

**Private John H. Austin, Co. G, 31st Tennessee Regiment, Infantry & 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, U S  
Volunteer Infantry**

[http://www.afaoa.org/db\\_files/William\\_Ruth\\_Austin\\_NC/Individuals/I1842](http://www.afaoa.org/db_files/William_Ruth_Austin_NC/Individuals/I1842)

John Henry Austin was born May 18, 1842 in Paulding County, Georgia (the part that was later Polk County). His parents were John C. Austin and Mary (Polly) Ann Gurley. Which man was the father of John C. Austin, born about 1807 in South Carolina, is the question? I can only mention that two candidates are, the Michael Austin, who was born about 1759, or a John also born in the eighteenth century in the Carolinas. The Georgia Land Lottery of 1827 shows that land lots were drawn in Fayette County by a Michael, David and Jesse Austin. Coweta County had land lots drawn by John H. Austin of Newton County, and William L. Astin of Green County. All that tells us is that there were men by those names, who were in the vicinity where John C. Austin might have lived.

For further study, it should also be mentioned that families named Gurley have had some connection with the line of William Austin and Ruth Bryant from early North Carolina to Georgia and Tennessee. John Charles Austin born 1727 in Ireland, one of the sons of William and Ruth, married a Rebecca Austin Gurley about 1755 in North Carolina.

John Culpepper Austin had a marriage to Mary Ann Gurley that is listed twice on early Georgia marriages. The date of their marriage is January 13, 1829 as licensed in Fayette Co., Georgia, but it was solemnized three days later in Coweta Co., GA according to a descendant. They lived in Paulding County, Georgia until about 1859. Their family removed to McNairy County in West Tennessee by 1860. The seven children of this John and Mary were: Richard (1830) who married Varcelle Tyler; Sarah (1833); William J. (1836-1863); Emily Cinderella (1838); John H. (1842-1893); Lewis Caste (1845); Martha (1849).

The family farms were near Purdy, Grovehill, and Chewalla in McNairy County, Tennessee. The descendants of John C. and Mary Austin lived there for several generations. John C. died there in August of 1879. After that, his son Lewis C. Austin took care of Mary and ran the farm. Some of the family members are buried at Indian Creek Cemetery at Chewalla.

John H. and his brother, William J. went to Trenton, Tennessee and enlisted in the CSA on the first of October, 1861. They enlisted in Company G of the 31<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Tennessee Infantry, for a period of twelve months. The Thirty-First Regiment was part of three other consolidated regiments. Service records show that John was present in Company G through April 1863. He was last recorded on an outpost near Shelbyville, Tennessee on May 12, 1863. Something happened at that time, and no more muster rolls are shown for John. He was marked as a deserter near Lee and Gordon's Mills in October of 1863.

One wonders if the disappearance of John could have anything to do with what happened to John's brother William? Evidently William was already sick when he enlisted in the CSA. His muster rolls show that he was never paid and was discharged ten weeks later, on December 16, because of a disability. His final record was at an outpost near Shelbyville, Tennessee on December 26, 1861. It is not known exactly when William died. A note by a descendant on a family tree on Ancestry.com states that William had tuberculosis and died in 1863. No document of proof is mentioned.

Soldiers in the Union Army found John wandering near Chattanooga on Sept. 12, 1863. He was captured and forwarded to Louisville, KY with a group of deserters from the Confederate Army. They were to be released in Louisville, because they had been given the opportunity to sign The Oath of Allegiance to the U. S. However, that never happened. John was on a roll of prisoners of war who were transferred to Camp Chase, Ohio from Louisville Military Prison by the orders of General Rosecrans.

Once again, the records show that the deserters were sent to Ohio to be released, if they gave oath that they would remain north of the Ohio River until the General gave them permission to return to the South. The group of prisoners declined the terms and said they preferred to be exchanged. They did not know that no prisoners were being exchanged by 1863. There was a shortage of soldiers on both sides.

John was finally sent to the infamous Rock Island Barracks, Illinois on January 17, 1864. He was on the prison roll there, listed as Joseph H. Austin. But, after almost ten months of deprivation, in October of that year, he took the Oath (swallowed the dog) and enlisted in the Second Regiment of the U. S.

Volunteer Infantry for Frontier Service. His name was listed on a descriptive roll as John H. Austin. These facts were listed for him: Age 22, born in Polk County, Georgia, farmer, enlisted for 1 year service, gray eyes, dark hair, dark complexion, 6 feet tall. Notice that he said he was born in Polk County and not Paulding County. The part of Paulding County that became Polk County was not created until after 1850. He was giving the name of the county of his birth, as it was in 1864.

The Second Regiment was sent by train transport to Fort Leavenworth and assigned to duty in the District of the Upper Arkansas along the Santa Fe Road from the Little Arkansas River to Fort Dodge and Cimarron Crossing. The soldiers walked west from Fort Wiley and on to Salem, Fort Ellsworth, Kansas, Fort Larned, Fort Zarah and then to Fort Scott, Kansas. Their duties were to scout and provide wagon train escort duty and to operate against the Indians. They served as guards at the signing of the Little Arkansas Treaty with the Indians.

