

THE DENBOW DIASPORA



December 1997

"An International newsletter for Denbows"

Vol. 4, No. 2-4

The "James Gang" — West Virginia Denbow Family Has Lewisville and Evans Connection

By Betty Evans Riley

Editor's Note: This story by Betty Evans Riley represents our first contact with living descendants of James Denbow (1827-1863) of the 78th OVI.

The factual information of the life of George Marion Evans and Mariah Anna Denbow is given below, but doesn't begin to tell the story of the descendants of this couple. From this union came eight children and these children had 15 known children; you can imagine how many more descendants of this couple now exist. I have always known her name to be Mariah Anna as that is given on her tombstone, marriage and death forms. However, her name has also been listed as Marie, Anna Maria and Maria on different records, so until her birth certificate is located, she will continue to

be Mariah Anna to me. **O**n March 13, 1873, Mariah Anna Denbow was married to George Marion Evans in Tyler County, W.Va.. J. W. Williamson performed the ceremony according to the Tyler County Marriage Records (1861-1899, page 31).

Mariah was the daughter of James and Rebecca Rogers Denbow of Monroe County, Ohio, and the granddaughter of John and Martha Sharp Denbow. She was born February 14, 1857, in Lewisville, Monroe County, Ohio, and died November 12, 1901, in Tyler County, W.Va. She and George had eight children: Agnes Rebecca, Joseph Denbow, Roy Sanford, Ira David, Clarence Nathan, Irena P., Charles W. and Louise (Bertie). Mariah is buried at Archer's Chapel

near Middlebourne, W.Va., and rests beside George, who died in 1939.

Until recently this is all I knew of George and Mariah and much of this was discovered only after I started the hobby (addiction) of genealogy. My husband had asked me about two years ago to check and see if we could find where his Riley family originated in Ireland. The Riley's were elusive and after running into a few brick walls, they went on the back burner when I decided to research my own family line. I was an only child and, so far as I knew, had only a few cousins and one half uncle who had been lost to me through the years. Much to my delight, a couple of years ago one of my cousins, Bill Evans, contacted me about an Ev-

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ans family reunion and asked if I would meet him, our half uncle and their wives to go to the reunion in Tyler County, W.Va. I said yes, and that was the beginning of a new and wonderful renewing of my family and a real reason to research the Evans family.

The other revelation was researching on the internet and finding a Denbow family reunion listed on a calendar of events for Ohio. Getting up the nerve to call a perfect stranger and ask about coming to a gathering of people that I did not know was not an easy thing for me to do. Carl was the person I reached and he

If anyone is interested in additional history of the Evans family, please feel free to contact me either at HC 79 Box 540, Davis, WV 26260 or by email at: <briley@access.mountain.net>. I would love to exchange information with any of my cousins and will be glad to add to my now much larger extended family.

encouraged us to attend the reunion this past summer. My cousin, Bill and his wife met my husband and me in Dover so we could meet these new 'cousins' together. We are so glad we did.

A little of the Evans history may be of interest to any of the Denbow cousins who are descended from this line. The first Evans to reach America was David who was born in Llanvachreth Parish, Merionethshire, North Wales about 1650.

David, his parents, his wife, three small female children and his brother, Philip, sailed for America prior to 1690 planning to settle in the Quaker Colony of Welshmen in Radnor, Pa. outside of Philadelphia. All but David and his three daughters died either on the voyage over or shortly after landing. David married a second time in 1690 to

Mary Jones in Philadelphia County, Pa. They had several additional children, including John who moved as an adult to a Quaker colony in Virginia. His son, (Colonel) John, came to Monongalia County (W.) Va. as an adult and was one of the first settlers of Morgantown — claiming land through “tomahawk rights.” The line from Colonel John is as follows: Dudley>Nimrod>James >George. George was born in Monongalia County, but his parents came to live in Monroe County, Ohio, and then later to Tyler County, (W.) Va.

Please note new email address for CJD: denbow@fptoday.com. While the university addresses still work, this address is now preferred for genealogical correspondence. Thanks!

