

ZW Banks Bio

A BIOGRAPHY OF

ZACHARIAH WILLIS BANKS

1841 - 1906

Go to 7. for Zachariah

1. Richard Bankes was, to the best of our knowledge, the first member of our family in America. He was born in Alkham, Kent, England in 1607, the son of William Bankes and Elizabeth Perye Bankes. Richard was first married in 1631 to Joan Harrison. He and Joan were the parents of three children all born in England. Of the three children, LDS records show that two were baptized in Alkham parish: Mary in 1636 and William in 1641. Richard came to Scituate, Massachusetts, what is now York County, Maine, in 1642. Records show that he made the voyage with three other men from Kent, with no mention of his wife or children. There is no subsequent record of Joan or the children in England, however, William (see section 2) is mentioned in at least one later account among the children in Maine. In 1644, Richard returned to England and married Elizabeth Curtis, sister of one of the men who sailed to America with him. It was a

troubled time in England with Oliver Cromwell in revolt and a serious plague wiping out families. With his new bride, and most likely his son, he returned to America. Richard and Elizabeth had one daughter, Elizabeth. It is unknown when or how Elizabeth Curtis Bankes died, but Richard married for a third time in 1655, to Elizabeth Alcock. They had four sons, John, Joseph, Samuel, and Job. Richard was a tailor in England. One of his early efforts in America was to lay out townships in what is now Maine. Over the next 50 years Richard engaged in multiple roles in the young settlement: Provincial Councilor; Assistant to the Court; Selectman for 7 years; juror 12 times; a Trial Justice; Court Appraiser; Tax Commissioner; and Overseer of the County Prison.

Richard was one of 48 persons killed in the Indian/French Raid on York in 1692.

2. In 1660, after William Bankes passed the qualifying age of eighteen, a certificate was granted to him for 150 acres in what was then York County, Virginia, for the importation of three people into Virginia. (The importation laws of those times granted 50 acres per person to the person

responsible.) Sometime later in the 1660's, William acquired 700 additional acres in a sale agreement, in St Stephen's Parish, King and Queen County, Virginia. This property became known as Mantapike. When later surveyed, 379 acres were added to the deed, making the original Mantapike property 1079 acres. The property bordered the Mattapny River and William built his house on a rise overlooking the river. The flow of the Mattapony slowed here, there being a sharp bend in its direction, and one report states that there was a "large fishery there." Later, in the 1700's, "being located along a major road to Williamsburg, was a major warehouse for tobacco shipments." When William made his will, in 1709 shortly before his death, he listed property on both sides of the Mattapony. He possibly had a transport or transportation service. With tobacco being the major export starting in the early 1600's, he may have ferried the product to the Chesapeake.

3. When Ralph Banks was born, in 1684, in King and Queen County, Virginia, his father William was 43 and his mother, Mary Martha Tunstall (1663 – unknown), was 21. Ralph, being the oldest son, inherited all of the Mantapike' property. He married

Mary Davis {1683 – 1756) in 1708. They were the parents of four children, Hannah, Elizabeth, William, and Thomas. Ralph was a tobacco farmer and most likely used indentured servants and African slaves for labor. He died 1735, leaving Mantapike to his oldest son, William.

4. Thomas Banks, born in 1709 in King and Queen County, Virginia, was the youngest child of Ralph and Mary Davis Banks. He was Zachariah's great-grandfather. He inherited land in Caroline County, Virginia, probably from his mother. He was married three times. After his first wife died, he married Betty White in 1748. They lived for many years in Oxford, Granville County, North Carolina, where he became Justice of the Peace. He also became a prominent landowner, amassing over 2,600 acres of land. Thomas and Betty donated land for the establishment of Banks Chapel, which later became Banks United Methodist Church. Thomas and Betty had seven children, including Zachariah's grandfather, William Banks. Around 1784, shortly after the Revolutionary War, Thomas and his children, including Ralph, James, John and William, migrated to Georgia from North Carolina. They purchased or were granted a tract of land not far

from the Savannah River in Wilkes County (became Elbert County). They built a large farmhouse and established a plantation. The house is still standing. When Thomas died in 1789 he was buried behind the house and the plantation was divided among his children.



Banks United Methodist Church, Wilton, North Carolina

5. William Banks (1766 – 1820) was born in Oxford, North Carolina, the fifth child of Thomas and Betty.

William appears to have sold his interest in the family property to brother Ralph and invested the proceeds in his own separate plantation, near the village of Ruckersville, Georgia. He and his wife Annie Henderson Banks (1771 – 1838), lived and farmed between Vann's Creek and the Savannah River. They had eleven children. Their plantation home, outside Ruckersville, was destroyed by fire in the 1930's and there is no remaining evidence of its existence. Much the same can be said of Ruckersville, which was a thriving center of politics and commerce in the Eighteenth Century but is completely gone today. William and Anne are buried next to the Methodist Church of Ruckersville. Their grave marker indicates that William was a Revolutionary War veteran. He must have been a drummer boy.

