



William Lewis Timothy Denny (Tim Denny)  
by Tim Denny

1923-2002

Flower: Lily of the Valley - Birthstone: Emerald



I was born May 25<sup>th</sup> 1923, Silver Point, Tennessee R# 1 at home. My parents were Virgil Timothy & Audra Camilla (Anderson) Denny. I was told that when I was born the people present happen to look outside and saw on the gate posts, two doves, one on each of the gate posts. Their used to be a lot of doves in the area and the farmers would hunt them on occasion. The house was in the country in Buffalo Valley, Putnam County, Tennessee. A dirt road led to this house. That road had neighbor farms, a country store, post office and a railroad depot on it. No indoor running water, electricity, or gas. The toilet was outside in the outhouse. You got your water from the rain tower. The tower would collect the water from the rains. There was a pump out back. You had to prime the pump with a bucket of water and start pumping the handle. Pretty soon you could feel the water starting to come up the pump. Out it would splash and you would put a bucket under the spout to catch the water. In the winter the pump would freeze. You had to heat some water on the wood stove and pour it in the pump to thrall it out. That was my job when I was little. I would bring in fire wood & coal for the stove, shell corn and do little jobs. My father and I would hike up the hills to find wild ginseng, hickory nuts, black walnuts, sassafras root and Possum grapes to take home. My father would sell the dried ginseng at the market. My mother would make homemade nut breads served with sassafras tea.

Our house was in a valley with a creek running through it. The creek's name was Little Indian Creek. I was told that Indians used to camp along the creek. My mother had a nice collection of Indian arrow heads found along the creek. Across the creek and up the road lived the Carr's. Wesley & Ina Belle Carr and their family, Joe, Ora, Ara, & Minnie. I played with the Carr children. In the winter I would sled down the snow covered hills by my house. I would go up to the dirt road and find ice covered spots and slide across them one after another. We would have snowball fights and make snow cream. We would mix vanilla, cream and snow and make our own ice-cream.

We raised hogs. In November we killed the hogs for their meat. We then had lard to cook with and made ground sausage out of the meat. My father's favorite meal used to be fried ham, red gravy and biscuits. My Dad (Virgil Timothy Denny) raised corn, tobacco, wheat & vegetables. The Denny farm was one of the best in the area. My dad sold seed corn and we shipped it to different parts of the county. I shelled it and helped bag the corn. We loaded up the wagon and took it to the train depot. My father would hire extra help when the harvest was ready. After a hard days work the group of workers would gather at the house for dinner. The women would be cooking all day and the tables were all set for the hungry workers. Everybody ate till they were full. My father never turned away a

person looking for a meal. During the depression if a stranger came by the farm asking for some food, my father would give them biscuits with some meat and something to drink.

The house had a bedroom up a flight of stairs, that was my bedroom. It had a window that faced the front yard and the creek. My Dad would get up every morning and start the fire in the stove located in the living room. There was a fireplace in the parlor. My mother ( Audra (Anderson) Denny) had a piano in the parlor she won as a prize. There was several sets of glass door separating the parlor and bedroom from the living room. Another set of glass doors separating the dining room from the living room. In the back was the kitchen & screened in back porch. The floors were all hardwood. Large gold gilded framed pictures hung in the living room and a old clock you had to wind every day. My mother had a lot of nice things. Every time my father went to town or on a trip he would bring my mother back a gift. My father made some of his own furniture.

I remember when I was very young one night in particular. My father never turned anyone away that came to his door for help. One night a couple came to our door and said that their car had broken down up the road and they saw the light on at our house. My father told them to come in any stay the night and he would help them in the morning to fix the car. They gave them my upstairs bedroom to sleep in. I remember that the couple looked 'rough' and that scared me. I didn't sleep at all that night. The next day my father helped them to fix their car and off they went.

