

# A Brief History of Englishton Park

*These facts are condensed from the book “Lexington” originally compiled and written by Mary Wilson and Sharon Asher in 1975, hence reprinted in 2005 by the Lexington Historical Society, wherein, the “English Family History” was originally written by Carl L. Boyd in the 1950’s and updated and corrections made by Cory Walker in 2002.*

*Many facts noted after 1955 were gleaned from articles and “Letters to the Editor” of The Give-away, The Scott County Journal, The Scott County Chronicle and the Madison Courier. One of these was a five part series in January 1963, published in The Scott County Journal, compiled by Brenda Zody.*

*Joe Gibson, of Lexington, shared many facts through his notes and pictures of the English Family and the Lexington area. The most startling fact that Joe uncovered and confirmed was the fact that there were two Rosalind English. William Eastin English had a sister Rosalind and he named his daughter Rosalind; that fact has confused many historians.*

*We thank these folks, as this consolidation would not have been possible without their efforts.*

Lexington Indiana was founded in the spring of 1805 when John Kimberlin and his sons came by flatboat from Pennsylvania, landing at what is now Madison, and then making their way to Lexington over the historic Cincinnati Trace (also called Captain Kibbey’s Road)

The history of Englishton Park began when William Hayden English’s father, Elisha Gale English, at the age of 19, moved from his father’s home (Major Elisha English) in Kentucky to the Lexington, Indiana, area and bought the original tract of the Englishton Park Estate in 1817. Elisha Gale English married a local girl, by the name of Mahala Eastin, whose brother-in-law possessed the first deed ever recorded in Scott County. Mahala’s ancestry is also a notable one as members of her family are credited with involvement in the early development of the Eastern United States. Elisha Gale English had an important part in the making of the early history of Indiana and his name was known and respected over a wide territory. Elisha was a member of the Indiana State Legislature as far back as 1832. He continued as a representative of the people, either in the Senate or the House, with a few brief intervals, between 1832 and 1867.

William H. English, born in Lexington, Indiana, was the child of Elisha Gale English and Mahala Eastin English. He was in the 5<sup>th</sup> generation of these families who were prominent from the times when there were colonial forces prior to the American Revolution. To be well born has always been accounted a blessing, and that was the first distinction of William H. English (8-27-1822 to 2-7-1896). He attended Hanover College and showed such powers of study and assimilation that at the age of 18 proved himself eligible under the strict examination then required and was admitted to the bar with the privilege of practicing in the Circuit Court. Soon afterward he applied to the Supreme Court for examination and was admitted to practice before that tribunal. His ambitions were always in the line of politics. His first civic duty was to serve as a delegate from Scott County to the Democratic State Convention while still a minor. Many of his other business successes and political elections or appointments are noted:

- 1842 - Appointed Postmaster at Lexington
- 1850 - Elected Secretary of Constitutional Convention
- 1851-1852 - Member and Speaker of The Indiana State House of Representatives
- 1853-1861– US Representative from Indiana 2<sup>nd</sup> District
- 1863-1877–Organized First National Bank in Indianapolis & served as its President
- 1880 – Ran as Vice president of the United States with Winfield S. Hancock

Mr. English amassed quite a fortune by purchasing depreciated bonds issued by Texas as a sovereign government, which subsequently appreciated in value and left him a very rich man.

- 1880-1896 Family moved to Indianapolis using Englishton Park as a “summer residence.” Building of the “English Block” on the Northeast corner of the circle in Indianapolis was begun with the construction of the 250-room English Hotel and also the English Opera House adjoining that structure.

In 1847, while serving as a clerk in the Treasury Department in Washington DC, William H. married Miss Emma Mardulis Jackson, of Virginia. She died in 1877. They had two children, William Eastin English and Rosalind, both born in Lexington, Indiana.

William Eastin English (11/3/1850 – 4/23/1926).

