

# The Lewis Family of Talladega County

## A Brief History

THE LEWIS BRANCH of our family follows a long, distinguished and well-documented trail, from fourteenth-century Wales to New England's Massachusetts Bay Colony to the frontiers of the American South. In the mid 1830s, Alexander Lewis brought his family from his native South Carolina to the young state of Alabama. They were among the first settlers in northern Talladega County, where his daughter Margaret Rose married Alex English.

The first known Lewises lived on the mountainous western side of England in the counties Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire of southern Wales. Although Wales was conquered by England in 1284, it was only in 1536 that the two nations were formally united under the English Crown. Even so, the Welsh have maintained their own language and identity ever since. It has been said of our Lewis family of the Van, Glamorganshire, that "no one of its members was of great historical importance. Its distinguishing characteristics were a lengthy pedigree and a marvelous aptitude for the acquisition of property." Our Lewis family's surname was derived from *Llewelyn*, beginning with Rhys Ap Llewellyn, who was born in 1370. Around 1508, *Llewelyn* was anglicized as *Lewis* with the birth of Edward Lewis at Pencoed Castle, Llanfarthin, Monmouthshire.<sup>1</sup>

It was one of Edward's great grandsons who brought the Lewis name to North America. Edmund Lewis (1601 to 1650) had broken with family tradition by marrying Mary Corey, a woman from an English family and a family without social standing. For generations, the Lewises would have been affiliated with the Church of England, but Edmund and Mary apparently aligned with the Puritans. The deeply religious Puritans maintained a relationship with the Church of England, but adamantly opposed its ceremonial manner of worship. They even banned the celebration of Christmas, owing to its "pagan" rituals, which they associated with Catholicism. In 1628, a group of wealthy Puritans purchased territorial land from New England's Plymouth Colony with the intent of settling it as a tightly knit, extremely righteous "nation of saints." (Plymouth Colony had been founded by colonists known today as the Pilgrims who arrived on the *Mayflower* in 1620, only eight years earlier. The Pilgrims were different from the Puritans in that they had severed *all* ties to the Church of England.) In late April 1634, the Lewises sailed to North

1. The distinguished British writer and lay theologian C.S. Lewis (1898 to 1963) was also one of Edward's descendants.

America from Ipswich on the *Elizabeth*, accompanied by their two sons, aged three and nine months. They were among the 20,000 educated Protestant families who fled England during what has been called the Great Migration of the 1630s.

After more than two months at sea, the *Elizabeth* landed at Boston in July, and like most of the passengers, the Lewis family settled in nearby Watertown west of Boston. Both towns had been founded four years earlier. In 1636, Edmund Lewis was examined by the General Court to confirm his religious views, then formally admitted to the Puritan church and declared a freeman. This change in status granted him the full privileges of citizenship, including the freedom to vote. Over the next several years, he acquired 147 acres of land in Watertown.

Another five children were born to Edmund and Mary. The family moved to Lynn, a coastal area north of Boston about 1643, but apparently retained some or all of their holdings in Watertown. In Lynn, he purchased forty acres on Nahant Bay. (Today, Lewis Street marks the location of his property there.) Edmund is believed to have worked as a sea captain. Born in the closing years of Queen Elizabeth's reign, he died in Lynn in January 1650, at age 49.

As colonists, the next three generations of Lewises remained subjects of the English crown. Although far removed from the civil wars over religion that wracked England and imperiled its monarchy, the colonies experienced their own conflicts over faith, largely stemming from the Puritans' strict, unyielding beliefs and approach to worship. Those who refused to conform to the Puritan way were subjected to fines, banishment, physical punishment or imprisonment. In 1635, the Puritans expelled all the Baptists from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Among them was Roger Williams, who had criticized the Puritan colonists for expropriating Indian land without compensation. The persecution of nonconforming Protestants would continue until Presbyterian and Baptist immigrants began outnumbering the Puritan population. The gradual migration of the Lewises to frontiers where the Puritan influence was weak may signal their discomfort with Puritan dogma. In the 1660s, Edmund's second son, Thomas Lewis (1633 to 1709), relocated to Swansea, a community of Welsh Baptists. His descendants would eventually settle in New Jersey and become Quakers.

