

## **Ralph and Ola Dykes Sanders Family**

Ralph Sanders was born on April 15, 1898, at Payne's Cove, Pelham, Tennessee, the seventh of thirteen children born to Nancy Nunley and Wheeler Sanders, the grandson of Solomon Sanders.

Wheeler and Nancy leased out the family farm and moved to the Grundy County mountain on top of the Cumberland Plateau when Ralph was seven years old. A first cousin, Dick Meeks, moved them in a mule drawn wagon up the mountain to the Sweeton Hill area of Coalmont. They moved into their new home in Wheeler Town on August 7, 1912.

Ralph attended the one room school house at Sweeton Hill. The school was open three months each year. His teachers were Ms. Edith Ponry and Mrs. Claudia Aylor Parson.

When he was 13 years old, Ralph began working in the coal mines for a group of independent contractors, Ed Hall, Harris, and Scruggs at the Old Summers Opening in Coalmont. He fired an air shaft which pulled smoke out of the mines for which he was paid seventy-five cents per day. This helped to feed the family of fifteen.

Ralph married his childhood sweetheart, Ola Dykes, oldest daughter of Jacob and Martha Shadrick Dykes on March 17, 1923 with Squire Hicks Warren officiating at the Ernest Meeks home. Ola was born on December 19, 1903 in Tracy City, Tennessee. Ola had six sisters and 6 brothers. Three of the brothers died when they were babies.

Ola was six or seven years old when her family lived on the side of Dunlap Mountain. For three days before baby Douglas died, an empty rocking chair in their home rocked by itself. Even though the family would stop the chair from rocking, it would begin again by itself. After three days, Douglas died. Richard, one of the boys, is buried upon a hill next to Highway 108 in Whitwell.

Jake and Martha, Ola's parents, lived in Tracy City for a time. Her dad would take her to camp meeting revivals. The family moved to Coalmont when she was nine or ten years old.

Ola loved to read although she only completed the fifth grade. She taught her children to love reading, also. She enjoyed crocheting, embroidering, and gardening. Ola, Ralph, and sons, Alfred and Jay, lived at Roddy Springs. Times were unusually hard since the time was the eve of the depression. Their house had big cracks between the boards. Snakes would put their heads up through the cracks. Margaret and George Tate were neighbors in Roddy Springs. Good Neighbors softened the hard living circumstances.

In 1923, Ola's parents moved with their family to the coal fields of Southern Illinois in search of work. This created a void in her life that was partially filled by Goldie Lockhart Young and "Sis" Lockhart Bean who were more like sisters to her than cousins. This close relationship continued throughout their lives.

When Ralph and Ola moved to Palmer around 1925, they lived in the house with John and Lizzie Cleek. Families often stayed with other families who were already settled in the area. The family moved to Tilden, Illinois, just before the stock market crash. Paul "Pepper" their third child was born there in 1929. While there, Ralph worked in shaft coal mines, 218

feet deep in the ground. The mines closed down when the screener belt burned. Ralph and his father-in-law worked in an orchard of walnut trees. The lumber from the walnut tree was used to make furniture, and the juice from the tree was used to make stain. After that, he worked in an animal slaughter house for Tony and Amil Lehr.

In Later years while visiting his in-laws, Ralph always visited with the Lehr brothers. The Sanders returned to Tennessee due to the illness of his father. After returning to Tennessee, he worked on the gymnasium in Palmer for Mr. E.J. Cunningham during President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal Program and the W.P.A. Days. During the early 1940's, Ralph would hire Eston Cagle to drive the family on a 325 mile trip each way to visit Ola's parents in Illinois. On the first trip, it had been approximately 10 years since Ola had been back to Illinois.

Charles and Margie were born in a 'company-owned' house located in the vicinity of the "Big mines." When Margie was six months old, they moved to a little three-room company house in the section of Palmer called Burnt Orchard. Ralph's mother and father lived next door to them. On the other side of his parents lived his sister Nell and her husband Will Land. Across the road, Alice Mae, his other sister lived with her husband Albert Sweeton. Louise Pocus, their sister-in-law, and nephew Hershel Harrison were also neighbors. There, they raised their four boys and two girls. Shelba Jean and Jo Ann were born in this house. Shelba Jean died with brain fever when she was ten months old. She is buried at Bonnie Oaks at Coalmont.

Ola's nature was very quiet and reserved, but she could be a woman of action when the need arose. One hot summer her boys slipped off and went to the "Blue Hole", she spanked the boys with a switch, and brought them home.

