

A History of Eva Gladys English

by Todd Eric Wells, November 2010

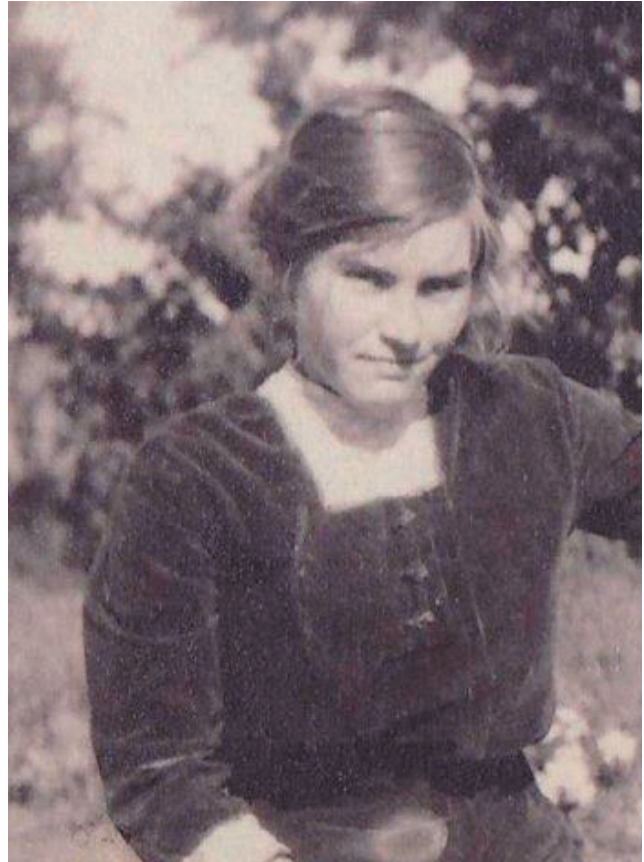
Eva Gladys English was born on December 6, 1896, likely in southern Texas. She was the second child of Levi English II¹ and Emma Chisholm, born a mere 13 months after her elder brother Joseph. Her younger brother, Guy, was born in June of 1898. Levi likely died sometime between 1898 and 1900, leaving Emma with three young children. But early deaths were not uncommon in the late nineteenth century and this family history has many of them.

Levi and Emma lived in Dimmit County, the heart of Texas brush country, bordering the Rio Grande River and 140 miles from the Gulf of Mexico. Levi's grandfather and namesake, Levi English I, was one of the original settlers and leaders of this county, which the Texas legislature misspelled after its founder Phillip Dimitt.²

The elder Levi had a storied history, even before coming to Dimmit County. He was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, in August of 1817. His mother died when he was an infant and he was raised by his mother's sister and her husband. They moved to Texas in 1824 and he left home at the age of ten. According to family legend he lived for six months with the Comanche Indians, and later served as a volunteer scout for the Texas Rangers.



Levi English



Eva Gladys English

Levi married Matilda Jane Burleson in 1838. Her background is unclear, but she is thought to have been the daughter of a wealthy slave owner, who presented them with a slave woman as a wedding gift. They had 11 children and three or four slaves.

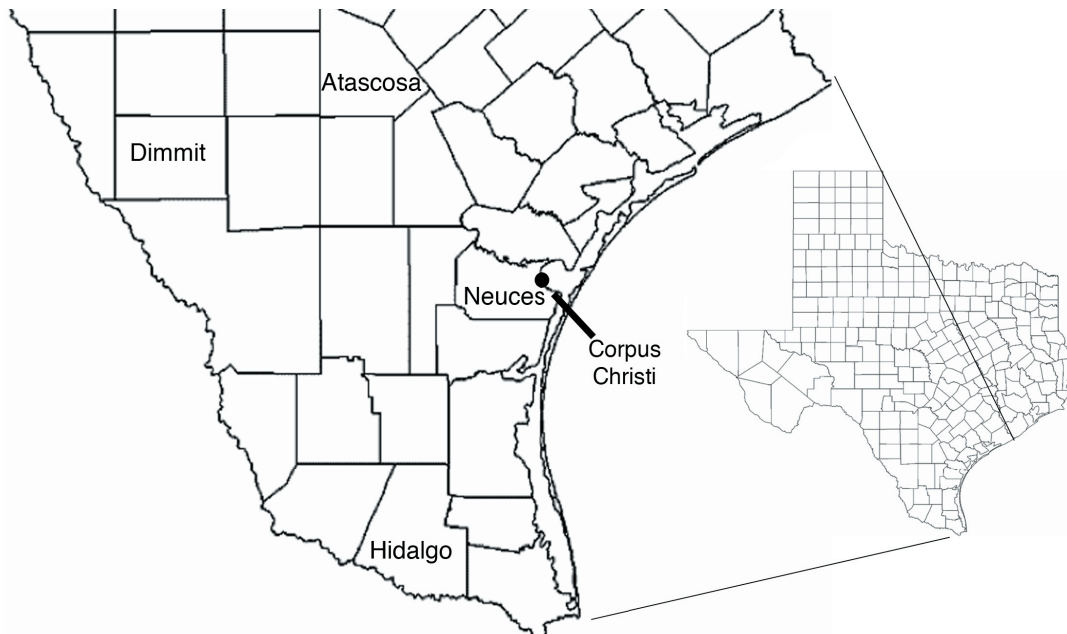
Indian raids were common in this part of Texas in the mid-nineteenth century, and Levi I was involved in battling them a number of times. The most memorable one involved an Indian attack on July 4, 1865. At this time the English family

