



*Ancestors and Descendants
of
Charles Denson
and
Mary Jane Wilkinson*

*by
Billie Jean Denson Henry
and
Kathy Henry Sterne*

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GENERATION NO. 5

(Compiler's Note: The ancestors of Nathaniel Denson have been a particular challenge. When we began to look into the family history we believed just about everything we were told. One distant cousin had developed a colorful oral history that included three brothers with English (or sometimes Danish) royal connections who came to America after the defeat of Charles I by Cromwell at Naseby in 1645. (One of our Denison line did actually fight with Cromwell at Naseby, but that is another completely separate story.) According to the Denson story one of the brothers, William, settled in Isle of Wight County, Virginia, and he was the progenitor of our Denson line. As we have researched and learned how to conduct proper genealogical investigation, proving one generation at a time, we have found no basis for these stories. We are not saying that the story is not true, just that we have found no proof to support it. Lois K. Nix of Amarillo, Texas is the foremost Denson researcher. She has developed very sound theories, based on the preponderance of the evidence, that James Denson, Jr. of Anson County, North Carolina is the father of Nathaniel.)

The material on Nathaniel Denson's father and grandfather, James Denson, Jr. and James Denson, Sr., has been researched and written by Lois K. Nix of Amarillo, Texas, and is used by permission.

16. James DENSON, Jr. was born about 1732. He was the son of 32. James DENSON, Sr. and 33. Priscilla _____. James died 1777 in Anson County, North Carolina. He married
17. Jemima (WHITE). Maiden name not confirmed. After the death of James Denson, Jr., Jemima DENSON married William BOGGAN.¹¹⁴

James and Jemima DENSON had 8 children:

- M i. James DENSON III, was born about 1758 in North Carolina and died 1817 in Jones County, Georgia. On 2 Feb 1788 in Anson County, North Carolina, James Denson signed a deed with William and Jemima Boggan to sell 100 A. on the south side of the Pee Dee River below Waggon Ford to Burwell Lanier. This deed establishes James Denson III birth as about 1757. He would have to have been twenty-one to sign with his mother and step-father. By 1802 he was in Sumter County, South Carolina with his brother, Joseph Hopkins Denson. The name of his first wife is not known. In Sumter County he married Nancy Cox SUTLIFF. In 1817 he placed an ad in the *Georgia Journal* stating that "James Denson inclining to the Alabama Country, would sell, lease or rent his farm on Hog Creek, Jones County, 10th District, 160 A. in good order, well watered." These plans never materialized. His will was written 10 Feb 1817 and proved 3 Mar 1817 in Jones County, Georgia and also filed in Sumter County, South Carolina, where he still had property. He names children: James H. DENSON, deceased, his share is to go to his children; and daughters Rebecca, Aretta, Mary TISDALE, and Jemima. He names grandson, Jesse Shadrack DENSON,

- to have a \$500 share above the other children of my dead son, James H. Denson.¹¹⁵
- M ii. William DENSON was born about 1760 in North Carolina and died unmarried 1 Sep 1779 in Anson County, North Carolina. An inventory of his estate recorded in Anson County, North Carolina, reads as follows: "Inventory of the estate of William Denson, Deceased, which came to the Privey or knowledge of William Boggan, Administrator."
- M iii. Thomas DENSON was born about 1763 in Anson County, North Carolina and died 1 Nov 1849 in Newberry County, South Carolina. Wife, Sarah died in 1846. Thomas was a Revolutionary War soldier serving Col. Casey in 96th District. He took part in the Siege of Fort 96 under Capt. Stark. He went on the 2nd expedition against Cherokee Indians under Gen. Andrew Pickens. He applied for a state pension 3 Nov 1829 at age 66 (born 1763) and a resident of Laurens County, South Carolina, for his service in the Revolution. He was paid a pension of \$60 each year up to 22 May 1848. In 1843 he had moved to the home of his daughter, Sarah Gallegly in Newberry, South Carolina. A federal Revolutionary War pension claim was rejected because he drew a state pension (#R13729). The children of Thomas Denson were: James, Jesse, John, Nancy VIRDEN, William (married a VIRDEN), Sarah ABRAMS GALLEGHY, Rebecca JOHNSON and Jemima "Jennie" VIRDEN. The children were named in the will of James Denson, who died 20 Aug 1847 in the Mexican War. Will proved in Newberry County, North Carolina.
- M iv. Shadrack DENSON was born about 1766 in Anson County, North Carolina and died after 1846 in Houston County, Texas. He married Elizabeth CONNER in Anson County about 1792. Shadrack is shown on the 1810 Census of Anson County. He is probably the Shadrack Denson who witnessed his brother James' will in Jones County, Georgia. His path of migration to Texas included stops in Washington County, Alabama in 1818 and Bond County, Illinois. He left Illinois for Texas in 1835, where he received a league of land (1,476 A.) in 1838. His name appears on the 1846 Republic of Texas Poll Tax List, Houston County, Texas. He probably died soon after.¹¹⁶
8. M v. Nathaniel DENSON was born about 1768 in Anson County, North Carolina and died in 1838 in Rankin County, Mississippi. He married Charity COLSON in Anson County.
- F vi. Jemima DENSON was born about 1770 in Anson County, North Carolina. She married Job PERRY before 1805, when they sold land in Sumter County, South Carolina to her brother Joseph Denson.
- M vii. Joseph Hopkins DENSON was born 25 Nov 1772 in Anson County, North Carolina and died in Sumter County, South Carolina 1838.¹¹⁷ Joseph married (1) Martha COLSON by 1798 when Joseph described a deed for land on Hurricane Creek in Anson County, from Colson Division, "which came to me through my wife." He moved to Sumter County, South Carolina about 1801. Martha Colson died between 1804 and

