

The Passage

Bulletin of the National Society of the Descendants of Colonial Indentured Servants

Number 2

July 2021

Just ARRIVED, at LEEDS Town,
the Ship JUSTITIA, with about one
Hundred healthy

S E R V A N T S,

Men, Women, and Boys, among which are many Tradesmen, viz. Blacksmiths, Shoemakers, Tailors, House Carpenters and Joiners, a Cooper, a Bricklayer and Plaisterer, a Painter, a Watchmaker and Glazier, several Silversmiths, Weavers, a Jeweller, and many others.

The Sale will commence on *Tuesday* the 2d of *April*, at *Leeds Town*, on *Rappahannock River*. A reasonable Credit will be allowed, giving Bond, with approved Security, to

THOMAS HODGE.

* * I have an assorted Cargo of GOODS from *London*, suitable for the *Season* (about two Thousand Pounds Sterling worth) which I will lump off, on reasonable Terms, at a Credit with good Security.

R UN away, the 29th of November last, at night, from the subscriber, living on Mill-creek, Leacock township, Lancaster county, a servant lad, named PATRICK RINZ, about 17 years of age, a down look, dark red hair; had on, when he went away, a dark green fulled lincey jacket, a whitish under jacket, coarse trowlers, black ribbed stockings, newly footed, a pair of new shoes, with thongs, a half worn wool hat. Whoever takes up said servant, and secures him in any goal, so that his master may get him again, shall have FOUR DOLLARS reward, and reasonable charges, paid by JOHN WILSON. G

18th century Pennsylvania newspaper advertisements



4th General Meeting
Friday, April 15, 2022 - Noon
The Army & Navy Club, Washington DC



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A Note from the President General

Welcome to this new issue of *The Passage!* Your officers hope you'll enjoy all the items of interest published here. There are some wonderful articles about several indentured servants as well as an article about indentured servants in the Chesapeake written by the Executive Director of Historic Pemberton Hall Foundation, the charity we've been supporting since our inception.



We are glad to get back to a post-COVID restricted world and enjoy once again meeting in April in Washington, D.C. The details for that meeting and our reservation form is on the last page. We will be sharing the luncheon with our Descendants of Early Postmasters friends.

Enjoy!

Janet Butler Walker, President General

The Passage: Bulletin of the National Society of the Descendants of Colonial Indentured Servants is published yearly by the Society. It is a perquisite of membership.

Submissions should be sent by January 31st to the editor, Sumner Gary Hunnewell, 2030 San Pedro Drive, Arnold, MO 63010. HildifonsTook@prodigy.net.

Indentured Servant Emigration to the Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century

by Pat Taylor, Executive Director, Pemberton Hall Foundation, Salisbury, Maryland

According to James Horn in *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century* one of the most important factors influencing the social and economic development of Chesapeake society in the seventeenth century was the prolonged influx of English immigrants. Unlike New England, where most settlers arrived as families within the span of a single decade, Virginia and Maryland continued to receive large numbers of single men and women immigrants throughout most of the century. They provided labor necessary for the production of the colonies' staple, tobacco and they replenished a declining population that was unable to reproduce itself by natural means until the last quarter of the century. Without sustained immigration the Chesapeake colonies would have failed.

Between 70 percent and 85 percent of emigrants to the Chesapeake in the seventeenth century arrived as servants. Whether the immigrants were free or non-free, they were influenced by what are called Push and Pull factors. Push factors are those reasons why people wished to leave their homeland; war, depression, and political or religious persecution. The third, fourth, and fifth decades of the seventeenth century had many social and economic difficulties in England which started the first colonization of America. The population and prices were rising, and the number of unemployed also increased. Fewer people were able to work on the farm. The rise and fall of wheat production were crucial factors in forcing people to migrate. Usually, the decision to emigrate came not when a person left his home village or town but after he arrived in one of the England's large towns and ports. The most common factor that uprooted people was the lack of work. Pull factors, the reasons why settlers wanted to come to a certain area, include the possibility of making a good living, of enjoying religious and political freedom and obtaining cheap land. In the book entitled "Myne Owne Ground Race & Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore 1640-1676" written by T.H. Breen & Stephen Innes emphasizes the importance of owning "myneowne ground." Property made a difference. Property provided a livelihood. A man could work for his benefit not for someone else's benefit.

