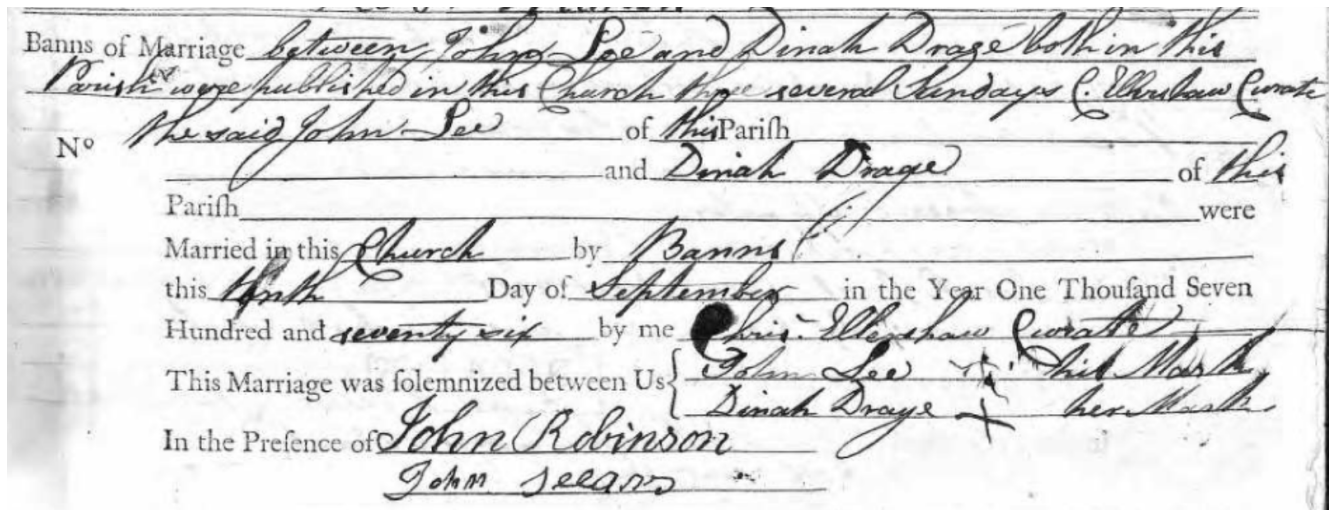


Wedding Wednesday: The Drage-Lee Wedding-and Colonial Independence



John LEE-Dinah DRAGE Marriage Record, Northamptonshire, England, Church of England Marriages, 1754-1912, Irthlingborough Parish Register 1754-1812, via Ancestry.com.

[Lee Family](#) (Click for Family Tree)

[Robert Eugene Lee→ Lloyd Eugene Lee (1907-1991)→ Samuel John Lee (1879-1964)→ Samuel Lenton Lee (1849-1932)→ George Lee (1821-1897)→ William Lee (1780-1851)→ John Lee (1736-abt 1827) + Dinah Drage (1748-?)]

Dinah Drage married John Lee on 10 September 1776 in Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire, England.

The marriage was by “banns”- a public announcement of an intent to marry, in this case at the church for several Sundays preceding the wedding. (Until 1983, the Catholic church published marriage banns in the parish Sunday newsletter.) Three banns, usually a week apart, were required-it limited spur-of-the-moment marriages. More importantly, there was time for anyone opposed to the marriage to come

forth. If the couple was too closely related, one was still married or obligated to another, if they were not of the required age, etc., this was the time to "...speak now or forever hold your peace." If no one spoke up with a valid concern, the marriage could take place, and would be legal.

And it is a good thing this one did take place- otherwise, their Lee descendants would not be here!

Dinah Drage was the daughter of William Drage (1715-?) and Ann Foster (?-?). Dinah was possibly about 28 years old at the marriage. John Lee's parents were Henry Lee (1710-?) and Elizabeth Bloifeild (1711-?); John was 40 at the time of the marriage, if we have the correct John Lee. (There were many John Lee in Northamptonshire, but only this one in Irthlingborough.) This could have been a first marriage, but might instead have been a second marriage, at least for John since he is much older. We do not have birth information for Dinah, but do have a baptism record of her birth with the names of her parents. So it likely was not a second marriage for Dinah (her parents were listed as "Drage"), though she may have been older than an infant when baptized, making her age closer to John's. Since they lived in a city with established churches, however, the likelihood that she was baptized as a young infant is high, making her about 28 or 12 years younger than John.

The above certificate is a bit difficult to read, but it appears that John and Dinah were married by Chris Ellenshaw, Curate. (A Curate was an assistant to the Vicar/Rector/Minister of a church.) John Robinson and John Sears were witnesses, thus may have been related or close friends of either the bride or groom. (More research to do...) John and Dinah were unable to sign their names and made their mark on the certificate.

Garlands of flowers were used at weddings at this time, so the bride may have had a garland in her hair, some at the church,

and even the reception if they had one. Gloves were often given as a gift to the bride- and possibly the groom?



King George III of England, age 33, painted in 1771, via Wikipedia. Public Domain.

George III was the King of England, the American Colonies, and a number of other countries around the world at the time of John and Dinah's marriage. The news of the Declaration of Independence was not printed in an English newspaper until 17 August 1776- it took about 5-6 weeks for the information to cross the ocean. Would the couple have been concerned, getting married less than a month after hearing the news?

They probably were not that worried, surprisingly. England had been at war with France and other countries for years, so war was not an unusual state. (The people were quite tired of funding such wars with their taxes, however, especially as the war in America continued.) John's age would have put him at a

less-than-prime age for soldiering, thankfully. Because of so many wars and the reduced number of available young men for conscription, the King turned to other countries for troops to hire for the American Revolution, such as the Hessians from Germany. Additionally, some British citizens sided with the Americans, or were somewhat sympathetic as they wanted to continue the lucrative trade with the colonies across the ocean.

So the wedding of John and Dinah was most likely a happy occasion, without the shadow of war looming over them. We hope their almost 46 years of marriage was happy as well.

Notes, Sources, and References:

1. "Henry Fairlie on What Europeans Thought of Our Revolution" by Henry Fairlie, *New Republic*, 4 July 2014. <https://newrepublic.com/article/118527/american-revolution-what-did-europeans-think>

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