

Austin Families Association of America, Inc.

NEWSLETTER



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Happy 200th Birthday to.

STEPHEN FULLER AUSTIN

November 3 1993 was the 200th anniversary of the birth of Stephen F. Austin, the "Father of Texas".

In 1820, Moses Austin, came to Spanish Texas, bringing 300 American families (now known as the Old Three Hundred) to the province. Knowing that he would not live to carry out his dream, Moses asked his son Stephen to finish the project. Moses had been a "wheeler-dealer", making a fortune and losing it, living one "get-rich-quick scheme" after another, finally living in poverty and disgrace.

Stephen had patience, diplomacy and financing (an indispensable resource that Moses lacked). Joseph Hawkins, a wealthy lawyer and fast friend, contributed several thousand dollars to the Texas venture. In return, Hawkins would receive half of any lands obtained from the Spaniards, (eventually, thousands of acres of Texas land).

Austin then spent months in legal hassles with Mexico, finally re-negotiating his father's contract in 1823.

He then returned to Texas where he revived the colonists' willingness to improve their life. They planted crops and received land titles. The population grew to more than 4000 by 1830.

Austin ruled his colony with patience and diplomacy. These traits did not endear him to a population that responded more to a military hero such as Sam Houston.

While Austin was in Washington D.C., seeking aid for a conflict with Mexico, Sam Houston reported his smashing victory over Santa Anna at San Jacinto. In the September Presidential election, Austin finished third. He accepted an appointment as Secretary of State and moved to Columbia (then the capital of Texas).

He contracted pneumonia and died December 27, 1836.

Sam Houston announced: "The father of Texas is no more. The first pioneer of the wilderness has departed."

For additional information, read: "The Life of Stephen F. Austin: Founder of Texas", by Eugene C. Barker.

Excerpts from Texas Highways magazine.

Thanks to Lorena Austin, AFAOA Secretary-Treasurer, Claude, TX, for this information.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



10 January 1994

Ah! A brand new year. . . 365 days filled with promise, excitement and opportunity. It's an excellent time to make a New Year's resolution you can keep in 1994 -- to make significant contributions to your Austin family histories and genealogies. And the best part is that you don't have to go it alone. Professional help is available.

Bill Minnick, Director of The Austin Computer Project, is amassing a comprehensive data base. These data are available to members to help answer knotty questions and circumvent dead-ends in Austin genealogies and family histories.

Our companion organization -- The Austins of America -- under the superb management of Dr. Michael Austin, also has an extensive Austin data base. Mike is always ready to help Austins unravel knotty problems. I believe it is advantageous to be a member of each organization and I strongly urge each of you to consider this.

In addition to compiling a data base, Bill Minnick and his colleagues are making historic strides in compiling Austin genealogies. Updating and augmenting Edith Austin Moore's *Richard Austin* book will be a classic. Other Austin families are being compiled and when published they too will take their place on the shelves of classic Austin literature.

So! As 1994 inexorably wends its way towards "*Auld Lang Syne*" we members of the AFAOA are more fortunate than our members have ever been before. We have resources never before available and the means to retrieve these resources faster and more accurately than ever.

Make that New Year's resolution and we will help you stick to it.

There is one more critical point I want to discuss and that involves membership. I am not talking about total number because our membership is slowly increasing. This is encouraging because it goes against the trend when so many organizations are losing members. We must be doing something right!

My concern is the areal distribution of *members*. Despite the large number of Austins residing in the Southeastern block of states, the number of members in the AFAOA from that region is woefully small. This needs to be corrected. There is a rich Austin heritage in the Southeast that is virtually untapped. The basic reason we are having the 1994 annual convention in Tennessee is to call attention to the association and try to receive more members from the southeast region.

Therefore, I would like for each current member who has an Austin acquaintance, friend or relative that lives in the Southeastern block of states to personally invite them to the convention in Nashville, Tennessee in August.

In closing may I sincerely say that I am proud of every member of the AFAOA and the Austins of America. You are a great group and I wish each of you the happiest and most productive New Year.