Lack of detailed records for the extended time that servants arrived in the Chesapeake makes learning specific data about the names, sexes, ages, skills or occupation difficult to determine. Approximately five thousand servants emigrated from Bristol to the Chesapeake from 1654 to 1686. It appears that the former occupation of a servant played no part in determining where he went in the colonies. They were drawn from common laborers, skilled artisans, yeoman, farmers, unskilled and even a gentleman with no land. Most of the indentured servants were young and had acquired little or no personal wealth or they would have paid their own passage. Men and boy servants were more attractive to merchants and planters because their labor potential was greater than that of women.

Indentured servants, people who sold all their rights to their labor for a period of up to seven years in exchange for passage to Maryland or Virginia and a chance to be free, worked the tobacco fields side by side with their masters. Servitude involved a formal, legally enforceable agreement. However, the indentured servants of the seventeenth century were not slaves, but for a portion of their lives they were property. They could be bought, sold, and pass on to the planters' heirs. They insisted upon being treated as human beings. Virginia law allowed mistreated servants to petition the county court which seemed to provide some legal protection. Given the incessant demands of tobacco cultivation and the shortage of labor in the area, white servitude took hold of the labor system.

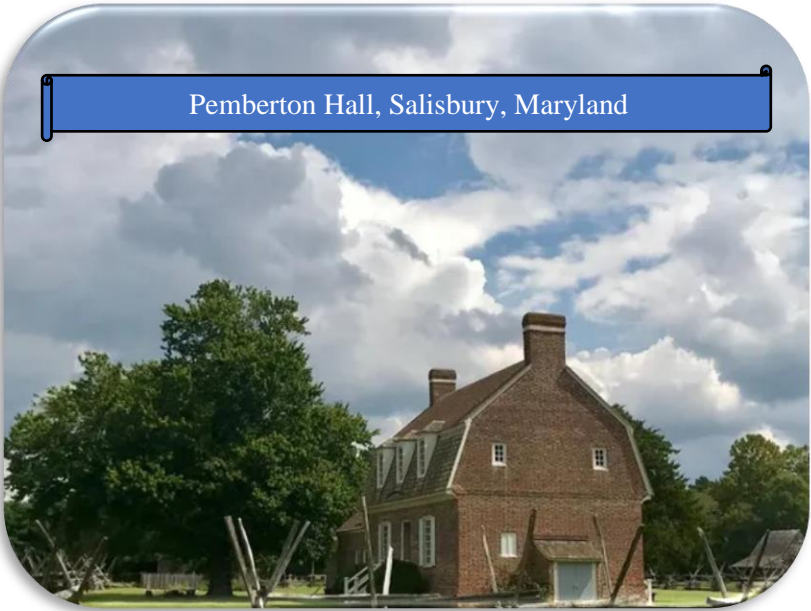
One study reported many of the small-scale masters transported servants to America from Bristol between 1654 and 1660, of which slightly over a third of the Chesapeake masters described themselves as mariners, a fifth were merchants and under a tenth were planters. About 80 percent of the servants were contracted by small merchants and traders who sent between one and nine servants. However, servants who emigrated to Virginia and Maryland were usually indentured between July and September and would sail a month or two later. This timing fit with the annual rhythm of the tobacco trade. Whether the servant went to the Chesapeake or to the West Indies largely depended on the demand for labor in these colonies. Increasingly the West Indies relied on the labor of the enslaved people so the number of servants transported to Virginia and Maryland steadily increased. The rate of emigration to the Chesapeake and the price of tobacco were related. High tobacco prices motivated merchants to recruit servants, and low prices made merchants reluctant to invest in labor and lowered the rate of immigration. During the seventeenth century, mariners, merchants, and small traders involved in the servant trade were responsible for supplying Virginia and Maryland with their most valuable import: people.

After 1690, the flow of indentured servants from England slowed because of the improvement in the economy and the return of stability to the social condition. After 1700 Maryland and Virginia became flooded with enslaved people from Barbados and Africa, which lessened the demand of the white indentured servant. The enslaved people were more profitable than indentured servants and their labor and offspring had no time limit. In 1707 there were scarcely 2,000 enslaved people in the Eastern Shore but over 17,000 by 1755.

