

Family Sampler

The year 1999 was the year that William Lewis Timothy Denny & Geraldine (Loftis) Denny had been married for 50 years. I decided that it would be a nice idea to trace the family tree and present it to them as a gift. I didn't know what I was getting myself into. I jumped right in not knowing where to start or end. I bugged my husband a lot to help me. We found charts and forms on several internet sights. We picked some charts and forms, added and subtracted the format till we came up with a system. I used these charts and forms to document my findings.

Years ago my mother gave me a book called Pictorial History of Putnam County Tennessee by Amy Beth Taylor & Lynda Sue Mann. In this book are several picture and notes about my family line. I thought that's a nice book but gave it little attention. When I told my mother that I wanted to trace the family tree she said that she had another book called Stray Leaves from Putnam County History by Mary Hopson. This book had information about pioneer families, sights and sounds from the past, old school groups, information about civil war soldiers and pictures of that era. I read both of these books and started to get excited about my research. I later found another valuable book for research called The Book of Jared, The family of John Jared by Eleanor M. Hall. My mother said, "That book don't got any Denny's in it." I guess she hadn't read the book. For research it was a gold mine. I continued to find more books on my family. I read a book called Putnam County, Tennessee, 1850-1970 by Mary Jean DeLozier. This book traced the development of Putnam County 1850-1970. It mentioned some of my relatives as businessmen, builders, farmers & government workers that helped to shape this county. My father told me that he had a book about Luke Denny, a relative of his. The book was lost but I found it several months later. I read the book. Luke always thought that a movie would be made about his life as a moonshine runner. The book is call Midnight Moonshine Rendezvous by Dr. Stony Merriman. It is all about Luke Denny and his stories about him and his ways of running moonshine all over the state of Tennessee. It provided a glimpse into the era from the mid-1930's to the mid-1960's. Luke was quite a character. When I read the book Pictorial History of Putnam County Tennessee, on page 23, Laban Loftis is mentioned, information from Cousins by the Dozens, Bobbie Bryant, Historian. There is a note saying that a book was being made about the descendants of Laban Loftis. Laban Loftis and his wife Elizabeth Holcombe, of Maryland came by wagon train from South Carolina to Jackson County, Tennessee, in the early 1800's with nine of their known ten children. My mother said she had always heard that we were related to the Cousins by the Dozens. I wrote to Bobbie Bryant for information. She said a book was published called Loftis and the Descendants of Laban Loftis by Jimmie R. Loftis and Bobbie H. Bryant. I received the book and we wrote by e-mail several times. I was so surprised to see my name on page 345. The book allowed me to trace the Loftis line for several generations. As new information is found out the book

is updated. The Loftis family has family reunions in Tennessee. I also based my finding on information from family records, family bible notes, family pictures, newspaper articles, links on the internet (www.familysearch.com), conversations and letters with family members. One family member named Lewis H. Gill helped me with my fathers line. The stories he wrote about the family were great. The chase began.

I found so many family loops that it felt like a amusement ride. My parents share an ancestor. My fathers grandmother, Matilda Isabelle Wallace's father MacDonald Wallace, is the grandson of Joseph Jackson Jared. My mothers, grandmother, Hulda Jane Thompson's mother Naomi B. Jared is the granddaughter of William Jared. Joseph Jackson Jared and William Jared are brothers. They are the sons of John Jared and Hannah Whitacre. Joseph and William settled in Buffalo Valley on Low Gap near Gentry. A community, known as Jared, is located there now. William Jared came over the trail that was soon to be the Walton Road, in 1795. He died at his home on Indian Creek in 1827. Joseph Jackson Jared came from Virginia about the same time, locating his farm on the ridge at a point know as the Low Gap. John Jared was a wagonmaker and storekeeper from Loudoun County, Virginia. His account book, gives entries to tell us that John was well established in the wagon making business before the Revolution. It is reasonable to conclude he was among the first wagonmakers and had a part in designing the ancestor of the Prairie Schooner - that trailer house of the American Pioneers.

Many of our ancestors were from Virginia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, & Tennessee. As roads were built and wagons made, our ancestors crossed the Cumberland Plateau and the Eastern Highland Rim. Some were seeking business and professional opportunities; Others had left the East to escape crowds, debts, or punishment for crime; a few were merely adventurers, but the great majority were land-hungry. In the early 1850's westbound travelers on the Walton Road entered Putnam's eastern edge from what was then Morgan County and is today Cumberland. They had been traveling across the Cumberland plateau, an elevated, forested tableland, extending not only east-west, but also north into Kentucky and south into Alabama, since they began the ascent of Walden's ridge west of present-day Rockwood. They continued along the undulated tableland for approximately six miles into Putnam County, for the plateau and its escarpment, or drop-off, constitutes approximately one-fourth of the county.

It was a rugged country with few roads, mountains and the only means of transportation was horse and wagon. Farms were built and the community started to grow. Schools and churches were built and socializing began. Because most pioneers in the Upper Cumberland encountered poor, rock soil, and great trees to be felled before crops could be planted, educational, religious, and social organizations came slowly to the area. Since most men and women labored physically from before dawn until long after sunset, they had neither time

nor energy for cultivation of the arts and socializing. People met and married people close to them and raised large families to tend the farms.

Only seven years after Putnam County was reestablished, the Civil War disastrously interrupted its political, economic, and social development. The story of how a majority of Putnam Countians became convinced that Tennessee should join the Confederacy; the suffering of the county's citizens during the conflict, both in the armies and on the home front; and the aftermath of the war on the Upper Cumberland is a long and tragic one. Many of our ancestors were soldiers for both the Confederate and Union armies. Many stories could be recounted about this time in history. While the men were off fighting the women & children tended to the farms and businesses. With the coming of the railroad and the highways our ancestors could move about much easier. People could meet people besides their close neighbors, get married, raise families, manage farms, and build towns.

Our ancestors were builders, teachers, lawyers, government workers, farmers, homemakers, railroad & highway workers, preachers, moonshiners, shopkeepers and craftsmen. The women were indeed strong and dedicated to their husbands and families. Our ancestors were isolated and used their own skills and resources to develop the land. They worked hard each day and night and helped to develop our country. Their children and their children continue to this day to help our country grow and prosper. The books I read told stories that gave some warmth to the family history instead of just names and dates. The books that included pictures added exciting visuals. Our ancestors were indeed a special breed of people.

I always wanted to find out why I was told that I was of Irish, Scottish and English descent. Through the books and the internet searches I was able to trace my family line back to the countries my ancestors came from. Some were revolutionary soldiers that led to our freedom today. I can now say with confidence my nationality.

In a family as large and diversified as ours, it is impossible to find all of them. Where errors appear I beg your pardon. Every effort was made to have this record appear as nearly perfect as possible. I recognize that it is impossible to be absolutely without error in a work of this scope. There are names, places, and dates that are not complete. A lot of work has gone into these records. I would appreciate any additions or corrections you could help me with to update the records. I hope you will enjoy it.

Audrey June (Denny) Lambert