

# THE DENBOW DIASPORA



May 1998

"An International newsletter for Denbows"

Vol. 5, No. 1

## A Little Family Puzzle

By James Denbow, Co-editor

*This article, by James Denbow, of Round Rock, Texas, offers some interesting speculation about Denbow place names in Pennsylvania.*

A few days ago a friend gave me a computer program called "StreetsPlus" that came with a new computer he had just bought. Of course, what should I do to try it out but type in the Denbow name to see what comes up. I expected to find quite a few places in New Hampshire and Maine named after Denbows, but there was only one -- in Durham, N.H. near where the original Salathiel Denbow settled in the 1660s. There were also a few Denbow roads and lanes in Arkansas and Missouri, all near places where I had received letters from Denbow rela-

tives and distant cousins over the past few years. So these I could also connect with local and more recent histories in my mind.

The puzzle came when the map brought up two different spellings of the Denbow name - Denbo and Denbeau Heights - within two miles of one another on the banks of the Monongahela River in southwestern Pennsylvania. These place names are in Washington County south of Pittsburgh - a region where I had earlier discovered a brief

reference to two Denbows, Solomon and Robert, in the Militia there in 1778-80. In looking back over our very first issue of the Denbow Diaspora I found that I had mentioned these two people when I noted that "several New Hampshire records indicate that a Solomon of about the right age was born to Elijah Denbow in about 1760. This Solomon had no brothers named Robert that I can find, however."

I don't know of any Denbows presently in Pennsyl-

### Highlights — 1998 Reunion Events

**Friday, July 31** — Diaspora Dinner, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Dutch Valley Restaurant, Sugarcreek, Ohio.

**Saturday, Aug. 1** — Family Picnic & Get-together, 11:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Dover City Park, Dover, Ohio

**Sunday, Aug. 2** — Field Trip TBA (Either First Ohio Denbow Lands or Washington County, Pa.) — 9:00 a.m 'til the cows come home.

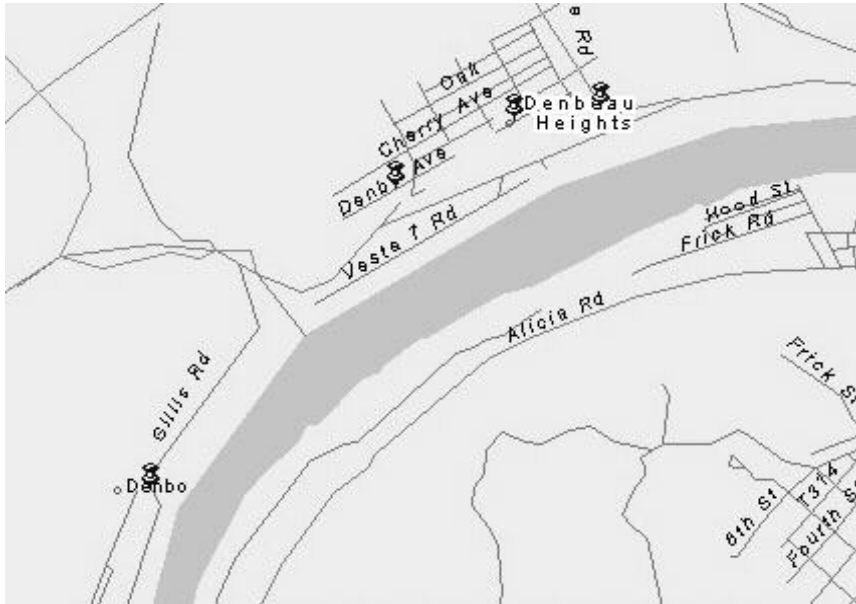
vania who claim this small area overlooking the Monongahela River as their family home, so perhaps these place names relate to this early period just after the Revolutionary war when soldiers were promised free land in the west. The fact that these two places (I believe they are both hills or hilltops) are only about half a mile off the Old National Pike road lends some credence to the possibility that they were occupied and given their names during this period. Unfortunately, in 1993, my cousin Florence Denbow wrote to me about these two men and this general area, saying "I have been to the Washington Co. Penn.

courthouse looking for land records in the Denbow name. I find nothing helpful. My search hasn't gone past that much. I believe Robert and Solomon were brothers, sons of perhaps a John of Philadelphia. And there might be the tie to Maryland."