- 1892 was a delegate to the Chicago National Democratic Convention and presented a very well received speech to nominate Grover Cleveland for President of The United States.
- 1896- Again a delegate to the National Convention from the Seventh Indiana District.
- William E. changed political parties and was a popular speaker in the Republican Convention for Presidential nominees McKinley and Roosevelt.
- 1904 Again campaigned for President Roosevelt
- 1908 Accompanied President Taft on his speaking tour of the State of Indiana
- 1912 Delegate to the Republican National Convention in Chicago

In 1898, then President McKinley offered William E. a position as a Major of the Army to serve as Paymaster during the Spanish-American War. He declined that offer that he might serve on the front as a commander of a Calvary Division He was commissioned a Captain. He was severely injured at the battle of San Juan Hill in Cuba. His horse (Santiago) was hit by a shrapnel shell during this battle; this caused the horse to rear and fall atop Captain English, severely injuring him internally. Colonel Theodore Roosevelt sustained a slight wound from the same shell that hit Captain English’s horse.

Rosalind Orr English (3/10/1903 – 12/22/1924)

Captain William E. English and his wife Helen Orr English had one daughter Rosalind Orr English, whom was named after the Captain’s sister Rosalind. At the age of four, his daughter Rosalind unveiled the statue of her Grandfather, William H. English on the public square in Scottsburg on September 28, 1907. Rosalind Orr English was admitted to the State Bar for her lawyer license on her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. She was an avid fan of horseback riding and flying airplanes. Her life was cut short by a freak automobile accident on December 22, 1924 near Putnamville, Indiana.

## Englishton Park

The old English Manor Home was built in 1840-41 and it was expanded to a 23-room Mount Vernon style home in 1896. This house was razed, to the disappointment of all concerned, in 1969 because of much-needed repairs and the fact that the original structure had no foundation but was placed on stones.

The existing barn was erected in 1914. Hewn posts salvaged from a barn built by Captain English’s Grandfather, Elisha Gale English, were used in part of the construction of this barn. The structure was built in 100 days at a cost reported at \$15,000, by a large group of laborers.

Upon the death of Captain William E. English in 1926, Englishton Park was left in trust by his will, for the establishment of a “Summer Home (with authority to extend same to other seasons if desired)” for needy children “primarily of Marion County, secondarily of Scott County.”

The 800-acre estate stood virtually abandoned from 1926 to 1958 when the court awarded it to Presbyterian National Mission Homes, Inc from the Lincoln Trails Synod. The court interpreted the terms of the will liberally and gave the corporation permission to use the estate for children of Marion, Scott and other Indiana Counties, and for other age groups as it saw fit.

Beginning in 1959, the original Manor House was used for the housing and care of several older persons after being refurbished and repaired to correct problems of some 30 years of standing unused.

### **Roe-Seal Retirement Home**

The Roe-Seal home was built thru a bequest of Miss Mary Roe of Kentland Indiana. The home is named in honor of her father, mother, and sister, Charles, Addie and Mildred Roe and her Aunt, Grandfather and Grandmother, Mary, Robert and Mary Stewart Seal. The Roe-Seal Home was first built with 17 Apartments for the Elderly in 1962. An expansion to this original structure, completed in 1977, is called the "Parker Wing" adding 22 additional apartments. The Parker Wing was financed by sale of 100 acres of farmland in the original bequest located in Nabb, IN. Katherine Parker lived in a home on the main campus, beginning in 1962. Her husband, Albert G. Parker, Jr., was President of Hanover College from 1929 until his death in 1958. She was a wonderful disciple of Englishton Park and was instrumental in many of the fund raising efforts for Englishton Park -- some of these benefits were bequests just recently received by the Corporation. Another noted fund raising champion was Dr. R. F. (Dutch) Struck, who was a retired Athletic Director at Hanover College and who had coached many of the college's sports teams. Starting in 1975, he served as Administrator of the Roe-Seal Retirement Home and then retired (again), assuming part-time duties as Director of Public Relations and Promotion for Englishton Park in the 1970's -- enhanced by his reputation as a notable events speaker. (It is noted that the largest bequests received by the Board of Directors have come from individuals whose support for Englishton Park is not related to the Presbyterian Ministries or former residents.) The census in Roe-Seal had been declining for several years and in 1997 the facility was closed. Changes in the Medicare and Medicaid rules and newer facilities for senior residents in the area led the Board, reluctantly, to this decision.

