Nicholas Faulcon Sr.

(1705/1710–1783)



of

Surry County, Virginia,

Son of Isaac & Jane Faulcon

by Timothy Dean Hudson

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Nicholas Faulcon Sr. was born between about 1705 and 1710, probably in Southwark Parish, Surry County, Virginia, the son of Isaac and Jane Faulcon [1]. Although some have claimed that the Faulcons arrived in the Virginia Province from England shortly before Nicholas' birth, Surry court records show that Isaac Faulcon had already become established in Surry County by November 1701. The Surry Court exempted him from paying tithables in 1701, which probably explains his absence from the 1704 tithables as well [2].

Nicholas Faulcon spent his adult life as a tobacco planter in Southwark Parish, Surry County, Virginia. He prospered at this endeavor, accumulating several plantations scattered across the county. On 3 December 1743, he delivered 1065 net pounds of tobacco to the public tobacco warehouse at the mouth of Gray's Creek on the James River, the location of the town of Cobham. His workers made additional deliveries of tobacco to the warehouse on December 14, 15, and 16th, delivering 997, 1004, and 1030 pounds, respectively. On 25 January 1744, Faulcon delivered 1939 net pounds of tobacco.

In 1745, an *"overflowing of the tide"* of the James River caused many Cobham buildings to flood. This inundation destroyed all tobacco stored in the Gray's Creek warehouse. In February 1746,

> *…to the end the sufferers therein mentioned may receive full satisfaction and reparation, for their several losses;*

the Virginia General Assembly authorized compensating the owners for their losses [3].

The General Assembly attempted to remedy the occasional flooding by providing funds to raise the warehouses, but periodic inundation continued. In November 1749, the Surry County Court

discussed the situation in which the warehouses at the mouth of Gray's Creek *"have been lately Overflowed...and great part of the Tobacco therein destroyed."* They said that the spring tides threatened the warehouses each year, and *"the said Houses are now in a ruinous Condition occasioned by the late overflowing."* The Court appointed men to contract with workers to attempt to move the warehouses up the bank and closer to Cobham. If they deemed the move impractical, the Court ordered them to build new houses on the bank of the James River in town [4].

Despite the precautions, in 1751, *"a high wind and rain, and the overflowing of the tide,"* again inundated the warehouse at the Gray's Creek and other public warehouses along the James River. Nicholas Faulcon had delivered 1092 net pounds of tobacco to the Gray's Creek warehouse on 14 March 1749, and the overflow destroyed his tobacco. In February 1752, the General Assembly again passed a measure to reimburse the owners for their losses [5].

Nicholas Faulcon's two sons who lived in Surry County, Virginia both became active in local affairs. Nicholas Faulcon Jr. was commissioned as a lieutenant in the Surry County Militia in 1764, and in 1765, he became both a Surry County justice of the peace and sheriff [6]. He served as a member of Virginia's House of Burgesses from 1773 through 1776 [7]. As political tensions with Great Britain intensified, Nicholas Faulcon Jr. received a commission as captain of his Militia Company on 23 May 1775 [8], and he served on the Surry County Safety Committee that formed on 5 February 1776 [9].

Jacob Faulcon was the primary partner in Cobham's thriving mercantile business styled as Jacob Faulcon & Co., which operated from the latter 1760s until the latter 1770s [10]. Jacob was commissioned as a lieutenant in his brother's militia company in 1775, and when Nicholas resigned his commission as captain in 1780, the Surry Court promoted Jacob Faulcon to the company's captain [11]. Jacob Faulcon served with his brother as a justice of the peace, and when the Surry County Clerk of Court died unexpectedly in early 1781, Jacob Faulcon *"was unanimously appointed Clerk of this Court"* by the justices. He served in that position for the next two decades, followed by his son, John Faulcon who served in the position from 1801 until 1829 [12].

The success that Nicholas Faulcon Sr. achieved as a tobacco planter continued during the 1760s and 1770s, with his financial situation seeming unphased by the volatility of the tobacco market in the 1770s as the colonies declared independence. As the conflict climaxed in 1781 and the Patriot forces of Gen. George Washington began to lay siege to the British army at nearby Yorktown, officials requisitioned supplies from the countryside near the James River. During March–May 1782, Nicholas Faulcon Sr. or one of his sons presented certificates that proved he

provided 875 pounds of beef for the use of the Patriot soldiers [13]. Even after contributing this large amount of beef, Faulcon still paid taxes on 40 adult cattle in 1782 [14].

