

The Carr Family

Tim & Geraldine (Loftis) Denny are my parents. My father was born at home on a farm located near Buffalo Valley, Putnam Co., TN. The mailing address was Rt. 1, Silver Point, TN. My father grew up with the children of the Wesley Carr Family. The Carr family lived up at the top of the road on



the side of a hill and my Grandmother Audra Camilla (Anderson) Denny lived in the valley opposite the Carr's home. My grandparents

Virgil Timothy & Audra Denny had a farm purchased in 1919. On this farm they grew corn, wheat, potatoes & other crops. My father said they planted their crops by the zodiac. The corn was bagged and



sent by train to different parts of the county. When the tobacco was ready it was cut and stored in barns to dry. The farmhand tenants



of this farm were the Wesley & Ina Belle (Helms) Carr family. Wesley was 30 yrs. old and Ina Belle was 28 yrs. old. Their children, Minnie was 9, Arah 7, Joe 6 and Ora 4yrs. old when they started to live by the Virgil Timothy Denny farm. My father grew up with the Carr's children and they all went to school together. They went to a one room school house called Denny's Seminary that was pretty close to their house.

Virgil had hogs, chickens, cows & mules. In November they killed the hogs and made ground sausage and had lard to cook with. They used the mules to plow the land for the crops. I

remember watching Joe Carr hook the mules up to the plow and till the land. His sister Arah was in the field working beside him. Arah in a simple plain dress and a hat. Joe was dressed in overalls, long sleeve shirt and a hat. While we played in the cool of Little Indian Creek that ran through the farm, Joe & Arah were in the hot fields all day planting corn, cutting the tobacco and loading up



the wagon. Sometimes they came to the hand pump behind my Grandparents home to wipe their brow and get a cool drink of water from the pump. My Grandfather purchased a tractor for the farm but the Carr's didn't much like it. They went back to using the mules & plow for planting. In 1943 the farm was given a certificate of recognition for meritorious achievement in having grown 75% or more of all the food necessary for the family and livestock, and leadership for better living in the community and State of Tennessee, awarded by the Governor of the State of Tennessee. It was quite a productive farm back then. The Virgil Denny farm grew with the labor of Virgil & the Carr family. Six years later Virgil died. The Carr family continued to work the Denny farm and was a lifelong companion to Virgil's wife Audra Camilla (Anderson) Denny. Ora was the only child to get married. She married Floyd Adams. The rest of the family lived on the Virgil farm till their deaths. For a while my brother Ronald Timothy Denny lived with his Grandmother Audra. I'm sure he was well taken care of by the Carr family. Everyday Minnie would go to Audra's house and bring the mail from the mailbox at the top of the road. Minnie would help Audra clean her house which was kept perfect.



Audra & Minnie would make the best breakfast & supper you could ever want. Homemade jams, hand picked black walnuts, thick sliced bacon, fresh eggs off the nest & homemade biscuits with county butter, sometimes county ham with red eye gravy for breakfast. Fried chicken, mashed potatoes, fresh vegetables from the garden, cornbread & homemade apple or pecan pie for supper. I used to watch Minnie, Audra & my mother Geraldine busy in the kitchen for hours. I remember the kitchen had a small pantry off to the side. They used to made the biscuits & piecrust in a large bowl near the bags of flour. Minnie & mother were covered with the flour. The stove was a large wood burning stove. They would fill the stove up with pieces of wood then Audra would get a rolled up newspaper and set it on fire, she shoved the paper in with the wood to start the fire.. Audra went and grabbed a chicken that was walking by and tore off its head. Minnie would put it



in boiling water and pluck off all the feathers and go back to the pantry for some flour, a pinch of salt & pepper to coat the chicken. They would coat a heavy cast iron skillet with grease and when it was real hot pour in cornbread mix and stick it in the oven. While the potatoes were cooking Minnie fried up the chicken in a hot cast iron skillet. The kitchen was a real busy place. We would put table cloths on a long table on the screened in back porch. The whole Carr family and my family would sit down to eat. Minnie took care of Audra Camilla Denny till her death. The Carr women always wore simple cotton dresses, no nylons or socks with worn shoes. I remember seeing their toes poking through. They had a different pair of shoes to put on when going into the house or away from home.



My brothers & I would love to go over to their house and hang out. We would sit on their long porch and drink cold sodas. When they got a TV set we would go over to watch Hee Haw with them. They had the TV in a big room that had a couple of rocking chairs and a couple of beds in it and a fireplace. Later a big potbellied stove for heating the room. They all liked to chew tobacco and had a mouth full on most occasions. There was another bedroom with two beds and another room with a long table with chairs as the kitchen. They had a pump right outside the door. Chickens ran around the yard. Arah fed the stray cats in the neighborhood and they were everywhere.



Sometimes we ate supper at their house. Joe would sing us a song and play the guitar. He never had lessons and couldn't read music but could play the guitar & banjo. He would sing a song "just like a tree beside the water". Arah played the guitar too and sometimes they played together a tune. We would swing on the porch and eat candy. Joe would take us for rides on the wagon and take us in the barns. Ina Belle told us if

we shot a possum she would "clean it and cook it up for us". Sometimes Joe & my father would take us to a area to shoot the guns they had. I remember going to the barns with Arah & Minnie to collect the hen eggs. They always spoke highly of Miss Denny. They cared for my Grandmother like their own family. Minnie & Joe were the shy ones. My mother



said one time a boy asked Minnie out on a date, she thinks he tried to put his arm around her. Minnie hauled off and punched him to the ground. Arah was more outgoing. She would do most of the talking. If a chigger got under my skin Arah would burn it out with a hot match head. My Grandmother wanted me to be the proper little lady. But when I was around the Carr's they liked it when my brothers and I acted like kids having fun. I remember their laughter, laughing at us kids. Joe had to round up the mules one time when my brother let them out of the barn. When we were kids we went trick or treating here in Michigan where I live now. We always picked out some of our candy to send to the Carr's. We loved candy. We were told that he would pick out all the Bazooka bubblegum and shove large amounts in his mouth all at once. On the fourth of July we shot off a lot of fireworks, the Carr's liked them but my Grandmother Audra hated the idea. We would catch a jar of fireflies and use it as a lantern to go visit the Carr's house at night. Sometimes we all sat around in the yard and looked at the stars. We were always welcomed at their house.



The Southern folk were a closely knit people. The Carr's were common folk that seemed happy with their lives on the farm. Arah



told me that the view she liked the most was the hill they could see from their front porch. She watched it change by the seasons. The last time I saw Arah & Joe Carr at their house the water line had come through the valley. They had a water line to their kitchen sink. It was



hot in their house, they were always cold. Arah offered us some water from the sink. She whispered, "Joe won't drink the water because he says it has bubbles in it". My youngest brother Joe Nelson Denny was named after Joe Carr.

Minnie & Arah wrote me a few letters through the years. I was real sad when they started to get sick and had to leave their home in the hills of Tennessee and go to a nursing home. I will always remember them as kind, gentle, kind, hard working people.