6. William Randall Banks, born about 1805, was the fourth of eleven children born to William and Annie. He married Elizabeth Bowman and, together, they left Elbert County about 1829 and headed for Monroe County, Georgia, where land was being granted to new settlers. There, they obtained land approximately five and a half miles southwest of Forsyth along with a group from Elbert County that included several Banks brothers, sisters, cousins,

and members of the Alexander family (two Banks sisters had married two Alexander brothers). William R enlisted in the Confederate army at age 59, pitting father against son (Zachariah). His enlistment record shows him as 6' 3" tall with blue eyes and grey hair. Toward the end of the war, it is interesting to note that a contingent of General William T Sherman's Union army, two days after burning Atlanta, marched south toward Forsyth. Their intention was to go through Forsyth where the Confederates had critical medical facilities and then head toward Savannah. In a 2024 conversation with Tony Banks, Priscilla Doster of Forsyth, an Alexander and a Banks, described what happened: "Kilpatrick's cavalry was coming from the north (battles around Atlanta). To stop them, Gen. Wheeler ordered the bridges over the Towaliga River burned to protect the Confederate hospitals at Forsyth. The local defense of old men and boys skirmished with Kilpatrick's men at the River, resulting in their not crossing the River, but turning east along the north side of the river and going on to Clinton and Macon—never entering Forsyth." It is unknown whether William Randall Banks or any of his many children took part. He died about 1866. Elizabeth Bowman Banks is believed to have died

about 1865. They were both residents of Forsyth at the time of their deaths.

7. Zachariah Willis Banks was born near Forsyth, Monroe County, Georgia in 1841. Zachariah was the fourth of William R. and Elizabeth's children. When Zachariah was about eighteen years of age he became estranged from his family. As Zachariah's grandson Harry Edward Banks, son of William Marshall Banks, wrote to his cousin Muriel Banks Anderson in 1961, "Uncle Sank told us our Grandpa left home in Georgia because he would not work Negro Slaves on his daddy's plantation, so he was disinherited." Zachariah left Georgia, bound for Tennessee.

Zachariah met Jane Catherine Wingo about the time he left Georgia, which we assume to be shortly before the 1860 census. Zachariah was not listed in the 1860 census, but the rest of his family was at their home near Forsyth. Jane Catherine Wingo was the daughter of Andrew J. Wingo and Rosannah Wingo, both originally from South Carolina. Jane Catherine Wingo was about four years older than Zachariah. She had been previously married to a Thomas R. Beckett in McMinn County, Tennessee, in 1856, but no record

of the termination of the marriage nor the death of Thomas R. Beckett have been found.

Zachariah was married to Jane Catherine Wingo by Justice of the Peace John Scarborough on the third Sunday in May, 1861. Jane had a young son named Lowry Beckett.

The children of Zachariah and Jane, are:

A. William Marshall Banks, born 1863, died 1915 the father of nine (9) children.

B. Rosanna Elizabeth Banks, born 1866, died around 1880 at about age 14

C. Thomas born 1868, died before 1870 (age 2)

D. Thomas Alexander Banks, born 1874, died 1930, the father of nine (9) children (one of whom died in childhood)

E. Sara (Sadie or Sade) Banks Lockmiller, born 1873, died near Athens, Tennessee in 1957 or 1958, the mother of two children and stepmother to several others. She may have lived with Zachariah or Zachariah with her in 1900. She and her husband Nathan Lockmiller (Sr.) managed Zachariah's meager probate estate.

F. Adaline Banks, born 1-August-1875 died 21-August-1893, three weeks after her 18th birthday. She is buried beside Zachariah and Jane Catherine.

The Confederate Army was assembled by pulling together "Companies". These were groups of 40 - 50 men formed in local Southern communities and then connected to larger commands. Zachariah's Athens' group became Company B and was organized by John R. Neal and R.F. Mastin at Athens, McMinn County, Tennessee, 31-May-1862 (along with Company A and Company C). It is important here to understand the tension of the times and the stress felt by both North and South. When Neal and Mastin came recruiting in Athens, they were drafting those fit to fight and there was nothing voluntary about it. Zachariah's "Muster Roll"

indicates that he enlisted on that date, with J.R. Neal. Zachariah was a Private and in addition to paying him for his service, he also received a fee for the use of his horse. His enlistment was for three years.

