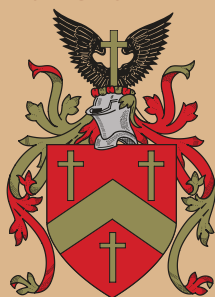


Austin Families Association of America

NEWSLETTER

September 2018

Fostering Austin Genealogy & Heritage



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EXPLORING FAMILY LEGENDS John Orlando Austin in the West

By Charles Ward Austin

My great-grandfather, John Orlando Austin (1835–1886), a descendent of Samuel Austin of Boston (John⁷ Hosea⁶ Abiathar⁵ David⁴ Zebediah³ Thomas² Samuel¹), was born and died in Dixfield, Oxford Co., Maine; but in between, in the words of my cousin Jim Lauder, he “got the itch and went west”. John left Dixfield sometime between 1857 and 1860. I believe that the “itch” was gold fever.

John had two wives, with whom he fathered a total of seven children, only two of whom survived to adulthood. His first

Our main source of family lore about John was his grand-daughter, Helen Harlow Palmer of Portland, Maine, who shared these “family legends”: (1) John had been an Indian scout and a pal of Buffalo Bill; (2) John had lived in a house in Albuquerque which had been owned by General Phil Sheridan; and (3) John had once owned deeds to “most of downtown Denver” which were lost when a flood ruined the “bank” where they were kept.

Helen shared a picture of John standing with a group of blanket-robed Indians,



Johnny and the Indians

wife was Helen M. Coover, whom he married on Feb. 5, 1864. She had a stillborn child on Dec. 10, 1864; their daughter Mary Vi was born Nov. 14, 1865; the birth of another stillborn child on Jan. 19, 1867 also took Helen's life. On Nov. 23, 1868 John married Jemima (Mina) Sparks, of Kickapoo Twp., Leavenworth Co., Kansas. John and Mina had four children; the first three died in infancy or childhood between 1870 and 1879. Their fourth child, my grandfather, Charles Peck Austin (called Charlie), was born in Detroit on June 9, 1875.

which we call “Johnny and the Indians”. Nobody in the family knew who the Indians were or what John was doing with them.

The “Indian scout” and “Buffalo Bill” legends were quickly verified. Bill had written in his autobiography that, at Ft. Dodge, Kansas in late 1868, “I met my old friend Johnny Austin, who was Chief of Scouts at this post”. Pay records obtained by Carol R. Austin confirmed John's employment at Ft. Dodge and later at Camp Supply in Oklahoma, from May 1, 1868 to June 30, 1869. He served as Scout, Inter-

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Austin Families Association Conference • August 16–18, 2018 • Philadelphia



Standing: Susan & Randy Austin, Bev & Art Sikes, Alice & Gay Martin, Robert Osborn, Lois & Bob Cody, John & Lil Clinard, Timothy Austin, Karin Wakefield, Richard Wilson, Carol & Charlie Austin, Dave Neithamer, Jim Carlin, Mike Wright, Brian Austen, Nancy Matheny, Curtis Austin, George Mackey
Seated: Carol B. Austin, Sue Osborn, "Benjamin Franklin", Elizabeth Neithamer, Marsha Davis, Jane Bruckner, Liz Carlin, Paula Mackey
Floor: Steve Rice, Russell Harlow, Barbara Austen, Glenn & Carol Bournstein, Ann Wright, Barbara Giacomelli

This year's Austin Conference was held August 16th–18th in the wonderfully welcoming and historic city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Austin/Austen friends and family gathered at the Courtyard Philadelphia Downtown, a beautiful landmark hotel listed on the National Register of Historic Places and in the shadow of Philadelphia's impressive City Hall. Early arrivals enjoyed exploring the city by foot and by sight-seeing bus, exploring such iconic sights as the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Christ Church, and City Hall. On Thursday the 16th our group was introduced to the impressive collections and research facilities at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP) through a very helpful tour and orientation, led by David Haugaard, Director of Research Services at the HSP. Later that afternoon, 37 conference attendees enjoyed each other's company over drinks and hors d'oeuvres at our Meet and Greet. It was fun to see old friends again and meet new friends and cousins!

