev. Nathaniel Taylor to found the First Presbyterian Church, in Maryland." [\[5\]](#)

In fact, Ninian Beall was named lieutenant of Lord Baltimore's yacht, the "Loyal Charles of Maryland" but the year was 1676, and the occasion was to protect the Maryland government from an armed force involved with Bacon's Rebellion that year. [\[6\]](#) The record does not suggest any voyages on the ship to Scotland a decade and a half later.

Element #4: Skordas Reports the Bell Sisters Immigrating.

Skordas does report a Mary Bell and Sarah Bell immigrating to Maryland.

However, Mary Bell was transported in 1660 (Liber 10, folio 286 and Liber 10, folio 417) and there is no further trace of her.

[Sarah Bell](#) was transported in 1675. (Liber 18, folio 306). ^[7] She did not marry Samuel Magruder; she married [James English](#).

Element #5: The Beall sisters married into Maryland's elite -- Mary to John Pottenger and Sarah to Samuel Magruder.

A number of items in the record made the legend tempting.

- The 1710 will of [Samuel Magruder](#) refers to John Pottenger as brother, or brother in law. The relationship would make sense if the wives of Magruder and Pottenger were sisters.
- The idea that Samuel Magruder's wife Sarah was nee Beall probably originated with Samuel's having named a son Ninean Magruder, but that falls far short of proof. ^[8] (Ninean is a not-uncommon Scots saint's name; Col. Ninean Beall was the most prominent Scots settler in Maryland and a close neighbor, and presumably friend, of the Magruders.) ^[8]
- Sarah was believed to be the sister of Mary Bell, who married John Pottenger. That seemed to be corroborated by the fact that a Sarah Bell and a Mary Bell were transported into Maryland (although it seems most unlikely that they were sisters, since they arrived in Maryland 15 years apart).
- The idea that John Pottenger's wife Mary was nee Beall depends wholly on the assumption that Samuel Magruder married Sarah Beall, the known fact that Samuel Magruder and John Pottenger were brothers-in-law, and the speculation that Sarah and Mary Beall were sisters. ^[8]

If Sarah were daughter of Ninian, then in the marriage of Sarah's daughter Elizabeth Magruder and Ninian's son, Ninian Jr one would have the marriage of Sarah's daughter to Sarah's younger brother, a most unlikely combination!

History of the Beall Sisters Legend [Link/URL](#) [\[edit\]](#)

Origins

Step 1. Saunders suggests that because Sarah and Samuel named a son "Ninian", Ninian Beall must have been Sarah's father. ^[9]

The idea that Samuel Magruder's wife Sarah was nee Beall probably originated with Samuel's having named a son Ninean Magruder, but that falls far short of proof. (Ninean is a not-uncommon Scots saint's name; Col. Ninean Beall was the most prominent Scots settler in Maryland and a close neighbor, and presumably friend, of the Magruders.) The idea that John Pottenger's wife Mary was nee Beall depends wholly on the assumption that Samuel Magruder married Sarah Beall, the known fact that Samuel Magruder and John Pottenger were brothers-in-law, and the speculation that Sarah and Mary Beall were sisters. ^[8]

Step 2. Because John was referred to as "brother", or brother-in-law, Mary must be Sarah's sister. ^[9]

1879 Boyd, History of Montgomery County: Elizabeth Gordon

Fredric Saunders wrote that "I believe the part about Elizabeth Gordon and sons John and Thomas in Scotland is from Boyd's 1879 *History of Montgomery County, Maryland*. ^[9]

1900 Pamphlet: Sarah, Daughter of Ninian

Saunders also notes, "I have seen somewhere reference to either a speech or small pamphlet given/prepared for some society in MD around 1900 as I recall, in which the speaker/author made a list of "most accepted" children of Ninian. I know that the list included Margery, and that several years later the author retracted that when they realized that was an error. I don't recall if Sarah was on that list or not. If someone recognizes to what I am referring please post it. ^[9]

1907 Colonial Families: Sarah, wife of Samuel Magruder, daughter of Ninian

Saunders notes that Macpherson ^[10] has a section presumably submitted by F. M. M. BEALL, (born 1849) in which is listed his lineage. There he lists Samuel MAGRUDER's wife Sarah as a daughter of Ninian. He must have been taken in at that time by some "fiction writer," before changing his mind. ^[9]

1911 Historical Address: Sarah married Captain Samuel Magruder

I have a short book or pamphlet that was "Printed under the auspices of The Society of Colonial Wars in the District of Columbia" Jan. 27, 1911. It's titled "Colonel Ninian Beall" and subtitled "Historical Address on the Occasion of a Memorial Boulder to Colonel Ninian Beall Delivered by Caleb Clarke Magruder, Jr. in St. John's Church, Georgetown, D.C., Sunday, October 30, 1910". Page 26 states, "Traditionally Colonel Beall was the father of twelve children. He mentions but three of them in his will by which he devised about two thousand eight hundred acres of land. Undoubtedly he had previously conveyed property to other sons and daughters upon their reaching age or marrying." It has a brief explanation of the Calvert Co. records being destroyed by fire in 1882, then on page 27 is written, "The most acceptable list includes John, Thomas, died unmarried in England, Ninian, married Elizabeth____, Captain Charles, married Mary____, Colonel George, married Elizabeth Brooke, **Sarah, married Captain Samuel Magruder**, Hester, married Colonel Joseph Belt, Jane, married married Colonel Archibald Edmondstone, **Mary, married Andrew Hambleton**, Margery, married (firstly) Thomas Sprigg, 3d, and (secondly) Colonel Joseph Belt, her sister Hester's widow; Rachael, married ____ Offutt, James." ^[11]