1809. Joseph married (2) Martha COMPTON 9 Apr 1809 in Sumter County, South Carolina. He died without a will. Final settlement of his estate Sumter County, South Carolina names these children: James K. and wife Elvira; William Jesse; Sarah, wife of James LITTLE; Mary, wife of David MYERS; Martha A.; Joseph Luther; Margaret; and Julia.¹¹⁸

- M viii. Jesse "The Scribe" DENSON was born about 1774 in Anson County, North Carolina and died 29 Jul 1841 in Rankin County, Mississippi. He married (1) Elizabeth_____. He married (2) Ann M. A. HUPTHINS 16 Mar 1836 in Rankin County, Mississippi. He moved to Stewart County, Tennessee with his brother, Nathaniel and other families from Anson County by 1804. He served as sheriff 1809-1810. He built a grist mill on Long Creek, 4 miles from the Cumberland River. He served with General Andrew Jackson in the Creek Indian Campaign and in the War of 1812. He served as Paymaster in the Creek Expedition and also served as Secretary to Jackson and chaplain.¹¹⁹ According to Ann Denson Goodson, (statement of 1850 for bounty land due her deceased husband), Jesse entered the service of General Jackson as secretary and chaplain at the beginning of the conflict with Great Britain (War of 1812). He also served with Gen. Jackson during the campaigns against the Indians in Alabama, Georgia, Florida (Seminole Wars). Pages from a journal kept by Jesse Denson found in the National Archives, Washington, D. C., show he was held in very high esteem as a missionary and soldier by the most prominent men in government at that time. One page shows donations made to Elder Denson "so that he can continue his Gospel labours, having served sixteen years without pay as Chaplain and volunteer." Among those making donations were: John Quincy Adams \$10, General LaFayette \$10, Andrew Jackson \$10, James Madison \$10. This document says he was "conciliator to the army in time of danger, mutiny and starvation, when the line of battle was formed in camp to fight one another; and parched corn, cowhides and acorns were substituted for food; where he lost his property and health; and has suffered by fire and afflictions." A similar document is a petition for bounty land applied for in 1825. The copy of the petition is signed by Andrew Jackson, John Eaton, Sam Houston and others close to Jackson. No doubt, Jesse Denson knew Sam Houston from the War of 1812. On 24 Jun 1825, Jesse made application for land in Stephen F. Austin's second colony in Texas. He received a league of land on Spring Creek, (present north Harris County) granted 4 May 1831. In 1834 he sold this Texas land to Elisha Roberts and returned to Rankin County, Mississippi. After Jesse moved to Rankin County, he was called Jesse, Sr. to distinguish him from his nephew and namesake, Jesse, who also lived in Rankin County. He married Ann M. A. Hutchins there in 1836. They had one son, Pinkney Bunyon Denson born in 1839. Jesse Denson wrote two books published in Nashville. The first was an allegory about his experiences in the Creek Campaign,

and the second *A Compendium of Useful Information*, contains chapters on Art, Theology, Logic, Grammar, and many more topics. Both books are in the Tennessee State Archives in Nashville. The books show that Jesse Denson was an educated, highly intelligent man. The nickname "The Scribe", was given to Jesse Denson by General Andrew Jackson. Following Jackson's second term as President, he was speaking in Jackson, Mississippi. Jesse, his brother Nathaniel, and some of his nephews went to hear the ex-President speak. General Jackson recognized Jesse in the audience and invited him to sit on the platform, introducing him to all as "Denson, the Scribe."¹²⁰