Hal Steiner

AFAOA PRESIDENT HAS OPEN-HEART SURGERY

A few innocuous words can often lead to more significant consequences. That's what happened to AFAOA President Hal Steiner last October. During a routine visit to his cardiologist, Hal commented that he had run out of steam and the old energy level just seemed to be slipping away. Fortunately, the doctor did not turn a deaf ear and scheduled a series of tests that discovered without any prior indications blockage in several coronary arteries.

Four attempts to correct the condition with angioplasty were unsuccessful and on 25 February 1994, Hal underwent open-heart surgery for a quadruple coronary bypass. The surgery was successful and Hal is now going through the slow recovery process. He sends his heartfelt thanks to all Association members who gave encouragement through this hectic period and he looks forward to seeing all of you at Nashville in August 1994.

MEET PHIL AUSTIN, ARTIST

by Bill Minnick

Phil Austin is quite a guy. From the age of six, Phil knew he would become an artist. And he did just that, combining hard work, personal luck, unbending principles, courage, faith and an understanding spouse to achieve his goal. Over the years, Phil developed his artistic skills and a business sense which has provided for him a good life in every respect.

Phil grew up in Waukegan, IL, an all-American city, which is also home to other notable folk, among them Ray Bradbury, popular science-fiction writer and Otto Graham, football hero. In fact, these two men of future fame attended a Sunday School class taught by our Phil Austin at a Waukegan Baptist Church in the late 1920's.



Imaginary Scene for Christmas Card - 1992

After high school, Phil attended the University of Michigan. Disappointed that the University did not have an art school, Phil studied architecture, taking all art courses offered. Upon his graduation from University of Michigan (1933), Phil faced the bleak truth that the Depression had eliminated all job opportunities for artists.

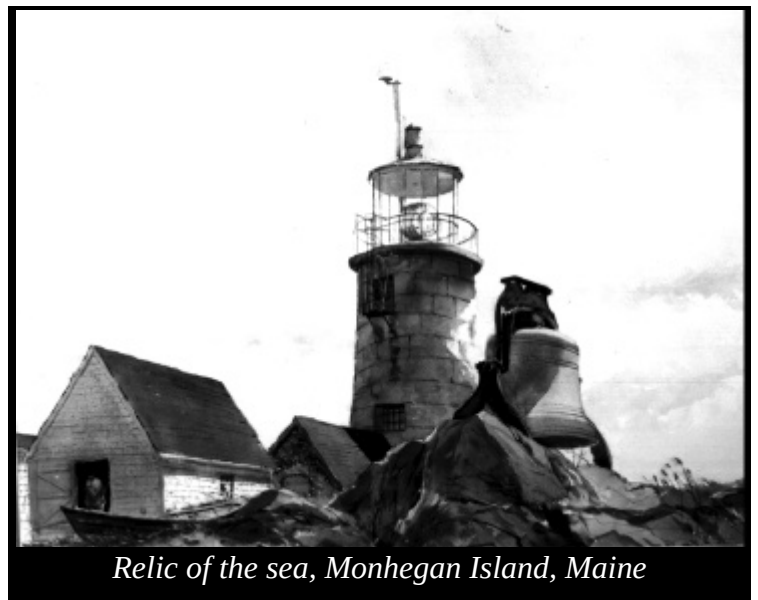
"How does a new grad artist-architect begin a career, get the experience and make a living under these dire circumstances?" was the question. Well, Phil began with "fill-in" jobs; then with \$19 in his pocket, drove in his old car to the Southwestern United States. He was awed by the beauty of places like Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and White Sands (before it was a military proving ground). At colleges in Texas and New Mexico, he pencil-sketched students for \$1

each, and made enough money to keep going. Motivated by the beauty of the region, he painted 75 watercolors. He sold a few, and learned a lot about technique and what customers would (and would not) buy. Seeking a way to improve his financial situation, Phil returned to the Austin homestead in Waukegan in 1934.

Now it was a stark life of odd jobs to bring in enough money to survive. Later, Phil landed a job as art director for a publishing outfit doing catalogs of hardware goods. In 1939, Phil and Edwina Whitlock were married; they resided in Waukegan for the next 31 years.