In October of 1862, Company B, along with other Companies, were attached together to become the 16th Battalion, also called Rucker's Battalion and later, after Rucker's promotion to an even larger command, Neal's Battalion.

Companies A, B and C were stationed at Post Oak Springs, Roane County, Tennessee from their formation until September or October of 1862 when they were moved to Knoxville, Tennessee.

Company B stayed at Knoxville for many months, then were located at Sweetwater from 30-June, 1863. While stationed in Knoxville, the Battalion was affiliated with certain larger entities (Rucker's Legion and Vaughn's Brigade) and they participated in raids in Kentucky and other areas.

The records pertaining to Zachariah's Confederate Company became sketchy after 30-June, 1863. Zachariah was listed on the Muster Roll as continuously present from 31-May, 1862 until

August, 1863, after which there is no record. His last Confederate payroll was for July and August, 1863. All the preceding "Muster Rolls" were effective to a specific last day of a specific month. But the final roll simply refers to July and August, 1863.

The apparent disintegration of Company B, it should be noted, comes shortly after Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, which went into effect January 1, 1863. Lincoln turned a lackluster fight for unity into a fight against slavery. It helped to galvanize the resolve of the North and caused many fighting for the South to rethink what they were fighting for. Zachariah and possibly some other members of Company B travelled to Wartburg, Tennessee, where, on the seventh day of August, 1863, Zachariah enlisted for a term of three years in the Union Army. One Tennessee historian said Zachariah probably had to travel that far North to find a "Northern Outfit", Wartburg being in a pro-Union area. The County to the north of it seceded from Tennessee when Tennessee joined the Confederacy. There was a large encampment of federal troops 2 - 3 miles East of Wartburg for approximately two years during the Civil War.

The Union enlistment paper says Zachariah was born in Monroe County, Georgia, that he was a farmer, he had dark hair, dark eyes, fair complexion, and his height was 6'3". Family legend had stated his height at 6'6". If the enlistment paper is accurate, family legend exaggerated his height. It may be that there was a height limit for enlistment (as there is now) and he had to slouch down to qualify. We will probably never know for sure.

On February 24, 1864, Zachariah's outfit was engaged in battle with the Confederate troops in a mountainous area five miles east of Cumberland Gap in northeast Tennessee, near the Kentucky and Virginia borders. This was a strategic mountain pass to the north and east of Tennessee which changed hands three times during the Civil War. The Confederate troops, under the command of William E. "Grumble" Jones, at Wyerman's Mills, surrounded the Yankee soldiers and killed or captured most of the 11th Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry. Only about sixty of the 11th Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry escaped, 256 were captured. Zachariah was captured and spent the rest of the Civil War in a Confederate Prison. His Union

Battalion was so decimated that it was never again reformed.

The documents called the Muster Roll, obtained from Union Civil War records, show Zachariah in attendance regularly from 7-August-1863 until the time of the February 1864 battle after which the Muster Roll states, "May 1864 Absent in confinement at Cumberland Gap, Tennessee." Banks family legends state that Zachariah's Georgia cousins protected him from the most abusive treatment as a prisoner of war. Certainly, this must have been necessary protection for somebody whose captors considered him not only an opposing soldier but also an abolitionist, a traitor, and a deserter. Any Yankee soldier who was captured and imprisoned by Confederate troops must have been subjected to some degree of mistreatment. The Confederacy could not adequately feed and clothe its regular soldiers; they could not have been humane to the prisoners of war even if they wanted to do so. No records have been found about Zachariah's captivity, but it began at a time when Sherman was already marching from Chattanooga to Atlanta. Thus, it was unlikely that Zachariah was taken directly South. Further, there was no point in taking him directly East because the mountains

would have made it difficult and the other side of the mountains would have been controlled by the Yankees. Obviously North was out. Therefore, Zachariah and the other members of the Tennessee 11th Volunteer Calvary were probably taken first to the East and then to the South.

It is interesting to note that Zachariah's Confederate Civil War records refer to the rental of his horse and his Union Civil War records list him as a "waggoner". His son Thomas Alexander Banks was a generation later, enlisted in the Spanish-American War as a "waggoner".

After the Civil War, Zachariah and his family moved to Canton, Cherokee County, Georgia, roughly fifty miles East of Rome, Georgia where they stayed five to ten years. One of Zachariah's sisters lived in Rome and Zachariah was close to her. In the 1870 census (for Canton, Georgia) Zachariah's name is spelled Bankes. It reads as follows:

Bankes Zachariah 29 M W farm labor GA

Jane 28 F W keeping house SC

Lowrey 10 M W

William 6 M W

Rosanna E. 4 F W

Thomas 2 M W

Zachariah's return to Georgia after the Civil War could make him a carpetbagger, however, his situation is more precisely described as a "skallywag" which is a Southerner who deserted the South and then returned.

