

## LITTLE DENNY HISTORY

By Jerry Tammer "Gus" Denny

Hi Mike and Audrey. Greetings from the last frontier, Alabama, an Alabamian once ask me how a person from the Tennessee hill country stayed in Alabama. The reply is quite simple. In 1954 while passing thru Alabama I had a flat and the tire had to be replaced. The wages they pay here are so low that it has taken me all this time to pay off the tire. (needless to say, he did not find it too amusing.) You asked for a little in on my family. That could have been your mistake to open that door. I once had a professor that told me to write a short autobiographical sketch. My reply was that I was born and died and between times I took up space that could have been occupied by a noble man.. His reply was that the first and the last were factual that he had asked for; so therefore an -a- for that. The in between part was not supported by any facts and could have been hearsay. Therefore an -f - for that. He averaged them out to become a -c-. After we discussed this in later years he and I both agreed that we learned a valued lesson in that exchange.

Therefore I will try to deal with the facts.

You have my birth (1930). I departed Tennessee in 1950 to answer Uncle Sam' call for the Korean war. I had oftener felt cheated that I was not old enough for the glory of WWII (sometimes I wonder about myself!) But little did I realize that they would star another war just for me, so I would not feel cheated. **During my absence my parents moved to Alabama.** You have heard the saying that when I left home my parents moved hoping I could not find my way back. Having completed Baxter Seminary in 49 I had enough knowledge to carry me over to my discharge date in 54. I felt the need for greater things (also I had no money and the G.I. Bill looked like an easy dollar) I enrolled at Auburn University, which was then Alabama Polytechnical Institute in Auburn, Alabama. Through the grace of god and intelligent neighbors in my classes I made it through in 58. Ready to get out of dodge into the big world was the plan, but cupid came calling and the local girl was just too much to leave. In 58, I like my Uncle Buck, a confirmed bachelor, marched with my bride: Mary Pearl Rollins to the alter. We were both old enough to know better, but what the heck. Mary was born in 28, which was two years my senior. Thank goodness I had been taught to respect and obey my elder for it has been a god send these past 46 years. Mary had a beautiful daughter by a previous marriage and I had used the calf to catch the cow. But, in the meantime I fell in love with this beautiful little girl, and to this day she is still the joy of my life. Gloria (which we adopted) became Gloria Elain Denny. Gloria was born in 49 and married William Harvey Jackson in 67. Her husband is a retired air force master sergeant and they reside in Auburn, Alabama. I have often wondered why she still looks so young, has no wrinkles, scars or emotional problems. They have no children.

In 1960 nature came calling and Mary and I had a son born 16 May 60. And, of all things (and no promise of five dollars) he was named Tammer Jerry Denny, Jr. In 81 he married Brenda Lynch and from this union came two children: Deidra born 1984, and Daniel born 1986. Then what was once rare but now so common among us, came the

d.i.v.o.r.c.e. (do you remember this song when the parents spelled it out so the children wouldn't know what they were talking about.) In 88 Tammer married Twana. They have no children but did keep Deidra and Daniel. Tammer is employed by Unical Royal Tire Company as a tool and die make. To me it is still a mechanic (which he is a good one). I will not hog any more of your time at present. I have not forgotten the picture but I will have to get with my daughter on how to send them on the net, as I am still learning.

You'all take care. T.J. "Gus" Denny. Some day I will have to tell you about the nickname of Gus, which I have had over 65 years.

### **AT LAST THE NAME GUS!**

OK you asked for it. I know you have been sitting on pins and needles waiting for the nickname story of Gus.

During and at the tail end of the great depression many people were jobless, migrant workers. some bums, some honest and some other wise, were flooding the country side in search of work, hand outs, what ever they could steal. Some would do all three. These guys were called tramps or hobos. The tramps walked and the hobo hitched a free ride on the Tennessee Central railroad freight. The south was flooded with these poor characters because they knew a "little" food was on the farm. The industrial north was about as bad off as they were. **SO THEY WENT TO WHERE IT WAS.** Our house surely had the "X" mark on it (the hobos marked houses for other hobos to show where there was an easy hand out., as we missed few call from this group. My mother. as most southern women was easy to "con" as a result of a pure heart that said no one goes hungry. I also think they feared the wrath of God and had no desire to be cast into hell's fire. (which we heard a lot about. Hell was no place to visit less long to live there for ever.)

Anyway this one guy came to our door often seeking work for food or a free meal. The free meal was always on the porch. The kind women didn't want them to go hungry, but they sure as hell wasn't going to let them eat with the family. This guy that came so often appeared to be nice well mannered guy and honest to everyone except myself. **I WAS TERRIFIED OF HIM.** When he came I retreated to the house, outhouse, or barn. **HIS NAME WAS GUS.** My brother being much wiser and two years older sensed my fear of him, and he created a living hell for me out of my fear for Gus. When Gus left from his visits my brother would wait a while and then announce; **HERE COMES GUS AGAIN,** I would retreat to the hiding places again much to my brother's delight. When I bugged my brother it was the announcement again. This "cry wolf" had to wear thin and the threat of the announcement became less frightening. Being bright my brother created a much worse tale. Gus did not have to come to scare me. At this time I was very much in love with my school teacher and at my tender age I could hear the wedding bells toll at any moment. So my brother's **EVIL** mind created the following scenario. Gus had gone to see my teacher and they were going to get married. **NOW THAT IS FEAR!!** It caused so many tears from me that the Caney Fork river must have reached the flood stage. So he played and I cried with the Gus game for what seemed years (really only a couple of months) Anyway the game grew old and I am not sure what replaced it, but whatever was not as fearful as Gus. Time marches on and I went

back to normal being called Jerry by everyone (except my brother) and the memory of Gus diminished some.

My brother and I went into the service very close to the same time and were both over seas in different countries. (the lucky dog went to Germany) One day at mail call I received a letter addressed to the 'HON T. J. 'GUS' DENNY. I had a lot more to fear that day than Gus but the feeling he remembered gave me a warm glow. (I think in retrospect he was trying to relieve his guilt feelings for the torment he caused me, because he did have "HON" instead of Sgt. on the address. The guys I was with picked up the name Gus, so it stuck again. Before that I had been "a ridge runner", "Tennessee", "red neck". or a bunch of hell to deal with. The name stuck and followed me through until this day. I owe a debit of gratitude to my brother for such a swell name (anything is better than Jerry) and of course to the original Gus, wherever his spirit is riding the rails. Now I know the location and who the phone calls or letters are from before I answer or read them. If they say Jerry they are from family or Tennessee, if they say Gus they are from 55 years of friendship from by buddies (and of course my brother). If they say Tammer they don't know me and most apt trying to sell me something.

I am getting ready to land but one more circle. There is a small college in Minn., called GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS. One of my friends sold sport wear and he made me up shirts with the school logo and Gustavus of course, and then helped to spread the rumor that Gus was short for Gustavus and that my ancestors had founded GA. I have never stepped foot on the frozen tundra of Minn. but I owe them one for giving me some recognition and a chance to haunt my brother. In this case (Lord forgive me )

Vengeance is truly mine.

VIVA GUS.

I SENT MY BROTHER A COPY OF THIS. THE NEXT TIME YOU HEAR FROM ME COULD BE OUT OF THIS WORLD.

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