

THE DENBOW DIASPORA



October 1998

"An International newsletter for Denbows"

Vol. 5, No. 2

Rare treat for those who attended the reunion!

Heirloom Quilt Displayed, Memorial to Pvt. Tom Denbow

By Gilda Haddox, Parkersburg, W.Va.

I had always heard typical childhood stories about my great grandmother Elizabeth Denbow Starkey. Most noted was when my grandfather bought my mother a little red coat and hat and a pair of black patent leather shoes to go visit her grandmother. Mom was only five at the time. Since mom didn't want to leave Grandma Elizabeth's house — she hid her shoes. Much to her delight the departure was greatly delayed.

Exactly when I became aware that Elizabeth's father was a Civil War Veteran — I'm not sure. I do remember seeing a conk shell that he had brought back after his service in the war — because he had seen the ocean. In that era, that was something to be noted. At some point I became aware that his name was Thomas Denbow — for my grandfather had been named after him. But by the mid '70s — way before I became hooked on

genealogy — my grandmother Starkey had died and Pappy (Thomas Starkey) had died a year before her. My younger uncle was in charge of settling the estate. My mother casually mentioned that she hoped her brother would take care of the old quilt top. That was the first I had ever heard the story. "What quilt top?" — I asked.

The story was then told to me — that when Thomas Denbow died his casket had been draped with an American flag because he was a Civil War Veteran. His daughter Elizabeth — my great grandmother — had taken the flag and cut it in pieces to make a quilt top. No one seemed to know the reason as to why it was never quilted. It had been given to my grandfather, Thomas Starkey — the name sake of Thomas Denbow.



Gilda Haddox proudly displays "flag quilt" at 1998 Reunion.

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Grave marker of Thomas Denbow, 1833-1903, in Bloomfield, Ohio (Washington County). His government-issue "casket flag" was made into an heirloom quilt.

So my curiosity and love for family history grew. So did my concern for the old quilt top. When I met Carl, I told him the story of the old quilt top. He encouraged me to see if I could bring it to the reunion. At that point, I didn't even know where the quilt top was for sure. So when I talked to Mom, I was excited and pleased to find out that when my grandparents estate was settled my mother had been given the quilt top.

Since Mom was unable to attend the reunion, she brought the quilt top to me. "Take it to the reunion," she said, "It's yours. You're the family history buff."

So the quilt — filled with love and family history — and I headed for the Denbow Reunion.

My friends thought I was nuts. They said, "You're going away for three days to spend time with people that you've never met." The thing is — when they put it that way — I began to wonder if I was nuts. But I never felt out of place, even for a moment. I realized — the hang up of meeting new people is trying to find something in common to talk about. We had family. Friday at dinner was filled with questions like — "Who are you?" and "Who was your Denbow ancestor?" We had fun figuring out if there were more Bazeleel Denbow descendants or John Denbow descendants at the dinner.

Then when we got back to the motel — Bonnie Miller and I pulled books out so Bonnie could help me visualize where all the family members fit in. A

few of us casually met later that evening to chat.

The picnic the next day was like walking into a museum. Pictures, books, documents, Civil War swords — and a quilt top. Then you start talking about your research. Comparing notes and making new notes. Do understand that when you come to a reunion — you'll probably come home with at least five more things on your list that you want to do more research on.

Oh — did I mention — we did take time to eat!

On Sunday, we had our trip to Denbo, Pa. About which I think Carl plans to fill in the details in another article. Let me just say that the California University of Pennsylvania Library will probably never be the same — but we had a ball doing the research.

Bottom line — the reunion was a lot of fun. For all of you that were there this summer, I'm glad I had a chance to meet you and I want to thank you for welcoming me with open arms. For you that have never been to a reunion, plan to come next year. I look forward to meeting you and I guarantee you'll receive a warm Denbow welcome!