We began on Friday morning with coffee, computer time, and a warm welcome by AFAOA President Jane Bruckner. Our first speaker was Sydney F. Cruice Dixon, the President of the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists. She did a wonderful job of arming us with information and resources for *Finding Your Way Through Immigration and Naturalization Records*. Even the most experienced researchers among us

learned a new trick or two. Our next speaker was David Haugaard, who led our tour and orientation at the HSP on Thursday. He spoke to us about *Adding Biography to Your Genealogy*, helping us to find ways of telling the stories of our ancestors.

Following a break for lunch, we settled in to learn *What's This DNA Stuff, and Why Should I Care?*. With his talk given in two parts, AFAOA member Dave Neithamer covered everything from cell structure and the different kinds of DNA to the different DNA tests and how to interpret the results. He gave us a much clearer picture of a complicated and not easily understood subject, but one that is becoming more and more important in today's genealogical research.

Between Parts I and II of Dave's DNA talk, Gay and Alice Austin Martin introduced us to *A. B. Austin and the Great American Road Trip—a story of personal transportation and its effects on daily life*. Alice's father, Albert Bennett Austin III was active in the new "age of the automobile," driving thousands of miles, to all parts of the country over sometimes primitive roads, in the early 1900s.

We resumed our time together on Saturday morning, beginning with AFAOA Vice President John Clinard's talk, *So Many Relatives, So Little Time: A Progress Report on the AFAOA Autosomal Project*. After the DNA talks from the day before, most of us were actually able to understand

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Recently elected, I wanted to say a few words in way of introduction. I am delighted to have a chance to lead this impressive organization. It is in tip-top shape because of efforts of the previous officers and other volunteers. I especially want to thank past-President Jane Austin Bruckner who has guided me into this new job. Following Jane will be a tough act—hope I'm up to it.

My wife, Lillian, is the Austin in the family. We grew up together in Greeneville, Tennessee and recently celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary. We have a lot in common, including love of family and history, as well as dedication to life-long hobbies like painting. I offer my self-portrait as an example of one artistic creation.

This is a time of change for AFAOA. We are changing our website to portray our databases with modern software called The Next Generation (TNG). We are rapidly advancing our DNA studies, which support our Austin genealogy research. We are modifying our display of information to comply with the changing requirement of data protection and privacy as recently redefined in the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). But we will not change things that are our basic focus: to share accurate and free genealogical data, from the accumulated work of all past and current contributors, with America's Austin families.

As we move forward, we will continue to work hard to add to that legacy. Please continue your support and participation.

John Clinard
president@afaoa.org



Barbara Giacomelli, Liz Carlin, Paula Mackey,
John Clinard, Dave Neithamer

AFAOA Conference, continued from page 2

most of what the project is about! The Autosomal Project is growing rapidly with over a hundred participants so far and promises to be very interesting and useful in identifying new cousin relationships.

Next, we heard from Brian Austen of Hobart, Tasmania. Brian's story begins with finding an immigrant to Tasmania, to joining AFAOA, to working with GOONS (the Guild Of One-Name Studies). His talk, *An Austen Adventure: From a Personal Interest in Family History to a Global Role and Perspective* gave us much deeper understanding of GOONS and where our two organizations can complement each other.

To finish out the morning, Kaitlyn Pettengill, the Digital Services Archivist at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, spoke to us about *The Centennial Exhibition/1876 World's Fair*. Held in Philadelphia, the 1876 World's Fair was the first World's Fair to be held in the United States and introduced such modern marvels as the telephone and the type-writer to the world.

Saturday afternoon began with Webmaster Jim Carlin, *Introducing TNG ... The Next Generation of Genealogy Site Building*. Joy Davis and Jim have put a great deal of work into our new AFAOA web site, which is almost ready to go live once all of the databases are cleaned up and made compliant with the new European GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) privacy regulations.

After this was the annual AFAOA business meeting. Officer and committee reports were followed by the election of AFAOA officers: President—John Clinard, Vice-Presidents Dave Neithamer, Barbara Austin Giacomelli, and Joy Davis, Secretary/Treasurer—Paula Mackey, and Genealogist—Liz Carlin. We thank them in advance for their service!