Scottish Name D'enbleau to Norman Denbeaux to English Den-

By Carl J. Denbow

Elmer Forest (“Bob”) Denbow (1886-1975) wrote in a family history paper a number of years ago: “Origin of the Denbows was France and the name at that time was Denbeau which is typical French. As perhaps you already know Switzerland is made up of different nationalities. A number of our people shifted over to Switzer-

land, and after a number of years emigrated to the United States locating in Maryland. That is when the name was changed to Denbow.”

As interesting as Uncle Bob’s story is, recent research has failed to find any credible evidence of this connection. In fact, the few uses of the Denbeau or Denbeaux spelling in North America have turned out to

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Cousins Corner

Our readers write to express their opinions and to shed more light on the fascinating topic of Denbow genealogy. Your letters are solicited and will be most gratefully received.

Anyone Recognize the Name William Harlan Den-

Carl,

I don't know much about my line, just to my father's father. My father passed away when I was young and haven't had much contact with his side of the family since. At any rate, here is what I know: My grandfather: William Harlan Denbow; My Father: Ronald William Denbow; My Uncles: David, Thomas and Daniel

Any help you can give me would be appreciated!

Heather
ZSweetness@aol.com

[Editor's Note: Can anyone help Heather? I can't find a connection in my Denbow database, though I must admit the name William Harlan Denbow sounds strangely familiar.]



Ohio Denbows Migrate West to State of Colo-

Carl,

I can't believe it! I've been trying to locate information on my father's family for months. I wish I had known about the reunion earlier. My vacation ends today. The information I have concerning my family is limited as everyone I'm directly related to is deceased.

I know that my great-grandparents moved to Morrison, Colo., sometime around 1913. I believe that one of his brothers, possibly having TB, moved with them. Grover died in April 1969 and is buried in Morrison Cemetery. His wife Nellie lived a very long life dying on June 29, 1989. She is also buried in Morrison Cemetery.

I'm not sure how many children they had. I know of three. My grandfather, Roy Virgil Denbow was born on Nov. 1, 1910. He was a heavy machine operator. He married Flossie Ethel Dyson, born Dec. 25, 1917 in Flagler, Colo., on Nov. 10 1935.

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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."

They had two children. Irene Denbow was born on Nov. 12, 1937. She died on June 4, 1943 of rheumatic heart disease. She is buried in Morrison Cemetery. My father, Grant Duane Denbow was born on Nov. 7, 1939 in Golden, Colo. He was also a heavy machine operator. He married my mother Linda Lou Bartsch, born in Denver, Colo., on July 24, 1942, on Oct. 2, 1958.

They had two children. Myself, Dennette Kim Denbow, born June 29, 1961 in Denver, Colo. My sister Lynnette Lea Denbow, born April 17, 1963, in Denver, Colo.

My father died while undergoing open heart surgery on March 12, 1964. He needed valve replacements. He had rheumatic heart disease. He is buried in Morrison Cemetery.

My grandfather choked to death on Oct. 19, 1972. He is buried in Morrison Cemetery. My grandmother died on Oct. 14, 1996 in her home in Golden, Colo. She is buried in Morrison Cemetery.

I married my husband Jeffery Allen Thielen, born on Aug. 24, 1961, in Springfield, Mo., on Sept. 25, 1982. We have one daughter, Jennifer Nicole born in Springfield on Oct. 13, 1983.

My sister married Stephen Jay Hitt on April 30, 1983 in Tulsa, Okla. They have two children. Jayme Catherine born on Aug. 17, 19???. Daniel Jack born on Feb. 17, 19???

I would love to read *The Denbow Diaspora*. My mailing address is 930 S. Douglas Ave., Springfield, Mo., 65806

I would be grateful if you could send me any information I could add to my database. I

have only Grover's date of birth. I will try to locate the names of Grover and Nellie's other children.

Your cousin,

Dennette
dennettek@aol.com

Editor's Response: I was able to connect Dannette to the Ohio clan. Her Grover is the son of Frank Denbow (b. abt 1855), who was the son of James (1824-1863). She is, therefore, another one of the "James Gang" that Betty wrote about in the lead story in this issue! Welcome to our merry throng, cousin Dannette!! — CJD

Another Bazaleel Progeny Surfaces

Carl,

What a surprise to get your message today. I would love to get your newsletter, the address is Laurel L. Demas, 3483 Wadsworth Road, Norton, Ohio 44203.