John served in the Second Regiment for a full year. He had daily duties as a military police guard. Then he was on detached service escorting prisoners to Sioux City, Iowa, and to Leavenworth, Kansas. The war was over two months after John went to Fort Leavenworth for Frontier Service. He mustered out at Ft. Leavenworth on Nov. 7, 1865 and was last paid for his service on Jan. 30, 1865. He then was able to return home to his family in McNairy County, Tennessee.

John H. Austin did apply for a pension from the U. S. Army in 1891. He was granted the pension # 791,491. His widow also applied for a pension in 1893 and it was granted. Copies of the pension papers from NARA in Washington, DC should be ordered by researchers interested in learning more about John.

It was not long after John was back home, that he met and married Elmina Catherine Derryberry on July 2, 1871. She was the daughter of Harvey Derryberry and Louvina Butler. The couple was married by Elmina's grandfather, Isaac C. Derryberry, a Minister of God. They were happily married and had a farm next to John's parents. John and Elmina had seven children. They were: Sarah Louisa Austin Simmons (1872-1961); Mary Melvina (1873-1929); Delilah Melisa Bell Austin Meadows (1876-1896); Nicey Henry Katherine Austin Suggs (1881-1909); Louis Harvey Culpepper Austin (1884-1954) who married Eula Mae McAlpin; John Bunyan Austin (1887-1969) who married Annie B. Davis; Vivian Barrett Austin (1891-1979).

John and Elmina led a long and healthy life on their farm. John H. (Henry) Austin died April 30, 1893 and was buried at Chewalla, Tennessee in Indian Creek Cemetery. Elmina died May 8, 1913 and is buried beside her husband. Many of their descendants are also interred at the same place. He was treated as a hero as he should be.

#### **SOURCES & NOTES:**

CENSUS: 1850 U. S. Census, Paulding Co., GA, Dist 950, 29 Aug, Page 63, Dwelling 144, Family 144.

John Austin 40, m, farmer, b. SC, ca 1810; Mary 42, NC; Richard 20, laborer, GA; Sarah 17 GA; William 14 GA; Emily 10 GA; John 8 GA; Lewis 5 GA; Martha 1 GA.

CENSUS: 1860 U. S. Census, McNairy Co., Tn, Dist. 5, Grovehill P.O., 23 Jul, Page 120, Dwelling 848, Family 846. J. C. Austin 53, farmer, \$1500. R.E., \$841. P.E., b. SC ca. 1807; Mary 57 NC; Sarah 25 GA; William J. 24 GA; Emily 19 GA; John H. 18 GA; Lewis C. 15 GA; Martha M. 11 GA. (these records suggest that the family removed from GA to TN between 1849 and 1860.

CENSUS: 1870 U. S. Census, McNairy Co., TN, Dist. 5, Purdy P.O., 10 Aug, Page 245, Dwelling 18, Family 18. John C. Austin 52 GA, farmer, \$600. R.E., \$600. P.E.; Mary A. 63, NC, keeps house; Sarah 36 GA; Emily 26 GA; John H. 28 GA; Lewis C. 25 GA.

CENSUS: 1880 U. S. Census, McNairy Co., TN, Dist 5, 22 Page 71, Dwelling 364, Family 324.

J. H. Austin 38, farmer, GA, SC, SC; Elmina C., 28, wife, MS, MS, MS; Luisa S., 8, dau, TN, GA, MS; Mary M. 6, dau, TN, GA, MS; Delila M. 3, dau, TN, GA, MS. [Note that his brother Lewis C. Austain (sic) age 35 is living next door with their mother Mary age 70, NC, NC, a widow; and sister Emily 40, and niece Molly 10, and nephew Martin. See these Austins on the 1900 Census.]

CENSUS: 1900 U. S. Census, McNairy Co., TN, Civil Dist. 14, Dist 85, 8 Jun, Page 155A, Dwelling 82, Family 85. Austin, Ellen [widow of John H.] Feb 1852, age 48, widow, b MS; Lou, dau, May 1872 age 29 TN; Kate, dau, Mch 1881 age 18 TN; Harvey, son, Mch 1884, age 16 TN; Bunyan 1887, age 13 TN; Vivian, dau, Oct 1891, age 8; Byron Simmons, grandson, age 7, b. Sept 1893 TN, GA, MS.

MILITARY :National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Carded Records Showing Military Service of Soldiers Who Fought in Volunteer Organizations During the American Civil War, compiled 1890 - 1912, documenting the period 1861 - 1866; Catalog ID: 300398; Record Group #: 94; Roll #: 15. (Galvanized Yankees) Provided by fold3.com.