Nominations were then received for next year's conference and narrowed down to two. AFAOA members will now choose between Fort Wayne, Indiana and Salt Lake City, Utah. Be sure to cast your vote for the location you would most like to visit next year!

Our conference concluded with a delicious Italian "Old City" buffet in the Rittenhouse Room at the Courtyard. We enjoyed a delightful visit with Mr. Benjamin Franklin himself, who entertained us with tales from his life and the exciting and turbulent times in which he lived. Scientist, inventor, statesman, and philanthropist, Mr. Franklin was a fascinating man, and our visit with him was the perfect way to wrap up our time in Philadelphia.

It is time now to look toward next year. Whether in Fort Wayne or Salt Lake City, we hope to see you in 2019!

Elizabeth Neithamer
Conference Chair

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NEW MEMBERS

And their Earliest Known Austin Ancestors

Ben Austin

3466 Owens Landing Dr., Kennesaw, GA 30152; austin.benjamin@gmail.com; "*Bartholomew Austin of Virginia*" b. abt.1768

Randy Austin

1317 Steve Drive, Akron OH 44319; rmaustin@neo.rr.com; "*Richard Austin of Charlestown MA*" b.1598 Eng; *Anthony* b.1636 Eng., *Nathaniel* b.1678 Suffield MA

Steven Scott Austin

4382 Dart Ave., Saint Louis Park, MN 55424; saustin@mailup.net; "*Samuel Austin of Boston MA*" b.abt.1640; *Thomas* b.1671 Boston MA; *Thomas, Jr.* b.1691 MA; *Nathan* b.1725 MA; *Nathan Jr.* b.1748 MA; *Nathan III* b.1770 MA; *Francis Brown* b.1795 VT; *Lucius Monroe* b.1826 VT; *Norman Hobart* b.1856 IL; *Perry Scott* b.1887 IA; *Hobart Scott* b.1917 MN

Timothy Bowes Austin

9 Denton Park Court, Gosforth, Seascale, Cumbria CA20 1BN, UK; arampaltd@yahoo.co.uk; *Jonathan Austen* b.1697 Kennington, Kent UK; *Thomas* b.1749 Egerton, Kent, UK; *Thomas* b.1796 London UK; *Hubert James* b.1841 Haughton-Leskerne, UK

William Thomas Austin

4017 Chesterton St. SW, Roanoke, VA 24018; starcityengineer@gmail.com; *Richard* b.1755 Gates Co. NC; *John W.* b.1805 Nansemond VA; *Jacob William* b.1829 Nansemond VA

Deborah Brennan

2624 Maclary Dr., Wilmington, DE 19808; debbi.brennan@gmail.com; "*Richard Austin of Charlestown MA*" b.1598 Eng.; *Richard* b.1632 Eng.; *James* b. abt.1679 Charlestown MA

Dale Marshall

2415 Aurelius Rd., Apt 18, Holt MI 48842; pepdale3@gmail.com; "*Jonah Austin of Taunton MA*" b.1598 Eng; *Jonah* b.1629 Eng; *John* b.1671 Taunton MA; *Samuel* b.1703 MA; *Lemuel* b.1727 MA; *Olive* b.1770 (m. *Nicholas Rouse*)

Jenifer Vieira

38 Leyden Court, West Greenwich, RI 02817; viei512@aol.com; "*Robert Austin of Kingstown RI*" b.1634 Eng; *Jeremiah* b.1665 RI; *Ezekiel* b.1714 RI; *Ezekiel* b.1757 RI; *Amey Ann* b.1779 RI (m. *Jeremiah Ellis*)

Andrew C. Wells

2 Whipbird Ave, unit 14, Ingleburn NSW 2565 Australia; acwells@netzero.net; "*Edmund Austin of RI*" b. abt.1705 RI; *James* b.1739 N. Kingstown RI; *Patience* b.1769 N. Kingstown RI (m. *Ezra Sweet*)

Please help us keep our membership records up to date. Send us any address or email changes and new ancestor information.