Site Near Exeter Possible Key to Trans-

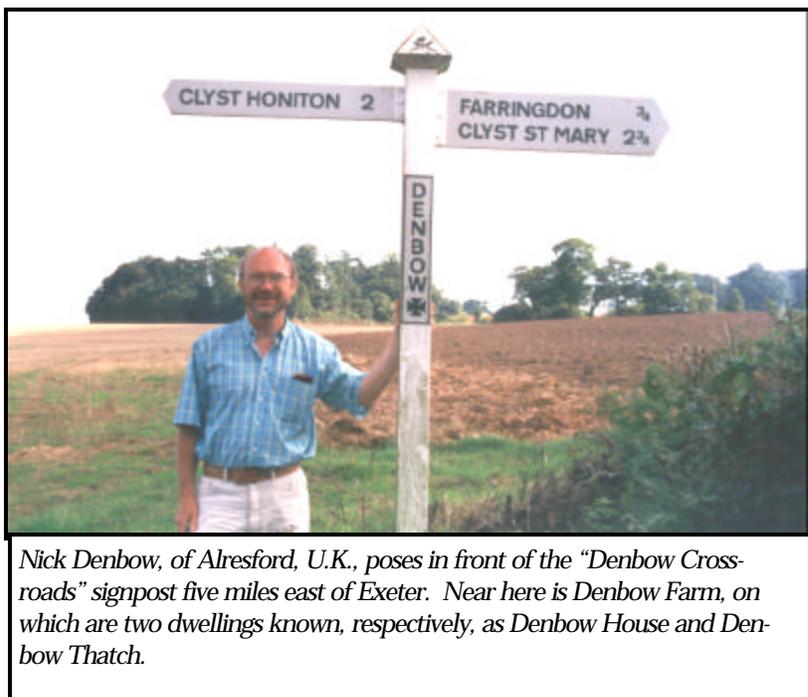
By Nick Denbow, Alresford, UK

Holidays in England are in Devon and Cornwall, down at the south-west corner. My wife and I spent a holiday there this year: on the way home I thought I should take the detour I do regularly — at least every 10 years — to check on my "Roots." Five miles due East of Exeter, one mile south of the airport, is a place marked on the maps as Denbow Farm. Also there, is a crossroads, and in 1968 I had seen a wooden signpost marked "Denbow X" (see *Diaspora* April 1994 for a picture). We went back — and I am delighted to report the new signpost at the crossroads is once again marked "Denbow X" (see below). It's actually a three-way junction, but now the signpost only labels two directions. There used to be a fourth road there, which was across the fields behind the signpost to Farringdon House (a school), but the track was closed in about 1960 to improve the shooting in the wood (pheasant shooting) — only in Britain could this close a road.

Down the unlabelled direction is Denbow Farm. It is now several separate dwellings, a working farm/grain store, some modern barns being redeveloped into houses, and two old houses. These were once the two sections of the Denbow Farm house, but they are now separated into two homes. Denbow Thatch, owned by Peter and Shirley Willatt for the last two years, and Denbow House, owned by Michael and Barbara Pentreath. So I did the American tourist bit, walked up the drive to Denbow Thatch and met Shirley Willatt, who was charming. Both families are interested in the history of Denbow- all of its owners.

Denbow Thatch is built on the original dwelling on the site. Holbrook Farm, one mile to the West, was mentioned in the Domesday Book of year 1086, when King William I (William the Conqueror, a Norman invader from France) listed all the land, buildings and people in England that he had conquered, and allocated to his supporters. Den-

bow itself was probably a cowherds dwelling, one room downstairs, one room upstairs, wooden frame, cob walls, and thatched roof, next to the cow barn and dairy. If it were not a separate farm at this time, it would have been a subdivision of Holbrook Farm. The picture shows the barn on the left, which is now turned into a living room below and two bedrooms above. On the right, the original "dwelling", has beams in the loft that show traces of the smoke from the open fire downstairs in the kitchen/living room as was. The



Nick Denbow, of Alresford, U.K., poses in front of the "Denbow Crossroads" signpost five miles east of Exeter. Near here is Denbow Farm, on which are two dwellings known, respectively, as Denbow House and Denbow Thatch.

dairy, with its well, is now converted to another bedroom.

Denbows — people like Philip and John — lived here up to the year 1428 at least. Philip was a Bailiff/Clerk in Exeter and Member of Parliament in around 1309 — the earliest records I can locate are from 1276 when Philip Denebaud is noted to own land at or near Holbrook Farm. Family fortune continued on the up, surviving the "Black Death" — i.e. the Plague of 1347— which killed about half the population of this area. In around 1428 we believe the



Denbow House near Exeter.

family line living at Denbow Farm ended with the one remaining daughter Elizabeth marrying Sir William Paulet. But there were many other family branches in the South Devon area, going as far as Plymouth in the West and Dorset in the East.

