



Vol. 10, No. 1 — July 2003

The Denbow Diaspora
17 Coventry Lane
Athens, Ohio 45701-3718

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July 2003 “An International newsletter for Denbows” Vol. 10, No. 1

Genealogy's Expanding Family Circle

How one Denbow cousin found a “lost” sister, healed old family wounds through her research, ingenuity and persistence

By Betty Riley

Back in 1997, I wrote an article in this publication about my research for my Denbow ancestors. As you may recall, I traced my Denbow lineage back to James Denbow (1827-1863) of the 78th Ohio Volunteer Infantry in the War of Rebellion. In this article, however, I’m going to relate genealogical research that doesn’t even go back one generation. It’s a search for a “lost” sibling. Here’s the story:

A few years ago while checking the Marshall County, W.Va., homepage on the web to see if there



The sisters and their husbands (l to r): Bill & Betty Riley; Jim and Jean Richmond.

was any information on the Baker family I decided to write a query and see if anyone in the Moundsville area knew the name and address of my half sister that I had never met. My finger was poised over the mouse with the

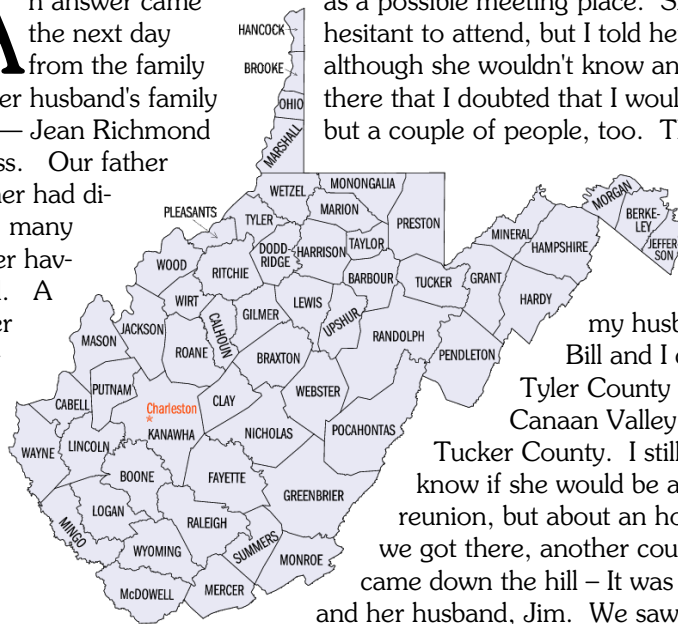
cursor on the send button. Should I do it or not? What if she didn't want to meet me? Oh, well, nothing ventured, nothing gained, so the finger clicked the mouse and off the message went.

An answer came the next day from the family historian of her husband's family with a name — Jean Richmond — and address. Our father and her mother had divorced many, many years ago after having a little girl. A few years later our Dad married my mother and they had one child, me. All the parents are deceased now.

I sent a letter out the next day explaining who I was and that if she was agreeable, I would love to meet her. In the letter I said something about the fact that children cannot be responsible for what happens between adults and whatever caused the break between our Dad and her mother was between them and had nothing to do with us. That must have been a thought for her to ponder because she contacted me saying that we should meet.

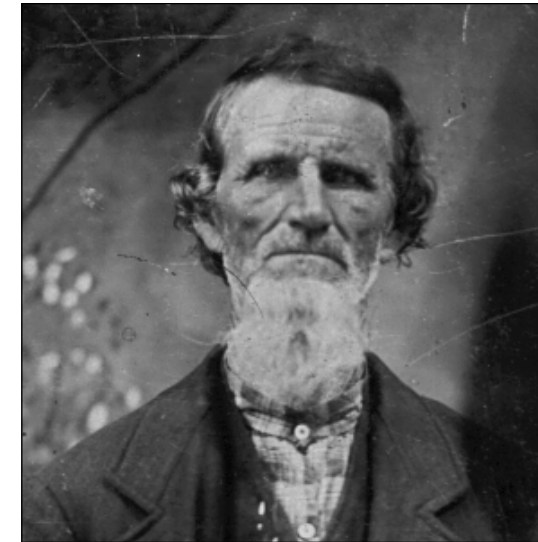
There was a reunion being held that year for the first time by an Evans cousin and she was also invited. As it was close to her home we set that as a possible meeting place. She was hesitant to attend, but I told her that although she wouldn't know anyone there that I doubted that I would know but a couple of people, too. The day of the reunion came and my husband, Bill and I drove to Tyler County from Canaan Valley in Tucker County. I still didn't know if she would be at the reunion, but about an hour after we got there, another couple came down the hill — It was Jean and her husband, Jim. We saw each other for the first time in our lives.