But here to me is the puzzle. Why in both the printed records of the Pennsylvania Militia, and in the place names for two adjacent locations, do we find two such distinctive spellings of the Denbow name preserved? The Pennsylvania archives list both Solomon Denbow and Robert Denbo in the same Washington Co. Militia Company under Lt. Everhart

Hoop. Solomon served as a sergeant while Robert is listed as "Pvt., 4th class." The company these men served in was small, so why does there seem to have been care taken to spell the name differently if the two men were related? The same thing for the map puzzle: why should two such distinct spellings be preserved for places less than two miles apart unless there was some desire to emphasize the difference in origins or ancestry of these two men who seem to have spent considerable time together in the military and who appear to have moved westward together into Kentucky a decade later.

If the different spellings were intentional rather than accidental, then it may also be significant that Solomon Denbeau is listed once on a Shelby Co. Kentucky tax list for 8/25/1800. Could Denbeau Heights in Pennsylvania be named for Solomon, while the nearby Denbo road and Denbo Hill are named for Robert? And could the choices of these different name spellings have been intentional indexes of separate family origins for these two men? If Solomon and Robert were not



Streets Plus map of Denbo and Denbeau Heights, Pa. In Vol. 4, No. 1 (1997) issue we ran a U.S. Geological Survey map of the same areas. The areas is referred to as the California Quadrangle.

related by blood, then who was Solomon?

The French spelling of the name as Denbeau is particularly intriguing. It is also very rare. The fact that it appears, probably for the same man, Solomon, in both Pennsylvania and Kentucky suggests that this spelling may actually form part of the family history itself. Could Solomon have married someone of French or French-Canadian ancestry? Or could someone in the family have learned to spell the name from a French or French-Canadian source?

The only other record of a Solomon Denbow I have come across was a child of Elijah Denbow of New Hampshire born about 1760. This would have made him the right age to be the Solomon of Pennsylvania and Kentucky who had daughters of marriageable age in the 1790s. Would anyone of this branch have been in a position to have been influenced by French-Canadian spellings of the name? Astonishingly, the answer is Yes!

In 1757, just before Solomon was born, an Elijah Denbow was taken captive at Fort William Henry and carried to Mont Royal in Canada "where he was about three

weeks & from thence was carried by the Indians into the Indian Country where they kept him about a fortnight & then he made his Escape from them & Returned to Mont Royal from whence he was Immediately transported down to Quebeck where he was Tweny on Months . . . " Twenty months in a prison in Quebec is certainly enough time to learn to spell ones name, and to learn to spell in it French orthography as well.

So the "story" suggested by the place name puzzle is that two Denbows from separate family origins find themselves in the same militia company and area after the Revolutionary War. They become friends and eventually travel together to Kentucky. But they both know they come from different Denbow stock (remember this is only 3 to 4 generations from the original Denbow founders: John and Salathiel), so one of these men experiments for a time with spellings such as Denbow and Denbeau, while the other uses Denbo, in recognition of their different origins. In support of this hypothesis, we have one other instance where the unusual Denbeau spelling is associated with Solomon's name in Kentucky, and a possible histori-

cal connection between a Solomon Denbow and French Canada through the New Hampshire Elijah Denbow's two-year captivity there.

