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*The Denbow Diaspora*  
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## Why Did the Denbows Flee Denbow Farm near Farringdon?

By Nick Denbow

### The Denbow Origins in England: Devon and Cornwall

The 19th Century distribution of Denbows in the UK was admirably illustrated by the late W. A. Roberts in his “Denbow Family Book,” where the majority were shown as resident between Plymouth and the western stretches of Exeter: there were other groups around Southampton and the Northeastern corner of Kent, from the port of Dover up to Margate and Whitstable, with further groups in south and central London. This looks like a distribution associated with ports and shipping, maybe fishing, from the original Devon base. Since then, in the 20th Century, population mobility would have made any pattern hard to discern: while my Grandfather was from the Plymouth branch, army links took my Father to Dover, and then to Leeds in Yorkshire: jobs then brought me south to Portsmouth, London and now Winchester.

Going back to the known origins of Denbows, we all know of the records showing them at Denbow Farm near Farringdon, east of Exeter towards Honiton, from the Domes-



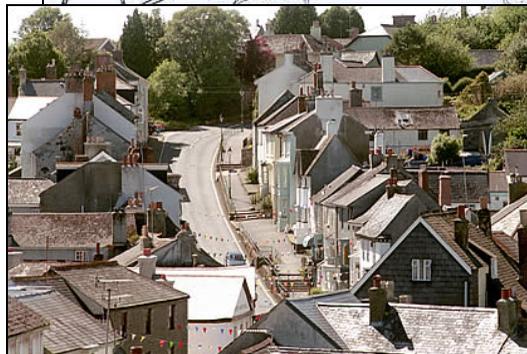
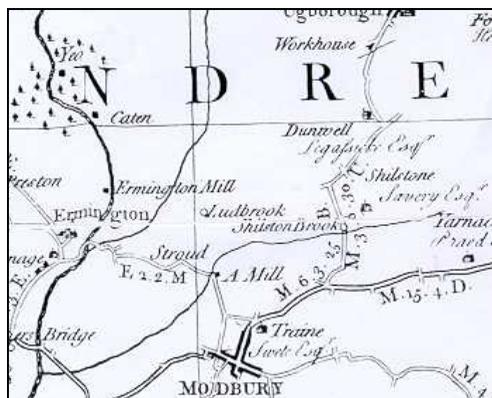
*Devon region in Southwest England.*

day Book through to 1376, when John Denbaude asked to build a private oratory on his land at Denbow Farm, so he was well established! Then the Rous family appears on the scene, owning Denbow Farm in the late 1600s. So something had happened to the Denbows here, during the early 1600s.

Further west the Devon and Cornwall parish records (showing births, marriages and deaths, all meticulously searched by Bob Roberts) for Plymouth and Brixham show Denbows from 1589 onwards, up to 1815, and Padstow continuously from 1601-1723, all fishing villages and sea ports. But there were significant numbers of Denbows in Ermington, an inland village near Modbury, south Devon, from 1644 through to 1709: but none between 1603, when the records began, right up to 1644.

## Civil War

Yes, we had a civil war in England, similar to the US one, but earlier: it was around 1640-1650, and the Devon and Cornwall areas were staunchly Royalist, supporting King Charles, who landed his supporters from France in the area, for some time occupying and holding Plymouth. The Royalists several times tried to March on London to fight Cromwell, gathering an Army as he travelled up the country, past Exeter and Denbow Farm too. At one stage the Royalists used Modbury as their HQ, and in 1642-43 there were two major battles there: the Royalists seem to have lost both, and the leaders were marched as prisoners into Plymouth and put on ships to be taken for trial to London. Being beaten, the Royalist armies were put to the sword (killed) or fled, only to be pursued by informers telling where they hid. Many of the English historical novels by authors



Upper: Detailed map of Modbury-Ermington area, near Bigbury south of Plymouth (see map on page 1); Lower: Main street in Modbury.

## Crayon Enlargements — by Joe Struble

Known as "Crayon Enlargements," these often life-sized paper photographic portraits were first made beginning in the late 1850s, and continued to grow in popularity through the end of the century, and up until the first World War. Frequently, an earlier portrait image was brought to the studio to be copied and enlarged, perhaps by a later generation of the family. The technique involved making a camera copy of the original photograph and then lightly exposing the resulting negative onto a sensitized surface. Paper, cloth, or canvas was used. This exposure provided a photographic "sketch" which was defined and embellished using paint, charcoal, pastels or other media (not really "crayons" as we know the term, but you get the idea). These were usually then framed and hung on the wall.