It reads like a hagiography, typical of that time, mixing truth with tall-tales. I hope this was what you were looking for. ^[11]

1929 Fielder M. M. Beall: Invention of Imagination

Fielder M. M. Beall wrote in 1929, "Fiction writers made the following two statements: (1) that Ninian Bell married Elizabeth Gordon in Scotland, where she had two sons, John and Thomas; she died in Scotland; (2) That Ninian Beall had two daughters in Maryland named Sarah and Margery. These two inventions are of their imagination, as they offer no proof of accuracy." ^[12]

But the damage was done.

Elizabeth Magruder: An Unsuccessful Theory ^[edit]

 [Link/URL](#)

In order to account for John Pottenger as "brother", a theory was developed that John Pottenger, in addition to his wife Mary, married Elizabeth Magruder, sister of Samuel Magruder. The theory required that the marriage to Elizabeth take place either before or after John's marriage to Mary.

Before Mary

In a posting to a list, Fredric Saunders posted "a couple comments regarding a possible theoretical marriage of Elizabeth Magruder to John Pottenger": ^[13]

1. John POTTENGER emigrated as an apprentice on the ship *Maryland Merchant* 24 Sep. 1684.
 2. The Queen Anne's Parish records list the baptisms of the children of John POTTENGER and wife Mary beginning with Sarah 20 July 1688, so they had married by about Oct. 1687.
- Any theoretical marriage of John POTTENGER to Elizabeth MAGRUDER and her death would have been between those 1684 and 1687 dates.

After Mary

For the theories that John Pottinger / Pottenger secondly married Elizabeth Magruder, Cooper noted, " that won't work either."

1. Samuel Magruder called John Pottinger his brother when his will was written in 1710, so such a marriage of John Pottinger to Elizabeth Magruder would had to have

occurred before 1710.

2. John Pottenger's wife was still listed as Mary in 1717, when on 1 May 1717 John Pottenger sold to Thomas Ricketts part of the tract "Majors Lott". It was acknowledged the same day by "Mrs. Mary Pottenger the wife of the within named John Pottenger." [Prince George's Co., MD Deed Book E: 526-527, FHL microfilm 0,014,248.] ^[14]

Mary Mullikin: Another Unsuccessful Theory ^[edit]

 [Link/URL](#)

The Puzzles [Link/URL](#) ^[edit]

On 27 November 2001 Brice Claggett ^[4] stated, " I have concluded that

1. John Pottenger's wife was in fact Mary Mullikin, daughter of James and Mary Mullikin, Scots settlers in Calvert County, Maryland. The evidence is circumstantial but, in my opinion, conclusive.
2. It follows that John Pottenger and Samuel Magruder were not brothers-in-law through their wives or through a marriage of Pottenger to Magruder's sister. By a process of elimination it would appear that Magruder married Pottenger's sister. And indeed John Pottenger had a sister Sarah, baptized at Lambourn, Berkshire, on April 28, 1659, with no burial or marriage recorded for her there. I conclude that she came to Maryland with her brother and married Samuel Magruder.

Thus Brice Claggett ^[8] proposed that Sarah Magruder began life as Sarah Pottenger, sister of John, and that John Pottenger himself married Mary Mullikin, daughter of James and Mary Mullikin, Scots settlers in Calvert Co., Md.

Claggett proposed this to account for key puzzles:

Puzzle #1: Brother John Pottenger

As already indicated, Samuel Magruder referred to John Pottenger as "my brother, John Pottenger" in his will.

If John Pottenger married Mary Mullikin, the only way in which Magruder and Pottenger could be brothers (-in-law) is if Magruder's wife Sarah was Pottenger's sister, and as shown previously John Pottenger did have a sister Sarah who is otherwise unaccounted for. Nat Taylor asks how we can foreclose the possibility that Magruder's wife was a Mullikin. The answer is that Mary Mullikin named no daughter Sarah in her testamentary deed of 1667, and there seems no reason to believe that she had other children not mentioned. ^{[15][16]}

Sarah Magruder named two of her children, Mary and John, as a compliment to her sister Mary, and Mary's husband John Pottenger. Mary Pottenger named two of her children, Sarah and Samuel, as a compliment to her sister, Sarah and her husband Samuel Magruder.

