

# Crawford County Genealogy

*Remembering our Heritage — Enriching the Present — Ensuring the Future*

September 2010

Larry M. Burmeister, 411 S. Redbud Ct., English, IN 47118



**LEFT** — Dan Wendholt's glass negative photo as it appeared in last week's Ferdinand News. From left: Rebecca "Anna" Austin, Guy Austin Sr., Fred Austin, Pulaski "Tom" Austin, Pearl and Audrey Self.

From Ferdinand News.

## Austin Families

Fifteen Generations in America  
Hampshire County, England to  
Macoupin County, Illinois - 1598 to 2010

*By Martin E. Porter, February 2010*

This summary is the result of my own research but mostly the result of work done by others before me. It also contains the personal memories of more recent Austin family members. Much of the information comes from, "Some Descendants of Richard Austin of Charlestown, Massachusetts, 1638" compiled by Jim and Liz Austin Carlin, A Publication of the Austin Families Association of America, published by Gateway Press, Inc., Baltimore, Maryland, 1998.

The above mentioned book indicates there were 7,500 Austin descendants in fourteen generations as of 1998 including Richard and Elizabeth who arrived in the year 1638. The generation including Grandpa Cyrus and Annie was the 10th. In their clan, the fifteenth generation has

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**The Proctor House in Marengo, Indiana is a Special Restoration Project of the Crawford County Historical & Genealogical Society. We Could Use Your HELP!**

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# Internet Gems

Items found on the web relating to Crawford County.  
By Roberta Toby.

## A Violin Sent the Captain to War

### Veteran of 4 Forces Scorns Merriwell Role in Air

By Andrew A. "Andy" Rooney  
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

A USA AIR FORCE FIGHTER STATION, England, April 2, 1943.—There is a quiet, likeable little guy with blue eyes from Crawford County, Indiana walking around this airfield who doesn't care whether anyone ever knows he fought with the Finns and the Norwegians or not.

"There's been a lot of cheap publicity about guys like me—we're just working here." That's how he feels about it.

He's Don Willis, promoted to captain last week after six months in the American air force, and is one of those honest, efficient Eagle Squadron men who did a job over England before the spotlight was turned on the outfit.

Capt. Willis doesn't tell his story in the manner of the fantastic type of American he is. He's pretty matter of fact about it.

"Not much story," he says. "Sounds kind of foolish but it all started in Louisville. A guy that drove for me—what the hell was his name? Well, Louisville got dull so we shoved off for Chicago, only 300 miles away.

"We were having such a good time that we decided to take our party to New York and that's how I got in the Finnish air force.

"In the bar, this guy, a Finn, starts telling me about Finland and their fight with the Russians.

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## Austin Families: Cont.

begun.

### Generation No. 1

*Richard and Elizabeth Austin*, 7th great grandparents of Cyrus came to America arriving in Boston Harbor on May 16, 1638. They sailed in April aboard a ship named "Bevis" from Southampton, England. They brought with them sons, Richard, 6 and Anthony, 2. When they arrived Richard was 40 and Elizabeth was 28. They hailed from Bishopstoke, a village in the southern county of Hampshire about a mile east of Eastleigh on the eastern bank of the River Itchen. The passenger list indicates Richard was a Tailor. Along with their two children they brought Robert Knight, a carpenter/servant. Annis Littlefield, Richard's sister, was also aboard the Bevis with 6 children and two servants. Richard died soon after arriving in America and the family settled in Charleston, Massachusetts near Boston.

### Generation No. 2

The two sons that came to America in 1638 with Richard and Elizabeth were Richard (b-1632) and Anthony (b-1636). Richard married Abigail Bachelder in November 1659 in Charlestown and died there in 1703. They had 11 children

Richard and Elizabeth's younger son and Cyrus' 6th great grandfather, *Anthony Austin* married Esther Huggins in Rowley, Massachusetts in 1664. They moved to Rowley in 1666. They had seven children between 1666 and 1687. Six of the children lived to adulthood. The family later moved to Suffield, Hartford County, Connecticut (first known as Southfield and part of Massachusetts) in 1674 where he was granted 50 acres on Feather Street. He was one of the original proprietors and an influential leader in the community. Anthony was appointed a Sergeant of a Foot Company at Suffield and later Captain and Commander of the local militia. They had frequent battles with the Indians during King Philip's War. In 1696 he became the first schoolmaster of Suffield, Connecticut, a position he held until he died in August 1708 at age 73. He is buried in the Old Center Cemetery, Suffield, Massachusetts.

