

Case 34 Welcome Clifton Austin, born 24 Sep 1885 at Bosque County, Texas and died 27 Apr 1940 in San Antonio, Texas

Welcome C. Austin is found on register 27109 of the Pacific Branch Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers at Sawtelle (Los Angeles) California. His military history shows that he was a veteran of World War I. He enlisted June 3, 1917 at Ft. McDowell, California, as a Private in Company B, of the Third U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). He continued his service until the end of the War and received an honorable discharge on Dec 17, 1919 at The Presidio, in San Francisco, California.

The personal details listed in the domestic history for Welcome Austin are: Age 41, born Bosque County, Texas 1886 (should be 24 Sep 1885); five feet and three inches tall; of a ruddy complexion; light brown eyes; gray hair. He was a Protestant by religion. He could read and write. He was a single man, working as a waiter in Bakersfield California before he applied to enter the Home.

Welcome's sister Mrs. Joe Colt living at 802 19th St., East Bakersfield, California was listed as his next-of-kin. In 1930, Joseph Colt (b. 1869 New Jersey), a barbershop supply store manager and his wife, Sally Austin Colt (b 1871-1873), who was a saleswoman at the same store, were still living in Bakersfield.

The Pacific Branch Home admitted Welcome on April 13, 1927 based on his honorable discharge papers from the U. S. Army. He dropped out on August 15, 1927, but was readmitted to the Home on May 2, 1929. His disabilities were perineal abscess, and drug addiction. The Register did not show how long he stayed there.

Sometime during the two years when he was on leave from the Home, he went to Seattle. On April 5, 1930 he was living in a boarding house with other men at 804 Virginia Street in Seattle, Washington. At that time, he was working as a clerk in an office.

One month later, his disabilities must have caused him to return to the Home at Sawtelle, overlooking the Pacific Ocean by Los Angeles, a very pleasant place. The Register does not list a date when Welcome left the Home. Perhaps it was because there was a change in administration about that time, from the U.S. National Home status to the new Veteran's Administration.

In 1940, Welcome had moved back to Texas. He was single and was working as a cook. His residence was 1208 West Houston Street in San Antonio, Texas. On April 27, 1940, he suddenly had an attack of Appendicitis and went to M & S Hospital. Because of complications with gangrene, he did not survive and died that very day. His brother, Joel Felix (J. F.) Austin

of Alice, Jim Wells, Texas was with him when he died. Fittingly, Welcome Clifton Austin, a proud Texan, was buried with a military marker at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas.

Back in the Day

When he was twenty-three years old, Welcome had married a girl named Elizabeth L. They married in 1908, somewhere between Texas and California. They had no children when they lived on East 59th Street in Los Angeles, California on April 10, 1910. Welcome was working as a waiter in a café at the time. That was seven years before he enlisted in the Army. Something happened to Elizabeth in the next ten years, as she did not appear with Welcome on other records. It is not known if they had any descendants.

After WW I ended, Welcome lived and worked with his brother Alfred Bryant Austin, for a while. Welcome was a salesman at Alfred's grocery store in Clovis City, Curry County, New Mexico. Welcome was listed as a single man in 1920.

More can be told about the military history of Welcome. Because of the scarcity of WW I records, we do not have proof whether he went to France to serve. Nor can we describe in detail what his jobs were. However, his unit records show, that within three months of his enlistment, the Third USACE, his unit, arrived in France as Combat Engineers.

The U. S. Army Corp of Engineers often worked on dams, canals and flood protection and constructed civil projects in the United States during peacetime. However, in 1917, there was an urgent need to facilitate the actions of the military, by moving artillery and equipment. So they were sent, right away, to the battle front. Welcome's unit of engineers were busy building bridges, maintaining beachheads, building beach roads, unloading supplies and personnel from transports, working on camouflage, providing healthy water supplies and sanitation, making maps, maintaining vehicles, setting up tents, and making temporary corrals for the horses and mules. The Engineers contributed both to front-line and rear-support efforts during the War. Whatever task Welcome was assigned, he did it well.

Family Background

Welcome's ancestry has been traced back to an early progenitor, William Austin of Kent County, Maryland. The family is found as an Austin Families Association database - Liz Austin Carlin is the Compiler.

The father of Welcome was Nathan Austin (1838 NC-1937 TX) and his mother was Harriett Davis Maddox (1845 TN-1903 TX). Nathan was age ninety-nine when he died on a farm at Electra, Texas, just ten miles north

of Wichita Falls. The couple married in 1861 and had twelve children over a period of twenty-seven years. That, in itself, is remarkable. The military history of Nathan needs some details.