Puzzle #2: Cozin Robert Pottenger

Second, John Demerall, Jr., in his 1725 will, referred to Robert Pottenger, son of John and Mary Pottenger, as "cozin". ^[17]

John and Mary Pottenger had a son Robert Pottenger, who, being the only man of that name in Maryland at the time, was obviously the "cosen" named in John Demall (jr.)'s will. Chronology indicates that Robert was a generation younger than John Demall jr., making an uncle-nephew relationship most likely. ^[15]

John Pottenger was the son of Robert Pottinger and wife Sarah; John was baptized 29 November 1661 at lambourne, Berkshire, England. ^[18] and ther other children were Sarah, John, Robert, Thomas, and Cisilla. ^[19]

Puzzle #3: Thomas Mullikin Next of Kin

Third, John Demall, Jr, in 1727 named Thomas Mullikin as next of kin. Thomas Mullikin

was a son of James Mullikin jr.^[15]

The Theory [Link/URL](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

To address these references, Brice Clagett developed a theory with four elements:

Element (1) Sarah Magruder began life as [Sarah Pottenger](#), [John Pottenger's](#) sister, baptized in Lambourne, Berkshire on August 28, 1659 with no burial or marriage recorded for her there. Clagett said, "I conclude that she came to Maryland with her brother and married Samuel Magruder." ^[8]

Element (2) [John Pottenger](#) himself married [Mary Mullikin](#), daughter of James and Mary Mullikin, Scots settlers in Calvert Co., MD. Clagett stated that "The evidence is circumstantial but, in my opinion, conclusive" adding that "It follows that John Pottenger and Samuel Magruder were not brothers-in-law through their wives or through a marriage of Pottenger to Magruder's sister.

Clagett supported his theory with several observations.

Observation 1

First of all, Mary Mullikin existed. Mary Mullikin of Calvert Co., MD., widow of John Demall (Demarell) and of James Mullikin, made a testamentary deed in 1667 in which she named her children John Demall (jr.) and James (jr.), Mary and Elizabeth Mullikin. Archives of MD. 57:216. ^[15]

Observation 2

Second, John Pottenger was a neighbor of James Mullikin:

- Petitioners: Edward Dawson, James Mullikin, Mathew Mackeby, and the executors of John Joyce. ^[20]
- To: Josiah Wilson, High Sheriff of PG Co and Mr. William Hutchinson, Surveyor.
- Bounds: Land of Maj. Nicholas Sewell, Edward Dawson, John Pottenger, James Mullikin, Thomas Lemarr, Matthew Mackeby.
- Her Majesties' Surveyor: William Hutchison.
- Signed: Jury included Thomas Swaringen, Richard Pile, Archibald Edmundson, Thomas Plumer (mark), Charles Hyatt, John Turner (mark), Anthony Draine, Soloman Rodery, Jonathan Simmons, Wm. Ray (mark), William Moor (mark), Thomas Wells.

Folio 63a, Indenture, 9 April 1703 From Edward Dawson, planter of PG Co and wife Mary; *To: John Pottenger, planter of PG County for 100 ac called **Ware**, part of tract called the Majors Lott in PG Co, laid out for Maj. Ninian Beall by patent of 800 ac lying in forks of West Branch of Patuxent River, bounded by land of James Millikin and John Joyce.

- Wit: Josiah Willson and William MOORE. ^[21]

Prince George County - June Court of 1706 established the resurvey of "Majors Lott" -

- June Court page 171B shows that Matthew Mackeboy had 150 acres, John Pottenger 200 acres, Thomas Lamar 200 acres, Edward Dawson 100 acres, John Joyce 50 acres and James MULLIKAN 100 acres. ^[16]

Observation 3

Third, no marriage or other post-1667 record has been found of Mary Mullikin, daughter of James and Mary, under that name. ^[15]

Element (3) This relationship would account for the brother reference.

Element (4) The relationships also account for the Robert reference. [John Demall \(jr.\)](#), in his will of 1725, named his "cosen" Robert Pottenger. MD. Calendar of Wills 6:36. (This reference was called to my attention many years ago by Douglas Richardson.) Mary Mullikin's will shows that John Demall (jr.) had no full brothers or sisters but did have three half-siblings through his mother's second marriage, to James Mullikin. ^[15]

Observation 4

An exhaustive study of the Pottengers in England fails to suggest any way in which Robert Pottenger could have been related to John Demall jr. through Robert's father. See Neil R. Thompson and Paul C. Reed, "The Ancestry of John Pottenger, Immigrant to Maryland in 1684," TAG 68:139 (1993).^[15]

Clagett concluded that the Pottenger-Demall relationship came through Robert Pottenger's mother. The obvious inference is that John Pottenger's wife, Mary, was Mary Mullikin, half-sister of John Demall jr.^[15]

Observation 5

Saunders reviewed a series of depositions in response to Brice Clagett's theory that Mary Pottenger was a Mullikin and Sarah Magruder was a Pottenger. The results of that search are at <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/BFALL/2002-03/1015045835>.^[22]

The Flaws  [Link/URL](#)[\[edit\]](#)