According to the book, "Celebration of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of Suffield, Connecticut, October 12, 13 and 14, 1920: with sketches from its past and some record of its last half century and of its present", Anthony was appointed to the position of the first Town Clerk in March 1682 and served 26 years. Many Austin's are mentioned in this

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July 8th, 1917 Celebrating Surprise Birthday Party for Anna &amp; Pulaski (Tom) Austin



First Row: \_\_; Mrs. Jones; Irene Ridenour; Berdie Ridenour; Imogen Leonard; Lester Leonard; Max Leonard; Hazel Cook Berg; Dorothy Nelson Jackson; Hugo Leonard; Woodrow Nelson; Edgar King; Curran King; Craig Nelson; Wheeler Nelson; Tommy Nelson; Clyde Austin;  
 Second Row: Mrs Ed. Ridenour; Ina Eastridge; \_\_; Anna Austin; \_\_; \_\_; Mary Nelson; \_Cox; Sara Cook; Lola Cook Austin; \_\_; Molly Cook Leonard  
 Third Row: \_\_; George Cook; \_\_; \_\_; \_\_; \_\_; \_\_; Mayme Donahue; Elizabeth Donahue Leonard; Pearl Self Turner; Tom Pulaski Austin; Ed King; Audra King; Audra Eastridge; Tom Nelson; \_\_; \_Bolden; Dow Blunk; Silas Cook; Jon & Homar Leonard.

From Ferdinand News.

### Austin Families: Cont.

book as being prominent citizens in Suffield. Many Austin's were also involved in planning the 250th celebration in 1920 attesting to their continued influence in the community.

Located on the Connecticut River between Hartford, Connecticut, and Springfield, Massachusetts, Suffield is a product of careful planning. Beginning as a farming community in 1670, Suffield maintains a delicate balance between its colonial roots and today's modern life-style. A lively community with a 2000 population of 13,555, Suffield is a gracious town with a rural flavor in a suburban setting.

#### **Generation No. 3**

Richard and Esther's middle child, *Dr. Nathaniel Austin* was Cyrus' 5th great grandfather. He was born in 1678 in Suffield and married Abigail Hovey in 1702. According to the history of the Austin family, Nathaniel lived for some time in Torrington and New Haven, Connecticut; in 1701/2 was chosen as a "fence viewer" in Suffield; in 1706/7 was chosen as a "tithing man" for

Suffield; 1702/3 was chosen a "surveyor" for Suffield; and was the owner of several mills in Suffield. According to the book documenting the 250th anniversary of Suffield, Nathaniel was a physician there from 1736 to 1747. Nathaniel and Esther had ten children. He died in December 1760.

Also of note, Nathaniel was the great-great grandfather of Rutherford B. Hayes, 19th President of the United States. President Hayes' grandmother was Drusilla Austin, daughter of Daniel, the seventh child of Nathaniel and Abigail.

#### **Generation No. 4**

*Capt. Nathaniel Austin* was Cyrus' 4th great grandfather and the first of nine children to Dr. Nathaniel Austin and his wife Abigail. He was born in May 1703 in Suffield, Connecticut but lived all of his adult life in Sheffield, Massachusetts. He married Agnes Adams in Suffield on 16 May 1732. They had ten children between 1733 and 1750 all born in Sheffield. Agnes died at age 44 in 1754. Nathaniel then married Sarah Bird in

**MORE On Next Page**

**Austin Families: Cont.**

1757. She was the widow of Mr. Bird. Nathaniel died in Sheffield in April 1777 and is buried there. Capt. Austin was an active Revolutionary War patriot. In 1773 he signed a "Declaration Against Great Britain". In 1776 he was on the committee that made a report to the residents of the town, at a meeting held on 18 June 1776, which, after it was adopted, resolved to take up arms. Upon his death, four sons including Gad divided his property in Sheffield after providing for his second wife, Sarah.

**Generation No. 5**

**Gurard Austin**, (or Gad as he was known), was Cyrus' great-great-great grandfather and the first of ten children. He was born in Sheffield, Massachusetts in October 1733. Gad and Susanna Callendar were married in Dec 1763 in Sheffield where they raised four boys between 1764 and 1770. The History of the Town of Palmer Massachusetts, 1750-1889, published in Sheffield, Massachusetts by J. H. Temple in 1889 (page 152) indicates Gad was mustered in as a soldier of the Revolutionary War on the roll of Capt. Daniel Burt's Foot Company, Col. William William's Regiment, Connecticut Militia on April 1758. It also indicates he was discharged as a Sergeant on 5 November (year not given). Gad Austin died in Sheffield at the old homestead in 1828 at age 95. He is believed to be buried in the Sheffield Plain Cemetery on Highway #7.

**Generation No. 6**

Cyrus' great-great grandfather was **Philip Adams Austin**, born in November 1765 in Sheffield, Massachusetts. Philip was a Blacksmith and served in the Revolutionary War from 1782 to 1784 enlisting when he was 16 years old. He was assigned to Capt. Luke Day's company. Philips first wife was Lucretia, married in 1786. They had one child, Marcus in 1787 before Lucretia died in about 1789. Philip then married Chloe Rue on Apr 25, 1789 in Sheffield, Massachusetts. They had three children in Sheffield between 1790 and 1809. Sometime in 1810 or 1811 they moved to Somerset County, Pennsylvania probably because as a Revolutionary War veteran he was entitled to a land grant. In Somerset County, Philip and Chloe had two more children in 1812 and 1813. **In 1816, Philip and Chloe moved again this time to Clark County in the new State of Indiana.** There they had two more children in 1816 and 1818. Chloe died about 1818 and Philip, age 53 married a third time to Martha, age about 26. Together, in 1826 they had a child in Borden, Clark

County. Philip died in Clark County in August 1838 at age 73. He applied for his veteran's pension on April 14, 1821 while in Clark County.