We lose track of the farm occupants there. Between 1426 and 1685 the only name known at Denbow Farm is Martyn — maybe a tenant. In the late 1600s there was trouble in England, following the confrontation between the King and the Parliament of Cromwell. The King, James II, had converted to Catholicism, and Whig and Tory factions were trying to depose him. The Duke of Monmouth, the son of King Charles II, led the first rebellion in 1685: he recruited most of his army from Dorset and Devonshire. Monmouth was defeated at the Battle of Sedgemoor in Somerset, along the road from Devon, and beheaded on Tower Hill, London. The notorious Judge Jefferies, at his “Bloody Assizes” in Dorset and Devon, condemned 320 of Monmouth’s followers to death by hanging, and ordered the deportation of 800 others to Barbados. It is significant that in Antigua there is another branch of Denbows, started by Richard Denbow, born circa 1660 — I suggest he was one of these Monmouth deportees. The next rebellion in 1689 was led by William of Orange: he landed from France at Brixham in Devon, and marched past Denbow farm on his way to London, where he deposed James II — who was his Father-in-law! James then fled to Ireland, and was finally defeated by William (now King William III) at the

famous Battle of the Boyne! All these old history names start to come to life when you can relate to a part of it.

So maybe a crisis at Denbow Farm? Maybe the Owner/tenant was deported, or died fighting in the battles also? About 1685-1690 the Rous family acquired Denbow Farm. They were well-to-do Exeter people who decided to significantly rebuild the farmhouse. So in about 1690 they built Denbow House, of local hand made bricks, a good quality building for the time/area. It even had three storeys. Two doorways linked the old dairy and thatched kitchen/scullery area to the new building. The Rous family remained owners till 1810 — various of them were Rectors (men of the Church) which was a normal occupation/good living for landed gentry. Indeed the Denbows have had their share of Churchmen: around 1700 there were two Denbow Rectors recorded at Oakford in Devonshire, and at Oxford and Cambridge Universities for their studies. The Rous family line died out in 1810, when the only daughter Hannah married Reverend William Ellacombe. The Ellacombe family owned the farm and house until 1860, when it passed to the Bishops (Exeter) Court Estate—who let it out to several tenants over the years. They sold out in 1958, at an auction. The houses since then have been re-divided into two, and much renovated.



Denbow Thatch, also, near Exeter.

Its nice to know that Denbow Farm is in good hands. It’s also good that the owners there are interested in the history of the dwelling. I’m sure that any future Denbows visiting there will be equally impressed.

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.

Carl,

Here is the abstract of the Obit for William Smith Sr. taken from Monroe County Ohio Newspaper Abstracts Vol. 4, by Rita Kopp 1994, pg. 7

"SMITH, William Sr., died at his home in Summit Township 2 Feb., 92y,5m,11d, from a stroke, farmer born Washington County, Pa., 22 Aug 1801, to Monroe County, Ohio, 1816, s/o Robert who was born on Muddy Creek — three miles above Peach Bottom — and Elizabeth HANLEY SMITH who was born in County Armagh Ireland, married Sarah EMMONS a native of Fayette County, Pa., in 1827, children: Rachel A., Sarah, Hester A., Robert H., Margaret, James, Catherine, William and Lewis. Rachel A. married a Wise, Hester A. married a Cashner, Sarah w/o Simon Rose are deceased,

Robert H. and James live in Polk County, Mo., Margaret married John Underwood and lives at Coates' Station, Catherine lives at home, William and Lewis live in Woodfield, there were only six families in Summit Township in 1816, wife died 4 Sept. 1890, buried Buchanan cemetery (8 Feb 1894)"

Will drop a hard copy of this page in the mail to you too.

Still having trouble with the GEDCOM you sent me even at ver. 4. I tried importing into my old gen database, which I never had problems with and I still get the same problem, no spouses and/or mothers connecting. I wonder if its a TMG problem?

Would it be possible to copy to RTF files group sheets for the GEDCOM you sent and then attach them to an e-mail? I don't mind doing the data entry, it actually helps me to connect people to people in my mind. Have been doing some research on the Smith line. Peach Bottom and Muddy Creek are in York County, Pa. just across the state line from Virginia and York County., was originally the county that Pittsburgh was in, Pitt now being in Allegheny County. I've found a few possible Smiths in 1790 census for York County but haven't checked the 1800 census yet. Need to check church records. York County has a strong US Genweb site and decent following, so just need to find someone to help.