There is no documentary proof of it, but Thomas Alexander Banks told his son Thomas Norman Banks that Zachariah had run for public office. This could have been in the Riceville area or in Canton, Georgia, before the family returned to Riceville, Tennessee. During his campaign for office, he had a heckler at a campaign speech or function. The heckler was so adamantly opposed to Zachariah's views that the heckler physically attacked Zachariah. Zachariah pushed him away the first time but the heckler got up and attacked him again. When the heckler attacked him the second time, Zachariah picked up a board or brick or something of that sort which was lying about the area and hit the heckler with it. The heckler died. Zachariah was

not prosecuted; the prosecutor ruled that he had acted in self-defense. The nature of the office he sought is not known. Whether his campaign was a success or a failure is similarly unknown, but it is probable that it was not successful or it would be something known to the family. The lack of success and the hostility of his heckler, if this occurred in Canton, Georgia, adds to the thought that Zachariah held some views which were very unpopular in Georgia.

The 1880 census has Zachariah and family back in McMinn County, Tennessee. They appear in the census as follows:

Banks Willis W M 38 farmer GA

Jane W F 40

Lowrey W M 20

William W M 17

Elizabeth W F 18

Thomas W M 8

The 1890 Civil War Veterans census lists Zachariah as a resident of Riceville, Tennessee. It also lists his ailments as heart, diarrhea, liver and kidney trouble, spinal trouble.

1900 records show daughter Sadie residing with Zachariah or Zachariah with Sadie. Not many years later Zachariah went to live at the Old Soldier's Home at Johnson City, Washington County, Tennessee. He resided there until his death in 1905. Zachariah did not leave a Will. Nathan Lockmiller (Sr.), husband of Sadie Banks Lockmiller served as Administrator. Zachariah did not have much. His clothing went to his son Thomas Alexander Banks of Tellico Plains, Tennessee. At that time Thomas Alexander Banks lived at Tellico Plains with his wife Lida Lord Banks and their daughters Muriel, Elizabeth, and Leona. Sadie distributed these items to her brother Thomas. No record of Zachariah ever owning any land has been located. He left one pair of eyeglasses, a pocket watch and chain, a pocketknife, two pocketbooks, and that's it.

Zachariah is buried next to his wife and youngest daughter in a cemetery overlooking Riceville,

Tennessee. His gravestone makes mention of his status as a member of the 11th Tennessee Volunteer Calvary. The three gravestones read:

(1) Z.W. Banks

Co. I 11 Tenn. Cav.

(2) Jane Catherine Banks

Dec. 11, 1836

June 18, 1896

"She believed and sleeps in Jesus."

(3) Addie Banks

Daughter of Z.W. and J. Banks

Aug. 1, 1872

Aug. 21, 1893

"Though lost to sight, to memory dear."

8. Thomas Alexander Banks was born about 1872 near Athens, Tennessee. His parents were Zachariah Willis Banks and Jane Catherine Wingo Beckett Banks. His immediate older brother was also named Thomas but he died at the age of two. Thomas Alexander Banks's middle name may have been an acknowledgement of the close relationship between the Banks and Alexander families in the preceding generation.

Thomas worked in the logging industry near Tellico Plains, Tennessee. He married Lida Lord about 1900. She was born and raised in western Pennsylvania. They became the parents of nine children of whom eight survived to adults: Muriel Anderson, Leona Turner Sheets, Elizabeth Hasty, Mabel Toney, Charles ("Flea"), Thomas Norman Banks, James Harold Banks, and Franklin Banks.

Lida Lord's father, George Washington Lord, was an engineer. He helped develop the domestic water system in the Pennsylvania town where they lived. He also invented and patented "Ain Improvement on the Cant Hook". (A cant hook is a large tool for rolling logs.) The family assumes that Mr. Lord took his daughter Lida with him on a sales trip to sawmills in Tennessee where she may have met Thomas.

Mr. Lord died in a train wreck in Ukiah, California -- still selling his cant hook improvement.

Thomas and Lida, with their four daughters and son Charles moved to Ontario, California in 1912. Muriel remembered the train trip and the family's attempt to hide Charles in a basket. It did not work, and they were compelled to come up with a seventh fare.

Thomas went to work for the Linley family, supervising the maintenance of their citrus groves. He was riding on or working on a farm wagon when it tipped over and broke his back. He was confined to bed for one year during which time he became terminally ill with tuberculosis. He died in 1930.