Another member of the Austin family Generation No. 6 was Stephen Fuller Austin (Moses, Elias, Richard and Anthony). Known as a daring pioneer and the Father of Texas, "Stephen Fuller Austin, founder of Anglo-American Texas, son of Moses and Maria (Brown) Austin, was born at the lead mines in southwestern Virginia on November 3, 1793.

In 1798 Moses Austin moved his family to other lead mines in southeastern Missouri and established the town of Potosi in what is now Washington County. There Stephen grew to the age of ten, when his father sent him to a school in Connecticut, from which he returned westward and spent two years at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky. At Potosi, Moses Austin was engaged in the mining, smelting, and manufacturing of lead and, in addition, conducted a general store. Just twenty-seven years old when he rode into the Spanish province of Texas in 1821, Austin endured physical hardships, illnesses, vilification, imprisonment, and one financial setback after another. But he never wavered in his plan to colonize Texas or his conviction that Texas's destiny was entwined with his own. Pursuing his goal relentlessly, he played a central role in events leading up to the Texas Revolution and the founding of the Lone Star Republic.

To learn more about the life of Stephen's life in settling Texas, read, "Father of Texas". Stephen F. Austin: Empresario of Texas, by Gregg Cantrell, Yale University Press, 2001.

**Generation No. 7**

The great grandfather of Cyrus was **Samuel Philip Austin**, the last child of Philip and Chloe born in 1819 before Chloe's death. When he was 18 he married **Sarah Ann Sarles** in October 1836. They spent their entire life in **Union Township, Crawford County, Indiana**. Samuel Austin died in 1864 at the age of 45 in Eckerty, Johnson Township and is buried there in the Potter-Rowland Cemetery. Samuel and Sarah had seven children between 1843 and 1857. The 1860 Census indicates Samuel's occupation was "Merchant".

**Generation No. 8**

The first of Samuel's children was **Isaac H. Austin** and he was Cyrus' grandfather. Isaac was born in 1838 and died at age 72 in June 1910 in Union Township,

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**Austin Families: Cont.**

Crawford County, Indiana. Isaac died of Bright's Disease (kidney failure). In September 1857, Isaac married **Elizabeth Goodson** and they had one child, Mary before Elizabeth died in about 1859. In July 1860 Isaac married **Tacey Shriber** in Crawford County. They had eight children between 1861 and 1881. Surprisingly there is no record of Isaac enlisting in the Army during the Civil War. His brother, James, age 19, died at the Battle of Perryville, Kentucky in October 1862. Isaac was a Farmer and a Cooper.

**Generation No. 9**

**James H. Austin**, Isaac's first child, was the father of Cyrus. He was born in June 1861 in Liberty Township, Crawford County. James was married three times. James was a farmer.

His first marriage was on August 29, 1880 at age 19 to **Nancy C. Payton**, 18 in Leavenworth, Jennings Township. She was from Sterling Township. James and Nancy had four children all born in English, Sterling Township: Mary L., born December 1881; Arthur Alva, born September 1883; Cyrus Logan, December 1887; and Benjamin, December 1888.

Mary was the only child of James to remain in Crawford County. She married **Emery Sturgeon**, had eight children then died at age 45 in English. She is buried in Sturgeon-Bogard Cemetery. Emery lived to be 90 years old and may have married a second time. He is buried in Mathers Chapel Cemetery next to a Rella Sturgeon. Arthur and Cyrus moved to the area around Alton, Illinois, worked in the factories and raised families there.

**Arthur Austin**, born in 1883 married **Mary Grace Riley** in June 1905 in Crawford County. This was her

second marriage and she had one son, Chester Gowens born December 6, 1902 in Lawrence County. Arthur and Mary moved to Alton, Illinois about 1917 or 1918. He first worked at the Federal Lead Plant then in 1920 went to work at the Western Ammunition Plant in East Alton. He retired from there in 1948 at age 65. They lived on Franor Street for over 41 years. They had eight children between 1906 and 1923. The first five children were born in Knox and Wabash Counties and the last three in Alton. In 1959, at age 75 he suffered a stroke and died two months later at Mather Nursing Home in Alton.

Benjamin moved to San Francisco, California, worked for the Coast Artillery for three years prior to 1918. The 1920 and 1930 Census lists Benjamin still living there. Cyrus' obituary lists him as a surviving brother and living in Alton in 1953. No one in the family recalls him ever living in Alton nor do they recall him ever being married.