Very few people could compare with Ralph and Ola's skills and accomplishments in the kitchen. They worked side by side cooking southern fried chicken and chicken and dumplings. She made biscuits that would melt in your mouth. The custom at their house was to have fried steak, chicken, pork chops, biscuits, fried potatoes, and gravy for breakfast. Visitors always loved to come and eat from their table.

Ralph and Ola raised six of the seven children born to them. Alfred attended Palmer Elementary School. When he was in the fifth grade, he was playing hind-catcher and someone struck him in his right eye with a ball bat. This destroyed the eye sight in that eye. He quit school in the fifth grade. Alfred "Foxie" worked in the coal mines with his dad from the age of 14 until the mines in the Palmer area closed in 1963. He opened up a small grocery store in the old post office building in 1964. During this time, he organized the men's and women's softball teams and sponsored them. The ball field at Palmer is named for him. He was born on July 24, 1924, and died on February 4, 1968, a few months before his 44th birthday.

Jay W., the second child, was born on December 6, 1927. Jay was allowed to begin school when he was 4 years old. The teacher at the school was Ms. Eloise Partin. Every time Jay would date a girl, his parents would tell him that she was kin to him. He had to go all the way to Laager to find his future wife, June, better known as "Shorty." In 1944 during World War II, he entered the army and was serving part of his time in Japan when his grandfather, Wheeler Sanders, died on June 19, 1946. Jay and June Tate married on his birthday,

December 6, 1946. Kerry Brooke, their son was born in October, 1947. Jay worked in the coal mines for several years. He went back to school and became a certified plumber. Jay retired from TVA at Sequoyah, and June retired as a teacher. He served as a member of the county court for several years. They reside in Gruetli Laager and enjoy Kerry and his wife Wanda Tucker Sanders, granddaughter Audrey and husband Shawn Willoughby, and great grandchildren Brandon and Amber Willoughby.

Paul "Pepper," the third child who had been born in Illinois on February 5, 1929, worked in the coal mines and construction in road building. He loved being involved in politics and was a member of Palmer City Council. He visited the sick and disabled in nursing homes. He used to raise huge gardens and gave produce to those who were unable to raise their own gardens. He married Elvia Roberts in 1954 and they had three children, Kenny, Paul David-deceased, and Deborah Kay. He has another daughter Vickie. He had heart problems and a stroke and died on August 23, 1994. As long as he was able, he mowed and took care of the Palmer Cemetery. After he was unable to do it himself, he would bring prisoners from the jail to do the labor at the cemetery. He was laid to rest in Palmer Cemetery.

Charles "Cotton" Sanders was born on May 20, 1932. Charles attended school at Palmer Elementary. He played football and basketball at Grundy County High School. He was the first one in the family to graduate from high school. He also attended Northeast Junior College in Alabama. Charles entered the Navy in 1952. He spent 4 years in the Navy and spent most of his duty in San Diego and Japan. He married Barbara Jean Davis. They have three sons, Bobby, Ralph Leslie, and Franklin Ewing. Bobby lives in Florida. Les and Ewing live in Palmer and Gruetli Laager. Ewing has a daughter, Courtney, and a son, Mitch. Charles later married Betty Sue Magouirk Cannon and acquired something he had always wanted-four daughters. Vickie Cannon married Norman Meeks, Jr. and has two children Matt and Angela. Renee, married and divorced Waymon Davis, and had four children, Jason, twins Mistie and Christie, and Stacy. Susie married Jackie Layne and had son Roy Ellis. She married Jeff Worley and had daughter Mariah. She married Monte Meeks and had Emily and Creed. Mitzi married Larry Rogers and had Jill. She married David Lowry and had Hank. Charles served as a member of Grundy County Court for several years and is presently a member of the Grundy County School Board. He served as a member of the Board of the Grundy County Exceptional Center and is still active in the center. Betty Sanders recently retired as bookkeeper of the Exceptional Citizens Center. Charles retired from Signal Mountain Cement Plant. Betty sews, crochets, and enjoys the grandchildren. Charles makes a garden, hunts and enjoys civic affairs as well as the grandchildren. They live in the Tatesville area.

Margie, the fifth child and the first girl was born in Palmer, attended Palmer Elementary and Grundy County High School. She married Clayton Anderson and had three children, Clayta Jo, Clayton "Andy," and Martha Susan. Clayta married Dean Sneed and had daughter Tammy. "Andy" married Rocella Creighton and had Amanda and Trevor. "Andy" married Anita Worley and had daughter Cayla. "Andy" later married Melody Reynolds and has step-children, Amanda, Lisa, and Jimmy. Susan married Gene Davis and had children, Eric and Kimberly. Margie lives in Palmer and teaches school at Palmer.