Research of mine in Feb. 2002 concluded that he overlooked that Robert POTTENGER's wife Ann EVANS was niece to DEMALL's wife, Mary EVANS. While CLAGETT's research could still be valid, and Mary a MULLIKIN and Sarah a POTTENGER, it cannot be considered as proved.^[23]

Fredric Z. Saunders initially accepted this theory: "Recent research of Brice Clagett (Nov. 2001) concluded that John POTTINGER married Mary MULLIKAN and Samuel MAGRUDER married Sarah POTTINGER, sister to John. This was based on relationships derived from John DEMALL in 1725 calling Robert POTTENGER, son of John and Mary his "cousin."18 (Brice Clagett, 27 Nov. 2001 post and 29 Nov. 2001 post to Rootsweb Gen-MEDIEVAL list) Research of mine in Feb. 2002 concluded that he overlooked that Robert POTTENGER's wife Ann EVANS was niece to DEMALL's wife, Mary EVANS. While CLAGETT's research could still be valid, and Mary a MULLIKIN and Sarah a POTTENGER, it cannot be considered as proved.27 ^[24]

The Pottenger Research Fraud  [Link/URL](#)[\[edit\]](#)

The Legendary material associated with Sarah Magruder is compounded with fraudulent material associated with John Pottinger.

You may want to read an article that appeared in **The American Genelogist** 68 (July 1993):139-145 that exposes that your source, Samuel Forrest Pottinger's manuscript which was unpublished during his lifetime, and now at the Filson Club was based on fraud.

He got taken by researchers he hired in England that invented non-existent records, and falsified others. John Pottenger's correct ancestry is given in the article.

Details on that at above site. ^[25]

The Withdrawal  [Link/URL](#)[\[edit\]](#)

Clagett undertook further research, however, and withdrew the theory, saying: I have concluded that my theory, posted Nov. 27 and 29, 2001, about the wives of Samuel Magruder and John Pottenger can't be sustained, for three reasons: ^[26]

1. There is no evidence that Sarah Pottenger, sister of John, came to Maryland.
2. Mary (Waylett, Demall, Mullikin) Williams did have a daughter Mary (whether by her 2d or 3d husband seems uncertain), but that daughter married (1) Richard Wallis, (2) John Hill, and chronology forbids that she also married John Pottenger.

John DUMALL's widow Mary wrote her will 20 Jan. 1739, prove 26 June 1740 in Prince George's County. [MD wills 22:220, FHL microfilm 0,012,849. ^[27]

Note this is incorrectly abstracted as DUVALL in the MD Cal. of wills. The will book copy is very clearly DUMALL] ^[27]

1. Research by Fredric Z. Saunders has convinced me that Robert Pottenger's wife, Ann Evans, was a niece of Mary Evans, wife of John Demall Jr., and that this adequately explains the reference in the latter's will to Robert Pottenger as "cousin."

Mary Mullikin is solidly confirmed as the daughter of Mary nee Waylett via her 1668 deed of gift, but there are no further records of Mary. Within a couple of years, Mary Waylett remarried to James Williams and had a daughter Mary Williams, suggesting that Mary Mullikin died in infancy. Mary Williams, whom Clagett confused with Mary Mullikin, however, lived to marry Willis and John Hill.

EDIT STOP

The Mills Sisters: A Likely Explanation ^[Link/URL] ^[edit]

In a 2005 Email Peter McManus noted that a variety of "official records show a close relationship between the Magruder, Mills and Willett families in colonial Maryland." ^[28]

Subsequent research has confirmed that the most likely home for Mary and Sarah, wives of John Pottenger and Samuel Magruder is the family of [William Mills](#), who was born 1628, England and died 26 Apr 1676, Calvert County, Maryland, and his wife [Tabitha Wright](#), born 1647, Metfield, Suffolk, England, and died 20 Jan 1700/01, Prince George's County, Maryland. William and Tabitha were married about 1666 in Calvert County, Maryland ^[29]

MOVE BACK TO MYSTERY -- PROBABLE DUPLICATE

Speculation on the birth family of Sarah, wife of Samuel Magruder (son of Alexander the immigrant) ^[30]

Official records show a close relationship between the Magruder, Mills and Willett families in colonial Maryland. ^[30]

