

Robert Austen Clarke United States Navy Test Pilot

Robert Austen Clarke was born in 1920 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to Robert Clarke and Ruth Hazel Austen. He was the eldest of three boys, the others being James and Thomas (now deceased).



Charles Austen
1818-1895

Robert's Austen ancestry has been traced back from Pennsylvania to England. His great great grandparents, Charles and Sarah (Pearce) Austen immigrated in 1820 to Pine Creek, just north of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, from Middlesex, England, with Sarah's brother and sister-in-law, Richard and Susan Pearce.

At the same time, Charles' parents, Ambrose and Susannah (Beard) Austen and four other children - John, Charlotte, Joseph and Ambrose Jr., immigrated to Jeromesville, Ohio. In England,

before immigrating to Ohio, Ambrose Austen was a Baptist Minister, hop grower and sheep farmer. His father was Thomas Austen of Yalding in Kent. Susannah Beard was born in Rottingdean to Nathaniel and Mary Beard, a well established Sussex family.

Charles and Sarah (Pearce) Austen and their children, Thomas, Charles Jr and Susan eventually settled at McCandless Township, Pennsylvania. Thomas stayed on the farm till 1844 when he moved to Richland. Charles Jr. became a carpenter and married Anna Jones. Susan married John Grubbs of a neighboring farm and later moved to Oregon. In 1927 the original farmland was acquired for a public park.

Robert Clarke's mother, Ruth Hazel Austen, born October 19, 1895, was the granddaughter of Charles Austen, Jr. and Anna Jones, and the daughter of Robert Edwin Austen and Lydia May Hogan. Robert Austen Clarke attended Colgate University where he studied Political Science. He joined the US Navy Blue Angels flight demonstration team on Christmas Eve 1946, flying wing, flying Beetle Bomb and acting as announcer at air shows.

In May 1947 he replaced Butch Voorhees as leader of the team for the 1947-1948 seasons. He was responsible for the

Blue Angels' current "four plane diamond" trademark formation; initially the team flew only three aircraft in a "V" formation.

This honor and achievement followed a career as a naval



1947 Blue Angels Flight Crew (l to r) Lt. Bob Thelen, Lt. Chuck Knight, Lt. Cmdr. Bob Clarke, Flight Leader, Lt. Cmdr. Dusty Rhodes, and Lt. (jg) Billy May

aviator, flying fighter aircraft in the Pacific during World War II

and later serving as one of the US Navy's top test pilots. On his retirement from the Navy in 1965 he entered a career with the commercial division of Boeing Aircraft in Seattle, Washington. During his career with Boeing he held responsibility for the Pacific Rim and was based in Australia for a number of years. Following his retirement from Boeing, he elected to stay on in Australia.

Throughout his life Robert Austen Clarke has been an avid sailor, political commentator, and a student of the history of explorers like James Cook, Lewis and Clark and others who undertook epic journeys. He has two children, Robert Austen Clarke, Jr. (born in 1949, living in Massachusetts) and Thorne Page Clarke (born in 1950, living in Hawaii).

Brian Austen

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In 1995, the AFAOA web site was created – the first genealogy databases on the Internet. On-line databases include over 90,000 individuals in more than 38 Austin lines, using a family group sheet format. These databases are also published as searchable descendency books on our Austin Research CD-ROM and on the Austin-Austen Research Center (AARC).

In 1998 AFAOA published a hard-cover book, *Some Descendants of Richard Austin of Charlestown, Massachusetts, 1638* - a revision of Edith Austin Moore's book on Richard Austin which had been published three decades earlier. This informal Newsletter is published four times a year.

The AUSTINS OF AMERICA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY emphasizes the gathering, publication and distribution of Austin genealogi-

cal and biographical information in a formal, indexed newsletter, copies of which are also bound and published in hard-cover books. Besides managing the AARC and the DNA Project, Dr. Michael Austin is the administrator for the Austin List on Rootsweb.

The AOAGS is now moving to a more international focus and is planning a name change. A reorganization announcement appears on their web site and in their latest newsletter. The new name will be AUSTIN FAMILIES GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY and they are currently preparing to sponsor the first International Austin Convention, to be held in England in September 2005. Therefore they have declined an AFAOA invitation to co-sponsor the 2005 National Austin Convention in Seattle.