

**Sanderlin, Elizabeth: Old-Fashioned People** <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Elizabeth Sanderlin: Old-Fashioned People**

by David Cecelski. "[Listening to History](#) <sup>[2]</sup>," *News & Observer*. Published 12/8/2002. Copyrighted. Reprinted with permission.

Elizabeth Sanderlin is 98 and going strong. She was born and raised in Moyock, a coastal village in [Currituck County](#) <sup>[3]</sup>, a land of seaside farms and freshwater marshes just south of the Virginia line. When I visited her home in Shawboro, a few miles from Moyock, she vividly recalled the days when the train's daily stop was a grand event and when teachers washed young mischief-makers' mouths out with soap. Her strength and independence were forged in the 1920s and '30s, when, as a home demonstration agent, she traveled the region's backroads helping families on the edge of hunger and despair.

Sanderlin joyfully described village life early in the 20th century, but she didn't leave out the mucky roads, the livestock wandering the streets or the lack of indoor plumbing. And yet like so many of the oldest people I interview, she still made me wonder if somewhere along our state's path to superhighways, busy cities, and backyard hot tubs, we left something important behind.

**In Elizabeth Sanderlin's words:**

You think about living nearly a hundred years! Isn't that awful? I have enjoyed every one of them. I am still enjoying them. I was born in Moyock in the home, not in the hospital, in 1904. My father was a merchant. He operated a country store. Moyock was a quiet place, and the two churches the only thing I knew much about growing up. You had to make up your own entertainment, but it was always something going on. We had a train station -- the Northern & Southern went through. We didn't have much of a street, and people stayed stuck. The roads were terrible. And when you came through Moyock to Snowden, you had to get out and open the gate, which was a cattle gate. People let the cattle go where they wanted. My father had a home built on Tull Creek Road. They put electric power in the house and the bathroom, and we thought we had something. It had to run on batteries. We had a house out in the back with large batteries that operated the elect. The man that built the house was very peculiar. At night he slept in a nightgown and house cap, and he had an imaginary wife and children. He never married, but he would talk to them. He would get up mornings early and tell his imaginary v. A lot of people drove up to Norfolk and worked at the Ford plant, and then we had some big farmers in Moyock. People used to grow their vegetables and corn, and they used to live at home. They didn't pay for groceries they way you do now. We had a happy home. My mother's health wasn't good, but she was always enjoying life. My mother and father both came from happy homes, and that's what they brought to us when they were married, because we had a real good time an. Every Sunday afternoon we'd go for a ride in a surrey, mama and papa and all the children, and we'd see what kind of animals we could see out of the clouds. I can remember a time mama was getting us ready and dressed to go and he had. Mama said, come on, let's drive right by him, play a joke on him. And she didn't know much about the car and she went around the block and she ran in the ditch, and the way the cars were built that day and time, the wheel just turned up and. We always had a house full of people, company coming in and church meetings. You never knew who was going to eat at our house because people would come from up the creek and other places to shop, and there weren't any restaurants. I can remember going to school, so many grades in one room, and we didn't have running water in school and had the outdoor toilets and the pump outside. We had a very strict teacher, a woman that became principal of that school and max. People then were people. They're people now, but they were old-fashioned people. Different! Entirely different. I can't put it into words because I talk funny anyways, but people were just different then. Everybody is for themselves now and th. My mother talked to us about the right way to live. She taught us you get out of life what you put in it. She taught us about staying happy, going to church, and not doing anything you'd be ashamed of. She taught me to see some good in ever. As far as dressing up in clothes, that wasn't stressed. My mother held to learning and reading and music and doing the things you should be doing. And she taught me I wouldn't have anything to worry about if I kept my mind on good things a.

**Additional information from NCpedia editors at the State Library of North Carolina:** : Elizabeth Sanderlin lived from September 27, 1904 - December 20, 2006.

Obituary: Elizabeth Sanderlin. *Daily Advance*, Elizabeth City. December 21, 2006. <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dailyadvance/obituary.aspx?n=elizabeth-...> <sup>[4]</sup>

U.S. Social Security Death Index, 1935-2014, Ancestry Library edition. Accessed 2/13/2016.

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**Origin - location:**  
[Currituck County](#) <sup>[8]</sup>  
**From:**  
[Listening to History. News and Observer.](#) <sup>[9]</sup>  
**Years:**  
September 27, 1904 - December 20, 2006

8 December 2002 | Cecelski, David S.

**Source URL:**<https://www.ncpedia.org/listening-to-history/sanderlin>

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