

1679-1680. Will of Nathaniel Sylvester (March 19, 1679/80. SIHS)

Source: A Forgotten People: Discovering The Black Experience In Suffolk County. Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, 93 North Country Road, Setauket, N.Y. 11733, p. 51.

Nathaniel Sylvester owned over 20 enslaved Africans. His will attempted to keep five couples together but gave several of their children to his own sons and daughters.

The Will of Nathaniel Sylvester Late of Shelter Island Deceased. – I Nathaniel sylvester of Shelter Island in America being sickly but of sound and Perfect Memory ... now these Presents Wittneseth that I the said Nathaniel Sylvester hereby doe give and bequeath unto my Indeared Wife Grizzell Sylvester Francis Brinly James Floyd Isaak Arnold Lewis Morris and Daniell Gould all of the said Moyetie or half part of Shelter Island and Roberts Island as also the Moyetie or halfe part of the Joynt Stock and increase of such Negroes with their increase that is to say Tammaro with his Wife Ayers and all their Children the Negro black John with his Daughter Priscilla the Negro Jo with Maria his wife and the Negro Jenkin ... That the Negroes Jacquero and hannah his Wife with their Daughter hope being my Wifes owne is to be at her my said Wifes Disposall forEver ... and I doe give and bequeath unto my sonn Giles two of my Negroes that is to say Tony and Nannie his Wife Item I give and bequeath unto my sonn Nathaniell twoe of my Negroes that is to say Japhet and Jenine his wife ... I doe therefore give and bequeath my said Negro Tammero and His Wife Ayers unto my sonn Peter, Item I doe give and bequeath unto my Daughter Patience ... my negro girle hester being the Daughter of Tony and Nannie his Wife Item I do give and Bequeath unto my Daughter Elizabeth ... My Negro girle Isabell being the Daughter of Jaquero and hannah his Wife, Item I doe give and bequeath unto my Daughter Mary ... my Negro Girle abby being the Daughter of Tony and his wife, Item I doe give and bequeath unto my Daughter Ann ... my Negro girle Grace being the Daughter of Tony and Nannie his Wife Item I doe give and bequeath unto my Daughter Marcie ... my Negro girl jenine being the Daughter of Tony and Nannie his Wife ... and whereas Tammero the negro hath four children belonging in Partnership, I do Give and bequeath ... unto my sonns Constant and Benjamin they shall Come to the age of twentie one yeares my sonn Constant taking first his choice ... In Testimony whereof I have hereunto sett my hand the nineteenth of the Month Called March in the yeare sixteen hundred seaventie nine and eighty ...