Nicholas Faulcon Sr. wrote his will on 6 January 1781, making bequests to his surviving children and many of his grandchildren. He died sometime in 1783, with his will filed with the Surry County Court on 23 December 1783 [15].

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Wives and Children of Nicholas Faulcon Sr.

The eldest children of Nicholas Faulcon Sr., Nicholas Faulcon Jr. and Elizabeth Faulcon, were both born during the 1730s, and so he must have married by about 1730. No known record gives the name of Faulcon's wife or wives, but she had died by 6 January 1781 when he wrote his will.

The children of Nicholas Faulcon Sr. who survived to adulthood include:

1. **Capt. Nicholas Faulcon Jr.** (1730/1735–1793) married about 1760 in Virginia to Lucy Wyatt (c1740–1788). Nicholas Faulcon Jr. married on 19 April 1790 in Southampton County, Virginia to Elizabeth Williamson (1740/1745–aft. 1793).
2. **Elizabeth Faulcon** (1735/1740–1784/1810) married 1753–1755, probably in Surry County, Virginia, to Nathaniel Sebrell Sr. (1723–1815).
3. **Capt. Jacob Faulcon** (1740/1750–Jan 1801) married on 17 June 1773 in Surry County, Virginia to Ann Spratley (1750/1755–bef. 1794), daughter of John Spratley III (1720/1725–1758) and Mary Cocke (1725/1730–1773).
4. **Jane Faulcon** (1740/1760–1815) remained single and died in Surry County, Virginia.
5. **Martha Faulcon** (1740/1760)–1798) remained single and died in Surry County, Virginia.
6. **John Faulcon Sr.** (c1745 – 5 Oct 1812) married on 27 May 1773 in Bute County, North Carolina to Lucretia Brown (1740/1750–aft. 1812), daughter of Jesse Brown (17 Oct 1709–3 Dec 1770) and Elizabeth Ridley (1715/1720–aft. Nov. 1770).
7. **Ann Faulcon** (1750/1755–c1790) married on 5 April 1773 in Surry County, Virginia to Capt. William Spratley Sr. (c1745–1796), son of John Spratley III (1720/1725–1758) and Mary Cocke (1725/1730–1773).
8. **Rebecca Faulcon** (1755/1760–1781/1796) married on 20 February 1775 in Surry County, Virginia to William Hamlin (1745/1748–1796), son of Thomas Hamlin (1690/1710–1750/1751) and Anne Flood (1690/1700–c1748). William Hamlin was a half-brother to Mary Cocke Spratley, the mother-in-law to two of Rebecca's siblings.
9. **Mary Ann Faulcon** (1755/1762–1779) married on 10 November 1777 in Surry County, Virginia to Maj. William Caufield Seward (1750/1755–1782), son of Henry Seward (c1710–1762/1763) and Sarah Nicholson.

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1781 Will of Nicholas Faulcon Sr.

Surry County VA Will Book 12 (1783–1792), p. 17–19

*In the name of God Amen. I **Nicholas Faulcon Sen^r^** of the Parish of Southwark and County of Surry do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament in manner and form as followeth.*

*Imprimis. I give and devise unto my Son **Nicholas** my Plantation on Crouches Creek, called, and known by the name of Spencers; also all that part of the Land I now live upon that lies on the east Side of the School house Branch, adjoining the Land my said Son **Nicholas** purchased of **Thomas Holt**. I also give and devise unto my said Son **Nicholas**, the following Negroes, to wit. **Jimmy**, **Ned**, **Dinah**, **Moses**, **Leway**, **Nanny**, **Moll**, **Kate**, **Natt**, **Steward** and **Caldwell**, and their increase, to him and his heirs for ever.*

*Item. I give and devise unto my Son **Jacob** my Plantation he now lives upon lying on Grays Creek; also the following Slaves, to wit, **Jeff**, **Suky**, & **Hailey** (Son of **Kate** that died some time ago) and their Increase to him and his heirs for ever.*

*Item. I give and devise unto my Son **John** the Plantation whereon I now dwell (including that I purchased of **William Edwards's** Exors.) also the following negroes, to wit, **Tom**, **Amey**, **Joe**, **Nanney**, and **Tom** Son of **Poll**, and their Increase to him and his heirs for ever. I also give unto my said Son **John** all my Stocks of Horses, Cattle, Sheep and Hogs, and all my household and kitchen Furniture and Plantation Utensils, six Hogsheads of Tobacco, and all the Corn that may be on the Plantation at my death.*