The marriage of James and Nancy Payton ended sometime between December 1888 and October 16, 1892 for on that date, James married **Nancy L. Hawkins** in Leavenworth, Jennings Township. At the time of his second marriage, James' children were 11, 9, 5 and 4 and they remained in the custody of James possibly indicating his first wife died.

Nancy Hawkins was 24 and James was 31 when they married. It was her first marriage. They had three children between 1892 and 1900 but only one, Myrtle M., born June 2, 1899 survived. On April 27, 1901 Annie Austin was born to them.

The marriage to Nancy Hawkins ended between 1901 and 1904 because James then married for the third time to **Mary J. Totten** (Parker), age 50 in about 1904. Two children between Nancy Hawkins and James remained with James indicating Nancy Hawkins probably died. Mary had been married before to Richard Parker who died in 1896. They were married 20 years and had ten children between 1876 and 1895 (8 lived to adulthood). To the marriage with James in 1904 Mary brought three of her children still at home, Nellie (15); Grace (11) and George (9). Already in the house with James in 1904 were Cyrus (17); Benjamin (16); Myrtle (5) and Annie (3) from his first two marriages.

The year following Mary Parker and James' marriage there was another marriage in the house. James' son, **Cyrus married Mary's daughter, Nellie** on November 11, 1905 and they continued to live in the house

## The Crawford County Newsletter

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*A Member of The Crawford County*

*Historical & Genealogical Society*

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**Austin Families: Cont.**

with James and Mary. Cyrus was 18 and Nellie was 16.

The 1910, 1920 and 1930 Census shows James and Mary living in Ohio Township, probably in Riddle, Indiana. James died on Apr 7, 1931 in Ohio Township.

**Generation No. 10**

**Cyrus and Annie Austin, 1945.**

**Cyrus Logan Austin** was born December 1, 1887 in English, Crawford County, Indiana to James F. Austin and Nancy C. Payton. The Austin family had been in Indiana since Cyrus' great-great grandfather, Philip, a Revolutionary War veteran settled in Clark County in 1816.

Cyrus first married Nellie Parker in 1906 and had three children, one survived (James Edwin, 1906); other two Garsie (female)-1907 and Russell-1910. Nellie's mother, Mary Parker married James Austin, father of

Cyrus in about 1903 and later Cyrus and Nellie were married. Nellie died about 1910 as did their third child, Russell.

Cyrus and his son James Edwin Austin, age 5, moved to Alton, Illinois in about 1911. There Cyrus met and married **Annie Burroughs** on May 23, 1912. According to the WWI Draft Registration card dated Jun 5, 1917, Cyrus lived at 124 Missouri Ave., Alton, Illinois. He asked for a deferment due to a crippled left hand (injured in a farming accident). He said he had a wife and 3 children (that would have been Ed, Marie and Everett) and that he was a Laborer with the Alton Base Ball — (the rest of what it said can't be read). In 1920 Cyrus was a Smelter at the Lead Works in Alton.

The family lived on Franor and Edsall Streets in the Milton Hill area of Alton until 1929 when they moved to a 40 acre farm in southern Macoupin County Illinois near Brighton. Cyrus was working at the Western Ammunition Plant in East Alton at the time. He stayed in a boarding house near the plant during the week and returned to the farm on the weekends. He owned a Model "A" Ford but it was not reliable enough to drive back and forth to work every day plus the country roads were sometimes impassable when it rained or snowed. This arrangement did not last long and he quit work at the Western to become a full-time farmer.

Annie and Cyrus had thirteen children together between 1913 and 1941. Before moving to the farm, three children died at birth or shortly after: Leone, 1913; Thomas, 1924; Ellen, 1926. Six children moved to the farm with them including Ed from Cyrus' first marriage: Ed-23; Marie-15; Everett-13; Omar-10; Alice-7; and Lorene-1. While living at the farm, Annie and Cyrus had five more children: Harriet, 1930; Georgia, 1932; Jack, 1935; Robert, 1938; and Alta, 1941. Robert died shortly after birth. Five children married during the depression and left the farm to establish their own families: Ed, 1936; Marie, 1935; Everett, 1939; Omar, 1940; and Alice, 1938.

Life during the Great Depression was difficult but at least the Austin family had most everything they needed on the farm. Grandma Annie Austin, with the help of the children, had a large vegetable garden, pigs, cows, chickens and ducks. She bartered or sold vegetables in Brighton for essentials she didn't have on the farm such as flour, dishes, sewing supplies, shoes, etc. Grandma sewed most of the children's clothes such as girls dresses made from feed sacks. She would save sacks until she

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**Austin Families: Cont.**

had enough of the same pattern to fashion the dresses. Other clothes were handed down from child to child. All the Austin children had chores on the farm such as helping wash jars during canning season. Grandma would can over 100 jars of vegetables, meat and fruit as well as make her own jelly and jam. The jars had to be washed and rinsed in hot water in two large wash tubs in the yard in preparation of the canning process. The girls also had to carry water to the boys and Grandpa planting and harvesting crops in the fields. The girls also had to feed the chickens, ducks, cows and pigs. The cows had to be milked by hand and the milk saved in cans and put in cool water to save for the family to drink. The older girls had to help cook three meals a day on the wood stove. The boys had to chop wood for the fire as well as help butcher chickens, ducks, pigs and cows. Everyone always had plenty to do. The old farmhouse was very cold in the winter. To help defeat the cold they would heat bricks on the stove, wrap them and place them under the covers at night.