**Alice Austin Martin
membership@afaoa.org**

Austin-Austen DNA Project

The AFAOA "Unplaced" databases are collections of many Austin families which have not been linked into any of the known immigrant Austin lines. It's helpful when a male Austin in one of these families has a Y-DNA test because that might show a connection with one of those known Austin lines and help us find the family that they are related to. Then they can be moved from "Unplaced" into that database. This is made easier since the search has been narrowed to one Austin line.

A Y-DNA test was just completed for a descendant of "John Austin b. 1787 in RI", in the database. There was a match to descendants of John Austin of Greenwich, Connecticut (1620 – 1657). Now the relationship must be found. We think the birth place may have been New York, not Rhode Island.

The Austin-Austen Autosomal DNA (at-DNA) Project, also using Family Tree DNA as our commercial platform, has continued to grow and presently has 112 mem-

bers. This is a secondary but helpful part of our uses of genetic genealogy to strengthen AFAOA's research into America's Austin families. The at-DNA allows women to supply their DNA in these studies, with about 25% of our at-DNA Project members being women. This is not a substitute for a strong Y-DNA Project in our mission to explore the Austin surname. Nevertheless, our at-DNA Project supplements our Y-DNA Project and adds a new wrinkle in DNA comparisons, particularly when at-DNA matches identify serious genealogical researchers and potential new AFAOA members. Welcome aboard!



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My Genealogical Journey:

from family history in Tasmania
to AFAOA and the GOONS

When I asked my father about my family history, over 30 years ago, nothing was further from my mind than that in 2018 I would be in Philadelphia giving a talk about genealogical adventures. He could tell me very little. He thought his father was born on the boat from England, but he did know where his grandfather's grave was. As all family history buffs know, discoveries start with one's parents. I was on my way.

Shipping records in the local library gave me the names of the family members and their arrival date: my grandfather was not born on the boat at all. As word spread within the family someone found some letters. This was a gold mine for they gave the names of some relatives in England and a place - St Peters near Folkstone and Dover. The next step was the phone book and a heap of names. I wrote to four. Three were bullseyes and, unknown to the recipients, all related to me and each other.

In spite of a visit and the discovery of a family bible entry, the search waned as other interests took precedence. When those interests came to an abrupt train wreck, family history beckoned again. This time the internet had emerged, so I went "on-line" searching for my family tree. Instead I found lots of people with Austen and Austin forebears who sent me *their* family trees. As the collection grew I often found connections - but not to me. People were pleased to get additions to their trees and I got a kick out of contributing.

One of those trees was headed by an Ambrose Austen, who emigrated to Ohio from Kent, England around 1800. He settled in Jeromesville with part of his family. Two married children settled in Pine Creek, north of Pittsburgh. Not only did I get several hundred names, but also an invitation to visit a descendant living in Los Angeles and use of an RV for accommodation. In the process I found AFAOA and AOAGS and joined both, became the compiler for the Ambrose Austin database, and attended the Austin Convention in Wisconsin. Headly times!

I also found and joined the GOONS. The Guild of One-Name Studies is an organization with nearly 3000 members, of which over 400 are Americans. They are focused on the genealogical research of single surnames. Currently there are 2900 name studies registered. Some are names with a single progenitor but most, like Austen, have multiple progenitors. I was registered with not just Austen families but the variants, chief of which is Austin.



I soon found that I got more than I bargained for. The name seems almost as numerous as Smith, which was a real surprise to me. In England the name is most prevalent in Kent, Sussex and Surrey and in the west counties of Devon and Cornwall, but there are families all over England and Ireland. It has also spread with Empire - to Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, United States, and Canada.

So, what do I do? So far, mainly collect. The latest innovation is the hosting of members' websites under a common format, all under the umbrella of TNG, which is also the software driving AFAOA's new site. I have around 60 branches (families) but not the depth of AFAOA's databases. My site, which is still under development, can be accessed at <http://austen.one-name.net/> and by a link from the new AFAOA site; and I have provided a prominent link to AFAOA.

Where to now? Collecting more families and individuals, adding to the website with stories and photographs as available. But also...

I have broached the idea of a UK tour providing travel (Kent, Sussex, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Hampshire) and visits to historical Austen/Austin monuments and sites. There is Tenterden and Great Heronden, Goudhurst and Broadford and Chawnton, Kippington (associated with Jane Austen), Titchfield (associated with Richard Austin). Oxford is interesting and associated with



Kent, England

Jane Austen's father, the British Car Museum and the famous Austin 7 pioneered by Sir Herbert Austin. The tour would probably start and end in Kent, with to and from travel to be privately arranged.

