Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

NAME				
HISTORIC		,		
Grass Hills (Sande	ers Farm)			
AND/OR COMMON	<u> </u>			
Same		·		
LOCATION				
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State Highway 47 at	Interstate 71		NOT FOR PUBLICATION	107
CITY, TOWN			CONGRESSIONAL DISTR	ICT
Ghent vicinity			COUNTY	CODE
Kentucky		021	Carroll	
CLASSIFICATIO	N			
CATEGORY OW	NERSHIP	STATUS	PRES	ENT USE
DISTRICTPUBLI	C	XOCCUPIED	XAGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
$\mathbf{X}_{BUILDING(S)}$ \mathbf{X}_{PRIVA}	TE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTUREBOTH		WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	X_PRIVATE RESIDEN
SITE PUB	LIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	-RELIGIOUS
OBJECTIN PRO	OCESS	$\mathbf{X}_{YES:\ RESTRICTED}$	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
BEING	CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED	INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATIO
		NO	MILITARY	OTHER:
	PERTY			
OWNER OF PRO				
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7 **DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION

__EXCELLENT __GOOD XFAIR ___DETERIORATED ___RUINS ___UNEXPOSED

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XORIGINAL SITE

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Grass Hills is an unusually large log house built in 1823. It is located off State Highway 47 or the Ghent-Eagle Station Road, about three miles southeast of the Ohio River between Carrollton and Ghent, two prosperous early 19th-century river landings and ferries. Interstate 71 intersects the farm and runs about two hundred yards behind the house. The view from the front of the house remains unspoiled. The house is situated on a rise, overlooking the farm, with an old pond in the foreground.

In her book, <u>The Sanders Family of Grass Hills</u> (1966), Anna Virginia Parker, a descendant of the builder, describes the original house.

Most of the land had to be cleared, but as the house, barn and outbuildings had to be built of logs, it was necessary for many trees to be cut for this purpose. Then all extra material needed for the buildings had to be cut from the logs, that is the shingles, flooring, rafters, etc. All of this work, cutting the trees, shaping the logs and notching them to fit on top of one another, as well as trimming out the flooring and all lumber used in building a house, had to be done by hand. There were no saw mills in the neighborhood at that time. It is said that the first thing that Mr. Sanders had the workmen do, was to make a large pond, and when the flooring was cut out, it was put in the pond and left for a year or more, until it was well-seasoned. The floors are all of white oak.

"There are two large front rooms, about twenty feet square with a wide hall, about fifteen feet wide, between them. At the far end of the hall is the dining room, a large kitchen being at the right side of it. The kitchen, with boxed walls and beams, opens upon a larger porch with a good-sized storage room at one end. Back of the front room on the left are two small bedrooms, and in the right-hand chimney corner, is a door leading into a narrow corridor upon which three small bedrooms opened which were used for guests. At one end of this corridor was a stairway leading to the basement. The wine cellar was close to the stairs. When two families occupied the house, which was much of the time, one of the basement rooms served as Mr. Sanders' kitchen. There were two larger rooms on the second floor with the wide hall between them, and as was customary in that time, each room had a private stairway. The stairs to the room on the right went around the chimney, being very steep with narrow steps, the one to the other room went out of the dining room to the upper rooms. Bookcases were built at each end of the large hall, and a large veranda was in front of the hall with a small porch at the back, at the dining room door. Large wood fireplaces were in the two front rooms.

The hall with exposed rafters and floor joists and the large room on the left, which was the one always occupied by Mr. Sanders, were and still are finished in the native logs. The rest of the house is plastered, this was part of the work that was finished after the family started living there." (pp. 26-27)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	XAGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
<u>X</u> 1800-1899	X_COMMERCE		PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
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		INVENTION		
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SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

1819-1823 ;1840

Grass Hills was the home of Lewis Sanders (1781-1861) and his direct descendants from 1823-1883. It is an unusually large example of the log-house construction. During Sanders' life, the house served as a post office for the area as well as Sanders residence. The Grass Hills farm was the site of Sanders' experiments in raising grasses and the breeding of sheep, cows, and horses. A twenty-five acre orchard was located on the farm. In 1878 Sanders' character and career were described at length in the Biographical Encyclopedia of Kentucky. This extract is not only a vivid example of late 19th-century style, but also conveys a sense of Sanders' personality and multitudinous activities, which centered on Grass Hills during the last forty years of his life.

