



Austin Families Association of America Newsletter

Look for us on the Web:
<http://www.afoa.org/>

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John Calhoun Austin

From the Carolinas to Tennessee to Alabama

By Helen Cook Austin, Ph.D.

John Calhoun Austin was born November 25, 1831, somewhere in east Tennessee. He was named for a famous South Carolinian and Vice-President of the United States, John C. Calhoun. It is thought that John's parents lived in the Carolinas until sometime before 1825, then headed west over the Smoky Mountains to the Tennessee River above Chattanooga.

Of the three or four possible routes across the Blue Ridge, through the rivers of North Carolina, to the area near present day Knoxville, the trail that follows the French Broad River until it joins the Holston and then the Tennessee River seems the most likely. The area was Indian territory and most of the travelers who came by Fort Loudoun, through the territory, were required to get passports, or permits to travel through the Indian lands. No passport has been found for John's family. Perhaps they crossed the mountains by the southern route of the Little Tennessee River and came right through the Indian villages. Since it is rumored that John's mother was a Cherokee Indian, it might have been possible for them to travel safely down the Tennessee River.

It is not known how long this Austin family lived in Tennessee. John's sister Nancy was born there about 1826. John was born there in 1831. Some of the early East Tennessee census records are missing and no land records for this family have been found. They left Tennessee sometime before 1844 for Alabama.

The trip was full of perils. According to family legend, they came down the Tennessee River on



a flatboat. John fell off the boat when his brothers were navigating the rapids but he was able to swim to shore and met up with his family downstream at Chattanooga. They continued down the Tennessee River until they got to the river shoals just below Decatur, Alabama. The shoals blocked navigation beyond that point during most of the year. This legend varies somewhat with the telling, but all versions of the story agree that the family split up after the float trip. Only John and his sister Nancy are found living in Morgan County, Alabama in 1860. If there were other family members in north Alabama

or Tennessee during the period of 1844-1860 they have not been identified. Nancy married William Lott in 1844 at Cedar Plains, Alabama. Later, John married two of William Lott's nieces.

William Lott's grandfather, George Lott, Sr. of Fairfield District, South Carolina, named a Joseph Austin as an heir (probably a grandson), which might provide a clue as to John C. Austin's ancestry. This researcher is continuing to look for Austins of Fairfield County who might have migrated to Tennessee.

At age 25 John Austin was a handsome man, 5' 10" tall, with hair black as a raven's wing, a dapper mustache and pointed beard, a ruddy complexion, and clear, intense, blue eyes set below straight thick eyebrows. In 1856 in Cedar Plains, Alabama he married Elizabeth Edwards Swann, the eldest daughter of Isaac Edwards and Anne Lott, and the lovely widow of John Swann. Francis Marion Austin was born in 1857 and died in 1858. Thomas J. L. Austin was born in 1859. John worked as a

Please see "John Calhoun Austin" on page 3

<http://www.afoa.org>

Membership



Corner

TENNESSEE STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES (TSLA)

New Members Welcomed

Curtis C. Austin

7666 McClure Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32312

Richard Eng, Anthony b. 1636 Eng, Anthony b. 1668 Rowley, MA.

Richard Thompson "Tom" Austin III

5 Woodhill Road
Louisville, KY 40207

taustin@universallinen.com

Samuel b. abt 1645 Boston MA, Thomas b. 1671 Andover MA, Thomas b. 1692 Andover, MA.

Karol Virginia Davis

4217 E. 24th Street
Tucson, AZ 85711

hhdfam@yahoo.com

Richard b. 1598 Eng; Anthony b. 1636 Eng; Richard b. 1666 MA; Richard Jr. b. 1699 MA; David b. 1746 MA; Luther b. 1782 CT; John b. 1816 NY; Charles b. 1839 NY; Dougald b. 1874 MI; Dale b. 1899 MI.

Billye Ruth Austin Hudson

PO Box 156
Slidell, TX 76267-0156

billyeruth@yahoo.com

Larkin b. 1808 SC; Sterling Tucker b. 1852 AL; William Thomas b. 1896 Lawrence Co., AL.