There are travel companies, such as Special Group Tours (www.specialgrouptours.com), that organize customized tours. August - September 2020 is a potential time frame. Before I take the next step, I would like expressions of interest via an email. For those responding, please indicate any special interest or ancestral location.

And a final observation: It was good to be in Philadelphia in 2018! The conference was a learning experience, historically interesting, and enjoyable—meeting people from all over, all sharing an interest in the Austin/Austen name.

Brian Austen • Hobart, Australia
austenbjr@trump.net.au

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John Orlando Austin, continued from page 1

preter, and (from Nov. 18, 1868 to April 14, 1869 at Ft. Dodge) as Chief of Scouts.

The adobe house in which John and his wife Helen lived had belonged, not to General Sheridan, but to Sheridan's father-in-law, Gen. Daniel Rucker, who (as Major Rucker) had been quartermaster of the Army post there. Although labeled in postcards as "The General Sheridan House," it was merely the childhood home of Sheridan's wife, Irene Rucker Sheridan.

Of all the legends, the most intriguing was the story of the deeds to "most of downtown Denver" being lost in a flood. This suggested answers to the questions: "when, where and why did John go west?" and "what did he do there?"

John was known to be in Dixfield in 1857 and was absent from the 1860 census of Oxford Co., Maine. The most well-publicized event in "the west" between those years was the discovery of gold in the Rockies near Denver, and the resulting "Pike's Peak Gold Rush" of 1859. I believe that John was part of that rush, putting him in Denver as early as 1859. In that year, most of the mining activity was taking place on the banks and bed of the nearly dry Cherry Creek, which joins the South Platte River at Denver. A Kansas land speculator named William Larimer claimed a mile square plot along the creek and laid out future streets in it, then sold parcels of land cheaply to the miners and merchants there. The miners traded them for grubstakes or used them as gambling chips. If John was there, he could have accumulated a large number of these.

Jim Lauder said: "Helen has a picture of the Denver flood of about 1880 which ruined most of the town". There were floods in Denver in 1876, 1878 and 1885, but I don't believe any one of them was the flood of John's story. I think Helen mis-remembered the date, or Jim did. The Cherry Creek Flood of May 19-21, 1864 destroyed the early wooden buildings near what was thought to be a mostly dry stream bed, including the "little city hall" with the city safe. In that safe were kept "documents relating to ownership of property". The safe was washed away and never found. This unusual event was described in at least two historical accounts of the 1864 flood, and I have found no such story about the later floods. After 1864 important buildings were built farther from the creek, and of sturdier materials. I believe that the uniqueness of this event, and the extent to which it matches the story of John's lost

deeds, imply that he went to Denver as a miner or merchant in 1859 and was present at the time of the 1864 flood.

If this is true, then he must have met and married Helen Coover in Denver, for she was already pregnant when John, washed out by the flood, moved her to Albuquerque where her first child was stillborn on Dec. 10, 1864. Mary Vi was

born in Albuquerque Nov. 14, 1865. An article in the Junction City [Kansas] *Union* for March 16, 1867 referred to "a Mr. J.O. Austin of Albuquerque", who spent one or two days there in late February 1867 on his way to Boston (probably taking 14-month-old Mary Vi to be with his family in Dixfield).

Now, about those Indians... On a driving trip in 2017, Carol and I stopped in Dodge City, Kansas, site of Ft. Dodge. In the little museum at the "Boot Hill" tourist attraction, we

found a copy of "our" picture, "Johnny and the Indians," in a display case! The historian there knew nothing about the picture, but on the back she found, handwritten, "*7th Cavalry Captives—Scout stands at L with group of Washita Captives—Mrs. E.B. Custer Collection—Custer Battlefield Museum*".