*Item. I give and devise unto my Daughter **Elizabeth Sebrell**, my Negro Girl **Lucy**, to her and her Heirs for ever. I also* [omitted word] *all the Money her Husband **Nathaniel Sebrell** is owing me.*

*Item. I give and devise unto my Daughter **Martha** the following Negroes, to wit, **Billy**, **Moll**, and **Betty** and their Increase, to her and her heirs for ever.*

*Item. I give and devise unto my Daughter **Jane** the following Negroes, to wit, **Sarah**, **Fanny**, **Patt**, and **Suky**, and their Increase to her and her Heirs, for ever.*

*Item. I give and devise unto my Daughter **Ann Spratley** the following Negroes, to wit, **Hannah**, **Daphne** and **Godfrey** and their Increase, to her and her heirs for ever.*

*Item. I give and devise unto my Daughter **Rebecca Hamlin**, the following Negroes, to wit, **Dinah**, **Isaac**, and **Poll**, and their Increase, to her and her Heirs for ever.*

*Item. I give and devise unto my Grandson **Nicholas Faulcon** my Negro Fellow **Hailey** that my Son **Nicholas** has in possession to him and his Heirs for ever.*

*Item. I give and devise unto my Grandson **Edward Faulcon** my Negro Fellow **Bob** that my Son **Nicholas** now has in possession, to him and his Heirs for ever.*

*Item. I give and devise unto my Granddaughter **Martha Seward** the following Negroes, to wit, **Robbin**, **Toby**, **Nancy** and **Jeff** (Son of **Fanny**), and their Increase to her and her Heirs for ever; but if she should die before she arrives to lawful Age, or married, my Will and desire is that the said Negroes may be equally divided between my four Daughters, **Martha**, **Jane**, **Ann** & **Rebecca.***

*Item. My Will and desire is that all the Money I have by me, and all that is owing to me, and all my Crop of Tobacco, except the six Hogsheads given my Son **John**, may be equally divided between my four Daughters, **Martha**, **Jane**, **Ann**, and **Rebecca**, and my Granddaughter **Martha Seward**. It is also my Will and desire that my Negro Fellow **Lewy** who is an Idiot, may be maintained by my three Sons **Nicholas**, **Jacob** and **John.***

*Item. And lastly, I do hereby constitute and appoint my three Sons, **Nicholas**, **Jacob**, and **John**, Executors to this my last Will and Testament, desiring my Estate may not be inventoried nor appraised.*

In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my Seal this sixth day of January, in the Year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and eighty one.

[signed] ***Nicholas Faulcon Sen^r^***

Signed, Sealed and declared
to be the last Will & Testa
*ment of **Nicholas Faulcon Sen^r^***
in presence of

John Petway
Robert Mackintosh
Joseph Judkin

At a Court held for Surry County
December the 23rd 1783
The afore written last Will and Testa

ment of ***Nicholas Faulcon Senr*** *decd. Was presented in Court by* ***Nicholas*** *and* ***Jacob Faulcon****, two of the Exors. therein named, and being proved by the oaths of* ***John Petway*** *and* ***Robert McIntosh*** *two of the Witnesses thereto, and by the Court ordered to be recorded. And on the Motion of the Exors. Who made oath thereto, and gave Bond according to Law, Certificate was granted them for obtaining a Probate of the said Will in due form; and liberty reserved the other Exor. to join in the Probate when he shall think fit.*