Lewis Sanders, agriculturist, and one of the distinguished business men of Kentucky, was born August 9, 1781, in Spottsylvania County, Virginia. Mr. Sanders never studied a profession, but throughout his active life followed business persuits, engaging in farming, stock-raising, and manufacturing; and although decidedly a man of the world in his manners, was greatly devoted to all the industrial and useful arts. He gave his attention, at an early day, to improving the breed of sheep, horses, and cattle, and, as early as 1816 or 1817 imported to Kentucky, from England, the first of the now famous Durham or Short-horn stock of the State. He was mainly instrumental in forming a company for the purpose of making importations and improving the stock of the State, even, to a considerable extent, advancing the means for carrying out the enterprise; and brought over a pioneer herd of Durhams.

Lewis Sanders

In any circle of men or women, however accomplished, he was the recognized superior, without making any pretensions. His knowledge was various and valuable, reaching to every interest in life, and always available for the edification of others. He was fond of discussing political matters. He was a Democrat in his creed, his discourse, and his intercourse; the same easy and attractive man in all companies.

He expended large sums to develop Kentucky. At Lexington, he introduced the woolen cloth industry, and built the mill, which probably still stands. About 1796, John James Dufour, the pioneer wine-grower, came from Switzerland and found his way to Lexington, Kentucky; and, although that place was then,

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9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Fairs and Fair Makers		1790-1860. New York: Harper and Row, 196
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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<u>Grass Hills</u>				
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The house remains in much the same condition, although the exterior has been completely covered with clapboards and the leanto at the west end opened up as a porch.

Because of the exceptionally generous proportions of the two rooms and dogtrot plus the additional "half-depth" rooms behind them, the house has a long low appearance, which is increased by the wings at the ends with their lean-to roofs. The effect is still further emphasized by the square upstairs windows right under the eaves; these retain fairly small-paned casement windows (there is a triple window over the front porch) whereas the first-story windows have Victorian two-over-two vertical sash. From the front facing south, the stone foundations are mostly above ground, with the rear or kitchen side set close to the ground. The ridge of the low-sloped roof (less steep than those of most log houses because of the second-story windows along the sides) rises slightly over the tops of the two inner walls flanking the central hallways; this creates a hand-made and almost nautical effect. The fairly tall chimneys at the ends of the main block (thicker at the east end) seem remote from each other.

Because of the continuity of ownership and few intervening generations of family tradition, it is difficult to disentangle the early history, description, and use of the house from gradually-evolved habits and changes. Aside from the late use of log construction on such a large scale as this, by a man familiar with the more sophisticated alternatives available in Kentucky for the previous forty years, there are several surviving details of early character, such as the large mantel in the left (west) front room, with its simple molding framing the opening--a late Georgian, rather than Federal, treatment. The separate enclosed stairs also belong to the tradition of the early log house, and there are remnants of chair-railing and beaded siding in the rear portion of the central hall.

It is this hall, and the right (east) front room, that seem to have undergone the most change. Stylistically, it would appear that the Greek Revival elements would have been added about the late 1830s or '40s (perhaps at the time the place became a prominent political center for the Texas annexation movement of 1844).

It appears that what may have been an open "dogtrot" or breezeway between the two main rooms was enclosed at this time with three diaphragm walls or screens at the front, rear and two-thirds of the way back at the point dividing the deeper front rooms from the shallower rear portion. The screen walls fill the whole width of the corridor, consisting of wide double doors flanked by four-pane sidelights with "book shelf" niches on the ends. The middle screen incorporates on the west side the enclosed stair (whose original location within the open dogtrot was normal in log houses). No doubt the large square three-**b**ayed front porch, with massive square pillars and bare entablature, was added at this time too (a separate porch would not have been needed earlier with the open breezeway). Also, as

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part of this abortive campaign of improvement the right front room was plastered and simple Grecian frames added around the double doors leading from the hall, the other doors and windows, and the cupboard to the right of the plain Greek mantel. These features have slightly-raised "pediments" and the vertical panels characteristic of the 1840s.

The interiors of the central hall, left front room, and other subsidiary rooms were never finished. It is not known whether this was because, as family tradition has it, the owner ran out of funds (as he did periodically throughout his life), in keeping with the personal preference that led him to build an anachronistic log house in the first place or for another reason. In any case, a wide double opening seems to have been cut in the logs between the hall and left rooms, temporarily filled in with unfinished boards and a narrow door, and left that way ever since (only the chimney breast of the left room is plastered).

Evidence that the house was not clapboarded until the period of these improvements is the flat siding under the porch, that extends beyond the width of the central hall.