Nathan Austin, was a soldier in the U. S. Civil War. He served as a Sergeant in Company I of the Eighth Regiment of the Missouri Cavalry from 1862-1865, for the full term of the War. His regiment was organized in Springfield, Missouri. They were immediately attached to the Army of the Frontier and went to Arkansas under the command of Lieut. Col. Elias Briggs Baldwin, where they were in the Battle of Prairie Grove. Nathan's group did not take part in the occupation of Huntsville, Arkansas. Instead, they moved on toward the Mississippi River in pursuit of Confederate Major General Sterling Price.

The 8th Regiment of the Union Army took part in expeditions in and around Arkansas and then captured Little Rock in September 1863. They stayed there until March 1864. Then they were sent to Duvall's Bluff, Arkansas. For the rest of the War they had several minor skirmishes. The War ended for Nathan on July 20, 1865.

For much of his time in the army, Nathan was a scout. His service records show that he was ill several times and was in the hospital once. He was allowed to return home for several months when he was ill. Since he and Harriett married just before the War began, and their son Mark Nathaniel was born in 1863, it was fortunate that Nathan was able to go home to see about his family for a while. He was definitely a family man.

Nathan and his family moved first, from Missouri, to McLennan in Central Texas and then to Hico Town, Texas. Hico is the town "Where Everybody is Somebody" and it's population in 2010 was only 1,379. Harriett and Nathan enjoyed their children and their family life. It is no surprise that they named their last son, "Welcome Clifton Austin". A descendant said that was because they were so glad to see Welcome come into the world.

Compiled May 27, 2016 by helencaustin@afaoa.org

Sources:

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

AFAOA Database: "William Austin of Kent County, Maryland. Compiler, Liz Austin Carlin. www.afaoa.org

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U.S. Census: 1850, 1860, 1870 Dallas Co., MO; 1880 McLennan, TX; 1900 Hamilton Co, TX; 1910 Los Angeles, CA; 1920 Clovis, Curry, NM; 1930 Seattle, King, WA
www.ancestry.com

U. S. Headstone Applications for Military Veterans, 1925-1963. for Welcome and Nathan Austin. www.ancestry.com

Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, TX. Burial Plot: Section F Site 21. www.findagrave.com

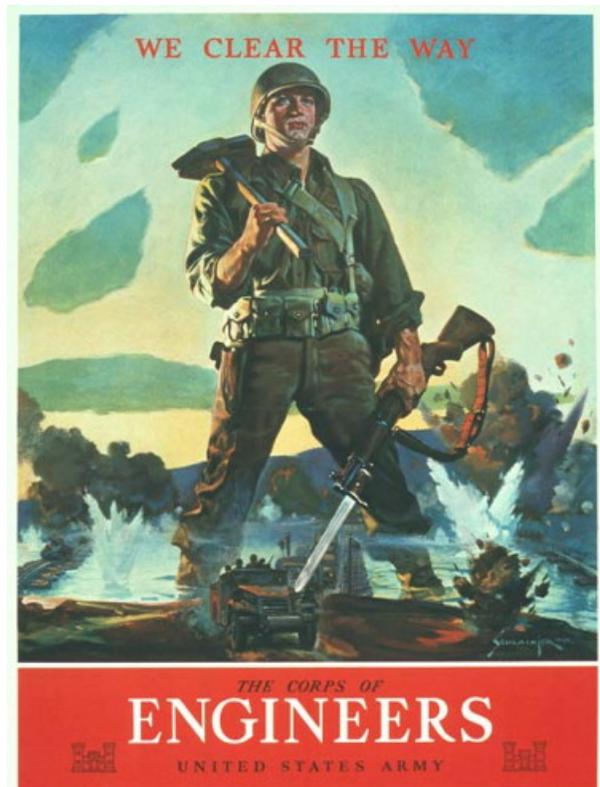
Texas Department of Health. Bureau of Vital Statistics. Death Certificate 70693. As viewed on Ancestry.com

Images:

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(2) *Gravesite Welcome C. Austin Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery* Photo of monument for Welcome C. Austin used by permission of LKat. www.findagrave.com

(3) *Nathan Austin (1838-1937) father of Welcome* on Ancestry Family Tree www.ancestry.com





Welcome C. Austin's gravestone



Nathan Austin