Jo Ann attended Palmer Elementary and Grundy County High School. She married Charles Donald Hill and had two children, Ricky Charles and Kathy Jo. Ricky married Cynthia Layne, Cherry Anderson, and Diane Webster Nunley. Kathy Jo married Tommy Christian and had two children, Danny and Charles Joseph "Jody". Jody married Kasi and had Choloe.

Kathy married Alan Griffith and had sons, Chase and Ricky. Jo Ann married George Fults and had a daughter Lisa. Lisa married Johnny Rodriguez and had a son Jonathan. Jo Ann has worked as a beautician, a health care worker, and is currently working at a pen factory in Shelbyville. She resides in Shelbyville with Lisa and her family.

Solomon Sanders, great grandfather of Ralph Sanders, Born 1730 Died 1830.

Mary, wife of Solomon, great grandmother of Ralph, Born about 1772 Died after 1860.

Jordan, fourth child of Solomon Julia "Pop" Smith wife of Jordan and Ralph's grandfather, Born about 1815 Died

Wheeler, son of Jordan and Julia "Pop" Smith Sanders, Born March 4, 1861. Died June 19, 1945

Nance daughter of Madison and Caroline Olsby Nunley, Born 1872 Died Sept. 30, 1939.

Ralph, son of Wheeler and Nancy Nunley Sanders, Born April 15, 1898 Died August 25, 1988.

Ola, daughter of Jacob and Martha Shadrick Dykes, Born December 19, 1903 Died October 15, 1978.

Lisa  
Griffith

Alan  
Chase  
Kathy Sanders  
Ricky.

Hall, Ed  
Harrison, Hershel

Hill

Charles Donald  
Cherry Anderson  
Cynthia Layne  
Diane Webster Nunley  
Jo Ann Sanders  
Kathy Jo  
Ricky Charles

Land, Nell

Land, Will

Layne

Jackie  
Roy  
Susie Sanders

Lehr, Amil

Lehr, Tony

Lockhart, Goldie

Lockhart, "Sis"

Lowery

David  
Hank  
Mitzi Sanders Rogers

Meeks

Angela. Renee  
Creed  
Dick, Jr.  
Emily  
Ernest  
Matt  
Monte  
Norman  
Susie Sanders Layne Worley  
Vickie

Parson, Mrs. Claudia Aylor

**Janelle Taylor**

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**From:** "Alma Harings" <aharings@cox.net>  
**To:** <jcoats@cafes.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 09, 2003 1:11 AM  
**Subject:** Grundy County Heritage Book

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Hi there Janelle,

My name is Alma Dailey-Harings and I am writing from Tucson AZ. I recently learned about the Grundy County Heritage Book and am extremely eager to include my information. I began researching my family tree about a year ago and since that time I have learned that my ancestors were some of the earliest settlers in the county. I am a direct descendent and the great great granddaughter of **Milton Porter SANDERS (b. 1834)** and **Selina Patton COPE (b. 1838)**. I spoke with a gentleman today by the name of Michael Fromholt who stated that he has already submitted his information on Selina's parents Comfort & Stephen Cope. Therefore, I would be willing to put more emphasis on the SANDERS line if you wish. You may link here for a quick peek at the Grundy TN family from which I descend.

<http://worldconnect.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=AHN&db=alma&id=I425>

I pray that I am not to late. This is a wonderful opportunity that I'd hate to miss so please contact me at your earliest convenience.

Looking forward to hearing from you real soon! Alma

EARLY SANDERS FAMILY SETTLERS IN PELHAM VALLEY, GRUNDY COUNTY, TN

Information about the Sanders' family who moved to Pelham Valley about the year 1798 was abstracted by Charles A. Sherrill, and published in his book Revolutionary War Pension applications from Franklin County, Tennessee.

Dates from book:

In 1832 Solomon Sanders said that he was born in Craven County, N.C. in 1740.