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Editor's Note: The interest in this letter from the Denbow standpoint is that William Smith's daughter Sarah was the mother of Sarah Catherine Rose, the wife of James T. Denbow (1847-1928), who is the patriarch of a number of Ohio Denbows, including Co-editor Carl J. Denbow.



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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."

Directory Issue Delayed — but only

THE DENBOW DIRECTORY, WHICH WAS SUPPOSED TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE, WAS SQUEEZED OUT BECAUSE OF THE WONDERFUL ARTICLES BY GILDA HADDOX AND NICK DENBOW. THOSE ARTICLES MADE THE ISSUE LONG ENOUGH THAT INCLUDING THE DIRECTORY WOULD MAKE THIS ISSUE TOO LARGE TO BE MAILED WITHOUT ADDITIONAL POSTAGE. THEREFORE, IT WAS DECIDED TO ISSUE THE DIRECTORY AS A COMPLETELY SEPARATE ISSUE WITH NO OTHER CONTENT. THE DIRECTORY WILL ACTUALLY BE IN A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT FORMAT — THAT OF A SMALL BOOKLET. IT WILL BE MAILED TO EACH PAID UP SUBSCRIBER EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR AND WILL BE MARKED AS VOL. 5, NO. 3, DEC. 1998.

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.



New WWW Address

The Denbow Diaspora newsletter is now online. Beginning with this issue, each issue when published will be placed on line. As time permits, past issues will be placed on the web site.

To check it out, visit
www.cjd.iqthost.com
⇒ click on menu selection
Denbow Diaspora

Visit to Denbo, Pa., More Questions than Answers

By Carl J. Denbow

On Sunday morning, Aug. 2, 1998, several "hard core" Denbow genealogists set out from the banks of the Tuscarawas in Dover, Ohio, for the exotic destination of Denbo, Pa., on the banks of the historic Monongahela. We wondered, as James Denbow had speculated in the last edition of *The Denbow Diaspora*, could this little hamlet hold the key to unraveling the connections between the Denbo, Denbow and Denbeau(x) name. To be succinct, the answer we discovered is a definite maybe.

Denbo is a quaint little settlement in the coal fields of Western Pennsylvania. It is located a few miles from California, Pa., the home of California University of Pennsylvania, in what the U.S. Geological Survey calls the "California Quadrangle." Our first stop was in California, where we set out for the university library to try to find out what its holdings would tell us about local history. One interesting entry was in a Master's thesis entitled, *Why is your town called that? An Onomastical Study of Washington County, Pennsylvania*, by Kimberly Jo Shorts. The entry under Denbo reads thusly:

"Denbo (Denbeau) (West Pike Run, 3) – In approximately 1760, James Denbo married Nancy Woodfield and made their home in an area to which Indians still claimed. A year later, Nancy's brother, Joseph Woodfield, built a cabin nearby. After returning from a hunting trip, Joseph instructed Nancy to cook some of the best game while he went to invite Joseph. Upon returning home they found the house was filled with savages while Mrs. Denbo did her best to serve them prepared food. The Indians took everything that they cared to and left. The savages repaid them by sending them venison and other foods, and they continued to raid the farmhouse with more frequency. After eight years or so, Mr. and Mrs. Denbo had three children, and one day James went on a hunting expedition. He returned to find his house robbed, and his wife and two children dead in the ashes of their home. The oldest girl, who was about eight years old, had been taken by the Indians. James wandered off and was never seen again, and his eldest daughter grew to marry one of the most powerful chiefs in (what is now) Ohio. The community

was named for this family that was associated with the area."

This is all very interesting, but these new facts seem to just compound the mystery rather than help solve it. Who in the world is this James Denbo? In the last issue (Vol 5. No. 1) Co-editor James Denbow speculated that Denbo, Pa., might be named for a Robert Denbo who served out of Washington County (where Denbo is located) in the Pennsylvania Militia with a Solomon Denbow (who may have later appeared in a 1800 Kentucky tax record as Solomon Denbeau), for whom

"He returned to find his house robbed, and his wife and two children dead in the ashes of their home."

our latter-day James speculated that nearby Denbeau Heights might have been named. Now consider this: Solomon Denbow was born about 1760. One would assume that Robert would be about the same age, or perhaps younger since Solomon was a sergeant in the militia and Robert a private. This would mean that this new-found James, who was marrying Miss Woodfield in about 1760, could have been the father, or uncle of Robert and/or Solomon. Confused? If not, you certainly should be!