This, of course, is all speculation brought about by the chance preservation of two very distinct spellings of the Denbow name within a few miles of one another. But it is well known that place names often preserve bits of interesting history, and the contradiction between these two spellings could just be one of those cases. Maybe someone who lives nearer this area could go to Denbeau Heights and the nearby Denbo to have a look and ask questions about local history. The map suggests that the intrepid traveler might at the very least be rewarded with a pleasant view over the Monongahela valley from this spot. They might also be lucky enough to unravel two of the biggest mysteries of the Denbow name: what was the relationship between the Denbows of Kentucky and the Denbos of Indiana in the early 1800s? And from which branch of the family - New Hampshire or Maryland - do the Iowa Denbows come? Good luck!

# 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.

## Another Colorado Denbow Who Has Ohio Roots

Dear Carl,

What I wanted is to know how you got the Denbow history and how far you have gone with it. I only recall you mentioning your parents and would, also, need that information again and any other names and the link. I am the daughter of W. Jene Denbow, who is the son of Ernest and Mabel Denbow. I know nothing about my grandfather, but I think he may have had a brother or brothers. Perhaps that's where you link in. I, also, had a brother W. James Denbow, but he was killed when we lived in Sandusky. Do you have any of this information? Please let me know ASAP; I really want to get started with this family tree but have basically nothing to get started with. Sure would appreciate your help. Thanks.....talk to you later. Jean

*Editor's Note: Jean and I have had an on again off again email correspondence. We have discovered a few things, though. First, she is another of the Bazzel clan that have "surfaced" recently and is my third cousin. Second, she is the niece of Robert S. Denbow, of Zanesville, who came to the reunion last year.*



### Editors:

Carl J. Denbow, Athens, Ohio  
Email: denbow@fptoday.com

James Denbow, Round Rock, Texas  
Email: 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."

## Bazeleel Descendant from W.Va. Provides Answers for

Was really glad to meet all of you last night. When I returned home, I managed to get in touch with Bonnie. You were right - she was thrilled. We have exchanged addresses in order to exchange info on Thomas and Elisha's families.

My mother is really interested in attending the Denbow reunion. Im going to try to make reservations this weekend.

Mom talked briefly to John Denbow in Beaver, Co. He remembers hearing about you and he knew about the Denbow reunion. Mom says that he doesn't seem real interested in family history - but suggested that we try to get in touch with his son John Denbow who is a VP at Michigan State University. He said his son is very interested in family history and I believe his son has your book.

John in Beaver has two sons - John and Thomas. WOW there's a surprise in the choice of names. John's father's name was John. However, he said he was under the impression that his family came from the New York State area??? Of course, he wasn't sure. If I find out any more I'll let you know.

Look for an envelope this week with a copy of the Washington Co Honor Roll.

Gilda

*Editor's Note: I was most pleased to have had the opportunity to meet Gilda on a recent excursion to Par-*

*kersburg. Gilda's research has helped Bonnie Miller connect her Elisha with Bazeleel, something she had assumed for years but until now had no proof of. Since Gilda was raised in Western Pennsylvania, maybe she'd be interested in a trip to Washington County, Pa., sometime this summer. If I can arrange it, I'd*

*very much like to go along, as I'm sure would some other Ohio and West Virginia Denbows. It might even be a possibility for the Sunday field trip for the Reunion, since that is still a TBA event. It'll be up to a vote of the participants. — CJD*

## Underground Railroad in Stafford, Ohio — More Evidence of Monroe County Aboli-

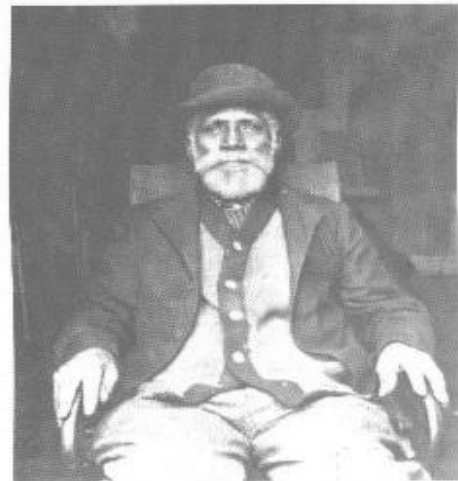
By Henry Burke, Marietta, Ohio

*Editor's Note: Mr. Burke, a native of Monroe County, recently sent me this first person account of his childhood in the Stafford area and his memories of a Mr. Devore. The village of Stafford is located on the western edge near the Noble County line. William Denbow, of 78th OVI fame, relocated to the Stafford area after the war. Of personal interest is that my wife's paternal grandmother's maiden name was Devore.*