We sat at a picnic table and talked and talked. We found many similarities in our lives such as both of us had worked in a correctional facility and we both did crafts. The more we talked, the more we found happenings in our lives that had been alike. Jean said that she really didn't know anything about the Evans family and was interested in finding out about them. The family was some-



ning Al Poosman of Co. G. 52 volunteers, died, disease pneumonia.

April 16, this morning there is some appearance of rain. There was another amputation today. It was one of the 11th boys, and his leg had been taken off just



This tintype photo is believed to be of John Denbow, 78th OVVI; the ID was made by carefully comparing it with a known portrait of this patriarch of the Ohio Denbow clan.

below the knee. Dr. Wilmers performed the operation. He (the patient) is very low and is not expected to survive the operation. Since writing the above the amputation case has died. He died at 8 p.m.

April 17th, today our hospital has changed hands and there is another doctor by the name of Stahl has taken charge and Dr. Wilmans is going to take charge of the Gothice hospital, a change which I am very much opposed to.

April 18th, today it has been raining almost all day. There has been one more amputation performed today, his name is Hotbran. He was wounded in the hand and had to have it taken off..

Feb. 13, 1862 — April 20, 1862

"The Toll of Battle"

The account below is an excerpt from the diary of Pvt. Aaron Loder Mastin, of the 41st Illinois Volunteer Infantry, Company F. It is transcribed as written for historical accuracy. For several months he served as a nurse and wardmaster in the Paducah Hospital. He had been left there, ironically, by his commanding officer because he had been sick. The interesting part for Denbow family historians is the reference to the death of John Denbow. Note that the location is Paducah and the date given is consistent with the April 14, 1862 death date in his Army records. If you will recall, he is also listed in his Army records as having died a second time in Bolivar, Tenn., in July. This document confirms that the first date may be the correct one.

April 12, today it is raining and the weather is cold for the season. This evening we received ten more wounded from Pittsburg. They are most of them dangerous. There is only one from the 41st. His name is Deboris of Ohio.

April 13, today is Sunday and a nice day. I have been thinking that I would go to church today but I could not leave tonight.

April 14, today I was awakened at four o'clock to lay out a dead man. His name was Bryan Davis, K. 28th Ill. wounded through the lungs. Since writing the above a man died. His name was John Denbow, 78 Ohio. [miss transcribed on the web at 18 Ohio.] He was upwards 77 years old. His son is also in the hospital; he is over 45 years old.


April 15, the weather is very pleasant today. This afternoon one of our men had two of his fingers amputated. He had been wounded at Pittsburg. This eve-

thing she and her mother never discussed.

I had a photo album belonging to my parents, and we went through it. There were some photos of her as a child in the album plus a photo of her son which she had sent to our Dad. I believe that made her feel as though she had been remembered and thought of by him. We spent an enjoyable afternoon and the following year she and Jim attended the reunion again.

Another cousin, Bill Evans, also wanted to meet Jean so this year we arranged to have breakfast together in Wheeling one Sunday morning so they could meet. This summer in August while at the West Virginia State Fair I was walking down one of the streets and someone said something to me, I looked up and it was Jean and Jim. We got to spend a little time together that day also and will see each other again at the Evans reunion in September.

THE
DENBOW DIASPORA



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This newsletter is published two or three times a year by the co-editors, who are proud to claim that it is the only newsletter in the world "For Denbows by Denbows."

When I started re-searching the Evans family, I thought that I, as an only child, had no one left as family except my husband, sons and their children, but now I have found a sister, a brother-in-law, a cousin with whom I'm very close and many, many other wonderful cousins — including those in the Denbow clan — that I communicate with. How the family has grown and the circle is never-ending.