Now My mother was Grace E. Heddlston 1917-1991, father was Howard 'Pat' Harrington 1907-1979. Grandfather Edward Harrington 1861-1902, grandmother Martha Scott 1868-1949. Great grandfather Henry Scott 1818-1907, Catherine Denbow 1824-1907. That is all I have.

I was the only child of both parents. . . . My parents lived in a small town New Matamoras, Ohio. . . . My father's first cousin gave me what information I have. . . . I guess that is why it was easier to answer something

on the internet. I didn't think it could be anyone from home. To this day I have to be careful who I talk to about my paternity. Small towns can be ruthless. They never just remember the present, they remember the whole family history. I tried once to talk to Scott's in Rinard Mills Some soap opera, huh. I really just want to trace my ancestors and I would like to maybe find relatives on my father's side that might let me in the family!!!!

I hope that you can tell me something about the Denbows.

Lynn

Editor's Response: As you know, I was able to use my computer program to discover that you and I are fourth cousins, once removed. You might be interested to know that my father used to say virtually every time we'd drive through New Matamoras on our way to and from Woodsfield to visit my grandparents and great aunts and uncles that he was once told that at one time there were "hundreds" of Denbows that lived in that town. Though I haven't found "hundreds" yet, I am finding more and more people with a connection to that little town. In addition to you I have recently been in contact with a Nathan Ray DeLong, descendant of Bazaleel, whose mother was born in Matamoras in Washington County, Ohio — which I assume is the same as New Matamoras — in 1915. See article later in this issue for a few more details on Nathan as well as another Denbow researcher. —CJD

Denbow Picture Page

In each issue of this newsletter in the future we would like to have a page of photos from the collections of our readers. Please send originals, if at all possible. They will be scanned into computer image files and then returned to their owners. This project will only succeed with your help.



The 78th Ohio Volunteer Infantry preparing to leave Zanesville, Ohio, after a furlough in 1864. A few months later they were at the siege of Atlanta and participated in the March to Sea with Gen. W. T. Sherman.



Janie & Sinclair Denbow. I have no additional information on this couple. [This and the band photo are courtesy of Katherine Denbow, of Lewisville, Ohio.]



Reproduction of the battle flag of the 77th Ohio Volunteer Infantry (Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society).



Labeled "Denbow Band," the men on this postal card appear to be dressed in SUV uniforms, perhaps after a Memorial Day parade. They are identified as (l to r): John W. (1863-1949); son of Civil War veteran Levi (1832-1911); Basil E. (1866-1920), son of Levi; Raymond (1908-19??), son of Basil; and William F. (1886-1959), son of Basil.

(Continued from page 2)

be due to individuals who changed their names from Denbo or Denbow to the French spelling, in one case for purely theatrical reasons and in another to perpetuate a fraudulent lineage.

However, a recent re-reading of an article by Douglas Shaw Denbow of Ashland, Ohio, made me think again of Uncle Bob's assertions of a French connection. What I suspect happened is that there was a "grain of truth" in Uncle Bob's story but that the facts had gotten a little mixed up as they were handed down from one generation to the next. Doug's article suggests that, perhaps, Uncle Bob's story refers to a Norman-era French spelling, which was itself a corruption of a Scottish name. This hypothesis, if confirmed, would explain the persistent "Scottish legends" — prevalent in so many North American Denbow families — and the stories like this one of a French origin of the name.

I will reproduce here a few relevant paragraphs from Doug's article, which originally appeared in the May 16, 1985 issue of *The Times of Acadian, La.* It was an article about some of his experiences during a recent trip to Louisiana to visit his daughter's family. Here are the excerpts:

"Inside the museum the hostess noted my last name and asked permission to phone Mrs. [Elizabeth Denbo Thad] Montgomery next door for an interview, since we share a similar name. Within the long-roofed, Victorian green clapboard and white-trimmed Shadowland residence, I found the charm of Mrs. Montgomery's home exceeded only by her own person. Her youthful walk, blond-graying hair and sea-blue eyes made me doubt her seven-plus decades. To my compliments on her living room, decorated with nested bunnies and handcrafted eggs in preparation for her grandchildren's visit at four, she replied. 'I've lived here most of my life, and I'd be happy to live here forever.' Her vitality caused me seriously to weigh that possibility as we traced ancestors back to the D'embleau of Scotland, before the Norman era when we became the Denbeaux family. She was pleased to meet her first Denbow who retained the English —w ending.

