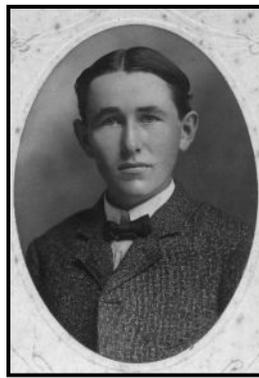


Virgil Timothy Denny Story  
(1884-1949)



Lives of great men all remind us,  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time.  
H.W. Longfellow

Virgil Timothy Denny was the only son of Timothy & Elizabeth Hetti (Paul) Denny. He had one sister named Minnie Myrtle Denny who was three years older than him. Virgil lived with his parents on a parcel of land, 200 acres, purchased by his father from J. W. McDaniel on August 13, 1870. The farm was located in the 11th Civil District of Putnam Co., TN. His father married later in life at the age of 51 to Elizabeth Hetti (Paul) who was 32 years old at the time.

Timothy must have taught Virgil well how to run a farm and take care of the animals at an early age because when Timothy died Virgil was only 14 years old and could do the job. Virgil & Minnie had some schooling because his father donated land for a school to be built at the end of the road from their farm. Timothy believed in a good education for his children and the other children in the area. His nephew Silas Denny was a carpenter and built the school. His nephew Tobe Denny was a teacher at the school. The school was called Denny's Seminary. Virgil and Minnie attended school there and the community grew. Pretty soon a Methodist church was built called Denny's Methodist Church.

Virgil stayed at home and took care of his mother and sister. When Elizabeth Hetti (Paul) Denny passed away and was buried with Timothy in a cemetery near their house, now called Capt. William Jared Cemetery, Timothy's will was settled. The Timothy Denny farm was to be divided equally between Virgil Timothy & Minnie Myrtle Denny.

Virgil married later in life as his father did. He was 33 years old when he married a young girl of 18, named Audra Camilla Anderson of Boma, TN on November 1917. Virgil must have had a Model T Ford at the time he married Audra because they got married while sitting in their car. Virgil saved his money and on August 12, 1919 he purchased a parcel of land, 164 acres from a man named Robert Filmore Maxwell. The property joined the Timothy Denny land he inherited from his father. Virgil invited a family to live on his land and help him to farm his acres. They are related on Audra Anderson's side through the Prettyman Jones Sr. line. That man was Wesley Carr who was married to Ina Belle (Helms) and they had four children. Their children were, Minnie 9, Arah 7, Joe 6 and Ora 4yrs. old when they started to live by the Virgil Timothy Denny farm. So Virgil and Wesley must of taken the chore of developing the farm on themselves, seeing that the children were young. Six years after on May 25, 1923 their only son was born. Audra wanted to call him William Lewis Timothy Denny, Lewis after her father, Lewis Monroe Anderson and Timothy after Virgil's

father, Timothy Denny. But his name was Tim Denny on the birth certificate. Virgil contacted the mumps; no further children were born to this family. Virgil and his family made it through the depression. They had to make sacrifices to make ends meet but it passed and better days were coming.

The farm survived the depression. Wesley & Virgil grew corn, wheat, potatoes, tobacco & other crops. They raised chickens, cows, hogs and horses. Virgil would raise hogs to sell. The Denny farm was a success because of the hard work of the Carr and Virgil families. Virgil had a thriving business which dealt with commercial production of Neal Pay Master seed corn. William H. Neal was the originator of Neal's Paymaster Seed Corn. Mr. Neal is an honored person in the Tennessee Agricultural Hall of Fame. Virgil's seed corn was of such high quality it was shipped by train to Nashville, TN and sent state wide. He also grew large crops of tobacco which he sold to various bidders. Virgil sometimes traveled to KY in order to get higher prices for his tobacco. In 1943 he was awarded a certificate of recognition for meritorious achievement in having grown 75% or more of all the food necessary for the family and livestock, and leadership for better living in the community and State of Tennessee, is awarded by the Governor of the State of Tennessee – Home Food Supply Program Certificate.

On the land where Denny's Seminary stood, a Methodist Church was built. It was called Denny's Memorial Methodist Church. Virgil was the superintendent of the church and was the Adult Sunday School Teacher. He was very religious man and allowed no cards or dice in his house. When they had revival meeting in the summer people came in wagons pulled by mules. The church would be filled with people with many others standing outside listening thru the open windows. It was a popular spot for the neighbors to meet, worship and socialize. Virgil was well liked by the people of the community. He was known to be very generous and kind to his workers and friends.