[signed] ***Jacob Faulcon****, Cl. Cur.*

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Notes

1. Surry County VA Deeds, Wills, Etc. Part 3 (1715–1730), pp. 761–762 (Will of Isaac Faulcon, written 12 March 1726/27, filed in court 18 October 1727).
2. Surry County VA Orders (1691–1713), LDS Film #8153306, Image #196 (4 November 1701), #197 (*"Jean De Lavard & Isaac Falcon upon their petition are exempted from paym^t^* [payment] *of County Levi's this* [current] *year."*)
3. Hening, William Waller, ed. *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature, in the Year 1619.* Richmond, VA: Franklin Press, 1819, Vol. V, pp. 311, 365–367. In February 1746, the Virginia General Assembly passed a measure that authorized compensating the tobacco owners for their losses: *"to the end the sufferers therein mentioned may receive full satisfaction and reparation, for their several losses."*
4. Bohannan, A. W. "The Old Town of Cobham." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography,* 57 (1949), p. 256.
5. Hening, Vol. VI, pp. 217, 236–241.
6. Surry County VA Order Book (1764–1774):
   - p. 18: Court session of 19 June 1764
   - p. 24: *"Nicholas Faulcon jr. Gent. Produced a Commission from his Honor the Governor appointing him Lieutenant of the Militia in this County, who also took the above Oaths & Repeated and Subscribed the Teste"*
   - p. 71: Court session of 20 August 1765: *"Ordered that John White, James Rodwell Bradby and Nicholas Faulcon j^r^ Gent^m^. be Recommended to his Honor the Governour* [sic] *as fit and Able Persons to Execute the Office of Sheriff for this County for the ensuing Year"*
   - p. 85: Court session of 18 February 1766: *"Nicholas Faulcon j^r^ produced a Commission from his Honor the Governour* [sic] *appointing him Sheriff of this County during Pleasure. Whereupon he together with Thomas Wilson and William Clinch j^r^ took the Usual Oaths to his Majestys Person and Government and Repeated and Subscribed the Teste and also took the Oath of Sheriff"*
7. *"The Virginia Gazette"* (Williamsburg, VA), 1 April 1773, p. 3, column 1: *"Elections…Mr. Nicholas Faulcon, junior, for Surry, in the room of Col. Hartwell Cocke, deceased."* Henry, Wm. Wirt. "House of Burgesses, 1766 to 1775." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography.* Vol. 4, 1897, p. 380–386. Boddie, John Bennett. *Colonial Surry.* Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1974, p. 167. Hartwell Cocke represented Surry County in the House that met 6 November 1766–31 March 1768, as well as those that met on 7 November 1769, 1 May 1770, and 11 July 1771. Cocke was elected to the 1773 House, but upon his death, Nicholas Faulcon Jr. was elected. Faulcon served in the House that met 11 August 1774 and 1 June 1775.
8. Surry County VA Order Book (1775–1785):
   - p. 6: Court session of 23 May 1775
   - p. 8: *"The following persons this day came into Court and qualified as Militia Officers for this County…Nicholas Faulcon and Josiah Wilson Captains…"*
9. Coleman, Charles Washington. "The County Committees of 1774-'75 in Virginia: II." *The William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine.* Vol. 5, p. 249. The Surry County Safety Committee was formed on 5 February 1776 and included *"N. Faulcon , jun."*
10. *"The Virginia Gazette,"* April 6 (p. 5, column 2), October 5 (p. 3, column 3), 1775; 5 September 1777 (p. 3, column 1).
11. Surry County VA Order Book (1775–1785):
    - p. 9: Court session of 27 June 1775: *"The following Persons this day qualified under their respective Commissions as Militia Officers for this County…William Brown j^r^ & Jacob Faulcon Lieutenants…"*
    - p. 99: Court session of 28 March 1780
    - p. 103: *"Jacob Faulcon Captain, William Edwards first Lieutenant and John Wesson an Ensign in the Company of Militia of this County whereof Nicholas Faulcon Gent. Was Captain, this Day came into Court and produced their respective Commissions to the said Appointments whereupon they severally took the Oath appointed to be taken…and also the oath of Office"*

    Revolutionary War Pension Application #S5559: Jesse King; #S5569: Thomas Hollaway; #W26060: John Williams.
12. Surry County VA Order Book (1775–1785), p. 125: *"Jacob Faulcon was unanimously appointed Clerk of this Court in the room of William Nelson deceased, which said Jacob Faulcon took the Oath of fidelity and the oath of Office,"* 24 April 1781. Boddie, p. 173.
13. Virginia State Library and Archives, Public Service Claims, Record Group 48, Surry County, pp. 1, 4. Abercrombie, Janice L. and Richard Slatten, compiler and trans. *Virginia Revolutionary Publick Claims.* Vol. III. Athens, GA: Iberian Publishing Co., p. 887. These records also show that Faulcon's sons, Nicholas Faulcon Jr. and Jacob Faulcon, provided numerous supplies to the Patriot army.
14. 1782 Surry County VA Personal Property Tax Book, LDS Film #8574973, Image #382.

15. Surry County VA Will Book 12 (1783–1792), pp. 17–19; Surry County VA Wills, Inventories & Estate Inventories #2 (1770–1873), LDS Film #4125015, Images #427–428 (Will of Nicholas Faulcon Sr., written 6 January 1781, filed in court on 23 December 1783).

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