"Dressed in green as verdant as the plants settling about the high-ceiling room, she turned the pages of her notes on the seat of her maroon Victorian settee. As she described her venerable father, Emzi Beattie Denbo, she fairly drew my imagination to her girlhood memory of his lips quivering "white, white, white" in the glow of the fire that destroyed the family' sugarcane mill. Immediately afterwards his heart failed."

As I now read it, this story does help to reconcile two different legends about the origin of the Denbow name. It certainly merits consideration as a hypothesis. If anyone has additional supporting evidence, we'd love to print it in an upcoming issue of *The Denbow Diaspora*.

Denbow Reunion

July 31-Aug 3
Dover, Ohio

Please mark you calendars now for this important event. As in past years, we will have a Diaspora Dinner on Friday, a picnic-style family get-together on Saturday and field trip on Sunday. Plans are still being developed as this issue goes to press. Details will be forthcoming in the next issue, which will be mailed in

This may be your last issue of *The Denbow Diaspora*!

Over the past year, this newsletter has been running in the red. Only a small percentage of our readers have ever made a payment to us to help defer our costs. Many issues have been supplemented out of the personal resources of the co-editors. As a result, this past year you only received two issues, of which this is one. Note that this is a late issue that was due out in December 1997.

From now on *The Denbow Diaspora* will be sent to a more limited mailing list. The newsletter will only be mailed to those who have paid-up subscriptions or are on a limited "courtesy" mailing list. Any person who is on a limited, fixed income will be placed on the courtesy list, if a request is made in writing. A few genealogists and others who have helped in our research will also remain on the courtesy list. All others will be required to pay \$9.00 for an annual subscription. This should greatly reduce our production costs and allow us to produce issues more regularly. We plan to produce at least three issues in 1998, after only two in 1997, of which this late issue is one.

Renew Your Subscription . . . Now!!!

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Enclosed please find: _____ \$9.00 for one year subscription.
_____ \$17.00 for a two year subscription.
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being placed on your courtesy mailing list.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

If known, earliest Denbow ancestor (parent, grandparent, etc.) :

Internet Continues to Reunite the Denbow Diaspora

Two Online Ohio Clan Researchers

In the last few months, several elements of the diaspora — widely scattered family members — have emerged online. This phenomenon is evidenced in the letters-to-the-editors column, where several new cousins have been identified through queries that were directed to the editors' email boxes. Two others, who we think will play a key role in helping us unravel the story of Denbow history, are Timothy Morton, of the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Nathan Ray DeLong, of Wooster, Ohio.

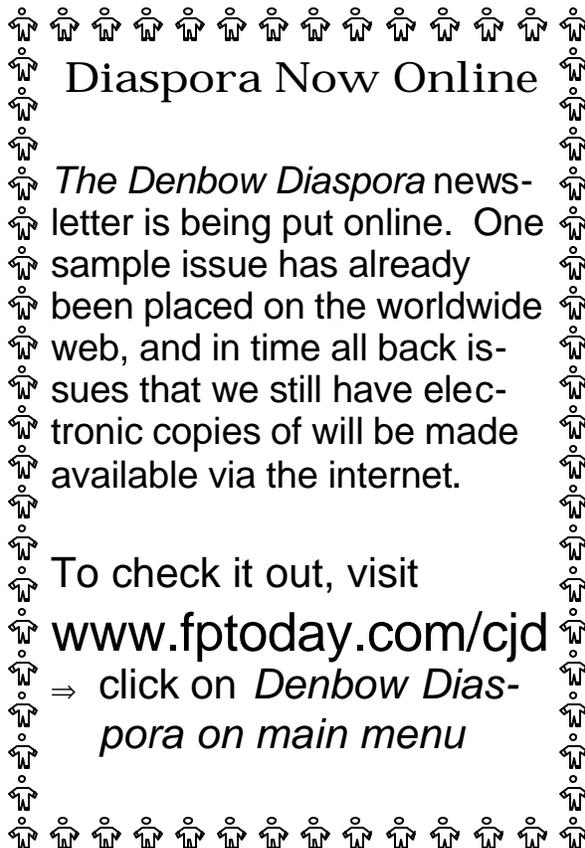
Morton is now conducting in-person research in the Maryland Hall of Records, which not far from his home. He is a descendant of John Denbow Jr. (1827-1905). His email address is: timmorton@friend.ly.net