Barbara Lee (Smith) Hunter

1115 S. Bryan Street
Mesquite, TX 75149-5803

blshunter@tx.rr.com

William b. abt 1700 IRE, John b. 1727 IRE, Richard b. abt 1755 IRE, Charles C. b. 1796 Anson Co. NC, Ephriam Henry b. 1820 Anson Co. NC, Phoebe Ellen b. 1850 Henderson Co. TN.

Carolyn Kingston

#1304-8485 Young Road
Chilliwack, BC CAN V2P 747

Carl Eugene Austin in Manitoba – Winnipeg.

Holly Jane Austin Klinzman

PO Box 211, Titonka
IA 50480-0211

hollyklinzman@gmail.com

William and Ruth (Bryant) Austin ca 1700 Ireland, John b 1727 Ireland, Michael b 1759 Ireland; Gideon b. 1784 NC; Michael b. 1833 TN; Richard Wilson b. 1860 MS; John Richard b. 1907 AR.

Stephen G. McCarthy

16927 Dulce Ynez Lane
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

sgmccarthy@earthlink.net

James Austin Banks b. 1804 Richmond, Yorkshire, ENG.

Scott Simms

112 Henston Drive
West Columbia, SC 29172

scottsimms@hotmail.com

Fredus Aldrich b 1782 CT? Sag Harbor NY? (wife Sarah L. Woodward b 1787).

Steven Sproul

750 E. 440 S., Hyrum
UT 84319

stdspl@aol.com

John b 1781 NC, William b. ca 1803 NC, Rosa Bell Austin b. 11 Jun 1869 Carroll Co., AR.

Renewals

Please check your newsletter mailing label for your renewal date. When you renew your AFAOA membership, please send your dues (\$15 for one year or \$25 for two years) to:

Bonnie Bigolin
415 Wilkes Dr.

Green River, WY 82935

Alice Austin Martin
Membership Chairman

<http://www.afaqa.org>

Location: downtown Nashville, 403 Seventh Ave North

Hours: Monday through Saturday, 8:00 am – 6:00 pm

Website: www.tn.gov/tsla

The Tennessee State Library and Archives is the official repository for the permanent records of the state of Tennessee and is the premier research facility in the state with extensive holdings in Tennessee, Southern and regional history.

Genealogical source materials include Tennessee official county records (such as court, tax and land records), vital records, county histories, city directories, newspapers, manuscript and map collections – and also:

- County histories and transcribed records for other southern states.
- Revolutionary, North Carolina and Tennessee land grants.
- Military and pension records and indexes through WW1.
- Federal census records for Tenn. and other SE states, plus most indexes.
- DAR records, Civil War records and general reference materials.
- Published family histories.

Southeastern states books, which are arranged in open stacks, include: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia.

Even if Tennessee is not a direct hit for your family research, remember that this area was a major artery for settlement of the mid-south and southwest, including Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas.

Visit the TSLA website (www.tn.gov/tsla) in preparation for research there.



"John Calhoun Austin" continued from page 1.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The big news this time of year is, of course, the Austin Convention, to be held in late May in Nashville. We were indeed fortunate to secure the Doubletree Hotel downtown at a great rate. The Doubletree has nice facilities. It is within walking distance of a number of destinations in historic downtown Nashville, including: the State Capitol, Tennessee State Museum, Country Music Hall of Fame, Ryman Theater, Honky-Tonk District (with live music) and excellent research facilities at the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

The Grand Ole Opry House and the Gaylord Opryland Resort are about ten miles away in the bend of the Cumberland River. This area is a huge recreation and shopping attraction. I recommend a cruise on the General Jackson showboat, with dining and live music.

For those who are into history and architecture, there are some grand old plantation houses on the outskirts of the city available for tours, including Andrew Jackson's Hermitage. If you would like to join others in visiting some of these attractions, before or after the convention, indicate that on your registration form.

I believe that Nashville is a great destination for our convention as well as for entertainment and fellowship. Come early and stay late. Enjoy old and new friends. Get assistance with genealogy research methods and Austin data. You might be able to give assistance also.

