

Case 19 William Valorus Austin born 30 March 1837 Erie, Pennsylvania and died 22 January 1920 at Edinboro, Salem, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

William was one of the estimated 360,000 men from Pennsylvania who fought in the Civil War. Like many, he suffered from multiple disabilities and spent twelve years at The Central Branch of the National Military Home at Montgomery, Ohio, before he went home for his last two years to die by the side of his wife Sarah Jane "Jennie".

Central Branch Home Register #31465

Military Record

William V. Austin enlisted Aug 15, 1862 at Edinboro, Pennsylvania, as a Private in Company B 145th PA Infantry. He was discharged on May 31, 1865 at Alexandria, Virginia, at the end of the War. His disabilities were: defective vision and hearing; a cataract on his left eye; cardiac hypertrophy; arteriosclerosis; and chronic rheumatism. When William was admitted, it was not stated when these ailments began.

Domestic History

William was born in Pennsylvania, was age 69 when admitted to the Home. He was 5' 9" in height. His complexion was fair. He had gray hair and eyes. He could read and write. He was a Protestant and a carpenter by trade. His residence subsequent to discharge was New Alexandria, Pennsylvania. He was a widower in 1906. A brother, Edgar H. Austin of Edinboro, Pennsylvania, was his nearest relative.

Remarks

William's admission date to Central Branch was August 13, 1906. The range of payments for his pension were: \$10, 15, 20, 30, 40, until he left the Home on June 10, 1918. He died at New Alexandria, Pennsylvania on January 22, 1920. The cause of his death is unknown. William V. Austin Pension Certificate #799,027, paid \$15 from 3 April 1907. There were no personal effects remaining at the Home.

More Military History

The three years and two months of service for William V. Austin in the 145th Pennsylvania Infantry began at Erie, Pennsylvania. His regiment then moved to Harper's Ferry, West Virginia and had duty there for a month. Then they advanced up Loudoun Valley to Falmouth, Virginia and took part in the Battle of Fredericksburg, December 12-15, 1862. They remained billeted at Falmouth, until April 1863. Afterwards, they fought at the Battle of Chancellorsville May 1-15, 1863 and in the Gettysburg Campaign through July 3 pursuing General Lee during July.

They then served at Rappahannock, Mine Run, Po River, Stevensburg, Spotsylvania Court House, and several other campaigns, before the Siege of Petersburg

from June 16, 1864 to April 2, 1865. There were other skirmishes ending at the Appomattox Campaign. William was present at the surrender of Lee and his army at Appomattox Court House and took part in the march to Washington, D. C. and the Grand Review of May 23, 1865. He served his country well.

Family History

The ancestry of William Valorus Austin is included in the AFAOA database *Richard Austin of Charleston, Massachusetts*. My additional research begins with the 1850 U. S. Census when William was living with his parents at their home in Edinboro, Erie, Pennsylvania and it continues with his life after the Civil War and some facts about his wives and ends with the data about his death and burial.

The parents of William, as stated on Pennsylvania Death Certificate 20509, were Nathaniel Austin (1811-1892) and Nancy Lewis (1815-1884). William was the oldest son and was a carpenter, as was his father. His brother, Edgar Hiram Austin (1841-1917) as named on the Home Register, enlisted in the same Company of the Union Army and was a Sergeant. There were four sisters in the family: Emeline Isabel (1839-1919); Sarah Ann (1842-1898); Mary Jemima (1845-1939); Terissa Estella (1847-1866)

After the Civil War

There was a flurry of activity in new construction at Edinboro after William returned home. It kept William and Nathaniel busy with carpenter work. William had married Eveline L. Willett who was age twenty-two according to the Census of 1870. They had a girl named Alta Austin who was age nine months (?). According to her headstone inscription, Eveline died 12 May 1874, only four years later. In 1880, William was still living in Edinboro, next door to his father, Nathaniel, but William had a new wife named Frances Carpenter who he had married 18 Dec 1876. Daughter Alta, age eleven, was in school and William was working as a grocer.

Removal to New Alexandria Borough of Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania

Apparently, something happened to William's second wife, Frances, as the U. S. Census of Derry Township, Westmoreland, Pennsylvania on 12 June 1900 shows Family 54, William Austin, born March 1837 Pennsylvania, who married in 1882 to a third wife, Eliza J. Austin born Dec 1824. There were no children listed in the household. Eliza was age seventy-six and must not have lived many years after that Census, as William called himself a widower when he was admitted to the Home in August of 1906. There was a fourth wife who William must have married between 1907 and 1910, as you will see.

The Final Decade

Can a man live two places at once? Certainly, it is possible, if we are going by census records. We know that it was common for the Veteran's to check out of the Veteran's Homes and then return any number of times. Some also showed up on the census of the Home and at a residence. The 1 June 1910 Census for the Central Branch at Montgomery, Ohio listed William V. Austin, a widower, but the earlier Salem Westmoreland, Pennsylvania Census of 18 April 1910 shows William V. Austin age 73, married as head of household, with his fourth wife, Sarah J. Austin, age 44 and two stepdaughters: Elizabeth Silvis age 13 and Lucy A. Silvis age 3, the two youngest children of Daniel Silvis and Sarah.