lived with a group of settlers in Atascosa County, where Levi was a cattleman and leader, having served as a county commissioner in 1865. An evening dance was planned to celebrate Independence Day. The settler hosting the dance went a short distance from his ranch to drive up some of his horses and was attacked by Indians. He escaped to his house and sent a few boys out to notify the community.

Levi, having some experience with Indians, led the defense. He was joined by ten others, including his eldest son Aaron John "Bud" English, who was Levi II's father. An account from 1933 describes the scene:

They overtook the Indians on the Leona about 13 miles below Martin's Ranch, and at once attacked them. The band proved to be 36 Comanches, well armed and mounted two to a horse. They at first retreated, but, noting that the settlers had fired their muzzle-loading rifles, quickly dismounted and charged. In a few minutes, a desperate hand-to-hand battle took place, in which English's men were compelled to retreat. The Indians pursued fiercely and killed Bud English, Dean Oden and Dan Williams. The rest, all wounded, but three, succeeded in getting back to the ranch...

According to his son Jacob, Levi suffered wounds to his neck that took six months to heal and never allowed him to speak above a whisper again. The settlers were disheartened and grief-stricken, and three months later Levi organized a mass exodus. He



TEXAS

led as many as 400 of them towards Dimmit County, an area that he first explored as a cattleman back in 1861. The Frio and Leona rivers had run dry, and he and several other pioneer cattlemen drove their cattle to Carrizo Creek, described as a cowman's paradise with a number of natural springs³.

Levi is considered the founder of Carrizo Springs. Dimmit County was established in 1858 but not organized until 1880, and as the largest and oldest town in the county, Carrizo Springs became the county seat. Levi donated land to the town designated for churches, schools and a courthouse square. He also donated the land for Mount Hope Cemetery where he and many others from his family are buried⁴.

Levi English II was six years old when his father Bud was killed in the Indian battle. He married a total of three times, his third wife being Emma Chisholm, mother of Joseph, Eva and Guy. After Levi's death she moved back in with her parents (also in Dimmit), where she and her children appear in the 1900 census. She married Mr. Carr and had a fourth child, Bradford, around 1902. Mr. Carr died and she married Mr. Cobb around 1903. By 1910, the Cobb family was living in Nueces County, Texas, where Corpus Christi sits next the Gulf of Mexico and 120 miles from Dimmit.

Eva married William Oscar Norwood sometime between 1910 and 1914, and they had two sons, Robert Levi (1914) and William (about 1918), and lived in Donna, Texas. Donna is in Hidalgo County, the southernmost in Texas, seven miles from the Rio Grande and 55 miles from the Gulf. Eva's husband William met an untimely end around 1917. A neighbor asked him to evict some duck poachers from her property. The duck poachers killed him and claimed it was a hunting accident, but the family believed it was murder⁵.