In 1852 Solomon's wife Mary said that she was 87 and had married Solomon in 1791 and that Solomon had died on 29 Nov. 1837. This means that Mary was born in 1765, however she later indicated her birth as the year 1755. Later, in 1853, Mary said that her husband did not keep accurate records of his children's births. From other sources these children appeared to be :

Richard, David, John, Thomas, Jacob, and in 1826, two daughters, Nancy, age 18 and Sally, age 16 **were living.**

1852 Southy (Luthey ?) Sanders said that his mother, a widow, lived in Craven County North Carolina when his uncle, Solomon, moved the family to Kentucky where his family lived. There, for the first time he met his aunt Mary Sanders in 1792. He lived with Solomon and Mary Sanders in Kentucky for several years, then nearly 50 years ago (in 1798) they all, his mother and Solomon Sanders's family moved to what is now Grundy County Tennessee. Southy was born in 1774 and married in 1794. His children were:

Sarah, Mary, Delila, George, Thomas, Jacob and Caroline. Southy,

1852 Thomas Sanders, age 62, said that he accompanied his brother/on the move with his family from North Carolina to Kentucky when he was too young to keep up with the wagons. If the dates are correct, Thomas would have been 2 years old. This data correspond with Southy (Luthey) statements concerning the move to Kentucky in 1792. Thomas, who <sup>was</sup> born in 1790, married in 1816 <sup>and</sup> was the apparent father of the following children:

Silas, George C., Lewis, Thomas, John Milton, Tyma, Wesley and James Mitchell.

Note. James Mitchel Sanders is named as George C. Sanders brother in George's death notice in Mrs. Grundy in 1911. George C., was born near Pelham on May 24, 1821 and died c. May 24, 1911.

George C. Sanders' children were:

Hamilton W., Malina C., Luzetta, Rufas L., John R., Louisa V., Martha and Dick.

Rufus L. Sanders was born in Tracy City, TN on Feb., 22, 1859 and died on his farm in Dunlap, TN on Dec., 1, 1933. His first marriage was to Mary Ann Litta Phipps. They had one son, James Arthur Sanders, born in Tracy City, TN on Dec., 23, 1892 and died in Chattanooga, TN on Feb. 14, 1960. James Arthur Sanders' first marriage was to Delia Pauline Sanders nee Gossett. Their children were James O. Sanders, Howard E., and Fred Dennis.

Rufus Sanders's 2nd marriage to Elizabeth Coppinger resulted in five daughters, Charlotte, Roberta, violet, Verdena and Madell.

**A copy of Charles A. Sherrill's Revolutionary War Pension Applications from Franklin (Grundy) County, Tennessee will be given to the Monteagle, Tennessee public library in May 1989.**

**Janelle Taylor**

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**From:** "Alma" <aharings@cox.net>  
**To:** "Janelle Taylor" <jcoats@cafes.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 27, 2006 2:21 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Fw: Sanders/ Thomas Lose Court records

Hi,

I am dropping everything in the mail to you today ( dues, fees & lineage)

I remember hearing about your Thompson ancestor being found up on the mountain abandoned. How tragic for the parents. Those defiantly were not *the best of times* for the folks of the Pelham Valley. How lucky for the infant though.....

My gg gf Milton P. Sanders served under John P Henley for a time.....

Anyway, I am preparing for a trip to visit my mother who now lives in Winslow, AZ.

And Yes.....I can't help but belt out the song every time I head into town :^)

Unfortunately, this trip is not of the most joyous nature as my mom recently finished her radiation treatment for lung cancer. She will be getting a cat scan today so we will be learning if the treatment worked or not real soon.

Keep her in your prayers. The family history I'm sending you is based on the ancestry of both her parents (Sanders & Dixon)

Well, gotta run to the post office.

Alma

The charge for copying and mailing will be \$8.70. Send the payment to Grundy County Historical Society; P.O. Box 1422; Tracy City, TN 37387.

Please note in the letter that the money is for copying Sanders Lose Files.

Do consider becoming a member of the Historical Society. It is \$15.00, and you get 4 Pathfinders, the society's journal, each year. The journals run about 40 pages and are quite good. We do have back issues of these as well. Check out the website at [www.gchs.homestead.com](http://www.gchs.homestead.com) to see the tables of contents of the journals.

We would love to have a copy of your lineage for our files at the genealogical library if you wouldn't mind sharing your work. There are many Sanders families here in Grundy County.\

**From:** [savanna rodriguez](#)

**To:** [Janelle Taylor](#)

**Sent:** Thursday, March 17, 2011 8:46 PM

**Subject:** Re: Ralph Sanders

Paul "Pepper" Sanders' daughter Vickie Karen Sanders is my mom.

Vickie Karen Sanders married Rogerio Perez, Sr. and lived in Chicago,IL. They had three children in this order

1. Savanna Dolores Perez who married \_\_\_\_ Rodriguez
2. Rogerio Perez, Jr
3. Samantha Faith Perez

We all reside in East Chicago & Whiting Indiana.

My grandfather use to always put our pictures in the Palmer TN newspaper... if I find them I will scan them and send them to you.