



## Story of Audra Camilla Anderson 1899-1990



Audra was the fourth child born to Matilda Isabelle (Wallace) & Lewis Monroe Anderson. Born at home, Silver Point, Putnam Co., TN, at the stroke of midnight, it was 15 below zero that night. The midwife named Margaret Evans came to help with the delivery. Audra grew up on her parents farm. She had a brother named William Grover and three sisters, Ollie, Martelia & Addie. Her father was a farmer. Her father Lewis was a tall, big boned man. Lewis would go logging with the men of the area. Once when he was on a raft of logs going down the Cumberland River he fell off the logs. He managed to get back on the floating raft but never felt as well after the incident. Her mother Matilda was a small framed women, delicate looking. Matilda was raised by her Aunt Creese Hendley, when her mother died. Matilda was baby when her mother, Julia Ann (Hendley), died. Her father, McDonald Wallace died soon after. Matilda was a active woman always busy with her chores around the house. Always happy to give a friendly hand to everyone.

Audra remembered the day her father died. She told Carolyn (Shanks) Huddleston this story as she was driving her to the doctors office. Looking at her own legs & feet being swollen she said, "Pappy's legs smelled so bad that they had to be lanced, treatment of the times. I'll never forget seeing him sitting there with his feet in a pan of water and the water was all bloody. He asked me if the sun was shining and I said, 'No it's dark outside.' He said, "I can see my mother." I gave him a drink of water and put my arm around him. He died with my arm around him. I'll never forget that. That scene just stayed in my mind forever, for so long, so vivid and real, so much to think about. But it was a good memory!"

Audra invited her mother, Matilda to live with her and her husband, Virgil Timothy Denny on their farm after her father's death. She would stay awhile and then want to go back home to her farm. She would use the excuse that she had to go home and feed her cats. The fact was she didn't have any cats. She just wanted to go back to her place.

Audra lived in the Silver Point area of Tennessee with her family. She went to the Silver Point School with her sister Ollie. Her parents were fellow Baptist of the community. Audra was baptized in a local creek by a Baptist preacher named Pete Bilyeu. On that day the hold congregation would have their Sunday sermon and then a group of young people would wish to be baptized. The whole

congregation would go down to the creek to witness the baptisms. Grandmother Audra wanted her only granddaughter, Audrey June to promise that she would be her "Little Baptist", preaching to her when they were taking a nap in the afternoon. Telling her that young ladies don't play games that boys play and they never go down to the local store, only men hang out there. But Audrey had different ideas being strong headed like her grandmother. When the World's Fair was in Knoxville, TN in 1982, Audrey & her friends stopped by to see her grandmother Audra. Everybody liked visiting the farm. Audra said to them "Audrey June is ugly like her grandmother". Audrey thought speak for yourself, but kept her mouth shut. Audra was joking around as she sometimes did, but was stern most of the time, always wanted things to be done the proper way.

She met a man named Virgil Timothy Denny, of the area. They got introduced and started to date. Virgil was 15 years her senior, but that was not uncommon in those days for older gentleman to date young girls. When Audra was 18 years old she got married to Virgil Timothy Denny. The local news had a article that read: A wedding of much interest to their many friends was that of Miss Audra Anderson, the charming young daughter of Silver Point, and Mr. Virgil Timothy Denny, only son of Mrs. Hettie Denny of Buffalo Valley, (Virgil's father Timothy had passed away in 1898). The wedding occurred November 28, 1917, Esq. Walter Jones officiating. Their only attendants were Miss Edith Maddux and Mr. Lafayette Nichols. The bride was lovely in her traveling dress of midnight blue serge with trimmings of white satin. Miss Maddux wore Alice blue taffeta with trimming of Georgette crepe. Immediately after the ceremony they motored to the home of the groom's mother where they were tendered an elegant reception and dinner, before leaving on the west-bound train for a bridal trip. They will be at home to their friends after December 2. *Lafayette Nichols is shown in the 1910 US Census living with his parents in the 11 Civil District of Putnam Co., TN near the Virgil Timothy Denny farm.*

The young bride and groom lived with Virgil's mother, Hettie & sister Minnie on the family farm. They had plans to purchase their own farm. On August 12, 1919, Virgil purchased the R.F Maxwell farm. Virgil worked hard on developing a beautiful, productive farm on the land. Audra set up housekeeping and had a big vegetable garden near her house. A few years later in 1923 her only child Tim Denny was born, at home. Audra pampered Tim & gave him all her love and affection. Tim could have just about all money could buy for the times. He was sent to school just up the road from their farm. Virgil's father, Timothy had a school built there for the children of the area. Tim's first grade teacher, Dimple (Breeding) McCulley lived with them while she taught school at Denny's Seminary.

Virgil was generous to his family. When he would go on business trips he would always be sure to bring home gifts for Tim and Audra. He brought her many beautiful home accessories and some jewelry. He brought her a small cameo with seed pearls on one of his trips. She took pride in keeping a clean, neat

home. Audra was a good cook and liked to entertain people of the community in her home. The Wesley Carr family lived across the road from the Denny's. They helped Virgil with the farm and their daughter Minnie was a constant companion of Audra's.