About 1930, three bedrooms and the corridor in the leanto on the west end of the house were torn off and a large porch put over the room in the basement, which is now used as a garage. On the second floor, a partition has been added to make a third room.

A weatherboarded log structure which is believed to have originally been one of the three servants' quarters, remains behind the house. It is now used as a toolshed.

There are several barns of varying age, including one of the earliest tobacco barns in the area, around the house, although few of Colonel Sanders famous agricultural improvements except the front pond remain visible. Ninety-six acres of the still-extensive farm land were taken for the interstate highway, which is audible and visually intrusive only from the rear of the house.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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to a great extent, the seat of culture and refinement in the West, and was made famous by the presence of such men as Clay, Rowan, George Nicholas, Col. Thomas Marshall, Jesse Bledsoe, Wickliffe, Joe Daviess, Gen, Wilkinson, and others, none of them appreciated, as did Lewis Sanders, the importance to the country of the grape culture. Dufour started a vinevard near Lexington, but it was not successful. Through the encouragement of Mr. Sanders, he brought a small colony, composed chiefly of his own family and relations, from Switzerland. But the little colony running short of funds at Pittsbarg, and Dufour not being able to supply them, Mr. Sanders met them there with great kindness, and conveyed them to Lexington. And no man watched their progress with greater solicitude than did he, or saw with deeper regret the failure of the efforts to make grape culture of great value to his adopted State. These people afterwards established themselves on the Ohio, at Vevay, in Switzerland County, Indiana; and, although the great staples of the Ohio Valley have long ago taken the place of the grape, not even the descendants of the Dufours ever forgot the kindness of Lewis Sanders, their first American friend.

Mr. Sanders expended an immense amount of money on the breed of bloodhorses in Kentucky. He established race-courses, and bred and trained **many** famous sires and sons of the turf. To him, as the beginner, Kentucky owes much of her unrivaled fame for the best race-horses in the world.

In his old age, he sat down at his splendid homestead farm, in Carroll County, called "Grass Hills," and made the peach, as well as stock, his crop. He succeeded perfectly, by his skill and assiduity, in growing the best article and protecting the tree from its foes. Personally, he charged himself with the care of his orchard, and wielded the knife, which he held to be the only means of stopping the worm. His vast old mansion at "Grass Hills," was never finished, probably for the want of time, but to some extent, no doubt, from the habit, especially of the old-time Southern farmer, of leaving his house forever half complete. But there he lived, and his hospitality was always to the fullest extent-there was no lack of completeness about that; and his enlarged views and genial manners gave untold attractiveness to the place, and left upon his friends and guests impressions of the fine old days of the past that would endure for all time.

Although devoted so variously to business pursuits, he gave much of his time to reading, and especially in connection with the history of his country. His opinions were considered of great importance on almost every subject.

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He sometimes assembled his neighbors to discuss public affairs. He took an active part in the Texas annexation movement of 1844, and at his house near Ghent the movement really had its origin; and from this movement came the nomination of Mr. Polk, who favored annexation, and the Mexican War. Just before the opening of the late deplorable sectional war, he led off in the attempts to solve the great questions before the people. At Ghent a meeting was called, at which he delivered his opinions at length, taking a strong position in favor of a union of strength in the great West, for the purpose of giving the West its true position and independence in the Federal Government; setting forth in a set of resolutions, of which he was mainly the author, the condition of the East and its political power, and the great comparative strength of the West in the revenues to the Government, and declaring in favor of organizing the popular branch of Congress, so as to give the South and West leading and controlling committees of that body. His bold opinions were published in the newspapers, but gained no wide-spread following.

Although remaining strictly domestic and quiet in his habits, and never relinquishing his attachment to his agricultural interests, he continued to exert his influence in public affairs, but lived to see little of the great civil strife, or to see of what little value were the efforts of one man to stop the course of the inevitable tide. He died and was buried at "Grass Hills," Carroll County, Kentucky, April 15, 1861.

Further details of Sanders' mercantile and agricultural activities will supplement this biographical account. Lewis Sanders came with his parents from Virginia to Lexington in 1782, as part of the so-called "traveling church" led by his uncle Lewis Craig. After being educated in Lexington, Lewis Sanders was left behind when the remainder of his family moved to the area near Ghent on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River, in 1795.

As a young man, he was employed as a clerk in Patrick McCullough's mercantile establishment. With a partner, A. B. Barton, Sanders bought McCullough's interest in the store in 1805. In 1812 Sanders purchased a five-hundred acre tract on the Georgetown Pike, two and a half miles from Lexington, where he established his residence, Sanders Garden.* A few miles from his farm, Sanders established the first cotton and woolen industry in Kentucky powered by steam. Near the factory, he constructed a small village for the workers which became known as Sandersville. The mill gave steady employment to 150 hands and cleared about \$1,000.00 weekly. Sanders' ginghams, tablecloths, and other fabrics were displayed in all the retail stores in the area.

