



ALBEMARLE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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NEXT MEETING & PROGRAM

The next meeting of the Albemarle Genealogical Society will be 10:00 am, Saturday January 11, 2014, at the Currituck County Public Library in Barco. We hope to see many of the new members that joined during the Fall Conference there.

“Ironclad Sailors and the Croatan Light”

Christopher Grimes will be our speaker at our next meeting. He will be discussing lighthouse keepers. Following is a short bio for Chris: Managing Agent/President of Martin County Insurance in Williamston, NC. Part-time historic interpreter at the Mariner’s Museum, Newport News, VA. Living Historian/Reenactor with a focus on 18th and 19th century medicine, Revolutionary War artillery, 1812 US Navy and Civil War Navy. President, Albemarle Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution. Former board member of the Washington County Historical Society and the Friends of the Museum of the Albemarle. 1991 Graduate of North Carolina State University.

Gregory Williams Outer Banks Genealogy Collection Dedicated at Manteo Library by Jeanne Meekins Murray

In a ceremony both exciting and poignant, the materials donated to the Manteo Library by Gregory Williams’ parents, Cary and Hilda Austin Williams, were officially opened to the public and dedicated to his memory. Funding sponsors, The Albemarle Genealogical Society, represented by President Jeanne Murray; The North Carolina Preservation Consortium, represented by KaeLi Schurr; and Dare County, represented by commissioners Virginia Tillett and Wally Overman; along with Jonathan Wark, Dare County Librarian, participated in the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Gregory Williams, a native of Manteo and grandson of Homer T. and Orphia Austin, was a practicing lawyer for over thirty years. He was also an avid genealogist. Williams succumbed to a long-term illness in 2010, but before that he amassed a huge body of work on many Outer Banks families. His parents donated a total of 50 bankers’ boxes of materials and over 60 books and journals. Thanks to the funding sponsors and the East Albemarle Regional Library in Dare County, these materials are now organized and housed in easily accessible cabinets at the Manteo branch of the Dare County Library. In addition, thanks to another grant, many of the Family Group Sheets may be accessed online at www.DareDigitalHeritage.org.

In comments made by his mother, Hilda Williams, she expressed her gratitude that Gregory Williams’ legacy as a lover of genealogy and the Outer Banks is able to live on for the benefit of the area and the people he loved.

**Personal Notes on the
Sanderlin and Mercer Families
In
Camden and Currituck Counties of North Carolina
by: William Thomas Wood**

**THE SANDERLIN FAMILY
The Sanderlin Manor House**

This house is situated two miles west of Moyock in Currituck County of North Carolina. It is a simple but satisfying geometrical design Colonial Home similar to the Archibald Blair house and the Charlton House in Williamsburg Virginia. In all these homes the main house is two rooms deep, with four rooms on each floor and a center passage containing the stair. In the Sanderlin House the stair starts on the left side of the twelve foot wide center hall, goes half way up to a balcony then across and up to the second floor on right side of hall. The Archibald Blair House was built in 1718, the Charlton House was built in 1722 by Edward Charlton a wigmaker, both of these houses have one concealed chimney at each end with opposing corner fireplaces. The Thomas Sanderlin House has two massive outside chimneys on the west end of the house and one chimney centered on the east end of the house. All these houses have a small 6 by 9 M/L front porch and are of lap board construction. Thomas Sanderlin and his family lived in this house from 1878 to the time of his death in 1896. None of his ten children were born here. After the death of Thomas Sanderlin his son Edward Wilson Sanderlin lived in this house for some years. The Sanderlin House was probably built circa 1790.

The Wilson House was larger and more substantial than the original farmhouse across the road, it is a simple but satisfying geometrical design of Colonial home, the main house is two rooms deep with four rooms on each floor and a center passage containing the stair. The stair starts at the left of the twelve foot wide center hall goes half way up to a balcony then across two massive outside chimneys on the west end and on an outside centered chimney on the other end. The house is of lapboard construction and was probably built circa 1790.

Fifteen feet to the rear of the house and separated from it was a 24 by 24 cook room. In those days the cook room was detached from the house keeping the smells of cooking and the heat away from the big house. About 100 feet behind the house was a fenced in area which was known as the Pond. The stock was allowed to roam in this enclosure and to graze on what grass they could find. The house, corn crib, a tool shed, and a hen house. There was a well in the Pond which was used exclusively for watering the stock, this had a sweep which was equipped with the famous old Oaken Bucket. Outside the enclosure and to the left of the house was the all-important Smoke House and to the right was a substantially built Bunk House and another well which was used to draw water for use in the house and the cook room. Just beyond this well was the vegetable and herb garden which was completely fenced in.