The children went to the county school called Daney School. It was located on Seminary Road at least three miles from their house. The one room school had grades 1 through 8 then kids that went on to high school went to Brighton. The older kids had to walk to Daney School and back every day in all kinds of weather. However, Alta, the youngest child, remembers Grandma taking her to Daney School in a horse and buggy in the late 1940's.

On the weekends, probably Sunday, the local teenage girls and boys had a "box social" at the school. The girls would prepare a lunch, bring it to the school and the boys would bid on a lunch. The boy with the winning bid got to share the lunch with the girl that prepared it. In about 1936, two boys who worked on the neighboring farm, bid on the box lunch prepared by Evelyen Austin. She married in 1938 to the boy who did not have the winning bid. They were married almost 30 years when he died suddenly of a heart attack at age 49. Three years later, she married the man who had the winning bid in 1936 and they were married almost 30 years before he died in 2000.

By the time the youngest child, Alta was born in 1941, five of the oldest children were married and out of the house. By the time Alta was 8 years old in 1949 all her older brothers and sisters except Jack were married and gone. That year, Cyrus suffered a serious paralytic stroke. He could barely talk and was not able to be

understood very well. Alta spent a lot of her time trying to make out what he was trying to say and communicate for him. Grandpa Cyrus never farmed again after his stroke.

Cyrus died February 6, 1953 at age 65 and is buried in Milton Cemetery, Alton, IL. Following his death, Annie sold the farm and moved with her two youngest children, Jack and Alta, to a small house in Brighton on Jersey Street. Jack married in 1954 and moved out then Alta married in 1956. Annie took in laundry and ironing for other people for several years. She lived with Alta and others until she needed 24 hour care and was moved to a nursing facility where she died on January 25, 1980 at age 83.

The marriage of Cyrus and Annie produced 13 children and over 250 descendants.

There have been five more generations of Austin family members since Cyrus totaling fifteen in all since Richard and Elizabeth came to America in 1638. As with the past 10 generations, they are hard-working, productive members of their society. They are active in their churches and have proudly served in various branches of the military. Most of them continue to live and work in and around Madison and Macoupin Counties in southern Illinois.

**Sources of information**

"Some Descendants of Richard Austin of Charlestown, Massachusetts, 1638".

Jim & Liz Austin Carlin, Compilers, Austin Families Association of America, Gateway Press, Baltimore, MD, 1998.

"Father of Texas". Stephen F. Austin: Empresario of Texas, by Gregg Cantrell, Yale University Press, 2001

Crawford County, Indiana Genealogy website.

Crawford County, Indiana History and Genealogy website.

Crawford County, Indiana Historical and Genealogy Society,

Richard Eastridge, Historian; Larry Burmeister, Vice President

Ancestry.com

Federal Census Records

Allen Austin

Personal memories of the following: Alta Acord; Anna Dorner;

Chuck Porter, Sr.; Evelyen Austin Porter Buis

Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates

**MORE On Next Page**

**For older issues of this newsletter, see:  
<http://www.yatesville.net/histctr/58.html>  
 Mr. Ron Yates has placed all my newsletters  
 on his excellent website. Check it Out!**

**Austin Families: Cont.**

INGenWeb Project website

USGenWeb Indiana

Boston, Charlestown, Dorchester and Roxbury, MA AHGP  
and US GenWeb

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishopstoke>

<http://www.suffieldhistoricalsociety.org/families.htm>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheffield,\\_Massachusetts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheffield,_Massachusetts)

—————  
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—————

Richard\_Austin\_MA Genealogical Database

**Verner Clay Austin**

Born: 6 Jan 1902 in Crawford Co., IN

Died: 15 May 1982 in New Albany, Floyd, IN

Buried: 17 May 1982 in Birdseye, Dubois, IN

**Family:**

Husband: Verner Clay Austin

Wife: Hazel Vivian Gilmore

Child: Dallas Gilmore Austin

Child: Kenneth Gillmore Austin

Child: Aleeta Marie Austin

Child: Billy Gene Austin

Child: Carl Ray Austin

Married: 28 Dec 1920 in Jeffersonville, Clark, IN

Marriage License: 1920 in Crawford Co., IN

**Parents:**

Father: Pulaski D. Austin

Mother: Rebecca Anna Nelson

Census: 1920

**BIOGRAPHY:** From a brief biography note written  
by Verner about the time of his retirement:

Crawford County Schools

Verner C, Austin, Superintendent

English, Indiana

Torrence: June 2, 1969

**Here is a short biography of me.**

I have spent forty seven years in the school systems  
of Crawford County, Indiana.