Denbo Descendants of Pocahontas?

Editor's Note: I received this story via an email post on the Denbow-L listserv from Tom Denbo, of Pasadena, Calif., who originally hales from Indiana.. Some of you may remember Tom from the Zanesville reunion. He received this article from Bob Denbo of Lebanon, Ohio. Bob is a descendant of Joseph Asbury Denbo.

In a few places I have done some minimal editing of the story as I received it for the purpose of correcting grammar and/or making it more readable. These changes have been kept to a minimum and involved no more than the insertion or substitution of a couple of words and the addition or subtraction of punctuation marks.

This story piques my curiosity because of the mention of the Denbo family having moved from Virginia to Pennsylvania. Our regular readers will recall an article written by James Denbow, co-editor of this newsletter, a few years ago (May 1998, Vol. 5, No. 1) that looked into the mystery of two variant spellings of our family name in place names — Denbo and Denbeau Heights — a few miles apart in western Pennsylvania. Also intermixed in my mind with James' story is a legend about an Indian massacre and a Denbow child (of whatever spelling) being carted off by the raiding party to grow up to be the wife of an Indian chief. Could it be that these Indians knew of the Pocahontas blood in their captive? Or, did she look a little bit Indian and was, thereby, spared the death that befell her siblings and mother, according to the story, which is published in several histories of that region of Pennsylvania.

I have not personally checked out the story of Pocahontas related herein, but reprint it because I think it will be of general interest to the readership of The Denbow Diaspora. I encourage some of the readers to check this out and write an article about their findings for an upcoming issue. As Tom pointed out in his email, there's "a host of information on the descendants of Pocahontas on the Net." I await your findings, dear reader. — CJD

Most everyone is familiar with the incident of Pocahontas saving the life of Captain John Smith and the foregoing is the recorded genealogy of Pocahontas the Famous Indian Princess.	And after the marriage of Pocahontas to John Rolfe he was for ever afterwards friendly with the white settlers of Virginia. He was born about the year 1550 and died in the year 1618 one year after the death of his daughter Pocahontas. He died at the age of 68 years.
Chief Powhatan was the Chief of about thirty tribes and he lived not far from Jamestown, VA.	Pocahontas was born in the

Denbow MINI REUNION — Saturday, Aug. 2, 2003

Hosted by Larry and Kay Denbow at their home. The address is 567 Winton Ave., Zanesville, Ohio 43701. You can contact Larry and Kay by phone at (740) 454-0859, or by email at ldenbow@aol.com. The event will run from 11:00 a.m. to around 4:00 p.m. Hope to see you all there! PLEASE RSVP BY JULY 25!

Explanation of Issue Numbering

If you are confused by the number of the issues of the *Denbow Diaspora* in the last two years, you are not alone. Due to a number of factors, including other pressures on the editors' time and the relative lack of submissions from readers, both Vol. 8, (2001) and Vol. 9 (2002) had only one issue (i.e., No. 1). Previous years had had two or three issues per year. It is our hope to return to the two or three issues per year in Vol. 10 (2003). This current issue is No. 1, and we hope to follow in the early fall with No. 2. One of the editors (CJD) has taken early retirement from Ohio University effective Sept. 1, 2003. On Nov. 1, 2003, he will begin to "double dip" with a half-time position at the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine.

DNA Project Gains Steam, Still Needs \$\$\$ & Volunteers

As you may recall from the last issue, we have started a special fund to support doing DNA research to establish genetic connections (or lack thereof) between several parts of the Denbow diaspora that we have not been able to link the old-fashioned way using birth and death certificates, pension files, census data, and other standard genealogical tools.

Our efforts in this project have been focused in two areas — fund raising and finding male volunteers to provide the DNA samples. One the financial front we have so far raised about \$125.00 of the needed \$600.00 for the initial study. Elsewhere in this issue you will find a donation form. Your continued interest in supporting this project are gratefully appreciated.

The volunteer front has also advanced in recent months. We now have three volunteers representing the possible seven families groups that we would like to include in this research. Remember that only men are eligible to volunteer for giving DNA samples. We will, however, gladly accept financial contributions from the distaff side of the family!