World War II provided Phil with employment opportunities: first as an instrument calibration technician at Johnson Motors, then working on production of 18-cylinder Pratt & Whitney Aircraft engines at the Nash-Kelvinator plant. Later, Phil returned to Johnson Motors where he worked for the duration of the War.

When the peace-time economy resumed, Phil found the only opportunities to get back into his profession were in Chicago - - a 42-mile commute. He worked as a commercial artist for big Chicago studios and advertising agencies from 1945 until 1970. This work provided an income for the Austin household, but this was not the artistic challenge



Relic of the sea, Monhegan Island, Maine

Phil craved. So all during his career as a commercial artist, Phil augmented his income and challenged his artistic skills by doing watercolors, some on speculation. One day, Phil did a watercolor on speculation for the Chicago Sun-Times - - it was a painting of a ship unloading newsprint rolls at the Sun-Times' Chicago River dock. He called the feature editor, who promptly bought the painting for the cover of the new Sunday Magazine. Next, Phil painted eight covered bridges located in rural areas of Illinois, and sold them to the Chicago Sun-Times for Sunday Magazine covers. The newspaper people referred inquiries about these paintings directly to Phil, which led to additional sales of his watercolors, and the building of a client base and market for his art. Between 1962 and 1968, Phil worked for Rigensteiner Press in Chicago sketching and producing illustrations for 20 children's books.

Recognition by the American Watercolor Society had been one of Phil's life-long goals. Based on watercolors submitted over several years, Phil was voted into the ranks of this prestigious, 500-member organization in 1966. Sales of his watercolors grew. He had called on United Airlines for seven years before they finally commissioned him to paint 13 watercolors of places throughout the United States in 1969. The United contract provided Phil with a good income to do the work he loved, and it covered expenses for travel to some of the most beautiful places in the country. Then in 1970 after his last child had finished school, Phil began doing watercolors on a full time basis .



Forget-me-not



*Sailing on Lake Michigan with friends:
Edwina and Phil Austin -1992*

Convinced they could now make a living selling his watercolors, Phil and Edwina left Waukegan for Gills Rock in Door County, Wisconsin on the Lake Michigan shore. Their new home would be a place they designed especially for painting and showing Phil's watercolors. Indeed, Phil Austin has exceeded his dreams with the success of his enterprises up in Door County. He runs workshops, teaches classes, and paints award-winning watercolors which are in demand. (We regret that we can not reproduce the enclosed copies of Phil's art in color. -Ed.) To help his students, Phil has written a wonderful book entitled: **CAPTURING MOOD IN WATERCOLOR**, published by North Light Books, Cincinnati, OH, 1988.

As I marveled at the accomplishments of this unique man, I asked Phil how he planned to celebrate his 84th birthday. With a twinkle in his eye, he said, " Edwina and I will be taking a Caribbean cruise - - all expenses paid - - I'll be teaching a watercolor workshop on the cruise!"

Phil Austin is quite a guy.

PHIL AUSTIN'S GENEALOGY

Philip Leslie Austin was born on January 27, 1910, in Waukegan, IL. He was the son of Charles Perry Austin and Mabel Gray, both from the Waukegan, IL area. On May 27, 1939, Phil and Edwina Billingsley Whitlock of Mt. Vernon, IL were married; they are parents of 5 children: Leslie Scot, Patricia Layne, Joan Gayle, Jari Dayle and Virginia Gray Austin.

With the help of AFAOA members and data bases, Scot has traced his father's Austin line back to their immigrant ancestor, John Austin of New London and Stamford, CT. John Austin came over from England prior to 1647. Scot tells me their Austin line went from Connecticut to Vermont (at the time of the Revolution), then across New York State and on to Illinois.

SECOND NOTICE: AFAOA ANNUAL CONVENTION

The 53rd annual convention of the AFAOA will be held at the Wyndham Garden Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee on 11-13 August, 1994. These dates have been selected to avoid a conflict with the Great Lakes Genealogical Conference that will be held in Fort Wayne, Indiana on the first weekend in August, 1994. Some members may wish to take advantage of the close proximity of Indiana and Tennessee and attend both these events.