Thus:

Taught in the Elementary schools twelve years.

Taught in The Secondary Schools fifteen years.

County Supt. For an eight year period.

City Supt. for three years at English, IN.

City Supt. for three years at Milltown, IN.

Again for one and one-half years, then to serve again  
as, County Supt. of Schools four and one-half years.

I am retiring June 30th. and shall be at home not far  
south from Eckerty, Indiana.

Hope to see the class June 21st.

—————  
CENSUS-RESIDENCE-OCCUPATION: 1920

Johnson Twp., Crawford Co., IN; 1930 Jennings

Twp., Crawford Co., IN, school teacher.  
—————

**MORE: Internet Gems****Both Started Crying**

“He brought out his violin, started playing sad  
Finnish music. He began to cry and I began to cry,  
and pretty soon he decided that I should join the  
Finnish air corps.

“He was with another Finn who had money he  
made bringing marble to America. There was a boat  
sailing for Finland in three days and he agreed to  
pay my way.

“The next day we went to the Finnish Embassy.  
He tells them a sad story about how I am really a  
Finn although I live in America and talk like a guy  
from Crawford County, Indiana.

“When he tells him that I am also one of the best  
pilots in America, the guy at the Embassy says that  
yes, I do look like a Finn, don't I, and gives me a  
passport.

“In Finland I flew with a Danish outfit. There was  
an American Major there, name Bonderant. I think  
we were only two guys to get into the air with the  
Finnish air force.

“Bonderant was from Cairo, Ill., had quite a repu-  
tation in the last war. He was the first graduate of  
Kelly Field; in the first class anyway. He wanted  
one more fling.”

After the Finns surrendered, the commander of  
his outfit gave his car and a stack of visas and pass-  
ports to Maj. Bonderant and Capt. Willis, and they  
drove from Helsinki to Norway, where Willis joined  
the Norwegian Navy.

Norway was short of planes, and Willis was used

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## **MORE: Internet Gems**

as a rear gunner rather than a pilot. Later he acted as co-pilot.

He explains that the squadron he was with in Norway was an ideal one for bombing Germans, because it was made up of nine captured German Heinkel 115s, seaplane bombers.

"There were about 6,000 Germans surrounded on a hill near Narvik for a long while," Capt. Willis recalls. "Hill number 144. They wouldn't surrender and we bombed them regularly, but I don't think the Germans ever fired a shot at us in anger because of our Heinkel 115s.

### **Ordered to Britain**

"That got to be a regular mail run. We flew over, dropped our bombs and came back without having a shot fired at us.

"We heard on the radio one night that the Norwegian King had landed safely in England. Our command said if the government was in England he didn't know who we were fighting for. The Germans hit Norway in about four places at once and things were pretty disorganized. He told us to take off for the British Isles."

Capt. Willis interrupted his story long enough to pay his respects to the Finns and the Norwegians. He thinks the Norwegians make the best pilots in the world. They are intelligent, they work hard, and the records show that they are excellent navigators.

The Norwegian squadron of German bombers left Norway and landed in the Shetland Islands.

"They took a pretty dim view of us coming in there in Heinkels," Willis says, "but we finally got cleared and I joined the RAF."

That was Capt. Willis' third air force. His fourth came when the Eagle Squadron was transferred to the USAAF last September.

During the period from April, 1940, when he joined the Norwegian Navy, up to last week he has taken part in 82 operations over enemy territory. He doesn't count the number of times he has been on operational flights that didn't take him over enemy territory.

The way Willis tells his story won't keep the kids he and his pretty English wife have sitting still on his lap. He makes no fantastic claim about the number of planes he has shot down.

"As a matter of fact, I don't think I ever knocked

one down," he says. "This fighting doesn't happen the way people think it does. It isn't that exciting."

Capt. Willis says that much of the work the old Eagle Squadron did was not against enemy planes but against small shipping in the channel.

"We drove those small German boats out of the channel. A squadron of fighters can lick a destroyer easily. Sooner or later someone hits a steam-pipe or something vital. The thing stops and you have it."

Willis and the other men of the ex-Eagle Squadron, plus a lot of newcomers, have been accompanying the Forts and Libs, and they are sold on the American heavy bombers. They don't think the claims of the gunners are exaggerated.

From *The Stars and Stripes*,  
Saturday, April 3, 1943, page 2.