The idea was to take a simple, small photograph that could be held in the hand and turn it into something that looked like a painting. It allowed ordinary people to have something like this in their homes, and of course, it was much easier to produce than an original painting would be.

They are not uncommon. Go to any antique auction or flea market and you will not have any trouble seeing Crayon Enlargements for sale. There are a few examples in the Eastman House Collection.

"Duh!" I think the only thing we can say with any degree of certainty is that Image A and Image B are probably of husband and wife. Neither Image C or D can be John Sr. because of the youthful look and date at which photography was invented. Image A could conceivably be John Sr. in 1860, but he doesn't look like a man that could pass as 44 a year later as John did when he joined the U. S. Army to help put down the Rebellion. Also, the only reason that "tintype man" is even in this comparison lineup is that I one time thought the man in this image looked so much like the man in the crayon enlargement

Oh yes, what to make of Mr. Struble's comment that Image E (carte de viste guy) and Image C (ambrotype man) could be the same person? Well, I can see a family resemblance, but I don't think they look like the same person at all. What do you think?

I think we've actually reached a point where we cannot ever solve this riddle unless there are other identified photographs that emerge out of basements or attics that allow us to make comparisons and come up with positive IDs. Consider this a plea to ask any Denbow relative you know if they have any old photos that they'd like to share. And, don't forget to search your attics, basements and other storage places for old photographs. Perhaps one of you, dear readers, has the Rosetta stone of Denbow family history photography just waiting to be uncovered. Start digging!

(Continued from page 7)

that has been widely circulated and published in places like the Thompson Genealogy as John Denbow (1767-1862) is probably not John at all but more likely his son, John Jr. (1827-1905). I can see where it would be easy over the years for a photo of a later John to be confused with the earlier Ohio patriarch. If so, then the man in the tintype (Image A) could easily be the same man a number of years later, since tintypes were “in fashion” for such a long period. In other words, the crayon enlargement (Image D) might have been made in the 1890s of a photography originally taken around 1860, when John Jr. would have been in his 30s. Then, the tintype was made around the turn of the century when John Jr. was a much older man. I’ve always been struck by the many similarities between Image A and D — the shape of the ears, the general shape of the face, the facial expression, the way the hair is worn, etc. Now, if I’m right here, then this means that the woman in Image B is Sarah Paith (1833-1906), John Jr.’s wife.



Image E — A photo which had been identified by CJD as probably, George Washington Denbow (1834-1906), one of John’s sons.

Now it gets even tougher, what to make of the ambrotype (Image C) that H. S. Denbow IDs as old man John? Well, since ambrotypes were not invented until 1845 that obviously gives us a starting date. It’s probably not too likely that this technology would have arrived on the Ohio frontier until at least a year or two later. Just for arguments sake let’s say that’s 1847. In that year John Sr. would have been 50 years old. Even taking into account that John is reported to have always looked “young for his age,” I don’t see anyway that the man in Image D could be 50. He looks in his 20s, so I could believe an age of, say 35, but not 50!

If you’re with me so far, good, because now I’m going to throw a monkey wrench into the works, I’ve also always been drawn to the similarities between Image A and Image C in one respect — they both seem to have a lazy right eye and similarly shaped overly big ears. Now, these can be family traits, so it may mean nothing more than that these two gentlemen are related. Well, duh, you say! And, that’s exactly where this analysis leads me — one big fat,



Aerial view of Denbow Farm, located 3/4 miles south of the Exeter airport, near the right edge of the map on the front page. The old structures are on the south part, the rest being modern additions.

such as Daphne DuMaurier, (such as *Rebecca* and *The King’s General*) describe this horrific time, and how families were dispossessed of their estates, and many fled the country. I reckon many would have sailed back to France with the remains of the Royalist fleet, or to Holland, where they had many links.

So presumably the first Denbows recorded in Ermington were displaced from somewhere else (where?) by the Civil war, and arrived there in 1643. They seemed to have plenty of spare time on their hands, after the war, because between 1644 and 1656 Diggorry and Blanch Denbow christened six children! By 1793, the branch of their family tree that eventually led to me, had moved down the road to Loddiswell, all of 5 miles away to the East, which possibly explains why there were not many more births in the Ermington records.