In 1996, a tenant was found who appeared to have proper funding and management to utilize these buildings for a year-round program for helping and training children with special needs. To the great dismay of the Directors and after significant preparatory expense, the Board was sorely disappointed when the business did not blossom and this program was terminated in November 2000 during a downturn in the national economy.

Without significant income, the Directors had no choice but to sell 406 acres of the original estate in late 2002. The acreage that was sold at auction was land that had never been used by the Englishton Park Presbyterian Ministries programs. It was not foreseen that this land would be needed in the future. The proceeds from sale of the property as well as continuing bequests received from families of Roe-Seal residents who lived at Englishton Park, allowed the Board to continue its search for a supporting tenant.

### **The Children's Summer Program**

Dr. Harve Rawson founded a nationally recognized and ongoing Summer Program for troubled children in 1970, following a pilot program in 1969. Dr. Rawson, now retired, served as the head of the Psychology Department at Hanover College. He also served as Program Director of the "Englishton Park Academic and Training Program" from 1970 until 1993 when he stepped back for the current directors, Lisa and Thomas Barnett to assume that role. In recognition of these contributions, Dr Rawson has been honored by the State of Indiana as a "Sagamore of the Wabash" and by the State of Kentucky as a "Kentucky Colonel." Dr. Rawson still coordinates the 10-day staff training each summer, prior to the arrival of the first campers.

The children, who attend this short-termed residential treatment program, are mainly from Marion County, but also come from Scott and many other Indiana counties in addition to surrounding states. The campers are 6 – 12 years old and are only accepted by referral from agencies currently working with them. Up to 36 children are grouped in each of four 10-day sessions making the total number of children approximately 130 – 140 each summer. Every child has an individual therapy program when they arrive. Sixteen staff members work with these 36 children in each of four summer sessions. Currently, this program is one of the longest-lived short-term residential treatment programs in the State of Indiana.

Beginning in 1962, a children's program was also operated for 15 years, under the direction of the Scott County Schools, for the Special Education of mentally retarded and learning disabled children from Scott County. The modified lower floor of the magnificent barn was used for this purpose. In an additional room of the barn, Lexington School's Kindergarten classes were held for a short time, beginning in 1977.

### **The New Horizon**

In the spring of 2004, after a lengthy search, the Board of Directors learned of Three Springs, a nationally recognized program for teaching children with learning disabilities, headquartered in Huntsville, Alabama. The mission of Three Springs is the healing and restoration of boys, aged 13-18, and their families. This organization is expanding the number of facilities they operate and they appreciate the possibilities afforded by the Englishton Park opportunity.

A lease agreement was completed in mid-2004. Unfortunately, unforeseen difficulties in acquiring all of the permits necessary to operate a program of this caliber resulted in a number of delays and additional expenses. Nevertheless, a joyful new chapter in the history of Englishton Park will commence in the fall of 2005, when the Three Springs residential program opens for the special educational needs of children from all over the Midwest.

In summary, the Englishton Park story is a rich tradition of community awareness and participation. The Board of Trustees is very proud to continue this tradition in our current relationships with Three Springs, the English Foundation (Indianapolis), the local and regional Presbyterian Churches, the Madison Area Special Services Unit, Hanover College, the Scott County Regional Sewer District, and many, many other organizations that regularly come in contact with Englishton Park.

*Compiled with assistance from many Board Members, past and present, and  
Friends of Englishton Park Presbyterian Ministries.*

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