One quarter mile west of the Wilson Place and forming part of this complex was the Mercer Farm. This had a long one story dwelling built several feet above the ground with a porch across the entire front, it had the usual compliment of farm buildings. After grandfather Thomas Sanderlin died grandmother lived here for some time with her son Edward Wilson Sanderlin. Beyond and to the west of the Mercer Farm was the Great Dismal Swamp, and two miles further west was the Currituck-Camden County boundary line.

In 1878 when Thomas Sanderlin first moved into the Wilson Home, Rutherford B. Hayes was president and Currituck County was still pioneer country. All the corn, potatoes, cotton, peas, and other products of the farm was shipped by wagon train to Norfolk or Elizabeth City and Norfolk Railroad, later the Norfolk and Southern Railroad began to operate. The coming of the railroad was a great blessing to the country people, it broadened their lives and economy

and gave to them a greater variety of goods from which to select their needs. One very welcomed treat was 100 pound cake of ice which was shipped in from Elizabeth City on the evening train in burlap bags packed with sawdust.

As far back as I can remember Grandfather Thomas Sanderlin's plantation consist of the Barnard Farm, which was the original farm, The Wilson Farm, The Lindsay Farm, The Mercer Farm, the Guinea Farm an others. Altogether there must have been 1200 to 1500 acres. In planting he used the approved agricultural system of rotating his crops and at certain intervals he would allow chosen acreage to lie idle and rest for a year.

Thomas Sanderlin was a true country gentleman, a Squire, and his spouse was by any definition a gentlewoman. In all of Currituck County there were no others who received more love, admiration and respect. There generous, friendly, neighborly and hospitable. My mother has often remarked that when she was a young girl at home there was seldom a Sunday when one, two or three carriages did not drive up for dinner with the Sanderlin's. Offhand this would appear to have been quite a task for grandmother however we must remember she always had two or three servants to prepare, cook and serve the meal then wash the dishes afterwards, leaving her free to enjoy the lively companionship of her guests for it was only at such gatherings that news of relatives and friends and the activities of the community could be disseminated, the men of course talked planting, cultivating and the harvest and swapped ideas with great wisdom on how, when and how all of this should be done.

In recording the following list of children and grandchildren of Thomas and Sarah Frances-Mercer-Sanderlin it is my pleasure that I do so from personal knowledge. With the exception of two of my aunts who died before I was born and one who died when I was three years old, I knew well and loved all of them, we were closely associated for many years. Many of their birth and death dates are not recorded and are not necessary for purposes of this brief narrative. At this time anyone who desires to continue and expand the Sanderlin Family history may readily find a great deal of information from living relatives, court records, and vital statistics. I'm writing these notes I've barely scratched the surface of available information having made no search in the Court House of Camden County. Thomas and Sarah Frances Sanderlin had 31 grandchildren. My paternal grandparents, William and Elizabeth Whitehurst Wood had 45 grandchildren. Nine of us were double first cousins and appear on both lists for a total of 67 which was a great number of cousins. It may be interesting to note that of these 67 children only 4 failed to live and reached maturity.

Thomas Sanderlin of Camden County, b. Nov. 1, 1828, d. Dec. 30, 1896 married in 1850 - Sarah Frances Mercer of Camden, b. June 20th, 1834, d. Feb. 25th, 1900. They had 10 Children.

William married Estelle Carney and they had 8 children.

Sarah Frances, 1853-1920, married James Thomas Wood on Dec. 8, 1886. They had 4 children.

Mary Gray 1855-1884

Thomas Mercer married Lila Russ, They had 3 Children.

Emma Susan 1859-1866

Edward Wilson 1862-1933 married first Maggie Gilliam Moss in 1844, they had 4 children. Married Second Addie Barnard in 1898, they had 4 children.

Clara Anne 1864-1891

Sam Sylvestor 1868-1920 married Hattie Russ, They had 3 children.

Elizabeth Estelle 1871-1951 married Caleb Luten Wood. They had 5 children.

Lena Bridgett 1874-1932.

