

LABAN LOFTIS AND HIS DESCENDANTS

Laban Loftis was likely the eldest son of Job Loftis. He married Elizabeth Holcombe circa 1790 and lived in Greenville County, SC from August 1790 to November 1816 when they left by wagon train for Jackson County, TN.

Laban Loftis and his family settled in Jackson County, TN about 10 miles southeast and upstream of present-day Gainesboro on Morrison's Creek which is a tributary to Roaring River which runs in to Cumberland River. Laban owned several tracts of land of approximately 275 acres on Morrison's Creek. The homestead stood until the late 1980's and was home to Gainesboro and Jeff Fox for many years. The Old Loftis Sugar Camp and grist mill stood behind the home in the bend of the creek. Laban's sons owned additional land adjoining him on Morrison's Creek and also on Blackburn's Fork River and Spring Creek which is near the Putnam and Overton County line.

Laban Loftis died 8 November 1850 at age 90 and his wife Elizabeth died 29 December 1859 at age 89. Both are buried in the Loftis Cemetery located approximately 200 yards up the creek from the Morrison's Creek Church of Christ in Jackson County, TN. There were nine children born to this union.

James Madison "Matt" Loftis (1811-1902) was the eighth child of Laban and Elizabeth Loftis. He married Sarah Elvira "Elviry" Dowell (1810-1897) on the 22nd of March 1832 in Jackson County, TN. She is the daughter of John and Sarah Hickman Dowell. They are buried in the Loftis Cemetery on Morrison's Creek. He served in the Confederate

Army as a Pvt. G Co., 13th Cavalry Bn. during the Civil War. “Matt” and Sarah had eleven children plus rearing one grandson Charlie Peyor Millard Loftis.

Reuben Hickman Loftis (1835-1890) was the second child of James and Sarah Loftis. He married Harriett Montgomery Johnson (1837-1892) on the 12th of November 1850. She is the daughter of Samuel and Nancy Jones Johnson. Reuben fought in the Civil War under Capt. Fitzpatrick and bought the Fitzpatrick farm after the war. There were eleven children born to this union.

Ray Kirk Loftis (1881- 1920) was the eleventh child of Reuben and Harriet Loftis. He married first Alice Ruth Birdwell (1882-1904) on the 21st of May 1900, Jackson County, TN. Ray Loftis then married her sister Clara “Claire” Jeanette Birdwell (1890-1965) on the 28th of January 1904, Jackson County, TN. They are the daughters of Jones M. (1849-1917) and Virginia Ann W. Jackson Birdwell (1852-1928). Ray, Jones and Virginia are buried in the Fox Cemetery, Jackson Co., TN and Clara Jeanette is buried in the Woodlawn Cemetery, Nashville, TN. Ray and Alice had one daughter named Lona Etta Loftis (1901-1970) who married Alvin Jackson (1901-1987). Ray and Clara had six children: Milton Otis Loftis (1905-1934) married Essie Avo Jernigan; Leo Vestil Loftis (1908-1990) married first Annie Anderson, married second Lascenia “Lassie” Bailey Spivey; Clyde Mitchell Loftis (1910-1984) married Hattie Thelma Gregory; Clarence C. Loftis (1913-1976) married Ona Beatrice Mills; Dona Lee Loftis (1915-2001) married Ponder Robert Lyle and Lola Bea Loftis (1917-1936) was killed by a hit and run driver. She is buried in Smellage Cemetery.

Milton Otis Loftis (1905-1934) married Essie Avo Jernigan (1901-1962) on the 26th of August 1925, Putnam County, TN. She is the daughter of John Tilford (1865-1941) and Mahulda "Hulda" Jane Thompson Jernigan (1871-1944). John Tilford Jernigan was a teacher in the public schools and served as a Justice of the Peace in Putnam County. They are all buried in the Smellage Cemetery, Boma, Putnam County. They had four children: John Ray Loftis (1926-1971) married Betty Joan Pendergrass born 1934; Jack Douglas Loftis (1928-2002) married Joyce Marie Burns born 1931; Geraldine Loftis (1930-2002) married Tim Denny (1923-2001) and Audrey Burton Loftis born 1934 married Exel "Shorty" Wallace (1931-1980). Milton Otis Loftis was killed in the line of duty as a deputy sheriff of Putnam County. His name is inscribed on the Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington D. C.

Geraldine "Geri" Loftis was born in Double Springs, Putnam County, and married Tim Denny on the 10th of July 1930, Bowling Green, OH. He is the son of Virgil Timothy (1884-1949) and Audra Camilla Anderson Denny (1899-1990). They lived near Buffalo Valley, Putnam County, for a while and then moved and settled in East Detroit, MI. Tim worked for the Detroit Industrial Vehicle Company till they left the state and then he worked for the East Detroit School's in the maintenance department. They had four children: Ronald Timothy Denny; Richard Lewis Denny; Audrey June Denny all born in Cookeville, TN and Joe Nelson Denny born in Detroit, MI.

