

# **REVEREND MOSES SANDERS**

**WHO DIED**

**29 March 1817**

**as recorded in the  
Groves Level Baptist Church  
Banks County, Georgia**

**By**

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# **Reverend Moses Sanders**

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## PREFACE

This publication is an attempt to clarify what is fact or fiction concerning the life and family of Moses Sanders, whose death date, 29 March 1817, is entered in the minutes of the Grove Level Baptist Church in Maysville, Georgia, and whose will is dated 28 February 1817. Family members and historians have relied on several sources of unsubstantiated but authentic appearing writings. Among these are the following:

**1. Two tombstones placed in a private Sanders Cemetery near Homer, Banks County, Georgia.** The epitaph for Moses Sanders reads: "Rev. Moses Sanders, Born in England 1742. Died 1817. Founder of Grove Level, Nails Creek and many other Baptist Churches. A soldier of the Revolutionary War. The Cross of Jesus Christ My Anchor." His wife's epitaph reads: "Sallie Hamilton, Wife of Rev. Moses Sanders. A native of Virginia born 1745. Died 1816. She died as she lived, A Christian." [Editor's note: Research fails to confirm his birth in England, or that he served as a soldier during the Revolutionary War. He was serving as Justice of the Peace in Iredell County during the war. His wife was Mary Hambleton and she survived him and is mentioned in his will in 1817. These headstones were likely installed 85 years after the death of Moses Sanders by a great grandson, Christopher Columbus Sanders at the same time he had commemorative markers placed at the Line & Grove Level Baptist Churches in 1902 on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Groves Level Baptist Church.]

**2. "Men of Mark in Georgia" Vol. IV** edited by William F. Northen, Ex Governor of Georgia, and published by A. B. Caldwell. Pub. At Atlanta, Ga. in 1908. This publication contains an article about "Col. Christopher Columbus Sanders, merchant and banker of Gainesville, Ga., born at Grove Level, Jackson County, Ga. May 8 1840 . . ."

Quoting from this publication: "Col Sanders' great grandfather, Rev. Moses Sanders, was a Baptist preacher. He emigrated from England in 1765 and with two younger brothers, David and John, who located in Tennessee and Alabama while Moses settled at Petersburg, Va. Later he moved to North Georgia. He was noted for his energy, ability, strength of character, and benevolence, all of which qualities he exercised in the upbuilding of the new country to which he had come. He encouraged education, established schools, invited immigration, and planted churches. Two of these churches recently celebrated their one hundredth anniversary. He also surveyed and laid out highways across the country from the Carolinas to Alabama and to the Indian reservations north of the Chattahoochee River in Georgia. He and the brothers mentioned above took an active part in the war for American Independence, participating in the battles of Kings Mountain, the Cowpens, the long campaigns in Virginia and the fierce guerrilla warfare in the Carolinas. He died in 1817. His eldest son, Moses Sanders, Jr., an enterprising planter, was the grandfather of the subject of this sketch . . ." "The parents of Colonel Sanders were Harris Sanders and Elizabeth (Smythe) Sanders . . ."

[Editor's note: No evidence that he emigrated from England has been located. He was in Virginia in 1769 when his eldest son, Aaron, was born. He was in Anson County, N. C. by 1771 and purchased property in Rowan County, N.C. in 1785 which becomes Iredell County in 1788. He moved to South Carolina in 1794 and then to Franklin County, Ga. in 1798. His only identified brother is Francis who appears with him in Franklin Co., Ga. and who moved to Smith County, Tenn. in 1807. The two younger brothers mentioned were likely his sons, David & John. David moved to Bedford Co. Tenn. in 1807 and was one of the Tenn. Volunteers who was killed in 1815 at the Battle of New Orleans fighting the Tories of Great Britain in the last battle of the War of 1812.

John sells his inheritance from his father in 1818 and moved to McNairy County, Tenn. In 1837 he moved to Tishomingo County, Miss. No evidence has been located which states Moses Sanders served in the Revolutionary War. He witnessed his will with an "X" indicating his degree of education.]

3. "History of Banks Co., Georgia 1858-1976" a book compiled by Jessie Julia Mize Page 53: Repeats the inscription on tombstones mentioned above. Page 81: "The Line Church was constituted by the Rev. Moses Sanders, Thomas Maxwell, and Daniel White, Sep. 13, 1802. Rev. Moses Sanders served the church he had helped found from 1802-1810. He was then succeeded by Littleton Meeks who served for 35 years.