But what of the other Denbows who were also displaced around this time: where did the Denbows from Denbow Farm go? Why would they move from an extensive set of farmhouses and outbuildings with or without an oratory, unless by force, or by having to flee? I reckon that many of my ancestor Diggorry’s cousins had travelled further, in that period 1640-1650, and went to the USA through the ports of Brixham, Padstow or Plymouth. This is the link that it would be really interesting to establish, if possible. [Perhaps this would include Nyhell, the patriarch of the Maine clan — CJD]

Just a thought to end on: at a similar time another Denbow bypassed the US and headed straight for Antigua: this was either Richard Denbow, or his father, because Richard appears to be only born in 1660. Richard built a very successful rum business, first with African slaves and later with many hired workers of African descent. I assume that this is the ancestral home of most of the Guyana and Caribbean branch of Denbows.

**Postscript:** *It was no fun being a Denbow in Yorkshire, or London for that matter: you have all met the problem, no-one can ever spell your name! But my daughter now lives in Cornwall. She is amazed by being able to give her name as Denbow, in the butcher’s shop or wherever: never once does she have to spell it out, and it is always written correctly.*

## Denbow Connection with John Brown's Harpers Ferry Raid

This probably comes under the category of editor's prerogative. That is, if you're the editor you can print anything you darn well want. This story may not be of interest to most of the readers, as the Denbow connection is somewhat tentative, but I find it fascinating because of some conversations that took place at a mini-reunion of my wife's high school classmates back about ten years ago. One of her classmates, Bill, a man who I had had a class or two with as an undergraduate at Ohio University, mentioned that he is a descendant of John Kagi, one of John Brown's raiders at Harpers Ferry in 1859. This shocking raid spread fear throughout the South of the possibility of wide-spread slave revolts and helped ignite the War of the Rebellion, now euphemistically referred to as the Civil War.

My family has been to Harpers Ferry a number of times, and I've read the historical markers about John Kagi, heard park service guides talk about him, and here I actually know a descendant. Things like this always bring history home to me. Meeting a descendant of an historical figure helps put "flesh and bones" on the subject and reifies it for me. And, at this meeting I got "reification" in duplicate. After Bill made his statement and he and I talked, another classmate, Connie, pipes up and says, that's interesting, I've got Kagi relatives, too. Bill then asks Connie, where are they from. She says, "Millersport, near Buckeye Lake." Bill responds, "Oh, that's got to be the same family." Connie is actually a very good friend of my wife's and she had no idea that she was related to her classmate Bill and of the connection to John Kagi.

All of the preceding is a long-winded way to introduce a brief excerpt that I found in the *McCracken County (Ky.) History Book* (McCracken County Historical Society, Turner Publishing Co., 1989) recently while I was doing an internet search on another matter. It shows that we Denbows also have a connection — albeit by marriage and tangentially — with the aforementioned Mr. Kagi. It's contained in the bio of Charles Henry Rhodes Jr.:

*Charles Henry Rhodes Jr, the only child of Charles Henry Rhodes and Birdie Jeanette Adcock Rhodes,... [was] born April 14, 1925. . . .His mother, Birdie Rhodes, was born Sept. 28, 1880 in McCracken County, the daughter of Mary Ellen Smith and Henry Moncure Adcock. A woman of many accomplishments, she served as Executive Secretary to the Secretary of the Treasury (Department of Loans) in Washington D.C. before returning to Paducah to be-*

**After a few years break, they're back!**

## Denbow MINI REUNION Saturday, July 18, 2009, Zanesville, Ohio

Hosted by Larry and Kay Denbow at their home — 567 Winton Ave. You can contact them at (740) 454-0859, or [Idenbow@aol.com](mailto:Idenbow@aol.com). The event will run from 11:00 a.m. to around 4:00 p.m. A backyard BBQ at about noon. Hope to see you all there! PLEASE RSVP BY JULY 1, if at all possible!

### In the Next Issue:

In the next issue, subject to change because of new and better ideas or simply the whim of the editors, will be:

1. An in-depth analysis of the DNA evidence, including the 66-marker test.
2. A photo section devoted to the 2009 mini reunion in Zanesville.
3. Photos of Denbow history sites on CJD's trips to England, in 2005 and 2009.

