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Bryan, Nathan [1]

Bryan, Nathan

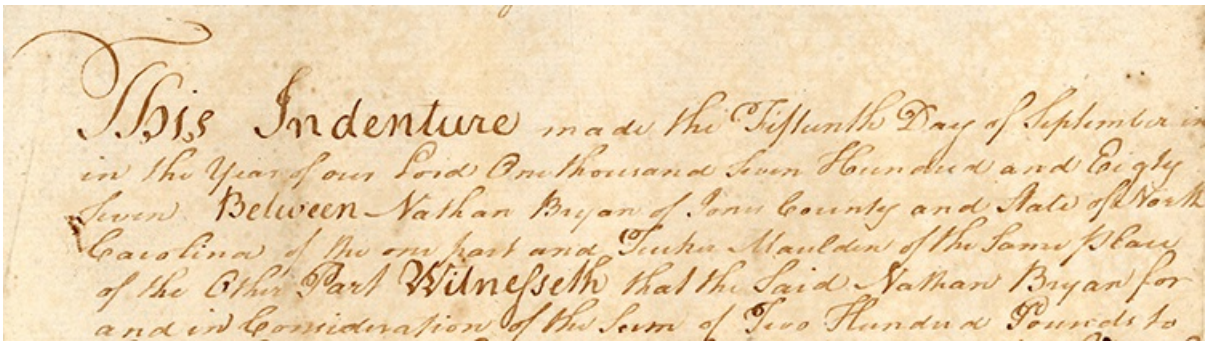
by Elmer D. Johnson, 1979; Revised November 2022.

1748–4 June 1798

Nathan Bryan, Revolutionary War leader and member of Congress, was born in Craven County [2]. He was the son of Hardy Bryan, who died in 1760, and was raised and lived most of his life on a plantation on the Neuse River [3]. During the Revolution [4] he served as a colonel in the Jones County militia [5], resigning this post in June 1779. He was also a justice of the peace. Because he was a noted Whig leader, his home was ransacked, and the people he was enslaving were carried off by the British forces on their way through North Carolina in August 1781.

Bryan was elected to the legislature in 1787 and again in 1791, serving until 1794 as a representative of Jones County [6]. In November 1789 he represented Jones County at the convention in Fayetteville [7], when North Carolina ratified the Constitution of the United States. In 1794 he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives; he served from 1795 until his death in 1798. He died in Philadelphia and was buried in the Baptist Cemetery.

Little is known of Bryan's family, although according to the census of 1790 he may have had five sons and three daughters. He also enslaved fifteen people. He was described by contemporaries as "wealthy and talented," with personal attributes of "piety and usefulness." He was baptized in 1767 and was active in the Baptist church [8] throughout his life.


This Indenture made the Fifteenth Day of September in
in the Year of our Lord One thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty
Seven Between Nathan Bryan of Jones County and State of North
Carolina of the one part and Tucker Maulden of the Same State
of the Other Part Witnesseth that the Said Nathan Bryan for
and in Consideration of the Sum of Two Hundred Pounds to

An indenture between Nathan Bryan and a Tucker Maulden for a parcel of land, dated September 15, 1787. Image courtesy of Tryon Palace. [9]

References:

Biog. Dir. Am. Cong. (1971).

William L. Saunders and Walter Clark, eds., *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*, 30 vols. (1886–1914).

John H. Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina* (1851).

Additional Resources:

"Bryan, Nathan, (1748 - 1798)." *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress.* Washington, D.C.: The Congress. http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=B000991 [10] (accessed December 17, 2013).

"CSR Documents by Bryan, Nathan, 1748-1798." Colonial and State Records of North Carolina. Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/creators/csr11134 [11] (accessed December 17, 2013).

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"Indenture, Accession #: P.TP.1967.050.006 [9]." 1787. Image courtesy Tryon Palace Historic Site.

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Biographies [12]
Military personnel [13]
Public officials [14]
Authors:
Johnson, Elmer D. [15]
Origin - location:

Craven County [16]
From:
Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.[17]

1 January 1979 | Johnson, Elmer D.

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