The Quaker faith, or Religious Society of Friends, had originated in England as a Protestant religion without creeds or a hierarchal organization. The Friends simply believed in the ability of every human being to experience and access "the light within" without an intermediary and see "that of God in everyone." Known to use the word *thee* in place of *you* and dress plainly, they believed in the spiritual equality of men and women, and refused to swear oaths to a government or participate in war. The persecution they experienced in Massachusetts led them to New Jersey, and then to Pennsylvania, a commonwealth established by William Penn and run according to Quaker principles.

Much of what we know for certain about our Lewis ancestors begins with Thomas's great grandson William Lewis (1746 to 1830). He was born in one of the colonial New Jersey farming communities west of the city of New York more than a century after his ancestors' arrival in Massachusetts.

The Lewises in America appear to have been primarily village tradesmen rather than farmers; what farming they did was probably out of necessity, to meet their own needs. Because their livelihood wasn't invested in a single piece of land, they had shifted southward, generation by generation, from colony to colony. As a young man, William Lewis apparently moved to Philadelphia, which was by then the largest city and busiest seaport of the colonies. Musically inclined, he compiled a songbook in 1763, its leather binding titled "William Lewis's Singing Book" and its pages filled with scales, notes with explanations, as well as tunes by various composers. Sometime in the late 1760s, he relocated from Philadelphia to the southern frontier, giving his descendants their enduring Southern identity.

According to William's son, Alexander (as related by Alexander's grandson James S.C. English in 1927), William and

his brother moved first to Virginia, then to South Carolina, where they built gristmills for grinding grain into flour. He returned to Philadelphia and married Margaret Linn, then “brought her to South Carolina in a Jersey wagon, a one-horse wagon with top to it, long bridal trip, put up a shop and built wagons for sale. Her father and mother had died. She had a brother Joseph. Her father was a merchant, her brother going on with the business. He died. She was expecting to get his property but did not get anything. His partner had sold out and gone to parts unknown.” William and Margaret Lewis settled in the Fishing Creek area of Chester County.

**William Lewis** (1746 to 1830)

**Margaret Linn** (1745 to 1834)

*Their Children*<sup>2</sup>

Sarah Lewis Wallace (1772 to 1824)

William Lewis II (1777 to 1822)

**Alexander Lewis** (1780 to 1879)

Samuel Lewis (1782 to 1832)

James Lewis (1784, to 1812)<sup>3</sup>

Margaret Lewis Boyd (1786 to 1888)

Col. Joseph Lewis (1789 to 1861)

Most of the pioneer families in Chester County were farmers from Pennsylvania, but it took more than farmers to establish a vital community. William Lewis could be described as an enterprising tradesman. He is said to have been a wagon builder and to have owned a gristmill as well as an inn. The record is confused by there having been two William Lewis households in the area in 1800, perhaps related, and both were known as millers and innkeepers. Each family left a lasting mark on maps of Chester County. Today, two of its rural communities bear the Lewis name. The first is Lewis, near Fishing Creek and about ten miles north of present-day Chester. Originally known as Lewis Turnout, it appeared as Lewis on a South Carolina map published in London in 1780, a map that does not show the county seat of Chester. (Chester, which served as a trade center for the surrounding farm communities, first appeared on maps in the early 1800s.) Lewis Turnout marked the location of Lewis Tavern, a stagecoach inn on the branch of the Great Wagon Road that passed through York and Chester counties. Our William Lewis is thought to have been the original innkeeper.<sup>4</sup> The second community, Lewisville, lies about nine miles northeast of Chester, near the Broad and Sandy Rivers, on the main road leading from Chester to Fish Dam Ford, near present-day Richburg. It first appeared on a South Carolina map in 1838.