I am struck again by the volunteer nature of our organization. We gather basic information on our own time and expense, organize it through the work of a number of dedicated compilers and web magicians and make it available free online, even to non-members. Explore the AFAOA website and be thankful to those who serve so well.

Many of us could do more, without too much difficulty, by sharing the data we have gathered. Contribute information to our database and stories about your Austin ancestors to our Newsletter. Volunteer to transcribe some of the donated printed pages, or copies of manuscripts. Any takers?

Gay G. Martin, Jr.
AFAOA President

millar and built gristmills for some years. He also repaired wagon wheels.

In 1861 John's daughter, Mary Easter, was born in Tennessee. We do not know what happened to his wife Elizabeth, or son Thomas, during the Civil War. One story says that she ran out of the house in the middle of the night carrying a child wrapped in quilts, took the wagon and left. A measles epidemic was raging at the time. We do not know if John took part in the Civil War, although records for both C.S.A soldiers and U.S.A soldiers have been studied.

By 1870 John had been married for three years to Mary Easter Edwards, the younger sister of Elizabeth. They had two children at home, his daughter Mary Easter and their son Isaac Samuel, born 1867. John and Mary left Morgan County soon after 1868 for nearby Winston County. In 1880 they were living near Brushy Creek, north of Addison, with 3 sons: Sam, John Harvey and Luther. Then John found a deserted homeplace on Warrior Mountain in Lawrence County where he made a homestead claim and lived for twenty-five years.

John's wife Mary died in 1891 and he married Margaret Henderson Simmons, a young widow and neighbor. Marg and John had 3 children of their own, after he was over 60 years old: Eunice, George and finally Arthur in 1897. It is said that Marg gave her 3 children Cherokee names as well as their legal names. (Her mother was said to be a Cherokee.)

John went hunting much of the time, when he was able. The boys went barefoot or made their own shoes. Traps, arrows and fishing poles were fashioned with sticks to help their father with the hunting. John made his own gun, a hand rifled barrel attached to a homemade wooden stock. They didn't have any cash money, but traded game and crops for goods.

John suffered from tuberculosis and when he no longer had an income he lost the forest home for nonpayment of taxes. Then John and his young family moved in with his married son, John Harvey. until he died in 1907.

John Austin's oldest child, Mary Easter Austin went to Greenville, Texas before 1900 with her husband, William Preston Francis.

Isaac Samuel "Sam" Austin, married Delilah Sherman Richards in 1889 and had eight children. In 1932 he married Caledonia Spillers Slaton of Mountain Springs. For a time he farmed in Mississippi, but he was buried in Franklin County, Alabama.

In 1899 John Harvey Austin married Henrietta E. Flannigan. They had eleven children. He first had a homestead south of Mountain Springs Church and later moved to a farm near Old Brick Presbyterian Church. Then he moved to Muscle Shoals, Colbert County, Alabama. John Harvey was very creative and musical. He made his own fiddle, as his father had taught him to do, and played music for the family. He also had a workshop by his house and was a carpenter as well.

Luther Austin married Rosa B. Cannon in 1902 in Texas. They raised seven children in Alabama. Many of their descendants still live in the Tennessee Valley in Florence, Muscle Shoals, Huntsville, and in southern Tennessee. His son, Howard

Continued on next page

"John Calhoun Austin" continued from page 3.

Austin, played guitar and had a country music show on television in Huntsville during the 1980-1990 period.

Eunice Austin married widower David Nichols and went to Mississippi, then to Corsicana, Texas. Eunice had thirteen children. With so many children to care for, Dave and Eunice came back to Muscle Shoals, Colbert County, Alabama. John Harvey was very creative and musical. He made his own fiddle, as his father had taught him to do, and played music for the family. He also had a workshop by his house and was a carpenter as well.

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In 1920 Arthur went to the coal mines in Morris, Alabama. There he married Bertha Brooks, daughter of a preacher, Brother Dave Brooks of Pinhook, Lawrence County, Alabama. The family were sharecropper farmers during the Great Depression and worked at many farms throughout Lawrence County.