The family held a "double indemnity" insurance policy on his life. The policy provided for X amount of pay off if he died as the result of sickness or 2X coverage if he died as the result of an accident. The insurance company tendered \$X and Leona took them on. She hired an attorney and demanded \$2X. The case was settled at near \$2X and the money was used to buy the land at 604 East Princeton and the house and land at approximately 612 East Princeton in Ontario.

When asked why the family moved from Tennessee to California Lida said they were in search of a

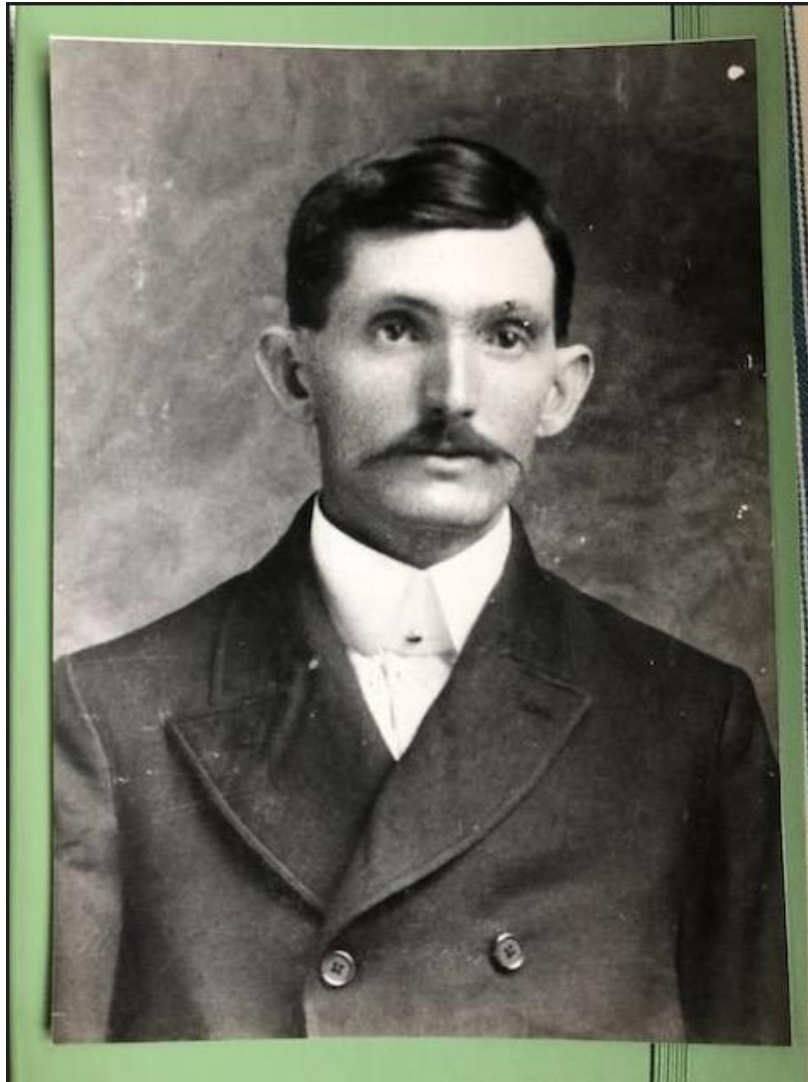
better education and job opportunities for their children. It is speculation but a possibility that Thomas had TB and they were moving from a damp climate to a dry climate as many thousands of others did at the time.

Older residents of Ontario said that Thomas liked to sit on a park bench in the median of Euclid Avenue where he discussed politics and other topics with men of his age. He spoke in a low and quiet manner with a slight Tennessee drawl.

He was tall and thin but not as tall as his father and grandfather had been. He had dark brown hair and eyes and a resplendent mustache.

Thomas is buried alongside Lida at Bellevue Memorial Park in Ontario, California, along with several of his children and grandchildren.

Thomas Alexander Banks



In 2022, six descendants of Zachariah funded the refurbishing of the three Riceville graves, resetting the stones and cleaning them. The descendants: Jim Banks, Steve Banks, Chris Banks, Fred Banks, Tony Banks, and Michael Banks, also had the grave of William and Annie Banks cleaned in Ruckersville. Efforts to find the grave of William Randall Banks have thus far been unsuccessful.

Acknowledgements:

John M. Sheftall

Ralph Bass, Jr. - Monroe Co Historical Society,

Priscilla Doster - Monroe Co Historical Society,

Larry Henderson - Athens Ga (for cleaning and QR code)

Riceville Cemetery Board of Directors

Muriel Banks Anderson

Banks of Elbert book