To Right: Plymouth Churchyard gravestone, Photo taken around 1960 by Ernest John Denbow (1911-1992), father of Nicholas John (1946-)

Top arch says "In memory of our dear mother, died August 6th 1944 Aged 79" (This is presumably a later addition when Mother Annie quoted below finally died)

Main centre section says "In Loving memory of Elsie Blanche Marion; Daughter of Ernest and Annie Denbow, Who died July 18th 1890 aged 17 months; Also Ernest the beloved husband of Annie Denbow and father of the above, Who died April 14th 1894 aged 35 years; Also Ernest John, eldest son of the above, Who died Feb 19th 1912 aged 20 years.

So this is the grave of my Grandad, plus his Denbow father and mother in Plymouth, and a sister.



sion: this killed him. My Dad was shipped back to England and was brought up at the Duke of York's School for army orphans in Dover: Ettie worked there, in a Matron type role too, while Ernest was growing up. Sgt Denbow was buried back in Plymouth, as you see from the gravestone.

Thanks, Grandad, for that pint! I still visit Ireland frequently, more to the west, like the Cork area, which borders Killarney: the Irish are wonderful people. But their ability to cause confusion remains.

come a teacher and marry Charles Henry Rhodes, Sr. on June 18, 1921. She died on Aug. 4, 1967.

His father also had many interests. He was an amateur boxer, a Jiggerman, a worker for the Illinois Central Railroad for 40 years. Born Sept. 28, 1880, the **son of Richard Harry Rhodes and Laura Kagi Denbow Rhodes**, he came to McCracken County with his family around 1900. His parents were traveling south by boat. The river was filled with ice and when the boat docked at Paduach, Laura refused to get back on, so the family stayed in Paducah.

Charles Rhodes is descended from families whose lives have touched and influenced American history. His paternal grandmother **Laura Kagi Denbow Rhodes'** sister was Anna Kagi Kochenour who wrote the words to Shenandoah. **Her brother, John Henry Kagi was a journalist who was killed with John Brown at the Harpers Ferry raid.**

His maternal grandmother was Mary Ellen Smith (born Jan. 28, 1856 in Pittsburg, PA) the daughter of William Alexander Smith and Louisa Jane Lobaugh Smith. W. A. Smith's great grandfather was James Smith, one of the signers of our Declaration of Independence. . . .

### **Need a few more good men — for another round of ale, err ... sorry DNA testing!**

We are now trying to recruit at least one additional man from each of the North American J2 groups and additional men from other parts of the United Kingdom. The reason in the former case is explained by the following email that I received from Eileen Krause at Family Tree DNA: "Yes, it would help to have at least two participants from each region. Indiana already has two representatives but an additional testee from the other three may be helpful. Note that this will not identify new branch-defining mutations, but will tell us whether the mutation that seems to join the Ohio and Maryland participants is really a single branch or mutated twice. When testing a second participant, we suggest testing someone who is the most distantly related person in that family or branch; testing a son or brother would not cover nearly as many generations as testing a distant cousin." Larry Denbow has already stepped up for the Ohio clan. How about it Iowa and Maryland? And those, Brits, so fond of their ale, well they can have a pint and donate their DNA for testing at the same time. It's a painless process made even more painless by following it up with a pint of your favorite beverage! Whatever it takes to get more UK Denbows from other parts of the realm in the hope of finding another J2 Denbow. — CJD

# Will the *real* John Denbow photograph please stand up!

As many of you know there has been a lot of discussion in the last several years about which, if any, of the photos that have been put forward as being the likeness of John Denbow (1797-1862), the patriarch of most of the Ohio clan, are correctly identified. This got to be so confusing that I put the question to the Joe Struble, an archivist at the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film in Rochester, N.Y. Here's what Mr. Struble said:



Image A — Tintype of man, bearing great likeness to the person in the crayon enlargement (Image D).