Widowed with two young children, Eva went to Corpus Christi to take a bookkeeping class so that she could earn a living. She did not take children with her – her eldest son Robert recalled that he (and presumably his younger brother) was raised quite a bit by Eva's mother Emma and Eva's brother, Guy English⁵. But on this occasion, he stayed in Donna with a Mexican nurse and consequently learned Spanish as his first language.⁹



Bird's Eye View of Corpus Christi, 1887



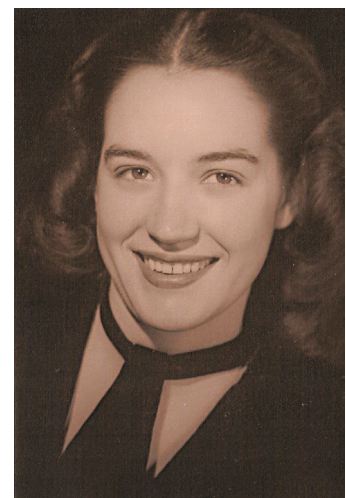
Eva, William and Little Bobby Norwood

Sometime after this schooling, Eva migrated westward, perhaps in search of work or following other family members. One child of Robert Norwood says that the two Norwood sons lived in Wickenburg, Arizona, with their grandmother Emma Chisholm and Eva's brother Guy. The memory is that Emma and her husband at that time were running some kind of resort either in or around Wickenburg, and Eva may have visited or lived there at some point⁵.



Billy and Bobby Norwood

While she probably moved to California around 1920, the next confirmed appearance of Eva is on the voter registration rolls of San Bernadino County between the years of 1924 and 1926, along with her then-husband Harold "Tex" Stallard. Eva was a registered Democrat and Tex a Republican. They had a daughter, Mary Lorena Stallard, in October of 1927. Mary remembered Tex as being mean, and she would go out of her way to avoid him⁶. Eva and Tex divorced by 1930.



Mary Stallard

In April of 1930, Eva and her three children were living with her brother Guy in Palomas, Arizona. Guy was a beekeeper in this mostly Mexican town, named for it's ever-present doves¹⁰. Though it was once a gold mining town, by 1930 its 142 residents were mostly railroad workers and a handful of farmers. Joseph Clarence Handley was living with his

eight-year-old son, Joseph Oliver, five miles away in nearby Aztec, a stop on the Southern Pacific Railroad line. It's not known if Joseph and Eva first met there or had met previously in California, but by the time their son Joseph Charles Handley was born in November of 1930, they were both living in North Sacramento according to the infant's birth certificate. Palomas and Aztec have since been reclaimed by the desert.

Her son Robert and daughter Mary had a memory of an infant that was taken away⁷ – and indeed Joseph Charles was placed in the Sacramento Orphanage and Children's Home at a young age. Perhaps Eva was already ill at childbirth or became ill and unable to care for an infant before her untimely death.

Eva died of tuberculosis on December 4, 1932, two days short of her 36th birthday. It's possible that she contracted the disease while staying near Wickenburg, Arizona. Her son Robert also tested positive for TB. The Riverside County doctor required him to take a test every year, and Robert continued to test positive for the disease his whole life⁵.

William Norwood, Eva's second son, died at a young age. He had a heart defect and was so weak in his last few years that his older brother Robert had to carry him around everywhere. He died of pneumonia at the age of 17 around 1935⁶.



Bobby and Billy Norwood

Eva's older brother, Joseph English, served in World War I and was a past commander of the American Legion post in Wasco, California. He was an oil field worker and was subsequently elected as Constable for Wasco. He was killed August 15, 1936, at the age of 40 when a drunken young man (whom he had perhaps jailed before) walked into a pool hall and shot him four times without warning⁸.



Emma Chisholm

Emma Chisholm, Eva's mother, died in 1964 in San Diego, California, at the age of 88.

Guy English, Eva's brother, died in 1966 in Leavenworth, Washington, at the age of 67.

Robert Norwood, Eva's eldest son, passed away in December of 1990 at the age of 76.

Mary Stallard, Eva's daughter, died in Los Angeles in 1997 at the age of 70.

THE FRESNO BEE

THE REPUBLICAN

FRESNO, CAL., SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 16, 1936—38 PAGES (SIX SECTIONS)

Peace Officer Victim Of Gun Spree In Cafe



JOE ENGLISH

WASCO CONSTABLE SLAIN BY GUNMAN AT POOL HALL BAR

Joe English Dead, Woodrow
Crabtree Held As Killer
In Kern Jail

(By McClatchy Newspapers Service)
WASCO (Kern Co.), Aug. 15.—
Constable Joe English, 38, of Wasco, widely known Kern County peace officer, was shot four times and killed almost instantly to-night in a poolroom altercation with Woodrow Crabtree, 22, unemployed local youth.