James Denson, October 6th 1777.
 An Inventory of the Estate of James Denson Decas?
 3.. Head of Horse kind .12.. Head of Cattle 28.. Head of Hogs
 3.. Beds & part of furniture .. 1.. Chest 8.. Pewter Basins ..
 2.. Dishes 9.. Plates 13.. Spoons 5.. Knives & 6.. forks 1.. box Iron ..
 .. & Hoaters 2.. Poots 1.. Skillet 1.. frying Pan 3.. saddles ..
 3.. Bridles 3.. bells 1.. Pitcher 4.. Bottles 1.. Candle stick ..
 7.. Books some she Tools 2.. axes 1.. grubbing hoe 4.. weeding hoe ..
 2.. Plow & Part of gear 1.. Cart 3.. Hoghead 7.. Barrels 2.. Chains 4.. Piggins
 1.. Pail 1.. Tub 1.. Loom 1.. Grind stone 2.. Razors 3.. augers 2.. chisels ..
 1.. Hand saw 2.. gimblets 1.. Sledge 2.. spinning wheels 4.. ps. of Cards ..
 2.. Slays & Harnis 3.. bears 3.. stools 1.. Table 1.. old Keler 1.. shoel ..
 3.. Bedsteads 1.. Stock lock 3.. Dollars ..

Jessima Denson adm^t.

Copy made out for
 Wm Boggan

THE ANCESTORS OF CHARLES DENSON

James Denson, Jr.

North Carolina land grant records show James Denson, Jr. received at least two land grants of his own, aside from the land he inherited from his father. They are #2370 and #2429, for 75 acres each and both received in 1766. James Denson, Jr. and his brother, Shadrack Denson are on the 1763 tax list of Anson County, North Carolina. Though James, Jr. owned a lot of land, he did not escape the squeeze of high taxes forced on farmers by officers and agents of the Royal government. Back country planters were a network of self-sufficient craftsmen. Money was exceedingly scarce as is always the case in a new country. Government officials were joined by Scotch Highlanders in introducing an expensive style of living quite inappropriate to the rural population of the colony. To support their extravagant lifestyle, these minions of power demanded exorbitant fees for their services. A fee of \$15 was extracted from a poor farmer for performing the marriage service.

The collection of taxes was enforced by lawsuits with enormous expense. Sheriffs demanded more than was due, under threat of a sheriff's sale; and they applied the gains to their own use. This happened to some of the Densons and their kin. Shadrach Denson was the victim of a sheriff's sale as were some of the Colsons.

Petitions to the Legislature for correction of grievances were treated with contempt. The people formed an association for *regulating* the abuse of power, hence the name Regulator. They resolved to pay only such taxes and legal fees as provided by law. The open defiance of the Regulators toward officers of the Royal government led to many collisions between them in the years immediately preceding the Revolutionary War.

James, Jr. and his brother, Shadrack were *Regulators* in 1769 when one of the first revolts against high English taxes occurred in North Carolina. They are listed in *North Carolina Colonial Records*, Vol. 8, pp. 79-80 with other Regulators from Anson County. In 1770 James and Shadrack signed a petition to the Governor against the court at Salisbury, asking that a court at Campbellton be established.

James, Jr. died in 1777, one might imagine in a skirmish during the Revolution, but no proof of this has been established through the Daughters of the American Revolution. There is a James Denson listed in the militia. ¹²¹

An inventory of James Denson's estate was found in Anson County Probate records, but there is no will. Real estate is not listed, only personal property.

James Denson, October 6, 1777. An inventory of the Estate of James Denson Deceased.
3 Head of Horse kind, 12 Head of Cattle, 28 Head of Hogs 3 beds & part of furniture, 1 Chest, 8 Pewter Basons, 2 Dishes, 9 Plates, 13 spoons, 5 knives & 6 forks, 1 box iron and Heaters, 2 Pots, 1 Skillet, 1 frying Pan, 3 saddles, 3 Bridles, 3 bells, 1 Pitcher, 4 Bottles, 1 Candlestick, 7 Books, some shed Tools 2 axes 1 Grubbing hoe, 4 weeding hoes 2 Plows and Part of gears, 1 Cait, 3 Hogshead, 7 Barrels, 2 Chearns, 4 Piggins, 1 Pail, 1 Tub, 1 Loom, 1 Grindstone, 2 Razors, 3 augers, 2 chisels, 1 Handsaw, 2 gimblets, 1 Wedge, 2 spinning wheels, 4 pr of Cards, 2 Slays and Harnis, 3 Chears, 3 stools, 1 Table, 1 old Keter (kettle?) 1 shovel, 3 Bedsteads, 1 Stock lock, 3 Dollars.