1. At William Mills death in 1676, his will (Calvert County) names wife Tabitha, sons William Jr. and John and unnamed daughters. Overseers of the estate were Alexander Magruder, Samuel Tayler and Ninian Beall. One of the witnesses to the will was Richard Chaffey. ^[30] 2. In 1677 when Alexander Magruder died his will named almost the same set of overseers: Samuel Taylor, Ninian Beall and Nathaniel Truman. ^[30] 3. Tabitha, widow of William Mills, remarried to Thomas Blanford. Thomas Blanford's will of 1698 (Prince George's County) names as overseers: Samuel Magruder, William Mills (Tabitha's son), and Edward Willett (husband of Tabitha's daughter, Tabitha Mills). ^[30] 4. Richard Chaffey, a witness to the will of William Mills Sr. has his will proved in 1698 (PGC). Overseers were Samuel Magruder and Edward Willett. ^[30] 5. Samuel Magruder, Edward Willett and a John Smith were asked in the will of Thomas Sprigg Sr. to divide the residue of his estate in 1704 (PGC) Connections here somehow. Thomas Sprigg's daughter, Eleanor, married Thomas Hilleary. When Thomas Hilleary died, William Mills Jr signed the inventory as next of kin. ^[30] 6. Samuel Magruder's own will of 1711 (PGC) was witnesses by Edward Willett, Tabitha Willett (Edward's wife) and an Ann Smith ^[30] 7. Benjamin Berry, in his will of 1719 (PGC) named as overseers: Samuel Magruder Jr., Thomas Hilleary Jr., Edward Willett and John Clagett. Benjamin Berry's wife was Mary Hilleary, brother to Thomas Jr. ^[30] 9. Anchovie Hills, the home plantation of Alexander Magruder, bordered Trenant, the home plantation of William Mills Sr. ^[30] 10. Samuel and Sarah named a son William and had a grandson by their son Samuel, named William Mills Magruder. ^[30] To play devil's advocate, both Samuel Magruder and Edward Willett were PGC officials. It might be expected that they would be asked to witness county documents. Still, all wills where they were overseers together seem to have a family connection and neither acted as overseer alone in the probate records of the county. ^[30] So, I think, but can not prove, that Sarah, wife of Samuel Magruder, was the daughter of William Mills Sr. and his wife, Tabitha ^[30]

END MOVE

Building Blocks in the Mills Scenario [Link/URL](#) [\[edit\]](#)

Building Block #1: Samuel Magruder's Will: "Brother John Pottenger."

The verse which caused so much speculation: In his will, Samuel Magruder named as overseers three persons: his brother Alexander Magruder, his brother Nathaniel Magruder, and his **brother John Pottenger**. The will establishes kinship between these two families. [\[14\]](#)

In his will, Samuel MAGRUDER named as overseers his brother Alexander MAGRUDER, brother Nathaniel MAGRUDER, and brother John POTTINGER. Now, if Samuel's wife Sarah was Sarah MILLS, the most likely way that he would call John POTTINGER (POTTENGER) "brother" is if POTTINGER's wife Mary was a sister to Sarah. For the other theoretical possibilities, Samuel MAGRUDER had no sister Mary to be the wife of John POTTINGER. While John POTTINGER did have a sister named Sarah in England, there is no evidence that she ever went to America to be Samuel MAGRUDER's wife.

If Sarah was a MILLS, then it would also be likely that John POTTENGER's wife Mary was a MILLS.

Building Block 2: Martha Blanford.

John Pottenger's name appears in William Mills, Jr.'s administration account in 1706 which allowed a payment to "John Pottinger for the use of Martha Blanford." [\[31\]](#) This raised questions as to why Martha Blanford should need a payment and what the connection with John Pottenger might be.

In Thomas Thomas Blanford's will, his children were probably named in order of their birth because that was the custom in those days. If that is the case - then Martha was the youngest. If the children were born about every two years after Tabitha (widow Mills) married Thomas Blanford, then Martha would have been born sometime around 1686 to about 1690. An implication for the payment to John Pottinger for Martha Blanford would be that Martha was living with his family and he was being reinstated for his expenses from the estate. Since both of her parents were deceased, a logical place for Martha, a single, 16 to 20 year old young female, would have been with one of her [half]-sisters. [\[14\]](#)

2. William MILLS, Jr.'s administration account in 1706 showed a payment to "John POTTINGER for the use of Martha BLANFORD." [MD Inventories and Accounts 26:136] If the children of Thomas BLANFORD were named in order in his will, Martha was the youngest. If the children were born about every two years after Tabitha (widow MILLS) married Thomas BLANFORD, then Martha was probably born about 1686-1690. One implication of the payment to John POTTINGER for Martha BLANFORD would be that Martha was living with his family. With both her parents dead, a logical place that Martha, a single age 16-20 year old female, would live would be with one of her [half]-sisters under this theory. [\[29\]](#)

Building Block #3: Martha Blanford's family

A review of Martha Blanford's family revealed complex relationships.

1. Martha's mother was [Tabitha Wright](#). When Tabitha married Thomas Blanford in 1678, she was the widow of William Mills and the mother of five small children, one of the unborn at his death.
2. William Mills in his will named his two sons -- and mentioned his three daughters without naming them.
3. At William Mills death in 1676, his will (Calvert County) names wife Tabitha, sons William Jr. and John and unnamed daughters. Overseers of the estate were Alexander Magruder, Samuel Tayler and Ninian Beall. One of the witnesses to the will was Richard Chaffey. [\[28\]](#)
4. Tabitha, widow of William Mills, remarried to Thomas Blanford. Thomas Blanford's will of 1698 (Prince George's County) names as overseers: Samuel Magruder, William

Mills (Tabitha's son), and Edward Willett (husband of Tabitha's daughter, Tabitha Mills). [28]