CSA ARMY: John H. Austin, Co. G, 31st TN Infantry, part of 3 Consolidated Regiments of TN Inf. Apr 9, 1865. A Pvt. on 13 Sep 1861 served until Jan 1, 1862. Enlisted 21 Sep, 1861 at Trenton, TN. Unexpired Term. Muster Rolls show that he was present through Apr 1863. He was on an outpost near Shelbyville, TN on May 12, 1863 in Capt. Sam Sharps' Co. 31st Regt TN Inf. and was age 21 at that time (b. 1842). In Oct. 1863 he was marked as a deserter near Lee and Gordon's Mills.

UNION PRISONER RECORDS: The U. S. Army listed John H. Austin on a Roll of Deserters forwarded from Stevenson, AL to Louisville, KY, there to be released having taken the oath of Allegiance (to the U. S.) on Sept 20, 1863 by Capt. R. M. Goodwin, Asst. Provost Marshall, Gen. Dept of the Cumberland. It was reported that he had deserted the C.S.A. near Chattanooga Sept 12, 1863.

Prisoner of War Records show that John H. Austin was captured and forwarded to Louisville, KY Sept 20, 1863. "Deserter to be released at Louisville. He has taken the Oath of Allegiance".

On Sept 30, 1863 his name was listed as Joseph H. Austin, same CSA Unit. He was on a Roll of Prisoners of War who were transferred to Camp Chase, OH from Louisville Military Prison by orders of General Rosecrans. The Deserters were sent to this place to be released if they accepted the offer to give oath that they would remain north of the Ohio River until the General gave them permission to return. The prisoners declined the terms and said they preferred to be exchanged.

No prisoner exchanges were allowed near the end of the war. John H. Austin was transferred from Camp Chase, OH to Rock Island Barracks, IL. He entered Rock Island Jan 17, 1864 and was on the Roll Jan 23, 1864. He also was listed as (aka) Joseph.

UNION ARMY: After almost a year of deprivation at Rock Island Prison, John took the Oath of Allegiance to the United States. Oct 6, 1864, Muster Roll, unattached, Rock Island Barracks, Illinois. Description of soldier: John H. Austin, age 22, b. Polk Co, GA, farmer, enlisted 1 year. Gray eyes, dark hair, dark complexion, 6' tall. [Note by H.Austin, Sep 13, 2012, Polk Co. was not formed from Paulding County, GA until 1851, but John was born in 1842. He gave the name of the County as it was in 1864.]

Nov 7, 1864, enlisted in the Second Regiment of the U. S. Volunteer Infantry for frontier service. May & Jun 1865 on detached service per S.O. 118. Jun 1865 Absent on DS as escort to prisoners to Sioux City, Iowa. Jul & Aug 1865, daily duties. Sep 1865 Military Police Guard of prisoners to Leavenworth, KS. Nov 7, 1865, Muster Out Roll, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, John H. Austin, last paid Jan 30, 1865. Clothing account was never settled. Four dollars to be stopped from his pay.

SIBLING: William J. Austin, also enlisted at Trenton, TN on Oct 1, 1861 as Pvt. Co. G, 31st Regt. TN Inf. CSA. His service was from Oct 1, 1861 to Jan 1, 1862. He was paid through Feb 22, 1862. Although he was enrolled for twelve months, he was discharged on account of disability on Dec 26, 1861 at an outpost near Shelbyville, TN. [Note: informant from Family Treemaker genealogy said he died of Tuberculosis.]

RESIDENCE: 1870 U. S. Census shows that John H. Austin returned to his farm in McNairy Co, TN.

MARRIAGE: AFAOA.org database for Unplaced Southern Austins, compiler, Liz Austin Carlin.

"There is a mention of a marriage license in the possession of descendant, Steve Austin, MD. McNairy Co, TN, John H. Austin m Elmina Catherine Derryberry 2 Jul 1871. She was the daughter of Harvey Derryberry and Louvina Butler. Married by Baptist Minister, Isaac C. Derryberry M.G., her grandfather."

CHILDREN: See U. S. Census of 1880 and 1900 and AFAOA.org. Seven children: Sarah Louisa Austin 1872; Mary Melvina 1873; Delilah Melissa Bell 1876; Nicey Henry Katherine 1881; Louis Harvey Culpepper 1884; John Bunyan 1887; Vivian Barrett 1891.

MILITARY PENSION: John H. Austin, Co. D. 2nd Regt. U. S. Vol. Inf. pension filed 1891, Jan 23, Invalid 1011,922, Certificate 791,491. Widow 578.408, Certificate 394,704. Dead. No death date given.

DEATH: Findagrave.com. Indian Creek Cemetery, Chewalla, McNairy Co., TN. Austin, John H. 05-17-1842 to 04-30-1898 and Ellen Austin 02-11-1852 to 05-08-1913. Photos of their Gravestones are on the website. Nine other family members are buried in this cemetery. See USGENWEB/TN/McNairy for directions to the cemetery off of Hwy 45 N.