

JONATHAN DENNEY/DENNY FAMILY

Bible records list Johnathan Denney as born in Smith County, 29 March 1822, to Zachariah and Catherine (Stallings) Denney, a Tennessee pioneer family, from North Carolina. Exactly when and why his name was changed to Jonathan Denny is unknown. By 1850 census he and bride Agnes (Winfree) reside in Smith County amid Denney relatives; Charles, Benjamin, and his mother Catharine. He was not a land owner but had livestock valued at \$96 and home manufactured goods valued at \$20, therefore, he was probably farming with his uncle Charles, or his mother. By August 1860 census Jonathan and Agnes reside in District 11 of Putnam County, the Post Office is Pekin. They have sons; Thompson Luther b. 26 August 1851, Silas Dean b. 1 December 1854, and John Bell b. 29 June 1861.

There is no evidence that Jonathan served during the Civil War. However, there are records made by an unnamed Union officer listing Jonathan, his brother Timothy and others, swearing allegiance to the Union and posting a \$5000 bond not to provide aid to the confederacy. Questions remains as to the true sympathies of Jonathan and Timothy, as their brother John Smith Denny who lived in close proximity to them served in the Confederate Army. A letter written by Timothy and Jonathan to John Smith proves they stayed in touch with him during the war. Additionally, it is thought their brother-in-law John Huddleston died while serving in the Confederacy. No records have been found that Jonathan, or any of his siblings, were ever slave owners.

After the war, Lucy A. Denny the last child of Jonathan and Agnes was b. 20 November 1869. By 1870 Jonathan owned a 120 acre farm valued at \$1000, forty acres of which he is had improved and was farming. He owned 3 horses, 2 milk cows, 18 sheep, 15 swine, and of critical importance for farming, 2 working oxen.

According to obituaries Jonathan and Agnes lived out their lives near Buffalo Valley never seeking public attention but were content with life on the farm. Agnes died 18 June 1894 and Jonathan died 10 April 1902. It is likely they are buried in the William Jared Cemetery along with some of Jonathan's siblings, and their daughter Lucy.

Son Thompson Luther, who as an adult went by initials T. L., m. Frances "Fannie" Jane Ford 1 December 1878. Fannie b. 21 October 1854, the daughter of Charles Randolph Ford and Henrietta Pheobe Draper. Both of who were distinguished early Putnam County families.

T. L. and Fannie were the parents of Minnie Bell d. 2 June 1879, Marguerite "Maggie" Black b. 28 November 1881, Leslie Luther b. 10 September 1884, Cora Agnes b. 3 September 1887, Clara Lucy b. 28 December 1889 and Theophilus Larimore "Larry" b. 1893. Fannie died 12 September 1907, after a period of poor health. T. L. died suddenly 12 September 1908, of a massive heart attack. They are buried in the Cookeville City Cemetery in the Denny family plot with sons Leslie and Larry.

Silas Dean m. Mary Ann "Mollie" Essex ca. 1878. They were parents of three children; Walter b. 26 August 1879, married Mary Curtis. Edward b. July 1882 married Elizabeth unknown, died 18 October 1943 in Ft. Worth Texas, and is buried there. Agnes Gertrude b. 20 September 1884 m. Steve Levent Dillard ca. 1915. Their only child Mary Katherine Dillard b. ca. 1917, married Arnold Judd, 28 June 1935, and were married 71 years when Arnold died 7 March 2007.

Walter suffered from ataxia, an hereditary movement disorder and wasting disease, and was disabled much of his adult life. Mary had previous employment in the postal service and Cookeville town government. When she became sole support for her husband and son she ran for Putnam County Trustee. She was quoted in the Herald Newspaper, 25 August 1921;

"Is there any reason I should be defeated because I am a woman? I am asking for this office in order that I can better care for a man who cannot care for himself." She was

elected and served two terms. Walter was under fifty when he died 12 February 1929.

The only child of Walter and Mary was Holland Dean, b. 23 July 1905, d. 11 September 1947.

Holland Dean m. Gladys Moody ca. 1932, their daughter Betty Lou b.9 September 1933, married Harlan Flatt 17 March 1951. Betty and Harlan resided in Franklin, TN. She died 31 March 1999 and Harlan died 17 October 2006. Holland and Gladys divorced, both remarried, he m. Pansy unknown and Gladys married Rupert Denny.

Silas and Mollie lived most of their married life in Cookeville. Silas was a carpenter by trade and built Denny Seminary, where his brother T. L. would teach. He was hailed as one of the best carpenters and cabinetmaker in the state of Tennessee. Mollie d. 30 April 1919 while Silas lived until 30 December 1934, when he died of a heart attack. Most of those last fifteen years his daughter Gertrude and granddaughter Mary Katherine lived with him at his home on Oak Street. Gertrude died 13 May 1963. All of this family is buried in Cookeville City Cemetery.

John m. Eliza Barnes ca.1885 and lived their entire lives near Buffalo Valley. Their elegant home still stands today. They had no children but raised nephew Ethelbert Jared, son of John's sister Lucy A. Denny m. Moses Simon Jared 15 July 1888. Lucy died 16 January 1891, shortly after giving birth. She is buried in the William Jared Cemetery. John died from a heart attack 23 November 1943, and Eliza d. 23 October 1949, they are buried in the Smellage Cemetery Putnam County.

And so it was.

Submitted by: Jamie Casey McBurnett
(Jonathan Denny is the fifth great grand father of Jamie)
Compiler: Jean A. Hudson

Pictures for Jonathan Denny Article



Leslie, T.L. holding Clara, Fannie, Cora
Maggie and Minnie



Silas Dean Denny and daughter
Agnes Gertrude Dillard



Eliza Barnes and husband John Bell Denny

Jonathan Denny Family
SOURCES

Agnes Winfree Denny Obituary
Arnold Judd Obituary
Bible Records of Zachariah Denney (courtesy of Audrey June Denny Lambert)
Conversations with Nancy Jane Clark Childress of Cookeville, TN, granddaughter of Oscar King and Maggie Denny Holladay, January 20, 2008
Cookeville City Cemetery Records and tombstone photographs
Federal Census
Genealogy Records of Audrey June Denny Lambert of Sterling Heights, MI (by permission)
Jonathan and Agnes Denney Obituaries
Edward C. Denny Obituary
Frances Ford Denny Obituary
Herald Newspaper, 25 August 1921
John Bell Denny Obituary and Death Certificate
Letter from Jonathan and Timothy to John Smith Denny copy courtesy of Hugh Wayne Denny
Putnam County 1870 Non-Population Census Schedules for Agriculture and Manufactures
Silas Dean Denny Obituary
Smith County 1860 Non-Population Census Schedules for Agriculture and Manufactures
Walter Denny WWI registration card
William Jared Cemetery records

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