I was born in 1940, the beginning of a very decisive decade in the World's History. I was raised by my grandparents, both born in the latter decades of the 1800s. Subsequently, the major portion of my childhood was spent with "older" persons born during the middle to late 1800s. My great uncle, Ed Curtis (1885-1951), owned a small farm near Stafford, Monroe County, Ohio. My uncle's farm was located next to Warren Sutton's place, which was on the south east edge of Stafford. From 1945 through 1951, I spent my entire summers in Stafford, with my Uncle Ed.

It was in Stafford that I became acquainted with Mr. Devore, the oldest person that I ever knew personally. I don't believe I knew his first name, I probably never even heard his first name; at that time, elderly people were always referred to as Mr. or Mrs. as a matter of respect. I don't know Mr. Devore's exact birth date or the date of his death. He was born around 1842, and was a Veteran of the American Civil War. Mr. Devore was the father-in-law of Warren Sutton, and lived with the Suttons during the 1940s. At that time, Mrs. Sutton was well into her 70s, and it was a source of great amazement to me, that a lady her age, had a father still living. I think Mr. Devore lived for over 110 years!

My uncle Ed and Warren Sutton used to help each other put up hay. I was too small to be of help in the hayfields, so I stayed around the farmhouse with Mrs. Sutton and Mr. Devore while the two men worked in the hayfield. I usually sat on the porch with Mr. Devore and sometimes we took very slow walks around the farm. He would tell me stories about his experience in the Civil War. Mr. Devore knew my great-great-grandfather John Curtis, and remembered when most of the black people first came to Stafford from Rockingham County, Virginia in 1849. The 1850 U.S. Census Report shows 69 "free persons of color" living in Monroe County, Ohio. The majority of these people lived in or near Stafford.



John Curtis (1830-1914)  
Ex-Slave  
Underground Railroad Conductor  
and  
American Civil War Veteran

It was during this period of my childhood that I first became aware of the Underground Railroad. Part of the Old Stafford Mill was still standing on or near Sutton's farm and Mr. Devore explained to me that the Mill was once an important Station on the Stafford Underground Railroad. According to Monroe County history, Stafford was founded by an abolitionist named William Steele. Steele was born in Bigger, Scotland, immigrated to Winchester, Virginia, with his parents at a young age, and came to Monroe County to live around 1835. Steele bought some land in Stafford and built the Stafford Mill. An early pioneer settler had called the place Bethel, but when Steele applied for a Post Office, there was already a Post Office in Ohio under that name so Steele changed the name to Stafford.

On one of our walks, while we were standing on a hill overlooking Stafford, Mr. Devore showed me the road on which fugitive slaves had entered Stafford! Now Mr. Devore lived through the days of the Underground Railroad, so as a researcher of the Underground Railroad, I may well be the only writer alive who has talked with a person who witnessed the activity of the Underground Railroad!

## This is Your Newsletter, We Need Your Stories!!!

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](http://www.fptoday.com/cjd)  
⇒ click on menu selection  
*Denbow Diaspora*

Our next issue will be the Annual Directory issue, which will contain names, addresses and phone numbers for all Denbows in the United States with listed phone numbers. This issue is always a hit with our readers. Don't miss it. Subscribe today!!

# Denbow Picture

- 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.



Grave of Thomas Denbow (1833-1903) in Bloomfield, Ohio, in Ludlow Township of Washington County. Thomas was the son of Bazeleel (1795-1857). Note the misspelling of the last name on this government marker.