Ronald Denny started his own jewelry store in Seattle, WA, Richard Denny has held positions with the ARMY, NOAA, EPA and DOC in Washington D. C. and Audrey Denny Lambert works for the USPS as an electronics technician. Audrey likes genealogy and has been a member of the Stoney Creek Chapter NSDAR of Rochester, MI (National Number 811361) since 2002. Her ancestors that were active in the Revolutionary War include, John, Joseph and William Jared, Matthew Raulston, James and William Anderson, John Shirley Sr., Edward Robinson Sr. and Jr., Jehu Meador, Samuel Atkinson, Ambrose Jones, James Winfree, Absalom Looney Sr. & Jr., Lewis Jernigan, John Hendley, Robert Gentry & William Alexander. Many descendants of these Revolutionary patriots and soldiers were born, raised and reside in Putnam Co., TN.

Story submitted by Richard Lewis Denny
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(Great-great-great-great grandchildren of Laban Loftis)

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Sources:

Loftis and the Descendants of Laban Loftis, 1995 by Jimmie R. Loftis & Bobbie H. Byrant.
Jackson County Tennessee Cemetery Inscriptions 1801 – 2003 Including Some Genealogy, 2004 by Larry Earl Mabry & Reda C. Knight Bilbrey, pgs. 569, 718, 720.
Putnam County Tennessee Cemeteries by Maurine Ensor Patton, 1995, pgs. 254, 267, 493 & 495.
Gainesboro Sentinel, June 7, 1900 – Marriages licenses issued in the month of May – ‘R. K. Loftis to Alice Birdwell’.
National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington D. C.: Line 20 Panel 21 East, Milton O. Loftis, Deputy, Putnam Co., TN: submitted to memorial by Mark Anthony Loftis.
Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, TN: Volume XXXII, Number 37, 20 September 1934 – ‘Deputy Sherriff Loftis Shot, May Die’.
Ibid: Volume XXXII - Number 38, Thursday, 27 September 1934 – ‘Deputy Sheriff Loftis Dies Of Shotgun Wounds in Stomach, Buried Monday’.
Ibid: Thursday, 17 January 1935 – ‘Killer of Deputy Sheriff to Face Trial at Session Opening Next Week’.

Putnam County Circuit Court Criminal Minutes Putnam County, TN – Vol. 14 (1935 – 1937) to Vol. 15 (1937 – 1940): The State of Tennessee vs Homer Roberts – Felony Docket, No. 18.

Milton Otis Loftis Memorial Record Book in the possession of Audrey J. (Denny) Lambert.

Book of Jared by Eleanor McAllister Hall, Vols. 1, 2, & 3.

Family Bibles: Tim Denny bible in the possession of Audrey J. Denny Lambert of Sterling Heights, MI & Milton Otis Loftis bible in the possession of Mark Anthony Loftis of Cookeville, TN.

US Census Records: Jackson Co., & Putnam Co., TN.

Family members birth & death certificates in possession of Audrey J. Denny Lambert.

State of Tennessee, Putnam Co., DC#234, Jones M. Birdwell; DC#12226, Virginia Jackson Birdwell; DC#288, Ray K. Loftis; DC filed, 26 Nov. 1965, Clara Jeanette Birdwell Loftis; DC#21085, Milton Otis Loftis; state file DC#424112 (294), Macomb Co., MI, Essie Avo Jernigan Loftis; DC#290, Davidson Co., TN, Lola B. Loftis; DC#28901, John Tilford Jernigan; DC#8752, Mahula Jane Thompson Jernigan; state file DC#1729692, Macomb Co., MI, Tim Denny; state file DC#2007835, Macomb Co., MI, Geraldine Loftis Denny.

First Families of Tennessee by East Tennessee Historical Society, pgs. 155,188 & 258.

Research by Audrey J. (Denny) Lambert, Stoney Creek Chapter NSDAR, MI, National Number: #811361.

NSDAR Patriot Index: William Alexander, James Anderson (#811361A921), William Anderson (#811361A879), Samuel Atkinson (#811361A909), John Jared/Jarratt (#811361A879), Joseph Jared/Jarratt, William Jared/Jarratt (#811361), Lewis Jernigan (#811361A878), Ambrose Jones (#811361A920), Absalom Looney Sr., Jehu Meador (#811361A980), Matthew Raulston (#811361A907), Edward Robinson Sr. (#811361A879), Edward Robinson Jr. (#811361A879), John Shirley Sr. (#811361A920) & James Winfree (#811361A920).

Loftis-Denny website: <http://www.ajlambert.com>

LOFTIS STORY INDEX

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<http://www.ajlambert.com>