The death of a father or both parents resulting in a loss of economic support was another inducement to go to America, and many servants arrived in the Chesapeake without contracts. According to family tradition both of these statements are true for Samuel Handy who arrived from England about 1665/1666 without a contract at the age of 15 and immediately indentured himself to Lieft. Coll. William Water/Waters to remain with Waters until his majority, the condition being that Waters would pay all expenses of the voyage across the Atlantic. Col. William Waters was one of the major landholders and most prominent residents of the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and beginning in the 1660s, he also received land grants in Maryland on the Annessex River in Somerset County. Waters is granted five hundred and fifty acres of land for transporting 11 servants into Virginia. Samuel Handy is listed as one of those

servants. In the 1667 tithable list for Northampton County, Virginia, “Leift. Coll. Wm Water” is listed with 12 tithable people including himself, “Sam: Hande,” 8 other males and two Negroes (Wm and Besse). Handy appears on the list of William Waters until 1675. By law, an immigrant under the age of sixteen without terms of servitude previously arranged, when indentured in Virginia, would serve until the age of twenty-four years. Court records indicate that he was 15 years of age when he arrived. If he was 15 in 1666, he would have reached the age of twenty-four in 1675.

Pemberton Hall, Salisbury, Maryland



Samuel Handy moved from Virginia to Maryland about 1676, and law and custom would have received a minimum of goods, such as, tools, clothing, provision, and perhaps livestock. He registered a Livestock Mark in 1678 and another in 1679. Samuel Handy and Mary Sewell were married in 1679 by Mr. David Richardson, minister. He married well. Mary Sewell was the daughter of Thomas and Jane Lowe Sewell. Jane married Stephen Bond after Thomas’s death. Bond died in 1675 without issue and left his entire estate to his wife Jane, at whose death the property was to descend to his daughter-in-law,” (step-daughter), Mary Sewell. Samuel was engaged in cutting of tobacco which was regularly shipped to England in his own vessels. At Handy’s death in 1721 he had accumulated at least two thousand acres, 15 Negroes, two thousand pounds of tobacco and a sloop called Samuel and Mary. Although he owned many parcels of land, he built his home on the property “Armstrong’s Purchase” and “Armstrong’s Lot” which his wife Mary inherited in 1681. His home has had many additions and remodels, but the back hall, a remnant of the original one-room, is believed to have been built by Samuel Handy. At least four of his sons also married well by marrying daughters of the wealthiest men in their area.

Andrew Heath

Indentured Servant in Pennsylvania and New Jersey

by Jo Ellen Heil

A native of Staffordshire, England, teenager Andrew Heath* arrived in the New World on September 28, 1682, aboard the vessel *Friend's Adventure* as she sailed up the Delaware River into Bucks County, Pennsylvania Colony.

Andrew was bound to William and Jane Heath Yardley. A Quaker minister, William had been imprisoned in England for his faith. Jane had the comfort of relatives on board, including three sons, two sisters and a brother. Evidence suggests that Jane was Andrew's aunt.

William was to provide his servant with "meate drink & apparrel & passage & land accustomed" for four years while the family settled into Lower Makefield Township (now Yardley, Pennsylvania). Andrew was released on "the 29th day of the 7th month 1686" and became a free man, complete with wages and 50 acres of land in Bucks County.

Andrew wasted no time making a new life for himself in Pennsylvania, but even greener pastures awaited him in New Jersey Colony. In 1699 he purchased 420 acres of land "near the falls of the Delaware" in Hopewell (now Trenton), then an additional 400 acres in Upper Freehold Township (1701), 1,700 acres in Hunterdon County (1702), 200 acres in Gloucester County (1708), 200 acres on the Delaware River (1713) and 472 acres alongside that the following year.



William Penn
Andrew Heath arrived on
Penn's flotilla in 1682

Andrew married twice. He wed his first wife, widow Elizabeth Barret Venables, in 1690 at around age 25. Elizabeth had been a passenger on the *Friend's Adventure* with her first husband and her daughters Joyce and Frances. Andrew and Elizabeth added four children of their own: John, Elizabeth, Andrew and Sarah. All were born in Amwell Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey.

When Elizabeth died between 1696 and 1699, Andrew had six children to care for. In 1701 he married widow Hannah Buckingham Clark, who brought three more children into the family: Daniel, Samuel and Hannah. The couple then had two children of their own: Richard (my ancestor line) and Martha (born around 1708, died under age two). Their blended flock now totaled 11 children.

