John Sebrell
(c1769–aft. 1794)

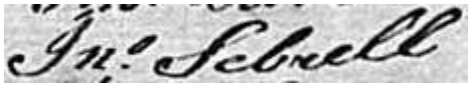
of

Blackwater Swamp, Surry County, Virginia,

Son of Nathaniel Sebrell Sr. & Elizabeth Faulcon of Surry County, Virginia

by Timothy Dean Hudson

John Sebrell (c1769–aft. 1794) first appears in 1787 as a young man over sixteen and under twenty-one years old living in his father's household [1]. On 4 May 1787, he witnessed the will of John Andrews, and the original version of the will gives us a sample of John's original signature made when he had reached the age of about eighteen:



John also witnessed the codicil to Andrews' will:



He appeared before the Surry County Court a few months later on September 25th to attest to his signature on the document [2].

Tax records show him as a part of his father's household in 1788 and 1789. Beginning in 1790, he paid personal property taxes in his own name, owning one horse or mare in 1790. In 1791 and 1792, he only paid a poll tax, but the 1792 tax record noted that *"John Sebrell left the County Since the 9th of March and now keeps School in Sussex,"* our only direct evidence that he worked as a schoolteacher.

John Sebrell again paid his poll tax in Surry County in 1793 and 1794 but thereafter disappears from the Surry records. It appears that he died as a young man, probably still single [3].

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Notes

1. 1786–1787 Surry County VA Personal Property Tax Books, LDS Film #8458765, Image #57 (1786), column 2, line #28: *"Nathaniel Sebrell Senior;"* Image #86 (1787), line #8: *"Nathaniel Sebrell, Sen., John Sebrell."* Nathaniel Sebrell Sr. began paying free tithes (or poll taxes) for John Sebrell beginning in 1787, continuing in 1788 and 1789. This proves that John was the son of Nathaniel Sr., and that he attained the age of sixteen years in 1786/1787.
2. Surry County VA Will Book 12 (1783–1792), pp. 159–160; Surry County VA Wills, Inventories & Estate Accounts (1770–1873), LDS Film #4124979, Images 705–706 (Will of John Andrews, written 4 May 1787, filed 25 September 1787; witnesses: Thomas Rose, John Sebrell, Jesse Carsley). Oddly, both the original Andrews will and codicil were dated 4 May 1787. However, in the will, Andrews referred to his daughter, Martha Rae, but the codicil stated that she had since died. It appears that whoever wrote the original will made an error with dating either the will or codicil, and this mistake was carried over to the recorded version in the will books. It seems unlikely that John Andrews would have received news of the death of his daughter on the very day he had just signed his will.
3. Surry County VA Personal Property Tax Books, 1788–1794, LDS Films #8458765, 8188299.

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