All of the above ten children of Thomas Sanderlin and his wife Sarah Frances Mercer-Sanderlin were born and brought up on the Thomas Sanderlin Farms at Puddin Ridge in Moyock, Currituck County of North Carolina.

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It is quite natural that city children coming from Norfolk would find life on the farm different from their usual environments and were thrilled with everything although it was usually normal happenings of life. Probably the most exciting interlude was the Saturday afternoon trip to the village. Moyock or Shingle Landing which was its earlier name, was a considerable trading center which served around thirty six square miles of countryside.

C.R. Van de Carr, a New Yorker, had a large general store which was managed locally by Mr. Lawrence Wilson. Nearby was Poyner Bros', Creekmores' and Cox's general stores any one of which could supply almost all the needs of the farmer and his family. On various Saturday afternoons it was the custom of the farmers to ride into the village to transact their various businesses and to visit with their neighbors, Mr. John Morse who was a man of great dignity always rode in on a large horse. At times Mr. Nat Hathaway came in as did Mr. Tom Sanderlin, Mr. John Barnard, Mr. Thomas Lindsay Jarvis, now this was at a period of my childhood around 1898, today which is 65 years later Mr. Jarvis' farm is being owned and operated by their family for a period of over one hundred and thirty years. Continuing the list, there was Mr. Theodore Creekmore, Mr. Jet Poyner, Mr. Seth Poyner, Dr. Fred William Ritter, Dr. Mann and others. In my youthful opinion these were tall men, important men and I am quite sure that in this I was correct.

On our way home to the farm and just outside the village of Shingle Landing was the establishment of Holt the Blacksmith. Mr. Holt as I remember him was a singing blacksmith, not that he had an outstanding baritone or bass voice but he sang snatches of hymns or folk songs as he worked, mostly I suppose for his own amusement. Mr. Holt was a consummate artist, any man who could take a strip or strap iron, being it around a huge wagon wheel, cut it, weld it together at the ends, reheat it and shrink it on the wagon when to a perfect fit could be nothing less. Later in my life I was interested in and visited blacksmith shops in small towns of Western New York and other states. I found them all alike, they were usually housed in nondescript wooden buildings which had clay floors and always when the Smithy cut off a piece of iron the remnant fell to the floor and stayed there. In time this formed quite a disarray of litter, however when the blacksmith needed a particular shape and length of iron he instinctively knew where it was and reached down and used it. It was my privilege to know a blacksmith in Alexandria Virginia who could create ornamental ironwork which was inferior to none of the famous examples found in the great cathedrals of Europe. With his forge, anvil and small tools he could shape a piece of wrought iron into a rose where delicate petals were objects of exquisite beauty.

Just the other side of Holt's Blacksmith Shop was the Ford. This was where the road went through Shingle Landing Creek at about the point where it joined the Big Ditch, usually there was very little water until after a hard rain when the water rose to the level of the hubs on the buggy. It was then we liked it best and usually made two or three trips back and forth. After fording the Ford and passing the Methodist Church we jogged left and followed the big ditch to the farm.

Other than Thanksgiving and Christmas there were three other feast days on the Farm and at various times it was our great pleasure to be present when they occurred. The first came after the corn was 8 to 10 inches high, it was then the custom for the men, women and children to take a hoe and carefully scrape away the grass and pile up a mound of earth around the roots of the corn. This gave the corn strength to fight the grass and weeds for the limited nourishment in the soil. After that there was a period of rest and the best of all available foods were gathered and cooked to give the field hands and their families a great banquet. This was the famous Corn Hill Dinner which in these days would be considered a fringe benefit.

Each summer way back in those days, the various churches in Currituck County would hold what they called a Protracted Meeting and this meeting would last for one week. There would be preaching in the morning and in the afternoon between services at Noon long tables would be set up in the Church yard and the ladies would bring out enormous stacks of fried chicken, pork, pies and cakes, there would be more than enough to feed the entire affair in order that he could spend the entire summer attending the various meetings. It is unfortunate his name was not preserved for posterity. During services the ladies and the girls sat on one side of

the church and the men and boys occupied the other side. Uncle Ed, Bud Ed as Uncle Sam called him, sat in the Amen Corner where he was very useful in punctuating an especially fine point in the sermon or during prayers.

Cousin Luna Jarvis Spivey was saying just the other day that when Cousin Shep Mercer stood up to pray all the children slid off the benches onto the floor and went to sleep as they could always count on a long prayer.