I would go hunting with neighborhood boys. The boys would bring their dogs. We went hunting at night for possums & coons. The men would get to drinking and gave up on hunting. They would make a big fire and tell stories till they passed out. We would sell the hides for money. We went fishing during the day and sometimes at night. I loved to go to the country store to buy candy and peanuts. We would play a game of horse shoes at the store. The local men would hang out on the front porch of the store, a big bucket was on the porch filled with water. Everyone was welcomed to get a cool drink when they got to the store. Near the store we would go swimming, suits were optional. We would find a long tree branch and swish it in the water to scare away any water snakes first. The men would play cards on the bank of the creek while we were swimming. When there was a election going on in the County sometimes a representative would come around trying to get people to vote for his candidate. He would offer to give you a ride to vote. Since most people didn't have a car it took a lot of time to get to the location to vote, so they didn't. The representative would make it easy for you to vote by giving you a ride, sometimes he even offered you money to convince you to vote for his candidate.

I owned a Tennessee Walker horse that I rode sometimes. My father had mules to do the plowing. Two of the mules, I remember, were named Old Blue and Kit. My father had cows on the farm, one day I decided I would grab the tail of one of

the cows. Bad idea, the cow took off running across the creek. Before I could think of letting go of the tail the cow starting pulling me in to the creek. I fell on a big rock and broke out three of my front teeth.

Christmas was a special time for me. I waited for Santa Claus to come to my house. I always got lots of toys for Christmas. My mother (Audra) made homemade cookies and candy. We had lots to eat at Christmas because my mom was a good cook. My father (Virgil) would search for the perfect Christmas tree growing on our farm and cut it down to bring home. We decorated the tree with homemade ornaments. The tree was decorated with strings of popcorn, paper cutout garlands and glass ornaments. We had a party at school (Denny's Seminary) and picked names to exchange presents with each other. Santa Claus showed up at school for the party. My grandfather Timothy Denny donated land, materials, labor and construction costs to the county to build the school I went to. Timothy's nephews Silas Denny, the carpenter and Thompson Luther (Tobe) Denny, the teacher, built and taught at the school. It was called Denny's Seminary. Next to the school was a church the neighbors called Denny's Memorial Methodist Church. My father Virgil taught adult Sunday school there. His sermons were so good that people came from all around the area just to hear him. Some walked and others came with their wagons pulled by mules. The school was right down the road from my house. I went to High School at Baxter Seminary. I got up early every morning and caught the school bus at the top of the road. I went to school there for four years.

I remember my Grandparents, Lewis Monroe & Matilda (Wallace) Anderson. Lewis was a tall, big boned man and Matilda was very petite. Lewis was not in good health and would sit on the porch to rest. Matilda was very active and would be running around doing a lot of work. After Lewis died my mother tried to get Matilda to live with us. Matilda would stay for a while and when she wanted to go back home she would say "I have to git on back home to feed my cats." My mother said that Matilda didn't have any cats. Matilda was just ready to get back home. My Grandparents, Timothy & Hettie (Paul) died before I was born.

I was drafted into the service. I went overseas for two years. I left from San Francisco, California for the Philippines. I was a airplane mechanic and made it to the rank of corporal. I arrived back in the United States by ship. I was sent to Arkansas where I was discharged. I went back to Tennessee to live on the farm. My dad had brought me a car. I traded my car for a horse once to Carolyn (Shanks) Huddleston and Martha Ann Pinkston. I was riding around in my car and stopped by Carolyn's place. They were standing by the barn with a horse. I said, "I'll let you drive my car if I can ride your horse." "Ok", they said. Neither of the girls knew how to drive. It was funny watching them struggle trying to drive my car. I enjoyed riding on the horse that day. I remember the day I took Carolyn Shanks and Ted Huddleston to get married in that car.

I had a relative named Luke Alexander Denny that used to be a moonshine runner. The sheriff was always on the look out for Luke to catch him transporting moonshine. Luke sold me one of his cars. I was out driving around in that car and the sheriff started chasing me. I couldn't figure out why. The sheriff started shooting at my car. When I stopped and got out of the car they started getting a little rough with me. They tore the car apart. They recognized the car as Luke's and thought it was him transporting moonshine. They didn't say that was what they were doing, instead they said I was going too fast in a residential zone. They took me to the court house but later I got released. I knew Luke and his moonshine, I used to get some of it, pretty good!

