

Odie & Bessie (Agee) Denney
By Donna P. Dennis



Odie was born, one of eight children, to the union of James Thomas Denney and Sarah Ann Agee. Also to the union of James and Sarah were born: 1. Lula, wife of Robert Gass; 2. William Jess who married Novie Orange; 3. James Elbert who married Nannie Ellen Paris; 4. Martha Ann, wife of Andrew Jackson House; 5. Thomas W. who married #1 Mary Ola Harrison, #2 Beulah Malone; 6. Mary Green, wife of L.R. "Live" Jones; 7. Odie who married Bessie Lee Agee; and 8. Cecil H. who never married.

After the death of Sarah, James married Allie Agnes "Aggie" Harrison. To this union were born: 1. Sarah Ellen, wife of Jessie Lee Certain; 2. John Earl who married Bertie Ola Allison; 3. Neapolion Bonaparte who married Lela Frances Warden; 4. Howard who never married.

In Odie's early life he helped his Uncle Greely Agee on his farm. Many hours were spent helping Uncle Greely chop out corn and in raising tobacco. He always enjoyed driving an automobile and decided, in his early manhood, that he would like to try another profession rather than farming. He was living with Julian and Mary Cooksey when he started driving the peddling truck for Mr. Cooksey. He also sold produce and drove a cattle truck for Mr. Cooksey. He fell in love and married the former Bessie Lee Agee, daughter of Berry Levi and Susie Jane Fuller Agee.

He applied for a job with Swift and Company between 1930-31 and drove for them until 1946-47. While working for Swift and Company, he bought the home in South Carthage where he lived until his death. He purchased the house from the Read-Wooten Company, December 13, 1943, and it is located on the property referred to as Rewoda Heights. As ever, he was looking for advancements, so Odie bought the taxi service previously owned by Dave Porter. After leaving the taxi business, Odie and Bessie worked in the maintenance department at Central State and worked there until 1953, when he went to work for his son-in-law, Mose Dennis, and drove a taxi for him until Odie's death. While working for Mose's Cab, he was also maintenance engineer for the South Carthage School.

Odie and Bessie only had the one child Mary Genelle Denney. She married Sam Mose Dennis (born September 14, 1924 and died July 22, 1978) son of Sam and Louvenea Watts Dennis. To the union of Genelle and Mose were born seven children: 1. Sammy Edward who married Freida Joan West. Their children: a. Tresa Ann who married Morris Wesley Tyree, II, b. Ricky Dewayne who married Crystal Renne Reece; 2. Jimmy Ronald who married Beverly Joyce Dillehay. Their children: a. Jeffery Scott who married Mary Annette McCall, b. Bobby

Stephen, c. Andy Wayne; 3. Linda Faye, wife of Ronald Carl Mickle. Their children: a. Belinda Carl, b. Melissa Marie, c. Mary Ruth; 4. Billy Wayne who married Donna Sue Pope. Their children: a. Stephanie Angelique, b. William Lee; 5. Randy Wilson who married Melinda Ann Williams. Their children: a. Timothy Michael; 6. Donnie Ray; 7. Ronnie Lee who married Lila Faye Andrews. Their children: a. Christopher Allen.

My memories are many; I recall that he chewed tobacco, was a renowned checker player, had a memory that wouldn't quit, and enjoyed teasing and telling jokes. He was a tall man and in his younger days had red hair, which has been passed down to his grandson, Randy, and great-grandson, Timothy. He loved life and lived it to its fullest. He had a driving desire to preserve the ground his family was buried on and even after he was older he would load the lawn mower in the trunk of the car and take off to mow the cemeteries. He also enjoyed visiting with many members of the family and reminiscing the "good old days."

The summer before he died, he was confident that he could still ride a bicycle. When I hesitated to believe him, he took Ricky's bicycle and rode it out the road at the age of seventy-one. He was not sick nor did he complain. He knew what work he had to do in a day and paced himself to take care of each task. That is why it was such a surprise to learn of his fatal heart attack on December 25, 1973.