As a yeoman, Andrew was active in civic life. On November 2, 1703, he was appointed as an official interpreter to the Leni-Lenape Indians by Burlington County's

Council of Proprietors. Instructed to go with a small delegation to “the Indians above the Falls, in order to have the tract of land lately purchased of the Indians marked forth,” the representatives were to conduct negotiations at “Nimhammoe's wigwam...to pay him what part of the goods already procured...and to do what else may be necessary toward the said purchase.”

Andrew was also busy in religious life. In 1703 he was one of four men who purchased two acres of land in Hopewell to build a Protestant Church and burial ground. In April 1705 permission was granted by the Governor of New Jersey “to operate said church, known as Christ Church.” A few months later, Andrew had John, Elizabeth, Andrew and Sarah baptized by the Rev. John Talbot, a circuit-riding Episcopal priest. [In 1725, Hopewell Church was absorbed into St. Michael's Church in Trenton.]

Nearing 60, Andrew wrote his will on January 3, 1716/1717. Proved on December 29, 1720, it reflected both a generosity of heart and a heartbreaking revelation. He provided for his wife Hannah, then gave large portions of land to his sons, solid monetary bequests to his daughters and additional gifts to his stepchildren, in-laws, and grandchildren.

His estate had been inventoried on October 3, 1720. “Two old Bibles and other books” were valued at £1. “Bonds and bills” totaling £85 were due by over a dozen friends and neighbors. And, nestled between the listing of Andrew's Bibles and his bills, was this note: “a negro man £22.10.” A human being listed as property. Unnamed. His age, skills and background unknown.

Andrew Heath. An indentured servant who became a slaveholder. A teenager who became a father to 11 children. A boy from Staffordshire who talked with the Leni-Lenape. A Quaker from England who became an Anglican colonist. For better or worse, he was my 7th great-grandfather.

*Andrew's name appeared several times in Bucks County Court Records as a witness. In 1685 when he testified against a neighbor, who sold whiskey to an Indian, his age was recorded as “about 20 years.” It is our only clue as to his birthdate (ca. 1665 - 1666).

Lineage Society Links:

Andrew's service as an interpreter for the Council of Proprietors (Burlington, New Jersey) in 1703 qualified him as an approved ancestor in the Order of Descendants of Native Americans and Friends (15 June 2019).

Andrew's daughter-in-law, Sarah Willson of Chesterfield, Burlington County, New Jersey, is an approved ancestor in the National Society Descendants of Early Quakers (28 November 2019).

Andrew's arrival on the *Friends Adventure* qualifies him as an approved ancestor in The Welcome Society of Pennsylvania.

Resources:

Percy W. L. Adams, *Notes on Some North Staffordshire Families* (Tunstall, Staffordshire, England: Edwin H. Eardley, 1930)

J.P. Chambers, "Early Germans of New Jersey" (Dover, NJ: 1895)

William Nelson, *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey*, Vol. 21 (Paterson, NJ: Press Printing and Publishing Co., 1899)

"New Jersey Abstract of Wills, 1670-1817" & "New Jersey Calendar of Wills" (ancestry.com)

Hamilton Schuyler, *A History of St. Michael's Church, Trenton* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1926)

Walter Lee Sheppard, Jr., comp., *Passengers & Ships Prior to 1684* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1970)

James P. Snell, *History of Hunterdon & Somerset Counties, New Jersey* (Philadelphia: Everts & Peck, 1881)

Be sure to check out our website

Indenturedservants.org

*As new members join, it is updated with new resources for
research and qualifying ancestors!*

Also keep up to date by joining our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/colonialindenturedservants/>

John Melson & Elizabeth Penter/Painter

Indentured Servants in the mid-1660's Virginia

by Janet Walker Butler, President General NSDCIS

A man in Accomack County, Virginia named John Renny, formerly an indentured servant (1652), brought several men and women as servants to the colonies so that he could get Headright Grants on them. Renny brought Elizabeth Penter, age 15, in 1663/4 and John Melson, age 19, in 1665 from England. These two were kept by him for indentured servants on his land. Indentured servants were not allowed to marry until their service was completed. Unfortunately, Elizabeth Penter became pregnant by John Melson and they were indicted by a Grand Jury for fornication. They appeared for trial and were convicted on 17 May 1669. Fortunately, and unexpectedly, John Renny's wife Mary agreed to pay their fines and court costs. This meant that they didn't have to endure the corporal punishment usually given to "criminals" which was being stripped and tied to the whipping post and lashed for so many times, or "until the blood ran."