Hal Steiner, President AFAOA

WRITING THE PHIL AUSTIN STORY

Scot and Donna Austin live across town (Cupertino, CA). A few years ago (perhaps in 1989), I met Scot at a city function. Seeing the *Austin* name tag, I introduced myself to Scot and mentioned my involvement with AFAOA and the Austin Computer Project. As it turned out, our wives were the invited guests: Donna Austin on the Planning Commission, and Joann, my wife, on the Park and Recreation Commission; Scot and I were the spouses.

Scot joined AFAOA in 1992, hoping the association would help him trace his Austin ancestors back to one of the early immigrant Austin families (which it did!). One day, Scot came over to my place to search the Austin Master Data Base for clues. At that time he mentioned that his father Phil Austin was an accomplished artist, and did AFAOA want to do an article for the Newsletter on the life and art of Phil Austin? "Seems like a good idea to me", I said. Then at the 1992 AFAOA Convention in Sunnyvale, CA, Donna Austin suggested (in our business meeting) that we include feature articles on living Austins as well as our deceased ancestors. The momentum was building.

In December 1993, Scot Austin invited Joann and me to dinner with his family: wife, Donna; daughters Kristen and Nicole; father, Phil; and mother, Edwina. We would combine a social visit with an opportunity for me to interview Phil Austin and view several of his watercolor paintings. Well, dinner was wonderful, and meeting Phil and Edwina Austin was indeed a pleasure. It was simply fascinating to hear Phil Austin's life story - - the story of a man who believed in his God-given talent, and who ultimately fashioned himself into a master artist. A man of character and strong resolve, Phil had become a successful artist on his own terms.

As the evening progressed, it also became clear that Phil and Edwina were both proud parents, and very proud grandparents. This was a special evening, one I shall not soon forget - - **Moral of this story:** look for an Austin name tag and strike up a conversation. - - Bill Minnick

FINALLY! PROOF OF OUR AUSTIN ANCESTRY!

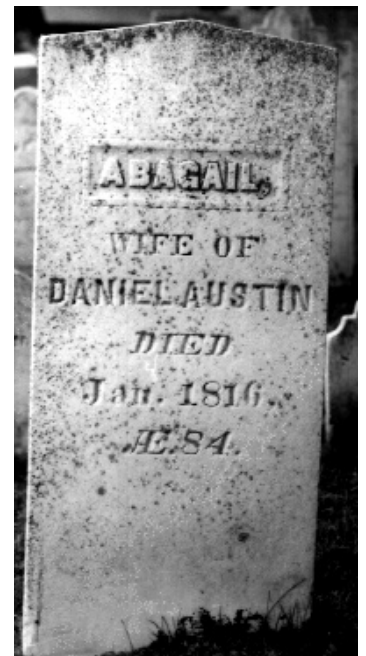
by Bill Minnick



These are the gravestones of my Austin ancestors: Capt. Daniel Austin (left) and his wife, Abigail Phelps (right). I photographed these stones in August of 1993, at the Old Riverview Cemetery in Wilmington, Vermont. That same day I finally located the definitive document which proves beyond a doubt that my mother's Smith family traces back to Daniel and Abigail Austin.

Daniel Austin is a descendant of immigrant ancestor Richard Austin of Charlestown, MA, 1638, and son of Dr. Nathaniel Austin, of Suffield, CT. Daniel fought in the American Revolution, rising through the ranks from Private to Captain. In honor of his service, an American flag graces his grave site.

(continued on next page)



EARLY CLUES OF AN AUSTIN ANCESTOR

The Smith Family Bible identifies Rowe Smith, b. Aug. 1782, and Diantha Smith (different Smith line), b. Dec 1786 as our ancestors, but gives no information as to Diantha Smith's parents.