Just what relation Cousin Shep Mercer bears to the Sanderlin Family I do not know, nevertheless I have heard his name so often I feel that I would be remiss if I did not include him in this narrative. The same could be said for Cousin Fonso Mercer who lived across the street from us on Clairborne Avenue in Norfolk. Oscar Ferebee as a boy always arranged to shit behind Cousin Fonso when he went to the McKendree Methodist Church as he enjoyed so much hearing him sing. According to Oscar he had a clear true baritone voice which he held under perfect control. Likewise we have never learned the relationship of Cousin Fonso to Cousin Shep Mercer or to the Sanderlin Family, in spite of this we were proud to call them Cousins.

The only time in the year when there was a surfeit of fresh meat on the farm was at Hog Killing Time, this came in November. Soon after midnight some of the farm hands would start fires under the huge cat iron kettles and by dawn the water would be boiling more vigorously. This was used to scald the animals in order to more readily remove the bristles and leave hides clean and sanitary. The hams, shoulders and slabs of bacon were salted down and would later when cured be smoked in the Smoke House. The other parts of the animals would be taken into the cook room where the snout and ears were jellied into Souse, parts were ground up for sausage, the feet and chitterlings were meticulously cleaned, nothing was wasted and there was an abundance of food for everyone.

According to God's plan for all living things the life of Thomas Sanderlin came to an end, it was on December 30th in the Year of Our Lord eighteen hundred and ninety six. Three years later his devoted wife Sarah Frances Mercer-Sanderlin joined him on February 25th, 1900. They were laid to rest in the land they loved so much and where they had lived for so many years, the little cemetery was between their original farm and the Wilson Farm. Three of their daughters had preceded them and later their son Edward Wilson Sanderlin was brought to be with them, a list of all the people in the Sanderlin Cemetery is given later. A short way down the road on the Mercer Farm is another private burying ground, this contains an above ground marble tomb in which is interred a little girl named Ann Doxey. When we were small children we would slide the top slab away and could see the skeleton of the little girl, the hair had survived and she had her doll in her right arm. I noticed several months ago that the tomb is still there apparently in good condition amidst a clump of bushes with one tree. Great uncle William Mercer married first an Ann. Luna Jarvis has a feeling that her name was Ann Doxey, if she was a widow this may have been her little daughter.

It has been said that a series of notes and memorandums, no matter how rudely written, if arranged in chronological order would constitute a history of those times. This may well be so, all history and literature is the result of notes recorded by someone. General John Elliott Wood of Currituck North Carolina has this to say in writing on Genealogy in his "Pasquotank Historical Society Year Book #1"

"Who are ancestors were, their place of origin, why they left home to dare unknown seas and hostile shores, how they fared along the way, and many aspects of the pilgrimages of our Elizabethan forefathers offer prodigious challenges to our imagination.

Those who perished were victims of the law of survival and have passed beyond practical interest; but those who survived hunger, disease, and the Indians; and who left progeny to carry on their efforts, forged the rough form of the civilization we enjoy today. Our advantages and mode of life are not accidental even though we are prone to take them for granted. All our benefits well as ills were the natural consequence of people and events before us. Somebody was responsible. Curiosity about the early pioneers who opened up the wilderness which was Albemarle is a normal instinct in those who turn their mind towards speculative channels."

This ends the Personal Notes on the Sanderlin and Mercer Families

**A Common Confederate Soldier's Diary
Company "B"
61st Virginia Infantry Regiment**

“A Common Confederate Soldier’s Diary for the Period 1861-1865” by author Faye Marsha Benjamin. The diary was written by an ordinary common confederate soldier, using the talking style of that era, to explain to those that were not there what it actually was like. The events and dates are correct but some of the narrative is the author’s creative style in providing a better insight into what was happening during this period. This diary dates from Jan 1862 till April 1865.

Aug 8, 1861 LtCol Samuel Wilson organized the 7th Battalion Virginia Company in Norfolk County.

Capt. William Stewart enlisted his men at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Norfolk County. They called themselves the Jackson Grays later to be Co A.

Capt. John Hopkins enlisted his men at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Norfolk County. They called themselves the Wilson Guards later to be Co B.

Capt. John Wallace enlisted his group at Great Bridge, Norfolk County. They called themselves the Blanchard Greys later to be Co C.

