

Peter [Augenstein] Augustine [History]

Peter Augustine had been born in Baden-Baden, Germany in 1748. Baden-Baden was a small Palatinate state in the South Germany Rhineland. It was the home of Augenstein (Augustine) family.

Johannes Augenstein, great-grandfather of Peter, had been awarded a family "Coat-of-Arms" in 1673 as they were of the lesser nobility. It was registered and described as the "Crest and Shield", bearing the figure of "DieEule, Decken, Schwarz und Godden" - and Owl in natural color with a mantling of black and gold feathers. Since the owl was considered to be very wise, the Augensteins were called the "I know" family.

Two sons of Johannes and Maria were Bruno and Hieronemus. Bruno and his branch of the family eventually came to America and settled in California. Hieronemus, the grandfather of Peter, had eight sons. The oldest son Casper, Peter's father, was born in 1727. Casper and five of his brothers came to the East Coast of America. The youngest brother remained at home with his parents. The chief reason for the Augenstein's seeking a new home in this new country, was that of religious freedom. They suffered intense persecution because of their religious adherence to "German Brethren", "Anabaptists", or "Mennonite" beliefs. They were also at odds with the Military Service since abhorrence of war was one of their principal tenets. Military Service was demanded of all able-bodied men, especially the young men. For these dissenters, their plain dark clothing and broad hats were the antithesis of the gaudy uniforms and high hats of the Military. The men's unshaven faces also denoted derisions of military regulations. The women wore their own style clothing and head covering that also seemed very different. The young German immigrants arrived in America in the years immediately preceding the Revolution of the American Colonies against Great Britain. They sought security within the supposedly peaceful communities of the Quaker Colony of Pennsylvania. Following the first blazed of American Independence at Concord, Lexington and Bunker Hill, the colonies of New York and Pennsylvania became the central location of the struggle. Philadelphia, became the war time capital. All able bodied men were called to the colors. Those who refused to serve were persecuted and shunned as Tories or British sympathizers. Dissent of religious grounds was not acceptable.

Some of the Augenstein brothers, arriving in America in the midst of this political turmoil, changed the spelling of their name, their religious affiliation and adopted new political views. Casper Augenstein, his wife and son Peter had sailed from Rotterdam aboard the ship "Two Brothers". They arrived in Philadelphia on September 21, 1751, thus becoming the first known member of the Augenstein family to settle in North America. On this same ship were the Hersbergers, who were to settle as neighbors in Maryland. Casper Augenstein, (later known as Jasper Augustine) first settled in Elizabeth Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. In 1765, he fled to the wilderness of southwestern (Virginia) Pennsylvania. He settled along General Braddock's Trail, just two miles from the Maryland line, in the area presently known as Addison.

On April 21, 1775, Peter Augustine, Jasper Augustine's son, bought Joseph Mountain's Tomahawk Right's to 150 acres of land in what was then Turkey-Foot Township, Bedford County (This is now Addison Township, Somerset County). On March 1, 1802, a survey of 312 acres of land was made in pursuance of a warrant granted unto Peter Augustine Sr., on February 1, 1797. Peter was issued a patent for 312 1/2 acres on February 24, 1814. Somehow the original 150 acres had grown to 312 1/2 acres. Peter named his farm "Sportsman". It was in the northern section of this farm, he marked off an area that would become known as Petersburg.

It was here that Peter Augustine built his cabin and along with his wife Rosina (Barkley) raised their family. The 1784 census shows the following children living at home: Frederick, John, Susanna, Catharine, Jacob and Ann. Peter Augustine became the first Mayor of his newly founded Villiage. The National Road closely followed and sometimes crossed the Nemacolin and Braddock Trail but through the center of Petersburg it was, (and remains today) the Main Street.

Peter's daughter Ann and her husband Henry Stuller became the owners of the first lot (#23) in the the village and here built their home in 1820. The Stuller's occupied this spot until her death in 1858.

The village cluster of Petersburg grew quickly and soon became a thriving place, catering to the needs of people traveling the National Road and the surrounding communities. However, the completion of the Railroad to Cumberland, Maryland in 1846, spelled the end to the rapid development of Petersburg. It soon settled into the

much quieter life of a farming village.

The village of Petersburg will later have its name changed to the present "Addison".

NOTE: This history was compiled by "The Old Petersburg-Addison Historical Society" and posted by Lawson L. Duckworth

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