William's fourth wife, Sarah Jane (Jennie) Sherry married first, when she was age fifteen, in 1880, to Frank Boyer, railroad brakes-man at Salem Methodist Church at Tamaqua, Schuylkill, Pennsylvania. The 1880 Census of Tamaqua lists Sarah Jane Boyer, a married woman, living with her parents Frederick and Sarah Sherry. Her husband was not listed in the household.

Sarah Jane married second Daniel Silvis in 1889. After Daniel died in 1907, William Valorus Austin married Sarah Jane sometime between 1906 when he entered the Central Branch Home, and April 1910 when he was living in Salem, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania with Sarah, and two stepdaughters, Elizabeth and Lucy Silvis. The 1920 U. S. Census of 6 January shows William at home and Lucy Silvis age 13 in the house.

William Valorus Austin died 22 Jan 1920 at his home in New Alexandria where he was cared for by his wife, Sarah (Jennie) Austin. He was buried on 24 January 1920 at the New Alexandria Union Cemetery and has a military marker at the site.

Widow, Sarah (Jennie) Austin lived with her daughter Elizabeth L. Silvis Wandless until she died. Jennie Austin had a pension granted in 1922, #1198223 on the service of William V. Austin.

Sources:

Historical Register of National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, 1866-1938; NARA Publication M174

AFAOA Database: *Richard Austin of Charleston, Massachusetts. Record of William V. Austin*. Compilers Liz and Jim Carlin. www.afaoa.org

Death Certificate #20509 Pennsylvania, Compiled by W. P. A. Salem Township, Westmoreland County, PA. William V. Austin, b 30 Mar 1837 Edinboro, Erie, PA, died 22 Jan 1920. Old Soldier retired, father Nathaniel Austin, Mother, Nancy Lewes. Informant Sarah Austin of New Alexandria, buried 24 Jan 1920 New Alexandria Union Cemetery, Pvt. Co. B. Died of Enteritis.

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New Alexandria Union Cemetery
<https://www.fold3.com/>

Union Regimental Histories. Pennsylvania, 145th Regt. Inf.
<http://www.civilwararchive.com/>

U.S. Census: 1850, 1860, 1870, 1900, 1910 (2), 1920
www.ancestry.com

Compiled Sept. 27, 2016 by helencaustin@afaoa.org

Form V. S. No. 5-509-9-19-18.

235

1. PLACE OF DEATH
County of Westmoreland CERTIFICATE OF DEATH
TOWNSHIP OF Salem Registration District No. 952 File No. 20509
Borough of W4 or Primary Registration District No. 3471 Registered No. 27
City of W4 (With the word "No." in Ward.)

2. FULL NAME William V. Austin

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

3. SEX M 4. COLOR OR RACE 6. SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED OR DIVORCED (With the word "Married")
5. DATE OF BIRTH March 30 1837 17. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I attended deceased from Jan 22 1920 to Jan 22 1920
6. AGE 82 years 9 months 22 days If LESS than 1 day how many hours, etc. of Jan 21 1920 to Jan 21 1920
7. OCCUPATION (a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work Retired (b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer) Old Soldier

8. BIRTHPLACE (State or Country) Penn 10. NAME OF FATHER Nathaniel Austin
11. BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or Country) Penn
12. MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER Nancy Lewis
13. BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or Country) Penn

14. THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE. (Informant) Sarah J. Austin (Address) New Alexandria

15. PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL New Alexandria DATE OF BURIAL Jan 24 1920
16. UNDERSEALER M. K. Wilson ADDRESS New Alexandria

Filed March 2, 1920 J. M. Tennell Local Registrar

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS

If death occurred in a Hospital or Institution, give the NAME, number of street and number.

If death occurred in a Hospital or Institution, give the NAME, number of street and number.

18. CAUSE OF DEATH Enteritis
19. DURATION (Specify) yrs. mos. ds. 105 yrs. 22 mos. 22 ds.

William V. Austin Death Certificate

DEAL

NAME OF SOLDIER: Austin, William V.

SERVICE: Late rank, Co. B., 145 Regt. Pa. Inf.

TERM OF SERVICE: Enlisted Aug. 26, 1862. Discharged May 31, 1865

DATE OF FILING: 1927 CLASS: Invalid, 1088227 APPLICATION NO. 1198223 LAW. 3-1-20 CERTIFICATE NO. 799227

1926 Jan 15
1922 Dec 19

ADDITIONAL SERVICES:

REMARKS: Died Jan 2, 1920, at Nat. Mt. Home Ohio

William V. Austin Pension Record