5. Samuel Magruder's own will of 1711 (PGC) was witnessed by Edward Willett, Tabitha Willett (Edward's wife) and an Anne Smith [28]

6. When Thomas BLANFORD's inventory was taken, the appraisers were Samuel MAGRUDER and John POTTENGER. Under the theory, BLANFORD would have been the step-father of both their wives. [MD Inventories and Accounts 16:108] [29]

7 When Thomas Blanford's inventory was taken, the appraisers were given as Samuel Magruder and John Pottenger. Thomas Blanford had married Tabitha Wright, widow of William Mills, and was the stepfather of Tabitha's children. If Sarah and Mary, wives of Samuel Magruder and John Pottenger, were Tabitha's daughters, Thomas Blanford would have been their stepfather. [32] To have been appointed an appraiser of an estate usually meant there was a close kinship - such as a parent or brother. [14]

8 William Mills, Jr.'s administration account in 1706 allowed a payment to "John Pottenger for the use of Martha Blanford." [MD Inventories and Accounts 26:136] In Thomas Blanford's will, his children were probably named in order of their birth because that was the custom in those days. If that is the case - then Martha was the youngest. If the children were born about every two years after Tabitha (widow Mills) married Thomas Blanford, then Martha would have been born sometime around 1686 to about 1690. An implication for the payment to John Pottenger for Martha Blanford would be that Martha was living with his family and he was being reinstated for his expenses from the estate. Since both of her parents were deceased, a logical place for Martha, a single, 16 to 20 year old young female, would have been with one of her [half]-sisters. [14]

9 Key to the identification of Mary's Parents was an analysis by Peter McManus focused on the note in the will of Tabitha Wright Blanford that Tabitha's youngest daughter, Martha, in her late teens at the time, would be taken care of by John Pottenger. This established John Pottenger as a family member.

Blanford's will noted three daughters, all unnamed. The puzzle was solved if the three daughters were Mary, Sarah -- and Martha, the youngest, making Mary's husband John Pottenger the brother-in-law and an obvious custodian for Martha until she reached majority.

Building Block #4 Multiple Association Documents/Overseers

1. In 1677 when Alexander Magruder died his will named almost the same set of overseers: Samuel Taylor, Ninian Beall and Nathaniel Truman. [28]

2. Richard Chaffey, a witness to the will of William Mills Sr. has his will proved in 1698 (PGC). Overseers were Samuel Magruder and Edward Willett. [28]

3. Samuel Magruder, Edward Willett and a John Smith were asked in the will of Thomas Sprigg Sr. to divide the residue of his estate in 1704 (PGC) Connections here somehow. Thomas Sprigg's daughter, Eleanor, married Thomas Hilleary. When Thomas Hilleary died, William Mills Jr signed the inventory as next of kin. [28]

4. Benjamin Berry, in his will of 1719 (PGC) named as overseers: Samuel Magruder Jr., Thomas Hilleary Jr., Edward Willett and John Clagett. Benjamin Berry's wife was Mary Hilleary, brother to Thomas Jr. [28]

5. Anchovie Hills, the home plantation of Alexander Magruder, bordered Trenton, the home plantation of William Mills Sr. [28]

6. Samuel and Sarah named a son William and had a grandson by their son Samuel, named William Mills Magruder. [28]

Building Block #5: Thomas Blanford's Will and Estate

Blanford's will noted three daughters, all unnamed. The puzzle was solved if the three daughters were Mary, Sarah -- and Martha, the youngest, making Mary's husband John Pottenger the brother-in-law and an obvious custodian for Martha until she reached majority.

28 April 1698: Samuel Magruder was appointed overseer of the estate of Thomas

Blanford ^[33]

When Thomas Blanford's inventory was taken, the appraisers were given as Samuell Magruder and John Pottenger. To have been appointed an appraiser of an estate usually meant there was a close kinship - such as a parent or brother. ^[14] Thomas Blanford had married Tabitha Wright, widow of William Mills, and was the stepfather of Tabitha's children. If Sarah and Mary, wives of Samuel Magruder and John Pottenger, were Tabitha's daughters, Thomas Blanford would have been their stepfather. ^[34]

Disambiguation ^[edit]

Disambiguation: Mary Beall ^[edit]

Several profiles for Mary have overlapping characteristics causing confusion. See **The Mystery of Sarah Magruder** for more detail.

- [Mary Bell](#) (Bell-24612), born about 1640, was transported across the Atlantic in 1660 ^[7] and presumably died in the Province of Maryland. No further information has been found for her.
- [Mary Beall](#) (Beall-332), was supposedly born 1657 in Scotland, daughter of Ninian Beall, and then married [John Pottenger](#) (Pottenger-15). Everything about this Mary is fictitious. **This profile has been submitted for Disproven Existence status.**
- [Mary Mills-4616](#) (Mills-4616), born 1666 in the Province of Maryland, is probably the actual wife of [John Pottenger](#) (Pottenger-15).
- [Mary Beall](#) (Beall-141), born 1690, Calvert (now Prince George's) County, d. 22 Aug 1719, was the daughter of [Ninian Beall-75](#) who was born 1625 Fifeshire. This Mary Beall married [Andrew Hamilton 2824](#) born 1655 and was mother of eight Hamilton Children.