When the Tennessee Valley Authority came to build the dams on the Tennessee River in the 1930's there was plenty of work to be had by the Austins. Arthur chopped stumps in the shallow water during the cold winters, but later worked as a carpenter, building the forms for the concrete dams at Wheeler Lake. By the time of World War II, there was a demand for carpenters in the area and plenty of work for Arthur. His older half-brothers found jobs in Tuscumbia and Muscle Shoals at the new factories.

George was drafted into the Army in World War I; also drafted was John Harvey Austin. But the war was almost over and soon after the boys got on the train at Hillsboro, to go to basic training, they were returned to Lawrence County without seeing any action. George married Clemer Jenkins a descendant of some of the same Warrior Mountain families, that had been neighbors to John. The Richards, Flannigans and Spillers are part of her family. The Flannigans are also ancestors to Bertha Brooks Austin and to Henrietta Flannigan Austin. So, the wives of three sons of John C. Austin had more in common than they might have known.

Further information is available from
Helen Cook Austin

Rhode Island Genealogy Research

Early vital records in Rhode Island are not as available as they are in other areas of New England where the Puritans settled. The colony was a refuge for people seeking religious freedom. Baptists and Quakers were some of the first settlers and they did not practice infant baptism, so baptism records do not indicate birth dates. Probate records will only exist if there was property to distribute. Land records can be valuable but don't always show relationship. Some old cemeteries are in bad condition - only 10-25% of the stones remain.

The starting point in Rhode Island research should be John Osborne Austin's Genealogical Dictionary of Rhode Island - lots of data on almost all of the early families - typically 3 or 4 generations, if the family stayed in the state. One problem is the lack of sources for the data. This book was published in 1887 and reprinted, with additions and corrections by G. Andrew Moriarty, in 2008.

James Newell Arnold (1844 - 1927) was tireless in his efforts to document Rhode Island's genealogical past. He spent 17 years abstracting records for the classic Vital Record of Rhode Island, 1636 - 1850. The first volume was published in 1891. In addition to town records, Arnold sought out church records, wills and even newspapers.

These 21 volumes of records are very valuable. They are done by town - vital records first then, in later volumes, probate and land records. It takes time to locate all the data for one town; if families moved between towns that makes it even more difficult. Copies of these books are in many major genealogical libraries. Great Resource!

Another valuable resource is the Rhode Island State Census records. The 1774 census gives counts for both males & females in age groups "below 16" and "16 and above", making it better than the 1790 Federal census. The 1777 Military Census lists all males, not just head of households. The 1782 census gives four age groups, for both males & females, again better than the 1790 Federal Census.

The biggest disadvantage of the state censuses is that some towns are missing in almost all of them. Using both the State and the early Federal censuses can give a better picture of early Rhode Island families.

Cemetery records have been published recently, with maps to find the cemetery and layout of the stones in the cemetery. Unfortunately this has been done for just some of the cemeteries - more are in the works, so continue to look for them.

Arthur M. Sikes, Jr.

What is a Wiki? [see next page]

A wiki is a page or collection of Web pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content, using a simplified set of rules for entering text. Wikis are often used to create collaborative websites and to power community websites. The collaborative encyclopedia Wikipedia is one of the best-known wikis.

"Wiki" (/wi?ki?/) is a Hawaiian word for "fast". "Wiki Wiki" is a reduplication. "Wiki" can be expanded as "What I Know Is".

Wiki Genealogy on the Internet

It has become increasingly frustrating to me that, instead of becoming a more valuable tool for genealogy, the internet has become more and more cluttered with junk genealogy. Sorting the wheat from the chaff gets more difficult as time goes by.

Some people think that genealogy consists of collecting ancestors by mindlessly downloading GEDCOM files from somebody's website. Online genealogy databases largely consist of un-vetted family trees with conflicting versions of data and much duplication of both right and wrong information. Everything that is submitted is included. Bad information proliferates as other researchers copy it and incorporate it into their own trees. If you write to the poster with the correct information usually you get no response and the data remains uncorrected, waiting to be dispersed by the next passer-by.