In 1989, I did a search of the LDS IGI files to locate all Diantha Smiths born or married in the New England States - - in a effort to find our Diantha Smith's ancestors. There were six such names on file, with two having a birth date within one year of our Diantha's birth recorded in the Smith bible.

Of the two *Diantha Smith's*, one caught my eye: she was born in Suffield, CT, hometown of husband Rowe Smith and his parents. This *Diantha's* parents were listed as James Smith and Sallena (Sally) Austin. I then found Sallena Austin listed as the daughter of Daniel Austin, b. Suffield, CT on 11 Feb 1760. I was also able to piece together from the records the James Smith line back to the Reverend Henry Smith of Wethersfield, CT (ca 1640) and later, Northampton, MA.

Between these initial finds in 1989 and August 1993, I worked with my Aunt, Helen (Smith) Dunnell to uncover solid proof that our Diantha and the Suffield, CT *Diantha* were one in the same person. Every time Helen said, "You ought to look there!", I would find another fragment which added to the *preponderance of evidence*, as our President Hal Steiner would say.

SOLID PROOF SURFACES

Then last August, Aunt Helen suggested we stop by the Wilmington (Vermont) Town Clerk's office. Once there, I decided to look at all land transactions made by any Smith's in the area. Low and behold, after 10 minutes of searching, **we struck gold!** Here in my hands was an original 1826 deed made between Rowe and Diantha Smith (my 3rd great grandparents) and James Smith, probably Diantha Smith's brother (all from the adjacent town of Halifax, Vermont). The deed transfers a piece of

land which was originally owned by Daniel Austin, and had passed via rights of inheritance through Daniel's daughter, Sallena who is identified in the deed as mother of Diantha Smith.

How lucky can you get! The deed actually states each of the key relationships between people in three generations of our ancestors, and also states all names in the chain explicitly! Beyond being absolute proof of our Austin relationship, this document can certainly be used by any of the women in our Smith-Minnick line to join the DAR. Last week, I checked with DAR headquarters in Washington, DC regarding existing memberships based on Daniel Austin. There are several DAR members who link to Daniel via his youngest son Linus, and one through his daughter, Drucilla (who is also grandmother of Rutherford B. Hayes, 19th U.S. President), but none were based on his daughter, Sallena.

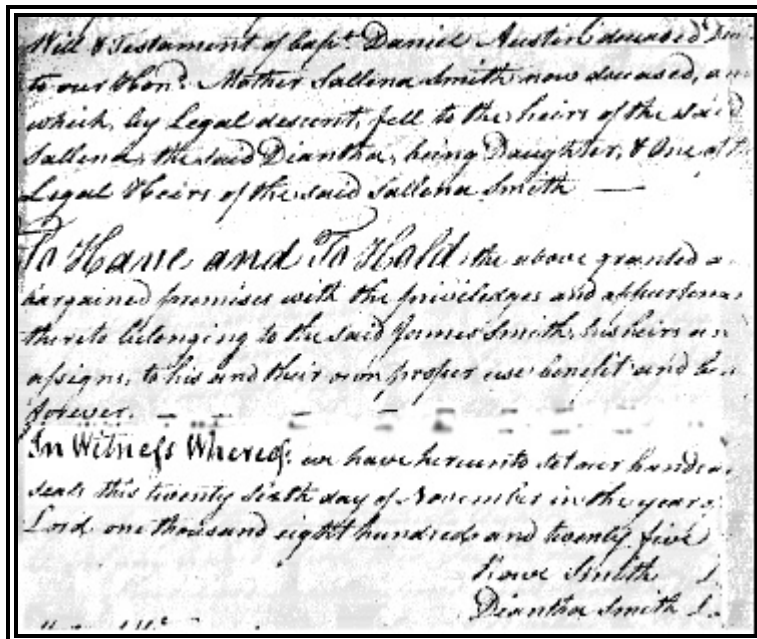
Incidentally,

the land parcel transferred was thirty-two acres for

a total price of \$17.00! I believe that this was the original price Daniel Austin paid for the land just after the Revolution. I suspect that the land was worth somewhat more than this; possibly Diantha worked a deal with her brother to keep the land valuation down to minimize taxes!