Because John had fathered a "bastard child" with Elizabeth, he was required to pay a security bond and remain in the custody of the sheriff until he paid. In those days the courts feared a child born out of wedlock would be a burden on the community, so the security bond paid for the care of the child if needed. John was able to pay his bond in a timely fashion, thanks to his efforts in saving money from work on his days off as an indentured servant.

Obviously in love and wanting to marry, as soon as their indenture was completed (two years after the birth of their little son Samuel in 1669), they immediately published their banns on 9 January 1672. They were married on 4 April 1672 at Rehoboth Plantation near Pocomoke, Somerset County, Maryland, by Pastor Robert Maddox. John bought land in Virginia as well as Maryland, and he and Elizabeth went on to have at least two more sons, John Jr., and Joseph. (John Jr. born 1675 is my line.)

The Melson family continued living on the Maryland/Delaware line and prospered, becoming friends and followers of Francis Asbury. The Melson family line that I come from are still Methodists today. One hundred years later by 1790, my Melson ancestor also named John decided to leave the Delmarva area to come to Hancock County in middle Georgia. His wife Hannah Parsons Melson came with him. Other Maryland families came to the same area of Georgia to settle. This is just a mere sixty miles from where I live today.

Sadly, John Melson died in 1808 in Hancock County, Georgia. His will is lost but a portion of his estate record survives. His wife Hannah was to pay Dr. Kennedy's bill for treating John before he died. There is a set of books listed in his estate among many farming instruments. I cannot imagine the living conditions between 1790-1808 in middle Georgia. But from an indentured servant ancestor who came from England to Virginia with nothing, my first Melson ancestor in Georgia had land, money, supplies and a set of books. The Melson family in Georgia went on to produce

successful family men, teachers and professors, preachers (Methodist, of course!), businessmen, and politicians.

Even though the Melson surname has died out in my line, the name continues in our family: my father David Melson Butler called “Melson” for his mother’s maiden name; my son William Melson Walker; and our daughter’s little daughter Emmaline Melson Lewis. Of course, my father says that he has had to correct people regarding his name his whole life. “Your name is Nelson?” “No. *Melson.*” “You mean Melton?” “No. It’s *Melson.* I’m pretty sure I know my own name.”

My family is extremely proud of our Melson heritage and the many accomplished Melson descendants. And it all started with an indentured servant!!

Sources:

Melroy, Lewis Byron, *The Melson Family in America* (privately pub., 1992)
Olroyd, Ida May Melson, *The Melson Story 1646-2006* (privately pub., 2006)



When Things Don’t Always Go as Expected

An Indentured Servant Gone Bad

by Sumner Gary Hunnewell, Past President General NSDCIS

Being a master and a servant was a two-way street. The master was expected to treat his help right and the servant was expected to fulfill any work diligently.

It was the winter of 1674/75 in a vacant house in Spruce Point (Kittery, Maine) when fisherman Robert Williams of Great Island (Portsmouth), New Hampshire, sat ready to take a pipe of tobacco. Just then his hired hand, Nicholas Favor, took an axe to his head (twice), killing him on the spot. Williams’ servant, Robert Driver, ran out of the house, but was threatened back by and convinced to join the murderer.

Evidently, the master was had gotten angry with Driver a week before and struck him in face causing him to bleed. He was not very forthcoming with wages owed to Favor either, who confided to Driver about a week before that he’d break his master’s legs in pieces, if he were not paid. Not long after Favor took matters into his own hands.

To dispose of the body, they decided to bury it in the cellar, but the ground being frozen, they dug a shallow grave and buried it, covering it leaves as well. They spent time washing blood off their clothes and then went to Great Island, house key in hand, and stole money from their master’s chest. Driver received 24 shillings. They told people that their master, Robert Williams, had gone to Cape Porpus (Kennebunkport), Maine.

Within a couple of weeks, two boys found the body, which set up a hue and cry with the constabulary up and down the coast. It was not long before both were apprehended and juries assembled to try the cases. They were found guilty. As

related in the diary of Judge Samuel Sewall, "A Scotchman and a Frenchman kill their master, knocking him in the head as he was talking Tobacco. They are taken by Hew and Cry, and condemned: Hanged. Nicholas Feaver born in the Ile of Jersey : Robert Driver born in the Isle of Orknye in Scotland. Executed March 18, 1674-5."

