

NUTHALL - NUTWELL

JOHN NUTHALL (the "h" in Nuthall is silent, & the name is pronounced Nutall or Nuttle, & is often so spelled; it is also often spelled Nutwell), Sr., the American immigrant ancestor in this line, was likely b. abt. 1620, in England, perhaps in London, where his parents later lived, but the family is said to have originated in Essex Co.; d. bet. June 5 & Oct. 10, 1667, St. Mary's Co., Md., on his estate "Cross Manor"; m. (1) abt. Jan., 1643/44, the marriage said to have occurred in England [see: the Layton Collection (#G 5077) the Md. Historical Society], Elizabeth (Bacon) Holloway, the widow of Dr. John Holloway; m. (2) Sept. 12, 1660, Hungar's Parish, Northampton Co., Va., Jane Johnson, who d. bef. 1663 [Wm. & Mary 2, op. cit., 1st Series, 18, 180.]

As John Nuthall was not listed among those "Inhabitants in Virginia, living and dead", in the Musters of 1624/1625, but is known to have been there ante 1630, we may safely assume that he arrived during the period 1626 to 1629, and that he was still a child, upon his arrival. Since there are absolutely no records indicating other persons of the name in Virginia at that early date, we may also safely assume that the boy John Nuthall, arrived in America, sans parents.

One's curiosity and imagination are naturally stimulated when one contemplates the whys and wherefores of emigration, of a young boy on his own, from his homeland in England to the then wilds of America! While we shall probably never know the facts, we may certainly speculate that young John was either a runaway who perhaps stowed away on the ship which brought him to America; or, that he may have signed on as cabin-boy, and later jumped ship once in the new land; or, and this seems the more likely, that he was one of those unfortunate children who, kidnapped from the streets of an English city, by a hard-bitten ships' captain, was later sold by the captain, as a servant in Virginia. [On "indentured servants", those "spirited" away, etc., see: The Sociology of Colonial Virginia, by Talpalar, pp. 298-304.]

During this period, and for many years thereafter, the only method of obtaining land in the new world, was through the transportation into one of England's Colonies, of oneself or ones family or servants, provided only that the cost of transportation was originally paid for by oneself. Many persons, including servants, whose transportation was originally paid by someone else, later paid for the transportation of others, and many persons made fairly frequent trips back and forth between England and the colonies, and had the right to claim additional land each time they re-entered the latter; thus, among the old land patents, one may often run across the record of a man who claimed land "for transporting himself 3 times", or "5 times", etc. (NOTE: The term "servant" did not then have the same connotation that it does today, for many of the early "servants" who were transported, were virtually on an equal social footing with their "masters", or very soon attained such.)

While there is no extant record for anyone having claimed land for the transportation into Virginia of John Nuthall, we do have proof that he was the servant of Hugh Hays, of Accomack Co., Va., sometime before 1630...ran away from his said master...lived with the Indians (probably in what is now the Eastern Shore of Maryland)...was found there by one William Jones, who paid the Indians "a hoe" for the boy, and who then returned young John to Hugh Hays, "well strapped with ye hallyards". Hugh Hays had himself been transported into Virginia as the servant of Mr. William Stone (later, Governor of Maryland), apparently very soon after the Musters of 1624/25, although Mr. Stone did not file his claim until 1635, in which he stated that he had transported, among others, Hugh Hays. (It was not at all unusual for persons to delay filing their claims to land for a number of years, and in fact was quite a common occurrence in the early years.)