*I have had a little time to consider these images and the following opinions reflect that, as well as, hopefully, my sense of 19th Century photography from my experiences at Eastman House.*

*Nevertheless, I reserve the right to be wrong. As I may have mentioned, Joan Severa's book "Dressed for the Photographer is useful in picking up the differences in clothing styles, especially women's clothing. . . .*

*The two tintypes are probably from the same period, and its reasonable to say that they are a husband and wife, since as you noticed (and I'm glad you drew my attention to it), the backgrounds are the*

*same. From the woman's clothing, I could go along with a date of 1862, but probably not much earlier.*

*I would not be at all inclined to think that the ambrotype [Image C] and the tintype of the man [Image A] are of the same person, since as you note, the ambrotype was first introduced in 1854, and this image was made then or even later (up until 1865). Information about John Denbow appearing much younger than his actual age is interesting and so, tempting to think they are the same man, but as you are beginning to wonder, there's just too much aging in this man between 1854 and 1862 to sup-*



Image B — Tintype of woman, likely wife of man in Image A.

guy you refuse a drink from, you know what I mean, and he never usually offers an Englishman anything." I don't remember the dinner.

I told Dad what had happened: so he gently explained. His dad was Ernest John Denbow, from Plymouth, and he joined the army as a regular soldier around 1908. He became a Sergeant in the British Army,



Car being driven by an unknown soldier, with Sgt. Ernest Denbow sitting in the back. Photo is on postcard sent by Sgt. Denbow to a family member back on the home front.



Ettie Poynter Denbow and Ernest J. Denbow Jr., father of author Nick.

and was sent to Ireland to assist in their role in suppressing the Irish rebellion against English rule at the time. When they were posted there in 1911, he took his new bride Ettie (nee Poynter), and their son (my dad) with him, to Tipperary. Ettie was possibly the Regimental nurse, Matron or maybe some other form of camp follower, I was never sure. She had been born in east London, as English as they come. Sgt. Denbow, from Plymouth, was in charge of the boiler house that heated the camp barracks: the troops were in Ireland to suppress the Irish, in their uprising (earlier than the one in the '70s). If I had told the landlord that my Grandad had been in such a garrison we might not have got out of the pub alive!

But in the cold winter of 1912, Grandad had run out of diesel fuel for the boiler, so filled it with petrol (gasoline), which resulted in an explo-

# The Denbows in Ireland

By Nick Denbow

I never took that much notice of what my parents said about family history when I was a teenager. All the relations were old and mad: particularly my dad's Mother, she was the mother-in-law with the real bad temper, according to my mum, she threw things regularly, like radios at the front door of our house. But she had told me, I thought, that she was from Tipperary, in Ireland, and had the Irish red (senna dyed) hair to prove it. Naturally you don't query such things with your Mum, so that was what I believed.

So, many years later, on my first business trip to Ireland in the '70s (the time of the troubles, as we say), entertained by the local sales engineer, we went to his Dublin local for a pint of Guinness before evening dinner. Now it was beautiful Guinness, after all, it was from the Dublin brewery, so we decided to have another pint.

I complimented the barman on his stained glass window, titled Killarney, and said that I had never been there, but my Grandma Ettie had come from Tipperary, a neighbouring county. Warning signs started in the sales engineer's eyes, but I did not notice them after the Guinness. So we downed the second pint, chatting as we drank, and made to go. The landlord said to have another, but I insisted that we had to eat something first, and got a kick on the shins from my colleague. So we had another pint. After, we staggered out, or maybe limped out, to try to find some dinner. Outside the sales guy said: "That's not the sort of



Sgt. Ernest John Denbow

port that it is the same man.

The painting of John Denbow looks to me to be what is called a "Crayon Enlargement", which is done by re-photographing an earlier photograph, lightly exposing the negative in an enlarger to serve as a "sketch" and then filling in the image with charcoal or pastels and using an airbrush to apply color. I can't associate the sitter with either the ambrotype or the tintype.

Finally, I wonder if the Carte-de-visite is really

something called a "Cabinet Card," since I have usually seen that scroll motif in Cabinet Cards, although there were "miniature" Cabinet Cards that could be still classified as carte-de-visites from the same period. (Cabinet Cards measure 4 1/4 x 6 1/2 inches while Cartes-de-visite are 2 1/2 x 4 inches). I would date this image at around 1880. And, if I had to match any of these people up, I would try to make a case for this man being the same man as the ambrotype sitter. Now how's that for free-association?

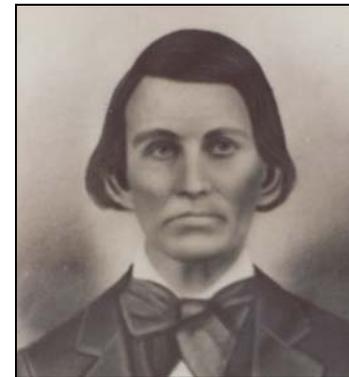


Image D — Identified by our expert at Eastman House as a crayon enlargement, this image has been widely considered for a number of years to be John Denbow (1797-1864).