Disambiguation: Sarah Beall ^[edit]

The following profiles can be confused with each other:

- [Sarah Bell-15180](#) born 1655. Immigrant, recorded by Skordas. Records under Sarah Bell and Sarah Beall. married James English, had daughter Elizabeth English.
- [Sarah Beall-849](#) born 1656 married [Francis Watts-5512](#). Currently unsourced. Married [Francis Watts](#), who has better documentation. No children linked.
- [Sarah Beall-1027](#), born 1656 Fife, Scotland. No data. Unsourced. Birth in Fife would reflect the belief that she was Ninian Beall's daughter, but he had no daughter Sarah. **Propose for Disproven Existence.**
- [Sarah Mills](#) born 1669. Wife of [Samuel Magruder](#), born 1654.
- **The Mystery of Sarah Magruder and Mary Pottenger** discusses the various theories regarding parents of Samuel Magruder's wife Sarah which were previously proposed.

Reference Documents ^[edit]

William Mill Will, 1676 ^[edit]

- To wife Tabitha, execx, life interest in estate. Mill, William, Calvert County. 13th Mch, 1676; 26th Apr., 1676. ^[35]
- To eld son William and hrs, Dunbafre" and "Faddington"
- To 2nd John and hrs, and unborn child if male, "Trenent". In event of death of any of afsd sons, survivor or survivors to inherit deceased's portion equally.
- daus. (unnamed) Personalty.
- Overseers: Alex Magrouder, Saml Tayler, Ninian Bell.
- Test: Robt. Lindsay, Robt Fowkes, Richd Chafey. 5.23

Thomas Blanford Will, 1698 [Link/URL](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

Blanford, Thomas, Prince George's County, 18th Nov., 1695; 28th Apr, 1698 [\[36\]](#)

- Wife Tabitha, extx, and sole leatee of estate during life
- To 5 child, viz, Thomas, Jean, Elisa, Grace, and martha, estate at death of wife afsd.
- Overseers: Sam'l Magruder, Wm. Mills, Edward Willett
- Test: Sam'l Copeland, Francis Haget, Geo Jackson. 6.77

Ninian Beall's Will 1717 [Link/URL](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

Beall, Ninian, Prince George's Co., 15th Jan., 1717; 28th Feb., 1717.

- To son Geo. and hrs., 480 A., "Rock of Dumbarton," on Rock Creek, and personalty.
- To son Charles and hrs., 1,000 A., "Dunn Back," on Wattes Creek, s. side Gr. Choptank, and personalty.
- To granddau. Mary Beall and hrs. (dau. of son Ninian, deceased), after payment of legacies, ½ of personal est., also that part of "Bacon Hall" lying on s. side of road to "Mt. Calvert," and to have her share at marriage.
- To grandson Samuel Beall, ex., and hrs., water mill on Collington Branch and remaining part of "Bacon Hall," providing that at 21 yrs. he makes over to afsd. Mary Beall a tract of land called "Sams Beginning" on s. side of sd. road to "Mt. Calvert." Shd. he die before he be of age to convey land afsd., then the entire tract of "Bacon Hall" is bequeathed to sd. granddau. Mary Beall.
- To son-in-law Andrew Hambleton, personalty.
- To son-in-law Joseph Belt and hrs., 245 A., "Good Luck," he to allow to heirs of testator 4,000 lbs. tobacco.
- Two grandchildren of deceased son Ninian to be cared for and educated.
- Test. directs that a tract of 400 A., "The Recovery," in the Freshes of Patuxent R., at head of Weston Branch, and adj. land bequeathed to Joseph Belt, be sold for payment of debts.
- Sons Charles, Joseph Belt and Geo. to aid executor until he arrives at age of 21 yrs.
- Test: John Busey, Rebecca Getward, Ed. Willet. [\[3\]](#)

Samuel Magruder's Will 1710 [Link/URL](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

In the name of God, Amen. I, Samuel Magruder of Prince Georges County in the Province of Maryland --- [\[1\]](#)

- Impremus, it is my will and pleasure in this my last Will and Testament that all my funeral charges and also all other just Debts due to and from me to any person or persons by Bill or otherwise howsoever be fully and honestley paid without Suit or Settler of Law by my well beloved wife Sary Magruder whom I do ... and appoint and ordaine to be my sole Executor over my whole estate.
- First I give and bequeath unto my beloved wife Sary Magruder my now Dwelling plantation and the Land belonging unto it during her whole life to ...have ... and make use of to the best of her advantage and after her decease I give and bequeath unto my son Samuel Magruder the said plantation with two hundred acres of Land belonging to it being the uppermost part of a tract of land called "Good Luck" to him and his heirs forever.
- Item: I give and bequeath unto my son Samuel Magruder one hundred acres of Land it being called by the name of "Magruders Delight" and the plantation belonging to it unto him and his heirs forever.
- Item: I give and bequeath unto my son Ninian Magruder a plantation that was my Brother John Magruder's and three hundred acres of Land belonging unto it being the uppermost part of a tract of land called "Alexandria" unto him and his heirs forever.
- Item: I give and bequeath unto my son John Magruder the tract of land called "Dumblane" with the plantation and two hundred and fifty acres of land belonging unto it unto him and his heirs forever.