The Virgil farm must have been a beautiful place at one time. He would build rock walls on the side of the creek where it would bend. The creek ran in front of his house. The creek was called Little Indian Creek. Indians used to camp all around the area and used the creek for water. Many Indian arrow heads were found there. Virgil would build rock fences around his farm. There was a huge pen with hogs, several barns with chickens and cows. The fields were planted with corn and tobacco. Some of the barns were used to dry the tobacco crop. The house they lived in was a big farm house with several small buildings in the back for storage of canned foods and a smoke house. There was a huge Dupont metal barrel that Virgil made into a rain tower that would catch the rain that ran off the smoke house and drain into the barrel. The water was used for several purposes. The fields were plowed by hand. A person would stand behind the plow with a mule pulling it and till the land. Virgil brought a tractor for the job but Wesley Carr didn't want to use the new method for plowing. After the farm was developed Virgil was the overseer of the farm and hired workers from the area.

Virgil took his wife and son to visit the Century of Progress Exposition show in Chicago, IL in 1933. Tim would have been 10 years old at the time and it must have been quite exciting.

Virgil loved to read Shakespeare and Longfellow. He would play classical music on his wind up Victrola, manufactured by the Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, NJ. He was a wealthy man for his day in the area. He would travel and buy things for his home and family. He had many things shipped by train for his farm. There was a train station not far from him. Furniture was made right on the farm and other things for the house. It must have been a beautiful place.

Virgil began to feel sick every day. He was finally diagnosed with stomach cancer. You can imagine how he felt when he was told the news. On June 26<sup>th</sup> 1949, on a Sunday, he took his own life, he was 64 years old. He died on his beloved farm that he and Wesley built. Audra continued to run the farm after his death. Their son Tim had gotten married and after his father's death lived near his mother. Later he moved his family to Detroit, Michigan. The farm was sold after Audra died, 26 October 1990. The old farm house and its buildings were torn down and a new house built in its place. When I look down in the valley where it used to stand I can still that old farm house. It is as if the new house is not there. I can picture the activity of the old days when it was one of the best farms in the area. Below is a picture taken in 1920 of their farm house.

Story written by Audrey (Denny) Lambert – Granddaughter of Virgil & Audra Denny – <http://www.ajlambert.com>



Virgil Timothy Denny holding his son Tim Denny. Picture taken at the Buffalo Valley Train Station. Virgil would take Tim down to the station to watch the train come in.

Sermon Notes  
From Virgil Timothy Denny's Funeral

The example this good man's life was in his home, his community and with his associates in life, was one that is worthy of emulation. He was honest and reliable in every way, the soul of honor and a true Christian in every sense of the word. His community will always be better for his having lived in it.

Pallbearers at his funeral were: Wesley Carr, Walter Smith, Arthur Boyd, Archie Carr, Arnold Medley & Lamar Medley.



Picture above: Taken in 1920 of the house that was on the Virgil Timothy Denny farm.



Picture left: Taken in front of Denny's Methodist Church that was located in Silver Point, Putnam Co., Tennessee across from the Virgil Timothy Denny farm.  
 First row: Dois Leftwich; Anna F. Leftwich; Carolyn (Shanks) Huddleston ; Reggie Shanks & Miriam (Shanks) Gwaltney.  
 Second row: Walter Warren Shanks, George Shanks, Dorothy Ann Shanks & Robert Shanks.  
 Top row: Luke Alexander Shanks & Virgil Timothy Denny.

Picture taken 30 May 1944  
 Picture courtesy of Carolyn Huddleston, TN



Virgil Timothy & Audra Camilla (Anderson) sitting on their Model T car. Virgil and Audra were married in the backseat of this car on their wedding day.

**DENNY-ANDERSON**

A wedding of much interest to their many friends was that of Miss Audrey 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 Nov. 28, 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 Dec. 2.



Virgil Timothy & Audra Camilla (Anderson) Denny



Virgil Timothy Denny & his wife, Audra Camilla Anderson Denny.  
This picture was taken not long before Virgil Denny passed away,  
26 June 1949.

Picture taken at the side yard of his farm, Rt. 1, Hopwell Rd.  
Silver Point, Putnam Co., TN