Copy made out for William Boggan

Jemima Denson admr.

M. A. (Mitch Auld, Clerk)

The estate of James Denson, Jr. remained undivided until the death of his son William, 13 Apr 1789. In July Court, 1789, both inventories were filed. William's portion of the estate was paid interest for eleven years, the length of time elapsed since his father's death.

James Denson, Jr. died at about 45 years of age. The theory that Jemima married William Boggan is supported by the fact that no records have been found showing the disposition of his land, unless Jemima remarried and it became part of another estate in later years. The statement "copy made out for Wm. Boggan" on the James Denson inventory indicated Boggan was now Jemima's husband and as such was in charge of her business. At the same time Wm. Boggan was administrator of William Denson's estate. The following deed abstracts support this theory:

Anson County, Deed Book 7, p.177, 6 Oct 1779

William Boggan to Patrick Boggan, both of Anson County, for £ 100; 200 acres south of the Pee Dee River on Gould's Fork of Brown Creek. Jemima Boggan also signs.¹²²

Anson County, Deed Book 2, p. 298, 2 Feb 1788

James Denson, William Boggan and Jemima Boggan to Burwell Lanier 100 acres. . . south side Pee Dee River below Waggon Ford. Witnessed: John Carraway, Clement Lanier, Elizabeth Lanier.

James Denson signed and seal

William Boggan signed and seal

Jemima Denson (her mark)¹²³

This James would be James III, Jemima's oldest son. Both of these transactions took place before James Denson, Jr.'s estate was divided. About the time of the first deed (1779), Anson County, was divided and the Denson land was in the part forming Richmond County. Jemima and William Boggan were probably living on some of the original land. Jemima Boggan signs as a witness to the will of James Smith 24 Nov 1790 in Richmond County, Will Book I, p. 37.¹²⁴

Nathaniel Denson Family Record

The age of Nathaniel Denson's children in years

- 1st James Denson was born March 1st 1791
- 2nd Isaac Denson - June 11th 1793
- 3 - Joseph Denson April 8 - 1795
- 4 - Jesse Denson December 30th 1797
- 5 - William Denson - August 9th 1800
- 6 - Thomas B. Denson - March 27th 1802
- 7 - Mary Denson - April 1st 1804
- 8 - Katharine Denson - December 17th 1807
- 9th Shadrach Denson - January 17th 1809
- 10th Nathaniel Denson March 15th 1811
- 11 - Son born dead
- 12 - Madison Denson April 10th 1815

GENERATION NO. 6

32. James DENSON, Sr. was born about 1715 probably in Virginia¹³⁶ and died 1760 in Anson County, North Carolina. He married
33. Priscilla _____. After the death of James Denson, Sr., Priscilla Denson married Alexander McPherson. She died after signing a will on 23 Mar 1778.

They had 2 children:

- M i. James DENSON, Jr. was born about 1732 and died in 1777 in Anson County, North Carolina.
- M ii. Shadrack DENSON was born about 1738 and died 1782 in Anson County, North Carolina. Shadrack and wife, Mary had two children, Shadrack, Jr. and Elizabeth "Betsey", who married William Patrick "Patt" BOGGAN. Shadrack Denson, like his brother, was a Regulator.¹³⁷ It is believed that they participated in the first clash of wills between the Colonists and the English government over taxation without representation: "so heavy were the extractions of the officers that in 1768 the people rose in self-defense, entered the court house and violently expelled the officers of the court. . . The people petitioned Governor Tryon and laid down the principle that *taxation and representation should always be associated.*" Shadrack received no less than 1600 acres in land grants and purchased 300 acres from his brother, James, that was part of their father's estate. Evidently Shadrack was heavily in debt at the time of his death. Several of his properties were sold at sheriff sales for debt and court costs.¹³⁸ An inventory of Shadrack's estate was filed in 1782, establishing his death date.

James Denson, Sr.