Mrs. E.B. Custer was Elizabeth Bacon Custer, Colonel George A. Custer's wife. Washita was the name of a river in Oklahoma where Custer attacked Black Kettle's village of southern Cheyenne on Nov. 27, 1868. In the battle, which is well described in Nathaniel Philbrick's book "*Last Stand*", Custer's cavalry killed or drove off the fighting men of the village and destroyed their herd of about 700 ponies. To ensure a safe retreat, Custer took 53 women and children as hostages, placing them on the flanks of the cavalry as it retreated toward his forward base at Camp Supply. There, Custer sent most of the captives on to a stockade at Ft. Hays, Kansas, passing through Ft. Dodge where they were pictured with Chief of Scouts John O. Austin, perhaps for nothing more important than a photo op.

John's last known employment was with the Grand Trunk Railroad in Detroit, where Charlie was born in 1875. City directories and the 1880 census place him in that job at least until 1880. In 1883, after Mina's death at age 34, John returned to Dixfield with his children, Charlie and Mary Vi. Perhaps a broken man, after losing two young wives and five of their seven children, John died in 1886, at age 51. On 21 Dec. 1886 Mary Vi married Alvan Carroll Harlow in Boston; she raised her young half-brother Charlie to adulthood.



Painting of Denver 1859

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VOTE FOR THE 2019 CONFERENCE SITE [One vote per membership]

Vote in one of the following ways:

1. **Vote by mail.** Use the ballot below.
2. **Vote by e-mail.** Send the information requested on the ballot to: membership@afaoa.org
3. **Vote on-line.** On the AFAOA web site. Select "Conference/Reunion" and follow directions.

Include your comments on date preference, the reason you are interested in that location, etc.



SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

Salt Lake City, the capital of Utah, is located in a high valley at the foot of the Wasatch mountain range. The city was founded in 1847 by Mormons, who were led by Brigham Young on a 1,300 mile trek from Illinois. "This is the Place" Heritage Park commemorates their arrival and includes a living history museum. Downtown's 10-acre Temple Square, the headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, is home to the majestic Salt Lake Temple, the Mormon Tabernacle (noted for its acclaimed Tabernacle Choir and great organ), the Joseph Smith Memorial Building (with its Legacy Theater, FamilySearch Center and restaurants) and the Family History Library. Other city attractions include the State Capitol and Historic District on Capitol Hill.



The Family History Library is the largest genealogical library in the world. The collection includes over 2.4 million rolls of microfilmed records; 727,000 microfiche; 356,000 books, serials, and other formats; over 4,500 periodicals and 3,725 electronic resources. Records are from the United States, Canada, British Isles, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa and have been filmed in over 110 countries, territories, and possessions.

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

The Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne boasts the second most complete genealogical collection in the United States, with over 350,000 printed volumes, 513,000 microfilm and microfiche items and over 50,000 compiled genealogies. The library's holdings include family histories, state, city and town histories, census records, city directories, passenger lists, military records, Native American records, records for Canada, the British Isles, Germany and other countries, periodicals and PERSI, the periodical index.

This region, at the confluence of three rivers, became an important center of trade, due largely to the Wabash-Erie Canal. Visit the History Center and the Old Fort, where history is brought to life through hands-on demonstrations and re-enactments. The restored Allen County Courthouse, a National Historic Landmark, boasts magnificent art glass, exquisite murals and intricately patterned tile floors. Surround yourself with nature at the Botanical Observatory, spark your imagination at Science Central. Another National Historic Landmark is the nearby Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum, where over 120 classic, antique, vintage and special interest cars are displayed.



Please cut here



2019 Conference Site Ballot:

_____ Salt Lake City, Utah
_____ Fort Wayne, Indiana

Comments: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Mail to: AFAOA
c/o Alice Austin Martin
527 Front Beach Drive #3
Ocean Springs, MS 39564

Austin Families Association of America

Austin Families Association of America
527 Front Beach Dr. #3
Ocean Springs, MS 39564

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The simple explanation is that we no longer have a choice. We are obligated to protect personal user data, as well as the data provided by researchers. Internet bots, also known as web robots or simply bots, are software applications that run automated tasks (scripts) over the Internet to collect data. Unfortunately, some of these internet bots attempt to steal or 'mine' data from genealogy sites. Requiring user registration gives us a defense against such practice. You can be assured there will never be a charge for the use of our website.

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