Nathaniel Sebrell Jr.
(c1763–1803)

of

Blackwater Swamp, Surry County, Virginia,

Son of Nathaniel Sebrell Sr.

by Timothy Dean Hudson

In 1784, Nathaniel Sebrell Jr. first appears as paying Surry County personal property taxes, paying his own poll tax and that of one slave aged above sixteen, and one horse or mare. He did not pay Surry County taxes in 1783, implying he surpassed the age of twenty-one between 1783 and 1784. His father, Nathaniel Sebrell Sr., did pay for two white males above twenty-one years of age in 1783, but the elder man was probably paying the poll tax for his son David, who was listed by name in his household in 1782 [1]. If Nathaniel Sebrell Jr. indeed turned twenty-one between 1783 and 1784, his birth must have occurred about 1763, which would imply that his mother was Elizabeth Faulcon, the second wife of Nathaniel Sebrell Sr. [2].

Each year between 1784 and 1803, Nathaniel Sebrell Jr. paid taxes each year on himself, a few slaves, and livestock [3]. On 22 July 1788, the Surry County Court appointed *"Nathaniel Sebrell junior"* as *"Surveyor of the road called Archibald Cockes Precinct,"* ordering him and the *"hands subject to work thereon do keep the same in lawful repair"* [4].

Although he remained a continuous resident of Surry County between 1784 and 1803, there are very few records of him. This suggests that he lived a quiet life, apparently not participating in many local activities. Nathaniel Sebrell Jr. did not own land in his own name but appears to have cultivated a portion of his father's lands.

From about the latter 1790s until 1803, a free black teenager, Wyatt Charity, worked with Sebrell on his father's farm. Charity was born about 1786 or 1787 to a free black woman, Polly Charity, a spinner, and his father appears to have been Elijah Charity, a shoemaker. Wyatt went to work as a young boy on the Sebrell farm, and he worked as a *"Labourer"* for and lived with Nathaniel Sebrell Jr. in 1803 [5]. After Sebrell's death that year, Wyatt Charity worked for several more years for Nathaniel Sebrell Sr. and his son, Nicholas Sebrell [6].

Nathaniel Sebrell Jr. died in late 1803 or early 1804, for when the land processioners marked the boundaries of the Johnchecohunk Precinct on 11 April 1804, they referred to the line between the farms of John Watkins and *"Nathaniel Sebrell decd."* [7]. The Surry County Court did not appoint

an administrator of his estate until 1813, when they approved Sebrell's nephew, Walter Spratley Sr., to serve as administrator of his estate [8].

If he married, Nathaniel Sebrell Jr.'s wife and any potential children all predeceased him, for his sole heir was his father [9].

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Notes

1. 1782–1784 Surry County VA Personal Property Tax Books showed this information for Nathaniel Sebrell Sr. and his sons:
   1782: *"Nathaniel Sebrell, David Sebrell"* 2 *"white males above 21 years"*
   1783: *"Nathaniel Sebrell Sen^{r}"* 2 *"white males above 21 years"*
   1784: *"Nath^{l} Sebrell Sen^{r}, Nath^{l} Sebrell J^{r},"* both paid for one white male above 21 years of age.
   References: LDS Film #8458765:
   1782: Image #10: Nathaniel Harrison's District; Image #12, column #2, line #5.
   1783: Image #24: column #1, line #40.
   1784: Image #38: column #1, line #13, 14.
   LDS Film #8574973:
   1782: Image #377, column #2, line #5.
   1783: Image #390, column #1, line #40
   1784: Image #402, column #1, line #13, 14.
   In 1782, Nathaniel Sebrell Jr. was presumably still underage, for his father paid taxes only on himself and David, then aged above twenty-one.
2. There is a possibility that Nathaniel Sebrell Jr. lived elsewhere prior to 1784. If so, he may have been older, possibly even a son of his father's first wife, Catherine, who died prior to April 1752. While there is no known documentation to even suggest this, the scarcity of records makes it a possibility.
3. 1784–1803 Surry County VA Personal Property Tax Books.
4. Surry County VA Order Book (1786–1789), p. 466 (Court session of 22 July 1788); p. 468 (*"Ordered that Nathaniel Sebrell junior be appointed Surveyor of the road called Archibald Cockes Precinct in the room of John Rose who is discharged from that Office. That the said Surveyor with the hands subject to work thereon on keep the same in lawful repair."*).
5. Surry County VA 1803 List of Free Negros, LDS Film #4121845, Image #6, p. 1: Wyatt Charity (Male, Labourer, *"Living with Nath^{l} Sebrell Jr"*).
6. Surry County VA Certificate of Free Slave, 1810, LDS Film #4122937, Images #13–14: Thomas Peter letter regarding Wyatt Charity, 22 June 1810. The letter stated that *"The Bearer hereof Wyatt Charrity* [sic] *aged about 22 or 23 years Old…served part of his time previous to age with M^{r} Nath^{l} Sebrell Jun^{r} Dec^{d} and since with M^{r} Nath^{l} Sen^{r} & M^{r} Nicholas Sebrell…"*
7. Surry County VA Processioners Returns (1796–1828), pp. 23–24 (11 April 1804); LDS Film #9101627, Images #24–25.
8. Surry County VA Administrator's Bonds (1797–1815), p. 112 (Walter Spratley Sr. appointed administrator of Nathaniel Sebrell Jr., 27 July 1813). Surry County VA Wills, Etc. Book 3 (1815–1821), p. 460 (Account of the *"Estate of Nathaniel Sebrell Jun deceased…Walter Spratley Senior, administrator,"* filed with Surry Court 24 July 1820). Surry County VA Wills & Inventories, Vol. 2 (1797–1879), LDS Film #4124916, Images #47–48 (Account of the *"The Estate of Nathaniel Sebrell Jur Deced; In acct with Walter Spratley Sen^{r}, Adm^{r},"* filed with Surry Court 24 July 1820). This is the original document that is recorded in Wills, Etc. Book 3, p. 460. The administrator of Nathaniel Sebrell Jr., Walter Spratley Sr., was the son of Susanna Sebrell and Benjamin Spratley.
9. Surry County VA Wills, Etc. Book 5 (1827–1830), pp. 134–135 (Final Account of Estate of Nathaniel Sebrell Junr., filed 27 August 1827). The final account reads, *"After the true balance was ascertained, the said Spratley paid over the whole sum to the executor of Nathaniel Sebrell Senr. decd. as entitled thereto."*

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