Capt. William Barnes enlisted his group at Beaver Dam, Isle of Wight County. They called themselves the Isle of Wight Avengers later to be Co F.

Capt. Littleberry Mason enlisted his group at Pig Point, Norfolk County. They called themselves the Confederate Defenders later to be Co G.

The 7th Battalion Virginia Company was ordered to protect the Hampton Roads waterways and Portsmouth Navy Yard.

Jackson Grays Co A ordered to build gun entrenchments at Fort Nelson.

Confederate Defenders Co G ordered to build gun entrenchments at Pig Point.

Wilson Guards Co B ordered to build gun entrenchments at Blinkhorn Point, Nansemond County.

Isle of Wight Avengers Co F ordered to build gun entrenchments at Forrest Entrenchment Camp near Portsmouth.

Officers elected Co B

Capt. John Hopkins
ILt Thomas Baxter
2Lt James Fulford
2Lt Ambrose Lindsay

Enlisted NCO elected Co B

ISgt James Scott
2Sgt Benjamin Baxter
3Sgt Ahaz Fisher
4Sgt John W. Hanberry
5Sgt John Tucker
ICpl Willoughby Barnard
2Cpl Francis Williams
3Cpl Thomas Williams
4Cpl John H. Brown

Men issued .58 caliber Springfield rifle musket, cartridge box, cap box, knapsack, haversack, bayonet with scabbard, blanket, uniform and canteen. 95 men enlisted Co B.

Our company has 2 sets father and son, 9 sets of brothers, and 4 sets of cousins. The fellers are from Norfolk, Portsmouth, and northeastern North Carolina. None of us boys know anything about soldiering. We elected 4 officers. After awhile it's plain as day only 2 know soldiering. Lt Baxter and Lt Fulford are teaching us how to march, clean muskets, load and fire muskets, use the bayonet, set up camp and proper military dress and rules. Capt Hopkins might be educated and a doctor but he ain't much on soldiering. Lt Lindsay ain't much neither. He's either sick or AWOL.

I'm a 18 year old private who gets \$11.00 a month with some book learnin. Just a simple farmer. If I go into battle, I hope my officers and the fellers with stripes know what they are a doin. When we joined up no doctor gave us a good goin over. Some feller asked us if we could hear and see good, did we have a bad cough, and were we ever bad sick. Most everybody passed.

Oct 19, 1861 Pvt W. Creekmore Co B shot himself in foot during target practice. Later discharged.

Nov 1, 1861 4Cpl Brown Co B transferred Signal Corps.

Jan 1862 LtCol Samuel Wilson added 3 more companies. 2 more companies and we'll be a regiment.

Border Rifles became Co E joined from Washington Point, Norfolk.

Virginia Rangers became Co H joined from Camp Pemberton.

Jackson Light Infantry became Co D joined from Norfolk County.

Jan 8, 1862 2Lt A. Lindsay Co B resigned to boil salt on coast of North Carolina

Jan 11, 1862 Some of the fellers are down with the measles including me. Most of us scratch and cuss all day and night.

Jan 26, 1862 Willis Dudley and Samuel Kinsey joined Co B from Blinkhorn Pt.

Jan 1862, Fellers are drilling, marching, taking target practice, bayonet practice. Fellers try to keep busy while in winter quarters. We write letters but don't receive many. We watch for enemy ships and troop movements.

Jan 20, 1862 This army sure has plenty of calls blowed on a bugle and banged on a drum everyday. This is a normal day's calls. Reveille anywhere from 2:00am to 6:00am to get up. Morning roll call in full dress or semiundress. Breakfast call to eat. Sick call for the ailing, and Fatigue call for the well. Fatigue call can be policing the company's grounds, tidying up the quarters, digging drainage ditches, cutting wood, or other duties. Call for guard mounting where you stand 2 hours out of every 6 hours. Drill Call. Dinner call to eat. Retreat call which can be roll call, inspection, or dress parade. Supper call to eat. Tatoo which is roll call again and ordering the men to their quarters.

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January is the time for your membership dues. We encourage you to invite friends and family to join the Albemarle Genealogical Society. It is through your membership that keeps AGS an important genealogical source in Currituck and Dare counties.

**ALBEMARLE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP 2014**

Albemarle Genealogical Society, 142 Waterlily Road, Coinjock, NC 27923
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