Her son, Tim got married 10 July 1949 to Geraldine Loftis. Geraldine was born near Tim, but they never met till he was in Detroit, MI where Geraldine was living with her Aunt Pearl (Loftis) Allison. Tim & Geraldine moved back to Tennessee and had a house close to his mother's. They produced three children while living in that house, Ronald, Richard & Audrey. Tim had dairy cows and sold the milk. He took his family to Detroit, MI in 1953 to live there, not wanting to live on a farm. Every year Tim would make the trip to his mother's house and bring the darling grandchildren. Every year the grandchildren would visit their grandmother and play on the farm. I do believe she was glad to see her family. Every year for her birthday and Christmas her grandchildren would make her homemade gifts. The grandchildren would write her letters and she would respond, sending five dollars to each on their birthdays. Audra, Minnie & Geraldine would cook up country meals for the family. Audra would go out to the barnyard and run up on a chicken. She would grab the chicken by the throat and wing its head off. That chicken would run around the yard without a head for awhile, it was kinda funny and sad at the same time. The women would cook up a big meal of fried chicken, biscuits, mashed potatoes and vegetables. Audra had a electric stove at the time but still used the old wood burning stove for cooking sometimes. She kept the grandchildren busy when they came to visit. She wanted wood and coal brought to the house for the winter. She had lots of work planned for the grandchildren to do. Tim would sit and supervise the children as they worked. Tim would take her to visit her family, the store and the annual Doctors visit. She would get all dressed up for the trip in her best clothes. Audra would cry as Tim left with his family; was it tears of relief!

Virgil died on 26 June 1949. He had been diagnosed with stomach cancer and was in pain most of the time. He took his own life, no longer being able to stand the pain. Audra was 50 years old when he passed away and grieved for many years after his death. She maintained the business part of the farm with the Carr family working the fields. She lived in the old farm house without indoor plumbing. She finally had a phone put in and got propane heat in the house. She would call up her sisters and friends on the phone and invite them over. She had a TV and kept up with the news. Her favorite stars were: Tex Ritter, Chet Huntley, Frank McGee, Charlie Weaver, Duke Ellington, Ed Sullivan, Jack Benny, Will Gear, Elvis Presley & all the members of the TV show Hee Haw. She was extremely upset the day Elvis Presley died. She kept busy never lazy.

Audra had a interest in genealogy and was in contact with the relatives and friends of the area. She collected books, information and stories about her community. She had a small scrapbook and some photo albums in her home. Audra collected Indian arrow heads and creek rocks. The creek in front of their

house was called Little Indian Creek. Indians used to settled along the creek at one time. Some believe that there are Indian mounds in the area.

Audra stayed on her farm till her health failed and lived in a nursing home for awhile. She had Tim get her a small cap gun that she had hidden in a cabinet drawer. She said she could use it to scare away intruders if they came to her house. She hated real guns and had Tim take them out of the house. One time she took her grandson, Ronald's BB gun and threw it in the creek. No guns in her house! She hated fireworks on 4<sup>th</sup> of July because of the noise, but would sit on the porch and watch as Tim and her grandchildren shot them off in her front yard. She would say, "That was pretty but now lets clean up the yard". The Wesley Carr family lived up the road and attended to her every need for many years.

Audra lived to be 91 years old and was the last of her family to pass away on October 26, 1990. She had told her neighbor friend, Maurine E. Patton, to put a little flower in her hand at her funeral. Maurine borrowed a knife from Tim, Audra's son at the funeral and cut a single flower from one of the funeral sprays and put it in Audra's hand. Audra had a strong conviction that the farm be kept in the family. She never allowed a single tree to be cut from her land. The city had a water line put in through her community, but she never used it. The farm was sold after her death, Denny's Seminary and Church are gone. The old farm house and its sheds and barns all torn down, a new house in its place. A lumber mill is across the road. New look, new owners, but the farm will always be there, hidden from sight, gone but not forgotten, it will always be imbedded in the hallowed ground.

*Story written by Audra's granddaughter, Audrey June (Denny) Lambert*



DENNY – ANDERSON

A wedding of much interest to their many friends was that of Miss Audra Anderson, the charming young daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Anderson of Silver Point, and Mr. Virgil Timothy Denny, only son of Mrs. Hettie Denny of Buffalo Valley, which occurred November 28, 1917, Esq. Walter Jones officiating. Their only attendants were Miss Edith Maddux and Mr. Lafayette Nichols. The bride was lovely in her traveling dress of midnight blue serge with trimmings of white satin, Miss Maddux wore Alice blue taffeta with trimming of Georgette crepe. Immediately after the ceremony they motored to the home of the groom's mother where they were tendered an elegant reception and dinner, before leaving on the west-bound train for a bridal trip. They will be at home to their friends after December 2<sup>nd</sup>.