AFAOA has always stressed source documentation for entries in our data bases. Finding and documenting sources can be a time consuming and expensive process involving travel and countless hours in libraries and record repositories. With the relatively small number of people working on our data, the process is slow and a limited number of records get documentation added each year.

A few years ago, as I watched the enormous growth and success of Wikipedia, it occurred to me that the "wiki" process was ideal for genealogy.

The wiki model allows every submitter to be an editor and collaborator. When multiple submissions occur for an individual or family and there is conflicting information, the submissions are merged into one entry, including any and all sources, and the submitters can evaluate and discuss the quality of the information and generally reach agreement on the correct solution.

If new information comes to light it is quick and easy to update the record. As cousins work together they are able to bring together various sources and knowledge that would be difficult for one person to gather alone. The result is an ever growing and ever improving body of knowledge.

There are a number of genealogy wikis on the web. After looking at several of them I selected WeRelate to experiment with, as it appears to be the oldest and largest. While WeRelate has been on line for the better part of two years, it is still in beta release.

There are over 15,000 registered users and more than 1,600,000 individuals entered into the database. The match/merge utility was released in October and since then volunteers have merged more than 33,000 duplicate individuals.

Each user has a watch list which contains every page he has submitted and/or edited. Pages can be added or subtracted from the watch list as desired. Each time a page on the watch list is edited, the user will be notified by e-mail of the edit.

The e-mail contains a link to the page in question so the user can visit the page and view the changes. If he has no objection to the edit he just accepts it and does nothing. If he disputes the change he can leave a message for the editor,

reverse the edit and send an e-mail with his comments. Hopefully this will start a dialogue resulting in agreement.

When you view a page, there is a list of watchers at the bottom, so you can see who shares your interest. In addition you can view your network and see a list of users watching pages on your watch list, ranked by the number of pages you have in common, with a list of the pages you have in common.

I uploaded my trees to WeRelate about 15 months ago and in that time have received thousands of edits. Most have been linking of my ancestor's siblings into collateral lines, but in many cases this has resulted in additional source documentation and, in a few cases, additional generations of ancestors. In some cases with notable ancestors - such as Mayflower passengers, governors, Revolutionary War patriots, etc. - the pages have been greatly enhanced with text, pictures and external links.

As this site matures, and the word spreads, I have high hopes for the growth and constant improvement of the quantity and the quality of information.

Visit WeRelate at: <http://www.werelate.org>. Click on the link "Explore" for site information.

To visit my ancestry, a link to my parents' page is: [http://www.werelate.org/wiki/family:Philip_Austin_and_Edwina_Whitlock_\(1\)](http://www.werelate.org/wiki/family:Philip_Austin_and_Edwina_Whitlock_(1)) *[all on one line]*

A pedigree chart can be found under "More" at the top right of that page. At the top of the pedigree chart page are display options such as Birth Places, Death Places, Timeline and Thumbnails. The arrows to the right of the earliest generation will take you up the tree.

Scot Austin

Robert Austin of Rhode Island Database Update

The family of Joseph Austin and Susanna Rounds has been moved into the Robert Austin database and is now on the web. The key here was the 1777 Military Census.

The Wait Austin family, from the Northern Unplaced database, is now updated and is a separate database. This is very likely a Robert line; DNA testing is needed to support that possibility.

I have gone through the entire database looking for Austins born between 1810 – 1860. If I could find them in the 1880 Federal Census I have added the census data to the database.

I have also searched for Austins born between 1880 – 1930 and looked to see if they show up in the SSDI [Social Security Death Index]. If I find them I add that data to the database. I also see if I can find their spouse.

I need data on many Robert Austin lines up to the present. I would like to get them into the database but they will not show up on our web site if they are living. Remember to send not only vital records of your ancestors but stories about their lives, their occupation, hobbies, Military service, etc.

Arthur M. Sikes, Jr.

NATIONAL **AUSTIN** CONVENTION
sponsored by
AUSTIN FAMILIES ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
will be held in
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
Friday, May 29 – Sunday, May 31, 2009

Do you have an interest in your Austin heritage? Would you like to have help with your Austin research? Meet your Austin “cousins” as they gather in Nashville, Tennessee! Search the extensive Austin databases. Bring your Austin pictures to be scanned. Bring your charts and data to share.