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

We discovered that proof of ancestry can be found in unexpected places! Here, indexed under Smith, was a deed between several of Daniel Austin's non-Austin descendants, all from another town; the deed happened to document three generations of Smith family relationships back to Daniel Austin. From this experience, it's my guess that land deeds are the most overlooked resource in the genealogy game. Perhaps someday, the names in all deeds will be available in a computer data base; think of how easy it would be to let your computer do the search for the dead-end *Diantha Smith's* in your ancestry!



Shown above is a section of an 1826 Deed which spells out the relationship of our Smith family to Daniel Austin.



Since the last issue, I have had the best of all Christmases-- with ALL my family home - - A rare and blessed treat.. Then the dreaded winter blahs set in, encased in layers of below freezing Michigan winter. But, Spring will come, for it always does. So, I look forward to - warmth, the miracle of Easter, and -- your letters. My mailbag has been filled with the following:

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

A postcard from AUSTIN, Texas sent by BARB AUSTIN of Dayton, Ohio visiting her daughter early in Dec.. (Editor's note: At the '93 reunion, Barb and I found that we share a love for some far distant cities.. Plan to attend this year.. who knows what you might discover?!) Thanks, Barb.....

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

A letter from TOM AUSTIN of Wheeler, MI, who has been fighting off cabin fever" by working on his genealogy. He discovered 425 Tom Austins in a list of 31,000 adult Austins, with 15 in his home state of Michigan.

Tom's line has been naming the first son after each grandfather.. This has resulted in a Tom Austin for 5 generations in a row. He is 3rd in line, named Thomas for his paternal grandfather, with middle name Warren for his maternal grandfather.

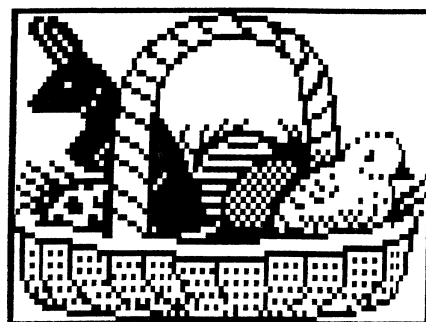
Tom would like to see more "name related facts".

So -- send in YOURS, for a "What's In A Name?" column next issue.

Thanks, Tom for a grand idea! ...Barb

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

Time to hang up my "Editor's Hat" and pack my bag-(off to Florida). Have a fine Spring.. Please keep writing! Onward and Upward - MO



AUSTIN QUERIES

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

RUSSELL A. WILLIAMS, 701 N. Rusk Ave., Sparta, WI, 54656 needs:

Parents of MOSES G. AUSTIN, born ca 1811 in Delaware Co., NY. Stated in 1880 census that parents were from Massachusetts. Named son

FRANKLIN WILLIAM, a possible lead.

Also need parents of first wife

SOFRONIA/SOPHRONIA BRADLEY, probably of Delaware Co., but perhaps Allegany Co., NY where they married ca 1830. Father possibly DAVID or WILLIAM BRADLEY. Ancestress CAROLINE AUSTIN born to them 14 December, 1837, Bolivar, Allegany Co., NY.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

A. CARMAN CLARK, RR #1, BOX 3660,E. SENNEBEC RD., UNION, MAINE 04862 is seeking parents & birthplace of REBECCA AUSTIN. She was born 1 February, 1831, died 11 Nov., 1874. In Nov. 1857, she married SILAS CARMAN in Manchester, Green Lake Co., Wisconsin.

Rebecca came to the Carman home-stead to care for Silas' sons when his first wife died. They had three children: FREELOVE ELVIRA, 1858- 1916; MARY JANE, 1861-1929; and ANDREW A., 1863-1916.. Silas Carman died in 1864. Rebecca operated the farm until her death in 1874 and her three children then moved to Adirondack Mts., in NY state.

Relatives say that Rebecca was the daughter of WILLIAM AUSTIN.

Can You Help ? ? ?