DeLong has done a great deal of research on the descendants of Bazaleel (1795-1857). His email address is: Nathanrd@aol.com. I'm hoping that both of them will write articles for upcoming issue of this newsletter about their research findings.

This is Your Newsletter, We Need Your Sto-

Tell us what you know about your Denbow ancestors. This is your newsletter, and we need your input to place the whole family history in perspective. We are looking for lead articles for upcoming issues as well as queries and letters to the editor.

Please consider writing down your own family history so that it, too, can become part of the permanent record of our common Denbow heritage. Each issue of this newsletter goes to several genealogical repositories, so what you write here will be available for future generations. Also, we are planning to put issues online for easy access.



Diaspora Now Online

The Denbow Diaspora newsletter is being put online. One sample issue has already been placed on the worldwide web, and in time all back issues that we still have electronic copies of will be made available via the internet.

To check it out, visit
www.fptoday.com/cjd
⇒ click on *Denbow Diaspora* on main menu

Fighting the good fight . . .

Abolitionist, pro-Union sentiments ran high in Southeastern Ohio during Civil War Era

By Carl J. Denbow

An edited version of this article appeared in the Jan. 18, 1998 issue of *The Athens Messenger*, which retains copyright. It is reproduced here because of its obvious connection with Denbow family history.

"Ring the good ol' bugle, boys, we'll sing another song,

Sing it with the spirit that will start the world along,

Sing it as we used to sing it 50,000 strong

While we were marching through Georgia."

It's 1865, and thousands of Southeastern Ohio boys are returning from the war. In every village and town, they are greeted warmly. Some communities have rallies, parades, band concerts and other festivities to honor the returning veterans of the War of Rebellion. This was no civil war. It was a dirty, rotten, stinking rebellion by the slaveholding oligarchy. It had to be put down. The Union had to be saved. They and their comrades did it! They were most proud of their accomplishments. Some would even say smug and self-satisfied.

But, after all, they had been part of the mightiest army the world had ever seen. Many had fought with William Tecumseh Sherman, the much beloved general from Lancaster, in such far away places as Shiloh, Tenn., Vicksburg, Miss., Corinth, Miss., and Atlanta, Ga.

Many of them had marched to

the sea with Uncle Billy, as they called Gen. Sherman. Some had even fought in Bentonville, N.C., one of the last battles of the War, before participating in the Grand Review that triumphant parade in Washington, D.C., on May 23-24, 1865 that brought a tear even to the eye of battle-hardened Uncle Billy, who described the compact columns of his veteran Army as "simply magnificent" and marveled that the "glittering muskets looked like a solid mass of steel, moving with the regularity of a pendulum."

As they went back to their farms and started to till the soil once again, they would often sing to themselves as they followed that old mule and guided the plow through



Col. Mortimer D. Leggett, Commanding Officer, 78th Ohio Infantry

"Hurrah, hurrah, we bring the jubilee!

Hurrah, hurrah, the flag that makes you free!

So we sang the chorus from At-

lanta to the sea

While we were marching through Georgia!"

In general, that's how the veterans in Southeastern Ohio felt mighty contented and mighty proud of what they had done. And in the nearby parts of that new state West Virginia they were also proud of having given Johnny Reb his due.