### ***The Indiana State Journal, March 8, 1899*** **Accidentally Shot a Bank Cashier.**

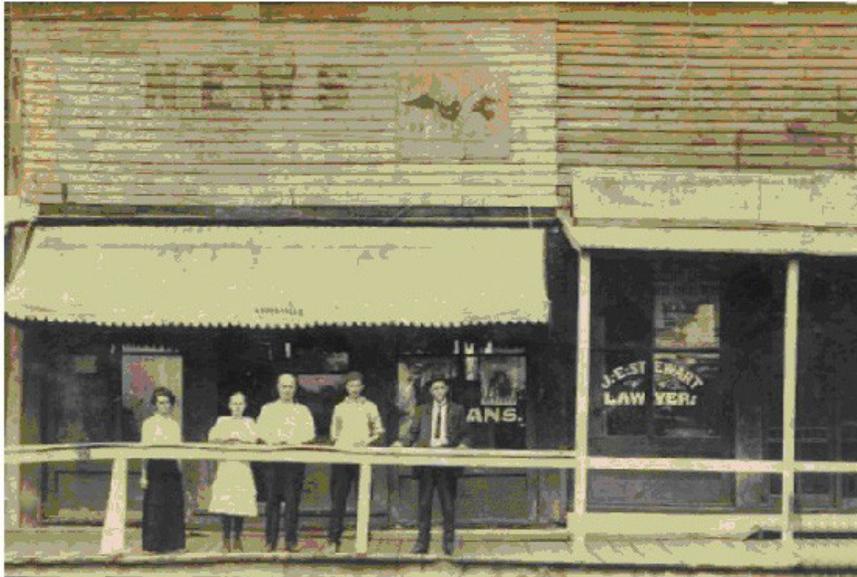
ENGLISH, Ind., March 6 — John M. Miller, cashier of the Crawford County Bank, was accidentally shot through the thigh this evening at the drug store of Roberts and Miller, by Willie Panky. Panky claims he did not know the revolver was loaded. He was on his way to the City Hall, where he was to use the weapon in a play given by the women of the Presbyterian Church.

### ***The American Nonconformist, June 6, 1895*** **Bitten by a Rattlesnake.**

ECKERTY, Ind., June 4. — Benjamin Nolan, a country merchant, who was attending a baseball game here, while sitting in the park was fatally bitten by a rattlesnake. The reptile stung him several times, and then fastened its fangs so securely in his flesh that it was killed before it was removed. The snake measured over three feet long, and had eight rattles and a button.

**The Crawford County Historical & Genealogical Society would appreciate your SUPPORT!**

English News Office, English, Indiana  
Left to right: Lelah M. Austin; Margery E. (Austin) Roberts; Thomas S. Austin, Editor;  
Earl Stewart; Elmer Stewart.



Notes: Lelah M. Austin, the first child of Thomas S. Austin, became the first Crawford Co. Librarian.  
Margery E. Austin, dau. of Thomas Austin, mar. Earl Roberts. Their daughter, Nadine  
Roberts Hammond was the Crawford Co. Librarian following the retirement of Lelah.  
The Stewart's business was located next to the news office.  
(Photo courtesy of The Crawford County Public Library)

## Betty Austin Dies in August of 2009 Buried in English Cemetery

If you get the Louisville paper, there is an obit today of my family, Betty Austin from Jeffersonville. She was wife of my mother's cousin Bob Austin—Bob was son of Glen "Huley", who was a Justice of the Peace and owned the shoe repair shop in English. Betty was retired from the secret service.

Funeral is Friday in Jeffersonville, but burial is at English Cemetery. Betty was born here, her brother was Charles "Pekey" Brown.

from Becky Hammond Stetter.

English News  
Office, English,  
Indiana.

Left to Right:  
Clarence  
Austin, Margery  
E. (Austin)  
Roberts,  
Thomas S.  
Austin, Editor.

Photo courtesy of  
The Crawford  
County Library.



# TOPICS

Ferdinand News

B

March 28, 2007

## A stroll down memory lane

by Kathy Tretter

The phone jangled in the newsroom last Friday afternoon. The gentleman at the other end had news.

"I recognize the photo on page 2 this week [March 21 issue] from Dan Wendholt. That is my aunt. I have the same photo on my wall," reported Jack Nelson, retired geologist living about 50 yards from the home where he was raised (in a home he and his wife built) on the east side of the Ferdinand State Forest.

Jack also contacted his cousin, Guy Austin of Birdseye, whose father, grandparents, aunts and uncles are portrayed in the historic photograph which was taken around 1900 in front of the Austin homestead at Riceville, a few miles east of Birdseye.

On Sunday, Jack and his wife, Eileen, along with Guy and his wife, Anna Rose, gathered around the Nelsons' oak dining table to pore over family records, look at additional photos and share some treasured memories.

Most astonishing was the depth and breadth of their family histories and the connections made along the way.

Guy Austin's father, also named Guy, was a toddler of two or three when the photo was taken. Born September



ABOVE — The same house as shown on page 1 a few years later after it was remodeled and two more sons were born to Tom and Anna Austin. From left: Anna, Clyde, Pulaski "Tom", Verner, Guy, Fred and Pearl Self Turner.

19, 1897, in Riceville, Guy's attire in the photo would lead the viewer to suppose *he* was a *she*. "I guess back before disposable diapers or rubber pants they put boys in dresses," opined Guy, Jr.