J. A. MAYBEE, 100 Clyde Lane, Apt. 106, Dunedin, FL, 35698 is tracing the MARTIN MABIE family and would like to contact mutual cousins in the JOHN FREDERICK AUSTIN family of Spokane, Washington. Jack would like to contact descendants of RUTH ADELINE CHURCHILL AUSTIN who married John Frederick Austin in Mich., in 1904 and had children: HELEN, b.1906 in Seattle, WA., and JOHN Churchill b. 1914 also in Spokane. The Martin Mabie family lived in Spafford Town, NY State in early 1800's.

FEES FOR AFAOA SERVICES

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP - \$15.00.

QUERIES FOR NEWSLETTERS - Free
(AFAOA members have precedence)

GENEALOGICAL INQUIRIES - Members: \$5.00 per inquiry. Non-members: \$10.00 per inquiry. This fee covers research time, copying and postage.

COMPUTER-GENERATED BOOKS - No fixed price. Book price is determined by number of pages in each book. For example, the Descendants of Daniel Austin of Maine book is 260 pages, and is currently priced at \$28.00. Contact Bonnie Bigolin for current list of Austin Descendant books and their prices.

IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT DUES

Please inspect the mailing label on this newsletter. The label date identifies the month you send in your annual dues to our Secretary-Treasurer. You are valued as a AFAOA member. As AFAOA grows (308 members currently), we offer increasing opportunity for you to meet new cousins, who may have new information on your Austin line. If you are considering terminating your membership, please let us know WHY. Your input is important.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

Need information on NATHANIEL AUSTIN b. VA, m. Apr. 14, 1847 to SARAH ANN DAVIS b. Jan. 8, 1821 Liberty, Union, Co., In., dau. of BARTHOLOMEW DAVIS. Their children: THOMAS, THOLLIE, LIBBIE, HATTIE AND MARY MAHALA. MARY MAHALA AUSTIN, b. Oct. 7, 1854 in Union Co., In., d. Dec. 19, 1903 In., m. Aug. 21, 1878, In. to GEORGE M. TUDOR.

DONALD RODEMAN, 4701 Ridge Rd., Kokomo, In., 46901.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

AUSTIN-HAYES: Looking for information on parents of DENNIS DANIEL AUSTIN, b. 1874 in South Boston, Ma.. Siblings were: TIMOTHY THADEUS, MARY VERONICA and WILLIAM J. . His children were: HAROLD OWEN, WILLIAM JOHN, GEORGE DANIEL, MARION MAY and GRACE GERTRUDE. His parents were DANIEL D. AUSTIN and MARY HAYES.

MICHAEL OWEN AUSTIN, 8 Park Plaza, #161, Boston, Ma. 02116.

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

Looking for information on WILLIAM AUSTIN (ASTON/ASTIN) b. ca. 1730, d. 1770 West Nantmeal Twp., Chester Co., Pa. (now Honeybrook Twp.), m. MARGARET----. Their children: MARGARET m. MORDECAI PERSOL, JOHN, SAMUEL b.1756 Pa. d. aft 1840 m. HANNAH PERSOL, REBECCA m. AARON RATTEW, ISAAC, SARAH m. DAVID JONES, JANE m. HUGH THOMPSON and HANNAH d. 1779. Son SAMUEL AUSTIN was a Rev. War Vet, enlisted Chester Co., Pa.. His children: WILLIAM, SAMUEL and MARY.

JAMES R. CAROTHERS, 524 E. Fairview Ave., Altoona, Pa. 16601

♥ ♥ ♥ ♥ ♥

EDITOR'S QUERY: I have just found information about an AUSTIN family history book from ROOTS RESEARCH BUREAU, LTD., 39 W. 32 St., NY, NY.. Does anyone KNOW if this a REALLY Austin history??

Marilyn Osterhout, 9252 Charmin Place Jackson, MI. 49201

More Austin Queries

*Happy
Easter*

**From
the Officers
and Staff of
A F A O A**

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**DEADLINE FOR JUNE ISSUE:
MAY 15, 1994**

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Forwarding and Address
Corrections Requested