Source

Harriet Ruth (Waters) Cooke, *The Driver Family* (New York: the author, 1889)



National Society Descendants of Colonial Indentured Servants

Third Annual Meeting, 21 March 2021, 2:30 p.m. Eastern, via Zoom

by Sharon R. Sowders, Secretary General

MINUTES

The third annual meeting of the National Society Descendants of Colonial Indentured Servants was held electronically and was called to order at 2:30 p.m. on March 21, 2021, by President General Sumner G. Hunnewell.

Chaplain General Carla W. Odom gave an invocation, the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Treasurer General Tim Mabee, and the Purpose and Objectives were read by Registrar General Robin Towns.

Introductions

President Hunnewell introduced the executive officers and national officers of other hereditary societies.

Officer Reports

Officer Reports were presented (written reports can be found on the Society's website).

The Treasurer General indicated there was a balance of \$15,502.66 in the society's account.

The Registrar General reported a total of 99 members.

New Business

Per the bylaws, four (4) members shall constitute a quorum. The quorum was announced and established for business to be conducted.

The Recording Secretary General read the recommendation from the Executive Committee and moved that the National Society Descendants of Indentured Servants shall donate \$1,000 to Pemberton Hall which is located at Pemberton Historical Park. The motion was approved.

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee Chairman, Tim Mabee presented the proposed slate of officers for the 2021-2023 term and thanked committee members Pat Gallagher and Sharon Sowders.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • President General | Janet Butler Walker |
| • Vice President General | Carla Lucille Whitehurst Odom |
| • Registrar General | Robin Redfearn Towns |
| • Treasurer General | Douglass “Tim” Mather Mabee |
| • Chaplain General | Patricia Ellen Gallagher |
| • Recording Secretary General | Sharon Rennard Sowders |
| • Inspector General | Susan Bolton Young Gray |
| • Councilor General | Deborah Ann Whitmore Hicks |
| • Historian General | Sumner Gary Hunnewell |

There were no additional nominations, and the proposed slate was elected by acclamation.

Memorial Service

The Chaplain General conducted a Memorial Service in remembrance of David Judson Bahn, Founding Member 43 and David Hobert McReynolds, Founding Member 60.

Installation of Officers

Officers for the 2021-2023 term were installed by the Chaplain General.

Newly elected President General Janet Butler Walker moved that immediate past President General Sumner G. Hunnewell be named Honorary Past President General. The motion passed.

Program

President General Walker introduced Cheryl Aultman, who presented “Joseph Royall, Indentured Servant.”

Announcements

The 2022 Annual Meeting will be held on Friday, April 15, 2022, at The Army-Navy Club in Washington, D.C.

Benediction

The benediction was given by Chaplain General Patricia Gallagher.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m. Eastern time.

Attendance: 40



National Society Descendants of Colonial Indentured Servants

The President General and Officers
cordially invite you to join us for to the Fourth Annual Meeting
Friday, April 15, 2022

Noon

in the John Paul Jones Room
The Army and Navy Club
Farragut Square, 901 Seventeenth Street, NW, Washington, DC

Luncheon will be followed by a business meeting and short presentation

R. S. V. P. accepted until April 1, 2022

Luncheon Menu (check one):

Pork Tenderloin Medallions

- or -

Eggplant Parmesan Zucchini and Eggplant Marinara Sauce

- both entrees include -

Carrot Cake with Chopped Walnuts, Cream Cheese Icing, Caramel Sauce

NOTE: The Luncheon will be shared with Descendants of Early Postmasters

National Society Descendants of Colonial Indentured Servants

Member name _____

Member of: Postmasters Indentured Servants

Guest _____

Cost is \$45.00 per person. Please send a check made out to "NSDCIS" to:
Douglass "Tim" Mabee
17 Killarney Court
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866-7501
518-587-8426 tmabee@aol.com



2021-2023 General Officers: Vice President Carla Odom, Treasurer Tim Mabee, Registrar Robin Towns, President Janet Walker, Historian Sumner Hunnewell, Chaplain Pat Gallagher, and Inspector Sue Gray. Parliamentarian Jane Power. Absent: Recording Secretary Sharon Sowders, Counsellor Deborah Hicks.