He pulled out a binder of the Austin family history with the same photo gracing its cover. The genealogical record stretches all the way back to Richard Austin, born in 1598 in England, although Guy Jr. believes his ancestors originally hailed from Scotland and wore the crest and tartan of the Keith Clan.

### RICHARDAUSTIN

Richard Austin sailed for the New World in 1638, meaning the Austins of Birdseye descend from some of this country's earliest European inhabitants. Austin, Texas was founded by one of Guy's ancestors.

### PHILIPA.AUSTIN

Guy's great-great-grandfather, Philip A. Austin, was a Revolutionary War soldier, who enlisted in Captain Luke Day's Company when he was a mere 16 1/2. He was a blacksmith by trade and was discharged from service on July 4, 1784. Philip moved to Clark County, Indiana in 1816, when the former territory gained statehood. He died in 1838 and is buried in Clark County.

Less information was available about Guy's great-grandfather Samuel, who is buried south of Eckerty in the Potter-Rowland Cemetery along with his son, Guy's grandfather, Pulaski D. "Tom" Austin, pictured in the original photo. One of Pulaski's brothers, James died in the Battle of Gettysburg.

### WINFIELDSCOTTAUSTIN

A great-uncle, Winfield Scott Austin,  
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# TOPICS

Ferdinand News

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founded Birdseye. He married Mary Blunk, a sister of Katherine Blunk who was Pulaski "Tom" Austin's first wife.

## THE NELSON TREE

Jack Nelson's family lineage is not quite as detailed. He knows his grandfather was George Washington Nelson, a Civil War veteran, and that George's father, William, headed to Tennessee to visit his parents. When William and his horse tried to ford a river they both perished.

## THOMAS BRADFORD NELSON

Jack's father was Thomas Bradford Nelson. Tom was a Spanish American War veteran who married Mary Ford and fathered seven children, the youngest of whom is Jack. While he was serving his country he went AWOL — just long enough to return home and plant his crops! He was not punished for this as far as Jack knows.

Jack's father's sister was Rebecca "Anna" Nelson Self, a widow who then married Pulaski Austin, a widower with no children. She bore him four sons.

Pulaski "Tom" and Anna Nelson Self Austin lived in the log house pictured in the March 21 edition, which they later "improved" by adding siding, a porch and gingerbread trim.

## ANNA'S FIRST MARRIAGE

Anna's first marriage, in 1886, to John Henry Self, a Perry County farmer, produced three daughters, Audrey, Pearl and Bertha. Bertha died at 11 months of age and is buried next to her parents in Federal Cemetery [Patoka Memorial Cemetery] near Painter's Creek. John died at age 27.

## TOMAUSTIN

Anna married Tom Austin in 1894. He was a station agent at Riceville as well as a cooper who supplied the area with wooden barrels. The sons, in order of appearance, included Fred, who was a commissioned officer in the Army during World War I. Fred lost part of his hand tossing a grenade in 1918. Guy Jr. still has the telegram he sent home claiming "hand is well."

Fred and his wife, the former Alta King, never had children but raised some fine dahlias, according to Eileen Nelson. He died in 1964.

Next came Guy Nelson Austin. Guy Sr. followed his brother into the military and served in Company E 38th Infantry 3rd Division during World War I. Guy Jr. learned later his father fought in seven major battles on French soil. Guy Sr. married Lola Cook. They had six children (Marjorie, Norma, Guy Jr., Sarah, Ruth and Jeanie) before Lola died in 1940. Guy Sr. then wed Verra Standiford. He passed from this world in 1956.

The other two sons, born after the 1900 photo was taken, were Verner and Clyde Austin.

The Austin family homestead at Riceville is now part of the state-owned forest and was purchased to be the site of a lake that was never built.

All in all, after an hour or two spent with the Nelsons and Austins, there were more details concerning the photo than the News staff never thought possible when agreeing to run it in an attempt to find out who is pictured.

Dan Wendholt, a professional photographer, had purchased the glass negative the photo was made from as a piece of photography memorabilia. He can't even remember where he purchased the antique glass negative.

Neither Jack Nelson nor Guy Austin Jr. — who are first cousins once re-

moved — or their wives, Eileen (Schnell) Nelson and Anna Rose (Schnell) Austin — also first cousins once removed — have any idea who snapped the original 1900 photograph. Jack supposed it could have been John Hollowell, an early Birdseye-area photographer, but this last piece of the puzzle will likely remain a mystery.

## WINFIELD SCOTTAUSTIN

A great-uncle, Winfield Scott Austin, founded Birdseye. He married Mary Blunk, a sister of Katherine Blunk who was Pulaski "Tom" Austin's first wife.

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All photos in this article came from The *Ferdinand News* of March 28, 2007, except the one of Cyrus and Annie Austin which was provided by the author of the Cyrus Austin article and the two photos on page 10 through the courtesy of the Crawford County Public Library and Becky Hammond Stetter.

—LMB