Crabtree, facing a charge of murder, is in the county jail at Bakersfield where he was taken by Sheriff Ed Campness, who was called by bystanders who witnessed the spectacular shooting and captured the alleged slayer after a chase down an alley.

The sudden killing took place in a food and liquor establishment operated by M. C. Thornburg on Seventh Street, Wasco's main thoroughfare, at about 10:30 P. M. Orders Men To Stand Up

Witnesses said young Crabtree, assertedly drunk, entered the place and gruffly ordered the fifteen men present to stand against the bar. The bystanders apparently believed Crabtree to be joking for they failed to move when he walked down the bar.

Lee Tibbie, local night officer who assisted Sheriff Campness in the investigation, said he was told when Crabtree got to where English was standing, he commenced firing his revolver without further warning.

Crabtree assertedly fired four times, three shots taking effect in the constable's chest. English died on the floor within three minutes.

The officers say as Crabtree started out the door Charles Bowman, one of the witnesses, followed and attempted to stop him at an adjacent alley. Bowman said Crabtree turned and clicked his gun in his face twice, but it apparently was empty.

Bowman returned to the bar, where confusion reigned, and picked up a revolver, which later proved to be English's, from the bar. Bowman took after Crabtree down the alley.

Meantime, Al Correll, who was putting his automobile in a garage in the alley had heard the shots and saw Crabtree running down the alley. Correll backed his car out. Bowman and Eugene Parditt, another bystander, got in and they gave chase.

Held In Automobile

The pursuers caught Crabtree near the packing sheds in the east end of Wasco. Parditt leaped out of the car and felled the fugitive with a flying tackle and hit him a blow on the head with his fist. Bowman produced English's gun and ordered Crabtree into the car.

They called Sheriff Campness by telephone and held Crabtree a captive in the automobile pending his arrival. A large crowd which gathered at the pool hall was unaware of Crabtree's capture and immediate presence.

English, a world war veteran and a past commander of the Wasco Post of the American Legion, is survived by a widow and a 16-year-old daughter, Leitha May English, a sophomore in high school. English was an oil field worker until his election as constable two years ago.



1935. Moonlight view of Great burning Gas Well of White Point, Texas.
Photo taken 3 (4 P.M.) Jan. 23, 1936. At 4 P.M. 22 miles from the Well. Goodland photo copyright.



Endnotes

The attached person sheet and pedigree chart have their own list of sources. Many of the known facts outlined in this history without specified references inline are based on vital records, censuses and other sources which are documented there. The inline references are as follows.

1. Since both Levi English (1817-1904) and his grandson (18??- abt 1899) share a name, "Levi English I" and "Levi English II" are used to distinguish them here, but those designations are just a device used by this author and not part of their legal names.
2. <http://www.texasescapes.com/SouthTexasTowns/Carrizo-Springs-Texas.htm>, viewed 21 November 2010.
3. Laura Knowlton Tidwell, *Dimmit County Mesquite Roots* (Austin, Texas, 1984).
4. John Leffler, "CARRIZO SPRINGS, TX", *Handbook of Texas Online*, (<http://www.tsha-online.org/handbook/online/articles/hfc02>), accessed November 15, 2010.
5. Linda Norwood, "Questions about Eva English," email message from reachlinda@earthlink.net to author, 16 November 2010, 17:30:17 (GMT-08:00).
6. Linda Norwood, "Questions about Eva", email message from reachlinda@earthlink.net to author, 17 Nov 2010 23:06:04 -0500 (EST).
7. Linda Norwood, "RE: Norwood - English family research", message to author via ancestry.com, 15 Nov 2010 3:48PM GMT.
8. "Peace Officer Victim Of Gun Spree In Cafe", *Fresno Bee Republican* (Fresno, California) [database on-line], 16 August 1936, page 1, column 3. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2007. Original data: Fresno Bee Republican. Fresno, California, United States Of America. Database created from microfilm copies of the newspaper.
9. Linda Norwood, "Re: Eva English History", email message from reachlinda@earthlink.net to author, 22 Nov 2010 13:28:23 (GMT-08:00).
10. Harold O. Wright, "Black Gold of the Sahuaral", *Desert Magazine*, Volume 38, Number 11 (November 1975): p.12-14.