

Sarah Ann Denny Pitman Reminisces

Joseph “Joe” Milton Denny - b. ca. 1916, Buffalo Valley, TN –
md Sarah Shader Lewis – b. December 1921 Glasgow, KY –
d. April 1988 - Both Buried: Huntsville Memory Gardens, Hwy. 72 W., Huntsville., AL.
s/o William “Willie” Timothy Denny & Effie D. Rippetoe
...Sarah Ann Denny – md Richard Pitman
 Richard; Buried: Huntsville Memory Gardens, Huntsville., AL.
...Betty Jo Denny – md Mr. Rinck

William “Willie” Timothy Denny was the s/o John Smith Denny & Nancy Henrietta Carlen. John Smith Denny was the s/o Zachariah Denny & Katherine Stallings
*See Chapter 5: <http://www.ajlambert.com>

Sarah Ann’s Story:

Joseph “Joe” Milton Denny graduated Baxter Seminary. I remember the story of his first trip away from home being in a mule drawn wagon to Baxter. He paid his way at the school by keeping the fires stoked and tending grounds there.

He also graduated from TN Tech with degree in chemistry. I do not know the year. He was working for the phone company when he met my mother. Dad had a heart mummer that kept him from active duty in WW2, but wanted to support the war effort. That is how they ended up in Huntsville, AL; he was one of the first civilian employees at the old Huntsville Arsenal (now Redstone Arsenal). He was in charge of mustard gas production during the war. I know he received several awards for improvements in production methods and in area of safety but don't remember details.

At some point during the war, a sister, Marylou, lived with us and worked in smoke bomb production. A brother, Will Kay, also was with us at times during war but not sure what area he worked.

After the war, his baby brother, Walter Ray and half brother, Ted (Edward Riley) came to live with us. They were both teenagers and my father did his best to get an education for both of them - unsuccessfully on both although they may have finished high school. At times, money was very short and dad had to choose between keeping Ray and Ted in school or me and my sister, the choice was always his brothers. He felt it was more critical to educate the males in family and it wasn't until well after I married that I understood any of that thinking.

As children, my sister and I spent part of summers at the Denny farm and part in Glasgow with my mother's parents. When at the farm, we were expected to work for our keep; in KY we got to play. We did such things as feed and water livestock and chickens, turkeys, etc., churn butter, work in big vegetable garden, also helped can or dry food. One of the jobs I hated most was drying fruit. I had to climb out upstairs window every morning to spread fruit on tin roof that covered front porch, then try to get cheeses cloth over it before every wasp in eastern TN showed up for a treat. In the evening all had to

be picked up before dew started and the process repeated daily until fruit reached a leathery state. The wasps usually managed to get me a few times each year.

I think I might have been about 10 or 12 years old when TVA finally got electric lines close enough to the farm to use. Dad and Kay had lines run to the house and did the wiring for Effie (Papa Denny had died by that time and she was tending the farm pretty much by herself). My father was horrified the first time we went there after wiring done because Effie had stuffed rags in most sockets and nailed stuff over outlets that were not in use. I was present when dad tried to explain to her that the electricity would not "drip out into the house and hurt her". It took a while to convince her of that fact. The farm lost some of its fascination for me after electrification. Oil lamps and candles (which Mama Denny made) gave it most of its charm.

I always hated the out house and was probably 16 or 18 before indoor plumbing was installed. There was a big rain barrel at back of house just off kitchen. Our weekly bath water was drawn from it and baths were taken on back porch -- winter and summer. There was a good well not far from house but that water was used only for drinking and cooking. Washing was done in big black cast iron kettle using lye soap which she also made herself. The kettle was suspended over a fire pit; that is how hot water was obtained.

I discovered a fox den one day and made the mistake of bringing a couple of pups to the house (I had wanted to take them home - I guess I was young enough that I probably mistook them for dog pups). It was wash day and the fire was stoked. Mama Denny snatched the pups from me and threw them in the boiling wash pot. I did not understand her struggle to raise chickens and that fox were enemy number 1 as they frequently raided the chicken houses. Took me a long time to forgive her for killing the pups.

