

ARCH R. ENGLISH

(December 18, 1888 – September 5, 1963)

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After graduating from the Tracy High School in 1907, Arch English began reading law in the offices of “Nat” J. Robinson. On March 2, 1910, he was admitted to the bar,¹ and became the junior partner in Robinson & English. He was twenty-one years old. Two years later, the two men placed short biographical sketches in a history of Lyon County. His was short:

ARCH R. ENGLISH (1887)(sic) is a lawyer of Tracy and a native of Lyon county. He was born in Tracy December 18, 1887 (sic), and with the exception of a few years spent in Waseca he has ever since resided in the city in which he was born. After graduating from the Tracy High School he read law in the office of N. J. Robinson and was admitted to the bar March 2, 1910. On that date he formed a partnership with Mr. Robinson and has since engaged in practice as a member of the firm of Robinson & English. He is a member of the Gopher Club, a social organization.

Our subject is a son of Michael and Tillie (Boydell) English, residents of Tracy. The father was born in Vermont and the mother in Chicago. They came to Lyon county in 1887. There are three children in the family, Bert L., editor of the *Tracy Headlight*; Florence A. and Arch R. Mr. English was married at Watertown, South Dakota, January 1, 1912, to Pearl D. Sturdevant, a native of Wisconsin and a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Sturdevant.²

¹ *1 Roll of Attorneys: Supreme Court, State of Minnesota, 1858-1970* 100 (State Law Library, 2011). He was first admitted by the district court, and later filed his oath with the Clerk of the Supreme Court.

² Arthur P. Rose, *An Illustrated History of Lyon County, Minnesota* 390 (1912). For Robinson’s profile see “Net J. Robinson (1872-1927)” (MLHP, 2014).

The firm dissolved in 1920 when Robinson withdrew from active practice due to poor health. Thereafter English practiced by himself for many years. While never a candidate for elective office, he maintained a commitment to the community by serving at various times on the school board and other local commissions, as president of the Ninth Judicial District Bar Association and on the governor's crime commission. In 1935, the following profile appeared in Theodore Christian's multi-volume history of the state:

ARCH R. ENGLISH was admitted to the Minnesota bar March 2, 1910, and since that date has accumulated an impressive measure of success and distinction as a member of the bar at Tracy. Lawyers in this and several adjoining judicial districts speak with uniform respect and admiration of Mr. English's individual attainments and his high fidelity to the ideals and ethical star of the legal profession,

He was born at Tracy December 18, 1888, a son of Michael and Matilda (Boydell) English. Michael English, a native of Vermont, spent forty years in the service of the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad, and for many years was a veteran engineer on the division running out of Tracy. He had come to Lyon County in 1887 and for a time the family lived at Waseca. He was a resident of Mankato and was retired when he died in 1930. Matilda Boydell English, who makes her home at Minneapolis, is of Scotch-French ancestry. Her parents died during the great Chicago fire in 1871.

Arch H. English, with the exception of a few years at Waseca, has lived his entire life at Tracy. He graduated from high school in 1907, read law in the office of N. J. Robinson, and on being admitted to the bar March 2, 1910, was invited into a partnership with Mr. Robinson. The law firm of Robinson and English was very successful one until Mr. English retired in 1920 and since that date Mr. English has conducted his law business individually. To his work he has brought both talent and

a sound knowledge that has been the product of ripe scholarship and industrious application to the vast body of jurisprudence. His clientage is no means confined to his own judicial district.

He has enjoyed a highly successful private practice and has no ambition for public office. However, he served an unexpired term of one year as county attorney. He has appreciated the professional honor paid him in his election on several different occasions as president of the Ninth Judicial District Bar Association. He is a member of the Minnesota State Bar Association and on its judiciary committee, and is serving as a member of the governor's crime commission. He is a past president of the Civic and Commerce Association of Tracy, past president and member of the Kiwanis Club, and was on the Charter Commission of Tracy. In politics he has been a staunch Republican through the years since he came to manhood, and not only served as chairman of the Lyon County Republican Committee but as a member of the State Central Committee and is a delegate to numerous state conventions. Mr. English likes outdoor life. He owns a summer place at Green Lake, and his favorite diversions are fishing and golf. At Watertown, South Dakota, January 1, 1912, he married Pearl S. Sturdevant. She was born in Wisconsin, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Sturdevant. They have two children, Ruth, attending the University of Minnesota, and Jack, in high school at Tracy.³

He continued to practice solo until he formed a partnership with Robert H. Velta. His death on September 5, 1963, at age seventy-four, was reported on the front page of the weekly *Tracy Headlight-Herald*:

**Funeral Saturday for Arch English, 74,
One of State's Foremost Trail Lawyers**

³ Theodore Christianson, 3 *Minnesota: The Land of Sky-tinted Waters* 510-11 (1935).

Over 25 district court judges and area lawyers were among the many friends who attended funeral services for Arch R. English at the Ohman funeral chapel last Saturday afternoon.

Fr. Frederick G. Lambert, vicar of the Tracy-Marshall Episcopal churches, officiated. Pallbearers were Wm. Rupp, Harold Shoeman, Fred Felix, Howard MacFarland, Fred Timm and Clarence Donnelly.

Mr. English, local practicing attorney for over 60 (sic) years and considered one of the state's outstanding trial lawyers, died last Thursday evening at his home following a prolonged illness. He was 74 years of age.

Arch R. English was born this city Dec. 18, 1888, the son of a pioneer family, Mr. and Mrs. Michael English, who came to Lyon county in 1887. He was married to Pearl Sturdevant Jan. 1, 1912, to which union two children were born.

Surviving are his wife, Tracy, and one daughter, Ruth English Gregg of Wilma. A son, Jack English, died May 6, 1944.

After graduation from Tracy high school, Mr. English started his profession by reading law in the office of N. K. (sic) Robinson and was admitted to the practice of law in Minnesota on March 2, 1910.

He was considered an astute trial lawyer and noted throughout the state for trial work in state, federal and appellate courts.

Arch, as he was called by intimate friends, practiced his profession all his life in this city, and in 1960, was honored to receive the title of senior counselor from the Minnesota State Bar association.

In addition he served as a member of several advisory committees appointed by the Minnesota supreme court. At the time of his death, he was the senior member of the law firm English & Velta.

Mr. English was a charter member of the Tracy Kiwanis Club, a member of the board of directors and past president of the Tracy Savings & Loan association, and served for many years on the Tracy board of education.

Mr. English also made many and valuable contributions of his time and advice to various civic enterprises and organizations.⁴ ◇

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RELATED ARTICLE

“Net J. Robinson (1872-1927)” (MLHP, 2014). ■

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Posted MLHP: August 19, 2014.

⁴ *Tracy Headlight-Herald*, September 12, 1963, at 1 (internment details and list of relatives at funeral omitted).