It should be pointed out that donating the DNA sample is a painless procedure, usually involving no more than a light scrape inside the mouth on the cheek. A kit will be sent to each volunteer, who will obtain the sample in the privacy of his own home and then send it back to the lab in a provided container. Here's a quick summary of the volunteer status to date:

Robert Bruce Denbow, Lindenhurst, Ill. — Indiana clan
Carl J. Denbow, Athens, Ohio — Ohio clan
James Denbow, Round Rock, Texas — Iowa clan
Needed — representative of Maryland clan
Needed — representative of Maine clan
Needed — representative of Devon, England clan
Needed — representative of African-Caribbean Denbow clan

If interested in filling in one of the “needed” categories above, please contact Carl J. Denbow at denbow@frognet.net, or 17 Coventry Ln., Athens, Ohio 45701-3718 USA.

Denbow Diaspora DNA Donation Document

I wish to donate the following amount to the dedicated *Denbow Diaspora* DNA Fund (DDDF), with the understanding that these funds will be used exclusively for the lab fees in conjunction with DNA testing done by a reputable laboratory. I wish to donate the following:

_____ \$100 (covers one man's lab fees)
_____ \$50

_____ \$25
_____ Other

Name : _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Denbow or Denbo Line: (Please check one)

_____ Maryland

_____ Indiana

_____ Maine

_____ Ohio

_____ England

_____ Kentucky

_____ Iowa

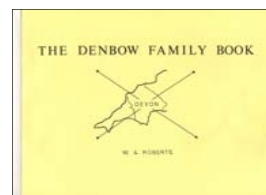
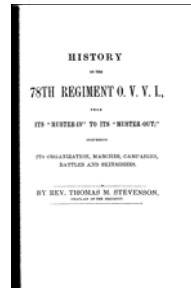
_____ Other, please specify _____



From the Diaspora Bookshop . . .

Two popular publications are still available from
The Denbow Diaspora book store:

- The Regimental History of the 78th Ohio Veteran Volunteer Infantry in the late War of Rebellion can be purchased for \$40.00. This reprint is much cheaper than the original, which brings up to \$450 from rare book dealers.
- The Denbow Family Book, by W. A. Roberts, also a reprint, sells for \$18.00. This book contains more information than is available in any other one source on the Denbow family in England.



Both prices include postage and handling. To order, send a check or money order, payable to:
The Denbow Diaspora, at the editorial offices at 17 Coventry Lane, Athens, Ohio 45701-3718.

(Continued from page 4)

year 1595. She received her Christian Baptism in the little Chapel in Jamestown, VA. And was the first Christian Indian in Virginia.

She married John Rolfe, and English nobleman and they sailed from Virginia for England in 1616. She remained in

England about a year and when she was about to return to America with her husband and son, she sickened and died from smallpox at Gravesend, England in June 1617, when she was not quite 22 years of age. Her body is buried at Crews, England and her grave is visited today by many tourists.

Her only son, Thomas Rolfe returned to America when he was thirty years of age and married in Virginia and was a very, prominent and very highly respected citizen in that State. He had sons and daughters and one of them married a Denbo in Virginia, an ancestor of Charles H. Denbo of the Newton Stewart vicinity and later of French Lick..

The early ancestors of the Denbo's were early settlers and residents of the state of Virginia and a copy of an ancient census at Richmond, Va. confirms that of the Denbo

ancestors migrating west to Indiana through Pennsylvania and down the Ohio River settling in Orange and Crawford. There was one James Denbo — evidently the father of the late Charles H. Denbo — who would be the grandfather of the children of the aforementioned late Charles H. Denbo.

Thus Orange and Crawford Counties should feel very highly honored today by having in their confines well known descendants direct from the historical Indian Princess Pocahontas.

This genealogy is thoroughly authenticated by the writings of the late Benson J. Lossing, LL. D., and author of early American History.

The memoirs of Chief Red Fox of our western states has also confirmed our genealogy here except he made a mistake and lists her death as being March 21st, 1816 which would have made her almost 200 years of age when her son was born.

/s/ W. Chester Swift

Pocahontas was the first American to be named a Lady of England. She was called Rebecca.

DONATE TO DDDF!