While I have many fond memories, there were many harsh lessons learned on that farm especially for a young city girl. In retrospect, it is amazing Mama Denny survived as long as she did under such difficult circumstances. Farm life was always a struggle there. The land was relatively poor and one had to get by pretty much on what they could grow, raise, make or trade for with others. Money was rarely used when I was a child; chickens, eggs, butter, etc. were bartered for the few things one needed from the outside world like salt, coffee, and flour. A rolling store came by about once a month with all those outside worldly goods. All of Mama Denny's clothes as well as most other household linens were made from flour sacks (selecting the sack with the perfect cloth was always a big deal when you wanted a new dress or bonnet).

Census: 1920 – Civil District 11 – Putnam Co., TN

Line: 73 Dwl: 95 – Family: 96

Denny, Willie Head M W Owns Farm 48 Married Farmer General Farm TN TN TN
Effie Wife F W 23 Married TN TN TN (*Effie D. Rippetoe*)
Holland Son M W 12 Single TN TN TN (*Holland E. Denny*)
Joe M W 4 7/12 Single TN TN TN (*Joseph "Joe" Milton Denny*)
Will K. Son M W 2 6/12 Single TN TN TN (*Will Kay Denny*)
Mary Lou Dau F W 6/12 Single TN TN TN

US Census 1930 – Civil Dist. 11 – Putnam Co., TN

Line: 22 Dwl: 105 Family: 105

Denny, Will T. Head M W 58 Married (22 yrs. old 1st marriage) Farmer General Farm
TN TN TN (*William “Willie” Timothy Denny*)

Denny, Effie Wife F W 42 Married (26 yrs. old 1st marriage) TN TN TN
(*Effie D. Rippetoe*)

Denny, Joe M. Son M W 14 TN TN TN (*Joe Milton Denny*)

Denny, Will K. Son M W 12 TN TN TN

Denny, Mary Lou Dau. F W 10 TN TN TN

Denny, Nan Dau. F W 5 TN TN TN

Rippetoe, Maggie Sister-in-Law F W 22 TN TN TN

Rippetoe, Edward Nephew M W 3 3/12 TN TN TN

(*Edward Ted Rippetoe Riley, s/o William “Willie” Timothy Denny & Maggie Rippetoe, sister of Effie D. Rippetoe*)

*See Chapter 5 for more information at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>



Sons of Edward Ted Riley

Edward Ted Rippetoe Riley had two wives named “Dot”. The 2nd wife Dorothy “Dot” Jones had two sons before she married Ted Rippetoe Riley, Davey and Dayton Jones.

Left to right: Mike Riley is the oldest, Robin Riley, Patrick M. Riley he's the one with the cane, behind him is Davey Jones, s/o Dorothy “Dot” Jones, Kim Riley & Dayton Jones, s/o Dorothy “Dot” Jones.

Also Aunt Nan (Denny) Kingsley raised his youngest son Jeff Riley Kingsley when Edward Ted Riley's 1st wife “Dot” Riley died. Nan Denny md James W. Kingsley.

Picture courtesy of Cathy Darlene (Denny) Seymour

Edward Ted Riley's son Patrick M Riley died.

Patrick M Riley of Toney Alabama passed away Wednesday February 13, 2008. Rita Riley was his ex but they remained in the same home and she took care of him. He was sick a long time. In the picture of all the boys he is the one with a cane. He has 2 daughters Kasey Barnett and LeiAnn Riley and one son Jeff Riley. Six brothers, Mike, Robin, Kim, David Jones, Dayton Jones, and Jeff Kingsley. Two grandchildren Colton Barnett and Will Riley. Two nieces Megan Edward and Logan Riley and one nephew Jordan Jones. He was buried at Kirkland Cemetery at Taft TN.