James English went on to say of William Lewis: “Great Grandfather was a Quaker. Grandmother, a Scotch Irish Presbyterian. He joined the church with her, was elected Elder.” Most of the Chester settlers were Scottish-Irish from Ulster (Northern Ireland) as well as Presbyterian. It was said that in Chester County, even the dogs were Presbyterian. The Lewises joined the Fishing Creek Presbyterian Church. Established in 1752, it was one of several early Presbyterian churches in the Chester area. Presbyterians in the Carolinas were on the forefront of the revolt against the British, and independence was fervently preached from the pulpit. On Nov. 4, 1775, William Lewis enlisted in the Continental Army, 2nd South Carolina Regiment, and later fought in the Revolutionary War, although taking up arms would

2. Margaret gave birth to eleven children, but four of them are said to have died in infancy.

3. He died in the War of 1812, serving with the Charleston Artillery under Captain Beatty.

4. A turnout was the place where a stagecoach turned off a main road to reach a nearby inn. Thought to have been built in the 1750s, the simple wooden structure still stands and is of historical significance: Aaron Burr spent a night there in 1807, chained to a bench, while being transported to Washington to face charges of treason. He had served as Vice President under Thomas Jefferson, but his political career ended after he killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel three years earlier.

have violated the pacifist Quaker beliefs instilled in him as a child. Two significant battles of the war were fought in Chester County in 1780. At Fishing Creek Presbyterian Church, the names of church members who served the cause of liberty are listed on a stone monument in the church cemetery; among them is William Lewis. He, his wife Margaret Linn Lewis and eleven other members of the family are buried there.

**Alexander Lewis** (1780 to 1879)

**Amaritta Rainey** (1787 to 1875)

*Their Children*

Mary Celine Lewis Best (1809 to 1880)

William Rainey Lewis (1811 to 1870s)

**Margaret Rose Lewis English** (1813 to 1890)

Elizabeth Ada Lewis Adams (1817 to 1909)

Samuel L. Lewis (1825 to 1864)

Alexander Lewis was born four years after the United States declared its independence from England. In 1809, he married Amaritta Rainey, the daughter of Samuel Rainey (1743 to 1817) and Mary Fondren (1752 to 1842) of York, South Carolina. Samuel Rainey was a wealthy, well-to-do plantation owner.

What little information there is about Alexander suggests that he, having been raised a Quaker, took issue with slavery. There is no record of his ever having purchased a slave, but when he and Amaritta married, her father, Samuel Rainey, gave them an unknown number of slaves as a wedding gift. Sometime later, Alexander sold a twenty-year-old female slave and her four-year-old son. Public records indicate friction between Alexander and his father-in-law stemming from Rainey's thwarted attempt to visit his former slaves without Alexander's consent. When Rainey died in 1813, he bequeathed Amaritta three more slaves: Judy, Jerry and Lewis. Unlike, the other Lewises of Chester County, Alexander owned relatively few slaves—fluctuating from seven in 1810 to four in 1830, the year his own father died. William Lewis's will states: "To my son Alexander, I will and bequeath my Negro boy Bob at the decease of my wife for the better purpose of drawing the affections of his family towards him." Mary Celine Lewis, their eldest child, wed Joshua Davidge Best (1802-52) around 1830. It's said that Alexander and Amaritta were adamantly opposed to their marriage, owing to Joshua's occupation as a plantation overseer managing the work of enslaved laborers.

Alexander, Amaritta and their four younger children, ages 11 to 25, moved from South Carolina to Alabama about 1836. They were accompanied by Joshua and Mary Celine Best and their two children, as well as four of Joshua's siblings.<sup>5</sup> Alexander was then 51 years old, and it was only the promise of a better future for his children that led him to leave Chester County and undertake such an arduous move. He was undoubtedly influenced by his nephew, William Linn Lewis.<sup>6</sup> In the northwestern corner of Talladega County, Alexander purchased two 40-acre parcels of land. This area close to Talladega village, the county seat, would be dominated by Presbyterian farmers from Chester County. Twenty-five-year-old Margaret Rose was the first of the Lewis children to

5. The Best siblings were Joshua Davidge Best (1802-52); William Benedict Best (1805-61); Nancy Bell Best (1806-63, the wife of Robert Walker McElhenny, 1801-63); Thomas Lee Best (1810-80); and Isaac Newton Best (1814-53).