Anson County, North Carolina was formed from Bladen County in 1750. Densons were in the part of Bladen County that became Anson county. James Denson, Sr. received the following land grants in Bladen and Anson County from 1746 to 1760.¹³⁹

Grant File #218	500 acres	1746
#923	500 acres	1746
#243	100 acres	1753
#1440	150 acres	1756
#1949	150 acres	1760

Land Grant # 218 reads:

George, the Second, To all to whom ye know that we have given unto James Denson five hundred acres of land in Bladen County on the North side of great Pee Dee. Beginning at a red oak on the great bluff above the mouth of little River, running N. 35 chains 180 poles to a pine, then south 55 chains 320 poles to a white oak, South 35 Ws. 320 poles to a red oak on the bank of the river, then up the river to the first station hold. Dated the 22nd of Nov 1746.

Gab. Johnston

Early deed and probate records of Anson County, North Carolina support the family relationship shown above. Consider the following abstracts from these early records (arranged chronologically for easier reading).

21 Jun 1750 Deed Book 1, pp.64-65

James Denson, Sr., planter, to James Denson, Jr., planter, for 5 s. Virginia money, 100 acres on North side of Great Pee Dee, part of original grant 22 Nov 1746. Witnessed: Wm. Downs, Luke Blakely.¹⁴⁰

22 Jun 1750 Deed Book 1, p. 63

James Denson, Sr., planter, to William Downs, weaver, for £10 Virginia money, 100 acres land on North side Great Pee Dee, granted to said Denson 22 Nov 1746. Witnessed: Thomas Ridge, Luke Blakely, Samuel Armstrong.¹⁴¹

12 Jun 1753

James Denson, Sr. and James Denson, Jr. were jurors in Inquest of Bryan Ponn, Anson County.

15 Nov 1753

Land Grant #243 to James Denson of Anson County 100 acres west side of Little River on a branch a mile from the mouth.

26 Jul 1756 Deed Book 1, p.242-243

James Denson, Sr. to James Denson, Jr. for £40, 150 acres on N. side Great Pee Dee at Red Bluff, part of the original 500 acre grant 22 Nov 1746.

29 Oct 1757 Deed Book 1, pp. 271-272

James Denson, Jr. of Anson County to William Terry for £20 Sterling money of Great Britain, 100 acres on North East side of Great Pee Dee River and all improvements, one-half of gold and silver mines, granted to James Denson 21 Jun 1750. Witnessed: John Frohock and James Robinson.

24 Oct 1760 Deed Book 1 pp. 157-158

James Denson of Anson County to Shadrach Denson for £40 procurement money, 3 tracts on North side Pee Dee (1) 150 acres part of the grant to James, Sr. 22 Nov 1746 being the land where Shadrack and his mother now live. (2) land adjacent to Josephus White granted said Denson, Sr. 5 Dec 1753 (see grant #243 15 Nov 1753). (3) land between the lines of James Shephard; three tracts falling to James Denson, Jr. by heirship by the death of his father, he being the oldest son and the will not proven for want of evidences. This deed includes 300 total acres.

James Denson SEAL

Witnessed: Ann Cartrite, Priscilla Denson, and Dorsey Pentecost¹⁴²

This last deed tells the whole story. By Oct 1760, James Denson, Sr. was dead and James, Jr. had inherited the land, apparently all the land because of some mixup in the will. He sold his brother this 300 acres and his mother was witness to the transaction. It should be noted that in Colonial North Carolina three kinds of currency were in use. The most valuable being British Sterling (£). "A man's wealth was measured by his possession of British Sterling." Next best was Virginia money and third, North Carolina procurement money. So, James sold his brother the 300 acres rather cheaply.

Sometime later, the widowed Priscilla Denson married Alexander McPherson, who died 14 Jan 1778. She died after 23 Mar 1778 and left a will recorded in Will Book I, p. 31. Abstract of this will: "Will of Priscilla McPherson of Anson County, to son Shadrach Denson all my land, mentions granddaughter, Betsey Denson. Shadrach sole Executor, 23 Mar 1778. (A true copy of Priscilla McPherson's last will and testament, Thomas Wade, Clerk)." James Denson, Jr. is not mentioned because, he predeceased her in 1777.

Herman L. Boggan, former college professor and avid genealogist of Memphis, Tennessee, considers James, Sr. the son of James and Elizabeth Denson of Onslow County, North Carolina and Jethro Denson the father of James. As yet, there is no documentation. Denson research continues to try to make a documented connection to the Virginia Densons and the Densons of Great Britain.