In fact, if you followed the mountains from West Virginia, to Eastern Kentucky, to Eastern Tennessee, to Western North Carolina, Northern Georgia and Northern Alabama, you'd find the same thing. Mountain folks had no time for this so-called confederacy. Now, mind you, mountain folks weren't as likely to be abolitionists as their comrades in Southeastern Ohio, but they hated the genteel slave-holder class nonetheless. They wouldn't fight in the Rebel army, and huge numbers actually went north to find a union regiment to volunteer for. The rosters of many union regiments are strewn with hometowns like Asheville, N.C., Johnson City, Tenn., Clayton, Ga., Forkville, Ala. and Pikeville, Ky., and Abington, Va.

Southeastern Ohio was not without its Copperheads, those so-called "Peace Democrats" who'd rather just let the South go its own way and restore peace at any price. But, Republicans and the "pro war" factions were much stronger in Southeastern Ohio. In fact, in Athens John Brough, the Republican candidate for governor, beat Clement Vallandigham, the Peace De-

mocrat, by a six to one margin, while in the state as a whole the margin was “only” about three to one.

But, that’s not how the now-romanticized version of the War of Rebellion is remembered by the good, white folks of Southeastern Ohio. Many think that because this is SOUTHeastern Ohio, we were teaming with southern sympathizers and that the Mason-Dixon line went somewhere just south of Columbus. It’s almost a case of “generational amnesia” of Biblical proportions. As the ancient Israelites forgot time and again the lessons their parents’ generation had learned, we, the current citizens of Southeastern Ohio, don’t quite understand the world the way our great-grandparents once did. Unfortunately, history misremembered can be as dangerous as it mistaken.

My personal family history is a case in point. My great-great grandfather, four of his brothers, as well as their “old man” all fought in the 78th Ohio Volunteer Infantry.

These radicals, who may have included my great-great-great grandmother (Martha Sharp), felt that slavery was “incompatible with the principles of Christianity.”

Another brother was in the 27th Ohio. These Monroe County boys were joined by a number of first cousins in Washington County, who served in the 77th Ohio. The old man, John Denbow, was 63 years old when the war broke out. Because, according to a family story, he had become an abolitionist, he lied about his age and joined up to fight with his sons. He and one of his boys died in the service of their country.

The 78th regimental history is

replete with abolitionist rhetoric and refers to the conflict as both the “slave-holders’ war” and the “Great Rebellion.” Some feeling for the



Capt. W. W. McCarty, Co. E., 78th Ohio

“racial sensibilities” of our Southeastern Ohio forebearers can be garnered by reading a chapter in this book which contains the first person account of the POW experiences of Capt. W. W.

McCarty of McConnelsville.

In this remarkable narrative Capt. McCarty tells about his shock at seeing a Negro POW beaten by a guard at a rebel hospital. But listen to McCarty’s own words:

“This hospital was in charge of G. R. C. Todd, a brother-in-law of President Lincoln. The doctor was an ardent rebel, and one incident occurred there which I shall not soon forget. A colored prisoner, belonging to a Massachusetts regiment, who had been taken at Fort Wagner [remember the movie *Glory?*], was accused by the guard of spitting from the portico of the building down into the yard, and without any investigation whatever, the doctor caused him to be stripped and tied, and receive thirty lashes on his naked back. The indignation of our sick prisoners was intense at this brutal treatment inflicted by the hand of a man far inferior to the negro [sic], for the latter could read and write, while the other could do neither, and could scarcely tell his name. The negro was a prisoner of war, born and educated in a free State, and he was entitled to

the same protection and treatment that we were, and the doctor could assign no other reason for his violation of the rules of warfare, than that the boy was a ‘d—d nigger.’ But perhaps the doctor will apply for a pardon now.”

Later, McCarty tells of an attempted escape in which he and three of his comrades are at large for a week or so. During that period, he relates numerous examples of being aided by the slaves who upon discovering their identities as escaped Yankee POWs would give them shelter and food. These experiences gave him a very favorable impression of those of African descent: “In all my experience,” he said, “I have never met a treacherous negro. That there are some, I have not a doubt, but all I met I found trusty, and many of them more intelligent than the poor whites.”

McCarty’s reminiscence gives not only a glimpse into the nature of the slavery system in this country but also clearly shows how knowledgeable the black population of the South was about the war and their desire to aid in ending the “peculiar institution” that was keeping them subjugated. This is certainly a far different picture than one gets from such classic tales as *Gone with the Wind*, written as it was from the perspective of the Southern aristocracy.