* The main portion of his mansion, known as "Plancentia," as well as parts of other stuctures, still exist.

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In 1816 Sanders held the first fair and cattle show west of the Appalacians at Sanders Garden. Exhibits at the fair included the best of the livestock, grains, and products of industry, such as wool, from the area. It was the first time in Kentucky a promotional link was made between agriculture and the mechanical industries. As a direct result of the fair, the Kentucky Society for Promoting Agriculture was formed. Isaac Shelby, retired first Governor of Kentucky, was elected president. The society encouraged the improvement of livestock and agriculture methods and continued sponsoring fairs for those purposes.

From the period of 1810-1817, Sanders was very much involved with the breeding and raising of Merino sheep. The price of wool was very high, as a result of the non-intercourse acts and the shortage of American wool during the War of 1812. Thus, Sanders was able to make large profits. His fortunes changed, however, when the War of 1812 ended and British merchants loaded vessels with stored cheap woolens and swamped the American market. The boom was over and the crash which followed destroyed Sanders' fortune. Sanders had previously suffered a heavy financial loss in 1807 when he gave Aaron Burr currency in exchange for credit never redeemed. As it turned out it was part of Burr's scheme to raise money for his plan to join the Western territory with the Spanish territory. In 1817 Sanders imported from England the first short-horn cattle that were brought directly West of the Appalachian Mountains, but because of his financial diff iculties, he was forced to sell his interest in them.

Sanders' wife, Ann Nicholas Sanders, inherited seven hundred and fifty acres in Gallatin County (now Carroll County) from her father, George Nicholas (Nicholas, an eminent lawyer, was credited with being the author of the first constitution of Kentucky, the first Attorney General of Kentucky, and the founder of Transylvania Law School). In 1819 Sanders began the construction of the log house situated at "Grass Hills" and moved in with his family before its completion in 1823. Sanders founded at Grass Hills his purebred cattle line from the original short-horn stock he imported from England. He also kept an accurate and detailed herd book of all his cattle breeding operations entitled <u>Cattle Imported in 1817</u>. This volume has furnished short-horn breeders up to the present time with a source of bloodlines for their cattle.

Sanders also bred and trained many great thoroughbreds. He encouraged horse breeders to organize in a manner similar to the cattle breeders. He built **a race track** at Grass Hills, just beyond the front yard fence. In 1832, Sanders was elected president of the Jockey Club.

At Grass Hills, Sanders experimented in the growth of grasses, grains, and other farm crops. He wrote up the results of these experiments in lengthy articles for farm magazines,

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setting standards for the various types. Having been a manufacturer of textiles, Sanders was a highly competent judge of fibers, especially wool, hemp and cotton. Because of this knowledge, Sanders was appointed agent for the U. S. Hemp Agency of Kentucky, in April 1845. As an agent, Sanders expended most of his energy attempting to convince farmers to improve their method of processing hemp so that the U. S. Navy would buy Kentucky hemp, rather than foreign-manufactured hemp. (Until this time most of the cordage for naval use came from Russia, which was of superior quality for their purpose. Most of Kentucky's hemp was dew-rotted and was not so strong.)

Even the support given by Lewis Sanders and his son, George, to the Texas Annexation Movement of 1844 seems to have been motivated, at least initially, by a concern to increase the market for hemp, since the cotton growers of the lower South provided the biggest market for Kentucky's product.

George Sanders, who spent his youth at Grass Hills, was active in local and national politics. He served as Consul to London under Pierce. In 1861 he went to Frankfort to urge Kentucky to join the Southern States to present a unified front south of the Mason Dixon line to make war less imminent. When Kentucky remained neutral he took up the Southern cause and moved to Canada where he took every opportunity to aid the South.

Lewis Sanders died and was buried at Grass Hills April 15, 1861. Sanders' sons Joseph and George inherited the farm. They sold it to Mr. Frank for \$26.00 an acre. In 1883, Mr. Frank sold it to Mr. John Montgomery, who owned it until his death in 1969. It is now the property of his daughter Mrs. Clyde M. Sanders (no relation to Lewis Sanders).



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Parker, Anna Virginia. <u>The Sanders Family of Grass Hills.</u> Madison, Indiana: Coleman Printing Co., 1966.