I decided to go to Detroit, Michigan for awhile. I met my future wife, Geraldine Loftis on St. Jean street in Detroit at a friends house. We had some good times together. I went home to Tennessee when my Dad died. Geraldine had family in Tennessee and had gone back to Tennessee also. We met again at my friend Luke Leftwich house, he had originally introduced me to Geri. We dated again in Tennessee. We kept running into each other. We both moved back to Detroit. We met again. We decided to get married. We went to Bowling Green, Ohio and got married. We worked in Detroit for awhile. We decided to move back to Tennessee. We lived in a small house by my Aunt Minnie Denny down the road from my mom & dad's farm. The farm was inherited from her father, Timothy Denny. Minnie Myrtle Denny was my father's sister. She was quite a character. When the mule & wagon path leading to her house was widen by the county, she refused to walk on the road. She would walk through pastures instead of using the road. Her country farm life was in the mist of being changed. I was told that someone gave her a rocking chair that she did not care for. When she swept the floor and had to move the rocker, she wouldn't touch it. She would push it aside with the broom! She was married for a while to Bethel Apple but he was a drinker, and she booted him out. Minnie hired workers and ran the farm alone. We had some cows and sold the milk. We would take the milk down to the creek to keep cold till we sold it to a man who took it to the market. We had a dog that would like to run up and down the hills and yelp at possums. We ran our own farm for awhile. Geraldine became pregnant with our first born Ronald Timothy. A year later she had Richard Lewis. A year later she became pregnant with Audrey June. While she was pregnant with June I went back to Detroit to find work. I went to find work to pay for the hospital bills for June when she would be born. Ronald, Richard & June were born at Cookeville Hospital, Cookeville, Tennessee. Geraldine and the kids went to live with her mother (Essie Avo) in Double Springs, Tennessee while I was in Detroit. I came back to Tennessee when I made some money.



Later my family and I moved back to Detroit together. I worked at Divco's. The plant made refrigerator trucks. I worked on the assemble line. Ten years later Geraldine became pregnant with Joe Nelson our youngest. Divco's left the state of Michigan and I was unemployed. I found a job with the East Detroit school system in the maintenance department. I retired from the East Detroit school system. I have lived in East Detroit for years. First I lived at 23015 Donald Ave. and then at 22483 Tuscany. My family grew up on these streets. I am now retired and taking it easy with my wife at a nice retirement complex called American House.

*My father, Tim Denny, died of congestive heart failure at the Church of Christ Care Center in Clinton Twp., MI. He suffered a year with this disease after he had a heart attack. The doctor's said he wouldn't last a year after they checked him out and Tim died a little bit after a year to that date. Tim was buried in Cadillac Memorial Gardens East, in Clinton Twp., MI on the anniversary date that the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. Tim serviced and loaded the plane called the Enola Gay this plane was the one that bombed Hiroshima, Japan in World War II. Tim served 15 months in the Asiatic-Pacific Theater of Operations with the 152<sup>nd</sup> Army Air Forces Base Unit. Served part of this time with the Army Transport Command – Veteran WWII - 7 April 1943 – 11 March 1946. He was a farmer, Production Worker, Maintenance - East Detroit School System*

*Before Tim and Geraldine Denny lived in the Church of Christ Care Center they lived in two different assistant living facilities. They would go outside the centers for activities till Tim was unable too. My husband and I would take them many places and always out to lunch a couple times a week.*



*About five months later his wife, Geraldine (Loftis) Denny died at the Church of Christ Care Center, her heart had given out. She missed her Tim immensely and now they are together again. Geraldine had a stoke and was unable to take care of her home on Tuscany in Eastpointe so I moved them to the assistant living center. My mother was able to move OK but her short term memory was bad.*

*This picture was taken 10 July 2001, a short time before Tim Denny passed away.*

*Geraldine is missing her tooth because Tim had her open a packet of soy sauce for him that was in a plastic pouch and her tooth broke. I took her to the dentist to have a replacement tooth put in. She only had her new tooth, she was so proud of, a few months before she passed away. Story told by their only daughter: Audrey June Denny Lambert – 2002.*

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