Even stronger sentiments than those of Capt. McCarty were expressed several decades earlier by the abolitionist society that met at the Sunbury meeting house in nearby Monroe County. These radicals, who may have included my great-great-great grandmother (Martha Sharp Denbow, John’s wife), felt that slavery was “incompatible with the principles of Christianity” and was “a crime of the deepest dye that ever did, or ever will disgrace any people, and that

wherever equal rights and equal privileges cease there slavery begins . . .”

Here in Athens County, abolitionism was also strong, especially in the western townships. As early as the mid 1850s, an abolitionist newspaper the *Free Presbyterian* was being published in Albany. Both Albany and the nearby village of Hebardsville were “hubs” on the Underground Railroad, a clandestine operation that moved slaves from southern bondage to Canada and freedom.

In the decade leading up to the war, the black population was expanding rapidly in the Albany area. By 1860 nearly 8 percent (174/1301) of the inhabitants were of African descent. In the next ten years the black population increased 48 percent, while the white population decreased 21 percent apparently lured west by better farmlands in Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska made available at little or no cost by the Homestead Act of 1862.

In the first few decades after the war similar concentrations of blacks could be found in other parts of Southeastern Ohio, including the

Washington Street area in the city of Athens. In one such pocket, in Gallia County, there exists to this day the oldest, continuous celebration of the signing on Sept. 22, 1862 of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Lincoln. Begun by Gallia County blacks on the very first anniversary in 1863, this celebration has been held every year since.

Shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation, while the war was still being waged, a group of black citizens many of whom were ex-slaves started the Enterprise Academy in Albany. One of the founders was Cornelius Berry, father of Edward Berry, who after being educated at the academy became a noted businessman in Athens and later opened the Berry Hotel. This Enterprise Academy may have been the first such educational effort started by blacks for blacks.

Perhaps it was the presence of this enlightened culture in Southeastern Ohio that drew Pat Mason and his family to Albany, where in 1861 his daughter Ednah Jane was born. Years later this remarkable woman after graduating from Oberlin College, teaching school and operating a business became the second wife of first African-American to play major league baseball. This was not Jackie Robinson but Oberlin-educated Moses Fleetwood Walker. The life of Walker, who was raised in Steubenville, serves as an excellent example of the regression in race relations that took place in the decades after the War of Rebellion when the figurative Mason-Dixon line moved north to somewhere near Cleveland.

Walker, who was accepted as a player in the then-major league American Association in 1884, found that by 1890, he could no longer play even in the minor leagues. In fact, his final year as a professional baseball player was in the International League in 1889. No other black

played in the IL until Robinson broke the baseball color barrier for good a half a century later.

Walker's biographer, David W. Zang, bewailed the developing racial polarization in the Ohio hill country as the new century began by observing, “The eastern Ohio area, whose population of former slaves and vigorous participation in the Underground Railroad had once made it a progressive outpost of race relations, now [in 1906] strained under its legacy of tolerance, which did not mesh well with the national inclination to regard separation as inevitable.”

Jim Crow was on the march north! Chapters of the Klu Klux Klan were established not just in Southeastern Ohio but throughout the state. In fact, an Ohio president Warren Harding even met with the barbarians of the KKK in the White House. Why this phenomenon occurred is hard to figure out. Many explanations have been put forward, including a “Great Reconciliation” in the last decade or so of the 19th Century between white southerners and white northerners that “buried the hatchet” of the War of Rebellion, now euphemistically called the Civil War, squarely in the backs of the former bondsmen! The desire of the hordes of new European immigrants to step on the backs of blacks to elevate themselves one step above the bottom rung of the social ladder may also have been a factor.

As Southeastern Ohioans we can look back on our role in the War of Rebellion and the abolitionist movement as the most important hallmarks of our heritage. It is from this more tolerant era that we should seek to draw our strength and on which we should fashion our future. Let us resolve to follow in the footsteps of those forebearers who envisioned a better and more equitable society and in the process hearken back to the best of our Appalachian culture.

For Further Reading

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