Explore the history and genealogy resources of the Tennessee State Library and Archives. Come early - or stay after the convention - to do research and to enjoy the many attractions in the area.

Where: The Doubletree Hotel, 315 4th Avenue North, Nashville, TN.

A block of rooms has been reserved in the name of “Austin Convention” at the special room rate of \$99 per night (1 – 4 persons), with a reduced parking fee of \$15, and complimentary high speed internet. Reservations must be made by May 8 to assure room availability. These rates will also apply three days before and three days after the convention, but rooms are not blocked for those days. **Make your reservations early!!**

To make reservations, call (800) 222-8733, or call the hotel direct at (615) 244-8200. Be sure to ask for the “Austin Convention” rate.

When:	Friday, May 29	2:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Registration and library tour.
		5:00 PM – 6:00 PM	Social Hour
	Saturday, May 30	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Speakers and workshops.
	Sunday, May 31	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Speakers and workshops
		6:00 PM	Social Hour
		7:00 PM	Banquet, Guest Speaker

Registration: The convention registration fee is \$60 per person, which includes all meetings, materials and the banquet. The fee is \$35 per person for family or friends who wish to attend only the banquet and social hours.

Registration forms, with checks payable to “Austin Convention”, should be sent, to the Convention Registrar: Alice Martin, 527 Front Beach Drive, #10, Ocean Springs, MS 39564.

Additional Information:

Austin Families Association of America: www.afaoa.org

Doubletree. Hotel: www.nashvilledoubletree.com

Nashville: www.nashville.com/attractions.html

Tennessee State Library: www.tn.gov/tsla/history/index.htm

<http://www.afaoa.org>

NATIONAL **AUSTIN** CONVENTION

Nashville, Tennessee

May 29 - 31, 2009

NAME: _____
[Please write names as you wish them to appear on name tags.]

ADDITIONAL REGISTRANT(S) WITH SAME ADDRESS:

MAILING ADDRESS: (Street) _____
(City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____

TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

EARLIEST KNOWN AUSTIN ANCESTORS (WITH PLACES AND DATES):
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The Convention Registration Fee is \$60 per person. This fee covers convention meetings and materials and the Sunday banquet. Family or friends who wish to only attend the banquet may pay a Banquet Fee of \$35.

(# of people) _____ x \$60 = \$ _____

(# of people) _____ x \$35 = \$ _____

Enclosed is my check, payable to "Austin Convention" for \$ _____

I am planning to stay at the Doubletree Hotel. Yes ___ No ___
(Don't forget to make your hotel reservations by May 8)

I expect to arrive in Nashville on (date & time if known) by Car ___ Plane ___

I expect to be staying after the convention Yes ___ No ___

I am planning to do research at the Tennessee State Library Yes ___ No ___

I would like to join others in visiting local attractions before or after the convention Yes ___ No ___
Which ones? (e.g. Grand Ole Opry, General Jackson Showboat, The Hermitage, Belle Meade Plantation)

Comments:

Please send this form and your check, as soon as possible, to the Convention Registrar:

Alice Martin
527 Front Beach Drive #10
Ocean Springs, MS 39564

<http://www.afoa.org>

PLEASE NOTICE THE RENEWAL DATE ON YOUR ADDRESS LABEL. YOUR CHECK FOR DUES - \$15 PER YEAR. OR \$25 FOR 2 YEARS - MADE PAYABLE TO "AUSTIN FAMILIES ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA" SHOULD BE SENT TO BONNIE BIGOLIN, 415 Wilkes Dr., GREEN RIVER, WY 82935-1094

AUSTIN FAMILIES ASSOCIATION
OF AMERICA
527 Front Beach #10
Ocean Springs, MS 39564

Address Service Requested

NOW IS THE TIME TO REGISTER

2009

National Austin Convention

& Annual Reunion

**May 29, 30, 31
Nashville, Tennessee**