Image C — A ambrotype of a man identified as John Denbow (1797-1862) by the notation on the left ostensibly by Harold Sinclair Denbow, a grandson of John's.

Anyway, it all just goes to show you that this is more or an art than a science, but some research and experience and intuition can help to make a case or not. Believe me, you are one of many who peer into the faces of 19th Century ancestors and want nothing more than to say "Speak!"

The questions remains, what are we to make of Mr. Struble's insightful analysis? It seems that the crayon enlargement (Image D)

(Continued on page 14)

# J2f What does it mean?

By Robert B. Denbo

**Editor's Note:** *This article was written a few years ago, before Bob had a further "deep clad" test done, refining the haplogroup even more to J2a4b. We'll try to get Bob to tell us the further significance of that finding in a future issue.*

The type of markers on the Y-DNA we have been previously discussing are known as STRs. Genealogists using STRs to find connections between families on a time scale of centuries. The mutation rate of STRs is such that they are a great choice for this kind of analysis. The values of these STRs are what have shown the close relationship between the Indiana, Iowa, Maryland and Ohio clans.

Population geneticists are interested in tracking the movement of groups of humans over time scales of 1,000's or 10,000's of years. Their studies involve a different type of Y-chromosome marker known as SNPs which have a much slower mutation rate than STRs. These SNPs are so rare as to be considered unique and are passed down faithfully from father to son. Because of this, they have been used to define several broad groups into which every male in the world can be placed. These broad groups are called haplogroups.

Human Y-DNA haplogroups are lettered A through R, and are further subdivided using numbers and lower case letters. The Haplogroup designations are established by the Y Chromosome Consortium. The identification of the Y-DNA Haplogroup provides an interesting glimpse into the deep ancestry of your paternal line.

When it comes to Europe, the haplogroups observed can be

8 — *The Denbow Diaspora* (June

broadly split into two groups, Paleolithic and Neolithic. Paleolithic Europe 18,000 years ago was in the grips of the last Ice Age. Glacial ice covered much of Northern Europe and the Alps. Due to the cold and need for food, the populations of the day waited the ice out in three locations. These were the Iberian Peninsula, the Balkans and the Ukraine.

Twelve thousand years ago the ice had retreated and the land became more supportive to life. The three groups of humans had taken refuge for so long that their DNA had naturally picked up mutations and therefore can be defined into different haplogroups. As they spread from these refuges, Haplogroups R1b, I and R1a propagated across Europe, R1b from the Iberian Peninsula, I from the Balkans and R1a from the Ukraine. During this repopulation of Europe the ancestors of the Caribbean, Great Britain and Maine clans would have arrived in England.

Around 8,000 years ago, the Neolithic peoples of the Middle East began moving into Europe. These people had developed the new technology of agriculture. Several haplogroups were involved, mainly E3b, F, J2 and G2. The J2 Haplogroup originated in the northern portion of the Fertile Crescent. From here it spread throughout central Asia, the Mediterranean, and south into India.

The J2f sub group is thought to have evolved in North West Anatolia. These people were engaged in widespread Aegean trade involving both the western Anatolian mainland and many of the large islands in the eastern Aegean, Chios, Lemnos and Lesbos. From here they are thought to have reached Italy by way of sea-faring Neolithic populations. The J2 Haplogroup is believed to have been carried to Great Britain during the Roman invasion.

By analyzing the SNP portion of the Y-DNA chromosome we see that the two different clans arrived in England thousands of years apart. Four hundred years ago they migrated to North America and our quest to uncover our family tree began.

## **New resources for Denbow genealogists coming soon . . .**

- denbow.org will have a database that can be searched for family tree information.
- special section of CJD's Flickr account will be devoted to family history photographs.
- More information to come!

9 — *The Denbow Diaspora* (June 2009)



### **Editors:**

Carl J. Denbow, Athens, Ohio  
Email: [cjd@denbow.org](mailto:cjd@denbow.org)

James Denbow, Round Rock, Texas  
Email: [jdenbow@mail.utexas.edu](mailto:jdenbow@mail.utexas.edu)

### **Editorial Offices:**

17 Coventry Lane  
Athens, Ohio 45701-3718

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." Denbos welcome, too!