The Line Church is indeed a part of the history of this area. The church's name is derived from being near the Line of the Last Four Mile Purchase Tract that the government bought from the Cherokee Indians. This is identified by markers put up by the Georgia Historical Commission. These markers can be seen at the church entrance and on the Line. Because of shifting boundaries The Line Church has been in three counties: Franklin 1802-1819; Habersham 1819-1858; Banks 1858-today."

"The memorial tablet of the church and the silver communion service were given by the late C. C. Sanders, Gainesville, Ga., in memory of his grandfather, Rev. Moses Sanders."

[Editor's note: This reference is to the grandfather not the great grandfather of C. C. Sanders. This Moses Sanders Jr. moved from South Carolina to Georgia in 1801, three years after his father.]

Page 94: "Nails Creek Baptist Church. The Georgia Historical Commission marker erected in 1954 states: 'Nails Creek Baptist Church, the first Baptist Church in Banks County was established Feb. 11, 1787. It was the mother church of Middle River, Grove Level and Indian Creek.'"

Pages 95-96: "Histories of Nails Creek Church have been prepared by Rev. J. F. Goode and by George Garnet Strange (1950).

The Reverend Moses Sanders was the Missionary and leader in founding the Church. Associated with Sanders in Missionary Activities among the Indians and early settlers at that time were Dozier Thornton, Littleton Meeks, and Thomas Johnson. What part if any these men had in assisting Sanders in the organization is not known. It is believed that Thornton was member of the presbytery, assisting Sanders in the organization. Both Meeks and Johnson were young men at the time. Possibly neither had been ordained. Brief personal sketches of these leaders are included here.

Information gathered from family records of the descendants of Moses Sanders, Littleton Meeks, and Dozier Thornton, has proven quite helpful. A brief sketch of these flaming evangelists of the Gospel will be informative in connection with his church.

Moses Sanders was born in Dawnton parish Westshire, England in 1732. He came to America in his early manhood and settled in Pittsylvania County, Virginia. soon after his arrival he married Miss Sallie Hamilton of the same county. Several children were born to them. He made some two or three missionary journeys down in the New Colony of Georgia before moving to the state in 1784. Moses Sanders served as pastor of Nails Creek until he organized a congregation at Grove Level in 1802 and became the first pastor there.

He located on a farm in western Franklin County, now Banks County, about four miles east of the present city of Maysville, Ga., where he lived out the remainder of his life. He died in 1817 and was buried in a family cemetery nearby. He served as a soldier in the Continental Army under General Washington. He bore a number of scars caused by bayonet wounds on his body proving his valor as a soldier of the cross.

Dozier Thornton was born Lunenburg, Virginia in 1755. Early in his ministry he became associated with Moses Sanders in Missionary Activities on the frontier in Georgia and among the Cherokee Indians. Like Sanders he was obsessed by an impelling urge to preach and spread the Gospel. He came into Georgia, along with Sanders in the year 1784 . . ."

"Littleton Meeks was a native of Pittsylvania County, Virginia. He was converted at an early age under the ministry of Moses Sanders and was baptized

by Sanders in the Dan River. Soon after his baptism he entered the ministry under the tutorage of Sanders and accompanied Sanders and Dozier Thornton on some of their missionary journeys into Georgia, before moving to Georgia along with Sanders and Thornton. He settled on a farm, a neighbor to Sanders in Western Franklin County, Now Banks County, Ga., some four miles east of the present city of Maysville, Ga."

**[Editor's note:** Moses Sanders did not move to Georgia until 1798 and there is no Dawnton, Westshire, England. It should have read Downton, Wiltshire, England but a visit there and correspondence with the minister reveals no Moses Sanders in 1732 or 1742. Coming from Pittsylvania Co., Va. has not been documented. His wife was Mary Hambleton, not Sallie Hamilton and there appears to be no official record of his having served in the Revolutionary War under George Washington.

**4. Wills of Moses Sanders dated 28 Feb 1817** proved in May court 1817, reg. 5 May 1817. Two separate writings of his will appear in the county records. One is more correct in identifying his family and it will be quoted in this manuscript. It is located in the Franklin County, Georgia Will Book 1814-1823 pages 58, 58a, 59, 59a.

This publication is a contribution of the author to the descendants of Moses Martin Sanders in fulfillment of his duties as Family Genealogist. It is recognized that errors do exist and some assumptions may be flawed. The author would appreciate receiving correspondence pointing out errors & their carification. He would also be pleased to receive further data concerning Moses Sanders and his descendants.