- Item: I give and bequeath unto my son James Magruder the plantation that John Colle lives on and three hundred acres of land belonging unto it unto him and his heirs forever.
- Item: I give and bequeath unto my son William Magruder all that tract of Land called "Turkey Cock Branch" with one hundred and ninety-three acres of Land belonging unto it unto him and his heirs forever.
- Item: I give and bequeath unto my son Alexander Magruder one hundred acres of land it being part of a track of Land called "Good Luck" unto him and his heirs forever.
- Item: I give and bequeath unto my son Alexander Magruder the eighth part of the Pertuxson Merchant Ship unto him and his heirs forever.
- Item: I give and bequeath unto my son Alexander Magruder tenn (hhds) of Tobacco for to be shipped home this yeare and with the produce for to buy a piece of land for him.
- Item: I give and bequeath unto my son Nathaniel Magruder one hundred acres of land it being part of a track of Land called "Good Luck" unto him and his heirs forever.
- Item: I give and bequeath unto my son Nathaniel Magruder the eighth part of the Purtuxson Merchant Ship unto him and his heirs forever.
- Item: I give and bequeath unto my son Nathaniel Magruder tenn (hhds) of Tobacco for to be shipped home this yeare and with the produce for to buy a piece of land for him.
- Item: My will is that if one other of my sons Samuel, Ninian, John, James, William, Alexander or Nathaniel Magruder shall dye without issue that then the deceased his land to be equally divided between the other six brothers.
- Item: my will is that my five sons John, James, William, Alexander and Nathaniel Magruder shall work for themselves at the age of sixteen years.
- Item: I will and bequeath one third part of my personal estate unto my loveing wife Sary Magruder.
- Item: I will and bequeath unto my two darters Elizabeth Magruder and Sary Magruder ten pound for to buy them a gowne and petty cotte.
- Item: I will and bequeath unto my five sons John, James, William, Alexander and Nathaniel Magruder and my three darters Verlinder, Mary and Eliner Magruder the two thirds of my Personale Estate unto them and their heirs forever.
- Item: I give and bequeath unto my sons Samuel, Ninian and John Magruder one...

Will Summary

23 Nov. 1710: Will, probated 16 April 1711 [\[37\]](#)

- to wife, Sarah, dwelling plantation and land, at her death to son Samuel (200 acres GOOD LUCK)
- to son, Samuel, 100 acres called MAGRUDER'S DELIGHT
- to son Ninian, 300 acres ALEXANDRIA
- to son John, 250 acres of DUMBLANE
- to son James: 300 acres - land that John Colle lives on
- to son William 193 acres of TURKEY COCK BRANCH
- to son Alexander, 100 acres of GOOD LUCK, 1/8 part of the Pertuxson Merchant Ship, 10 hhds of tobacco to be shipped this yeare and with the produce for to buy a piece of land for him.
- to son Nathaniel 100 acres, part of GOOD LUCK, 1/8 part of the Putuxson Merchant Ship, 10 hhds of tobacco to be shipped...
- 1/3 part of personal estate to loving wife, Sarah two daughters Elizabeth and Sarah, £10 to buy a gowne and petty cotte
- 2/3 part of personal estate to children: John, James, William, Alexander, Nathaniel, Verlinder, Mary, Eliner
- to sons Samuel, Ninian and John one lot at Marlborough Town containing 1 acres of land, lot #48
- to sons, James, William, Alexander and Nathaniel one lot in Marlborough Town, lot #2
- overseers: brothers Alexander and Nathaniel Magruder, **(brother) John Pottenger**
- wit: Edward Willett, Tabitha Willett, Anne Smith

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Michael Kearney

Interesting, but confusing. A graphic of these trees would have been helpful. Under building block #4 there is a mention of a John Smith. Can I assume that this is the man who marries Jane Prater and leaves his vast holdings to his step children and his nephew John Bowie?

[posted](#) Nov 28, 2020 by [Michael Kearney](#)

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CE Boggus

Will the real Sarah Beall/Mills/ Pottenger Magruder please stand up! For decades I was proud to claim Ninian Beall as my 8th great-grandfather. While researching family trees on Rootsweb, I was dismayed to find some researchers that claimed alternate fathers for Sarah, spouse of Col. Samuel Magruder (1660-1711), my 7th great-grandfather. After much consideration of the above information, which repeats research which I have encountered elsewhere, I reluctantly give up my dear Ninian and anxiously await

confirmation of my 7th-great-grandmother's real father.

By the way, Col. Samuel Magruder's mother was also named Sarah, and, like her daughter-in-law, her parentage is also unknown.

[posted](#) Oct 16, 2020 by [CE Boggus](#)

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