William Starkey (1857-1943) and his wife Elizabeth Denbow (1861-1???)

The photos on the right are from Gilda Haddox of Parkersburg, W. Va.; the grave photos are from the collection of Carl J. Denbow, *Denbow Diaspora* co-editor.



Tom's wife, Anna McVey (1838-1902). The Elizabeth (Lizzie) Denbow in the two pictures to the right was the daughter of Tom and Anna.



**Standing** (l to r): Charlie Whiston, Clarence Starkey, Thomas Starkey, young boy at the top Earnest Taylor, Edward Starkey, Lou Theis, Maggie Starkey Theis, baby in arm Crean.  
**Sitting** (l to r): Elsie Starkey Whiston, baby in arms Oria, William A. Starkey, Elizabeth Denbow Starkey, Sarah Jane Denbow Taylor. **Little child standing:** Lona. **Two young children kneeling in front:** Katy Starkey and Goldie Starkey

# Denbow Reunion

July 31-Aug 3  
Dover, Ohio

 Make Motel Reservations ASAP.  
Call Tuscarawas Visitors and Con-  
vention Bureau at  
**1-800-527-3387**  
for a list of area motels, hotels &  
Bed and Breakfast establishments.

**Meet new cousins, find out about your family history and have a lot of fun. Don't miss it! 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.**

## RSVP FORM

Please cut out this reply form and send it in ASAP. While reservations are only required for the Friday night Diaspora Dinner, your courtesy in replying about all events would be appreciated! Reservations for the Friday night dinner **must** be accompanied by a check for \$11.00 per person attending.

\_\_\_\_ I will attend the Diaspora Dinner on Friday Night. My party will consist of \_\_\_\_ people. I've enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (number of attendees x \$11).

\_\_\_\_ I will attend Saturday Picnic and Get-together. (I anticipate \_\_\_\_ number in my party.)

\_\_\_\_ I will take part in the Sunday Field Trip (\_\_\_\_ will be in party).

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street/P.O. Box: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_



Site of Friday Night Diaspora Dinner: 7:00-9:00 p.m.  
Insights Into Mysteries of Denbow Family History —  
Good Food, Good Fellowship As Well!

*Amish Kitchen Cooking*

**Dutch Valley**  
Amish Kitchen Cooking

Hours Mon-Sat  
7:00 am - 8:00 pm  
(Closed Sunday)  
330-852-4627

- Family Style Dinners
- Breakfast Buffet
- Home Made Pies

Dutch Creek Foods  
Fresh & Smoked Meats  
Variety of Cheeses  
Jams & Jellies

Dutch Valley Gift Market  
Country Gifts  
Oak Furniture  
Lamps & Toys  
Victorian Gifts & More!

Dutch Valley Furniture & Antique Mall  
Quality Antiques  
New Oak and Cherry Furniture  
10,000 Square Feet

Bus Tours Welcome with Reservations

6 mi. W. on St. Rt. 39  
from I-77, Exit #83

## Directions to Dover City Park Pavilion For Saturday Family Picnic: 11:30 — 6:00

Take Dover Exit off I-77:

If coming from South (heading North): Turn right off ramp

If coming from North (heading South): Turn left off ramp

Pass BP Oil, Elby's and several restaurants and cross RR tracks. When you come to the traffic light and "Y" in road, turn left. This is Slingluff. Cemetery will be on left. Pass Walnut and several smaller streets (traffic light on Walnut). Next traffic light will be N. Wooster Ave. Turn left and follow to E. 20th Street and turn right. Follow pool signs — this takes you to Tremont Street. Turn left again. Pavilion on left near top of hill. Pool is at top for those who care to swim.

## Your second — and final — *last chance* to subscribe

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. 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.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed please find:   \_\_\_ \$9.00 for one year subscription.  
                                  \_\_\_ \$17.00 for a two year subscription.  
                                  \_\_\_ Courtesy mailing list (limited, fixed income)

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