The question now is, "Where do we go from here?" It would be useful, I'd suggest, to see if any pension records exist for either of these Pennsylvania militia boys. Would they have served in the War of 1812? Solomon would presumably have been in his 50s at that time, and, as I said, Robert may have been somewhat younger. If so, there's a chance that some record might be available that would shed light on these

(Continued on page 9)

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.



These photos are from the field trip to Denbo, Pa., at this summer's Denbow Reunion. In clockwise direction, starting at the upper left hand corner: (1) Denbeau Heights Christian Church; (2) Denbo "Welcome" sign, starting at back (l to r): Patrick Denbow, Zanesville, Ohio; Gilda Haddox, Parkersburg, W.Va.; Larry Denbow, Zanesville, Ohio; Carl J. Denbow, Athens, Ohio; and Bonnie Denbow Miller, Pana, Ill.; (3) Post Office Denbo, Pa.; and (4) Sign for Denbo Marina outside Denbo, Pa.



(Continued from page 7)

gentlemen and their life stories. Bonnie Denbow Miller was able to retrieve War of 1812 records on her g3grandfather Bazeleel Denbow (1794-1857) which contained such interesting information as his wife's name, and some documents related to "bounty land" he claimed as a result of War of 1812 service. Could we be so lucky on Solomon or Robert? Maybe Bonnie will lend us a hand on checking for these records? Giving assignments to Denbow researchers is part of my job, isn't it?

Our search in the university library in California was hindered by the fact that the library had only recently decentralized their local history collection and placed these materials in the general stacks rather than in local history room, as had been the case previously. Some of books and other documents did not seem to have yet found their way to their new home.

We did, however, uncover one additional bit of information on Robert Denbo. He is listed as having been a Frontier Ranger who participated in the Indian Wars

*“ . . . his eldest daughter grew
to marry one of the most
powerful chiefs in (what is
now) Ohio.”*

from the time of the Revolution until 1783, when hostilities ceased. He served under Colonel Williamson in the tragic massacre of the Moravian Christian Indians in the Ohio Territory at Gnadenhutzen in 1782. According to the introduction of the *Alphabetical List of Rangers of Washington County, Pennsylvania*, the populace in Western Pennsylvania believed that these Indians had aided the Pennsylvanian Indians in making war on them. The specific incident that led to the massacre was the

The massacre was touched
off . . . when the “lifeless naked
body [of Mrs. Wallace] was
found impaled on a sapling
along the trail to
Gnadenhutzen.”

aduction of a Mrs. Robert Wallace and her children from Washington County. The massacre was touched off, according to the document, when the “lifeless naked body [of Mrs. Wallace] was found impaled on a sapling along the trail to Gnadenhutzen. Colonel Williamson's party summarily massacred 96 of the christian Indians with hatchets.” Well, I never promised you that all Denbow genealogy would be pretty. Facts are facts and the Denbow Diaspora is committed to reporting them, “warts and all”!

As you will note from the accompanying pictures, we had a good time in Denbo. We talked to a number of people, none of whom really knew much about local history. One lawyer, who we were told was the local history expert, was away on vacation. We left a message on his doorstep but have heard nothing in reply to questions we ask in our note. I have since misplaced the slip of paper on which I wrote his name and address. If any of the other intrepid Denbows on this trip still have that information, perhaps a nice letter to remind him that we are still interested in corresponding with him on these issues, would be in order.

As one can readily see from this short article, much research on our family history remains to be done in Western Pennsylvania.

Third — absolutely final — chance to sub-

After our last plea for support, several readers made substantial contributions that have put us “in the black.” Due to this fortunate turn of events, this issue is again being mailed to our expanded mailing list. Many of you have subscribed in the last few months, and we want to give just as many as are interested every last opportunity to join the growing ranks of Denbows interested in their genealogy. After this issue, we really will start mailing only to those who actually subscribe to our publication, or are on our limited “courtesy” mailing list. This latter group consists of those who are on fixed incomes and find it difficult to pay the subscription cost, some genealogists who have helped us in our research, and a few libraries and genealogical societies that will preserve our writing for future generations.

Name _____

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City, State & Zip _____

Enclosed please find: ___ \$9.00 for one year subscription.
 ___ \$17.00 for a two year subscription.
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If known, earliest Denbow ancestor (parent, grandparent, etc.) :