6. William Linn Lewis (the son of Alexander's brother Samuel) was an adventurous 22-year-old school teacher who journeyed to Alabama in 1830. After teaching on the new state's western frontier, he moved to Talladega County in 1832, in time to observe the Muscogee Creek Indian way of life, learn a little of their language and witness their removal to the western territories. What he reported in letters to the Lewis family in Chester County no doubt encouraged Alexander and numerous others to migrate to northern Talladega County over the next several years.

marry in Alabama. She and Alex English were wed in November 1838. He was the son of Samuel Alexander and Mary Crawford English.<sup>7</sup> The English and Lewis families are said to have been neighbors in Chester County before the Englishes moved to Alabama in 1820. Elizabeth Ada Lewis married Isaac Abner Adams in 1839. His family had also originated in Chester County. Margaret and Elizabeth's older brother William Rainey Lewis married in 1847 before moving to Mansfield, DeSoto Parish, in northwest Louisiana. They were followed there in about 1849 by Joshua and Mary Celine Best and their nine children. A tenth child would be born to Mary Celine before Joshua's untimely death in 1852, about the time that Joshua's sister Nancy Best McElhenny and her husband moved from Talladega County to DeSoto Parish.

The information collected in censuses over the decades that followed describes Alexander and Amaritta as living and farming moderately. In 1850, they owned forty acres, 23 of which were improved, with one slave, a 44-year-old woman who was most likely a house servant. Their nearest neighbors were the families of their daughter Elizabeth Ada Adams, who was widowed in 1854, and nephew William Linn Lewis. After William Linn Lewis's wife died in 1847, he married Esther Adams, the sister-in-law of Elizabeth Ada Lewis Adams.

In 1860, Alexander owned one horse, four milk cows and eleven pigs. His forty acres were planted in wheat, indian corn, peas, beans, sweet potatoes and a little cotton (two bales were harvested that year). He was credited with real estate valued at \$350 and a personal estate of \$795, which implies his ownership of no more than two slaves.

Sam Lewis, Alexander and Amaritta's younger son, had come of age in Talladega County and, like most young men there, aspired to farming. In the 1840s, he went to live with his sister Margaret Rose and her husband Alex English on their large farm. Working alongside Alex, he was afforded experience he could never hope to gain on his parents' more simple farm. After marrying Eliza Towery in 1850, they moved to her father's property in the upper northwest corner of the county. In the fall of 1863, at age 38, he was forced to enlist in the Army of the Confederacy, leaving Eliza with the farm and their six children, the youngest only a few months old.

Whatever Quaker pacifist principles the Lewises adhered to had been set aside when Alexander's father, William Lewis, took up arms in the Revolutionary War. Alexander's younger brother, Samuel, had died fighting in the War of 1812. During the Civil War, Alexander and Amaritta would await news of their son Sam; their grandsons Jim Adams and Jim English, as well as two of Mary Celine's sons and her son-in-law, Michael Pearson.

Alexander's nephew and neighbor William Linn Lewis had grieved the death of his son in the Battle of Antietam in September 1862. In August 1864, his sensibility led him to free the slaves he owned, with a written agreement requiring them to continue to work for him another four months, until Christmas day: "to gather crops, repair the plantation's fences, get firewood and do all such labor as may be reasonably required of them, to be obedient, industrious, and orderly..." He promised to continue to clothe and feed them, and also share a quarter of his crops and one sixth of "the pork fatted for bacon." The four men and three women accepted the terms of the written contract on behalf of themselves and their minor children by marking an X beside their names.

When the war finally ended in April 1865, Alexander and Amaritta were mourning the deaths of their son Sam and two grandsons. They went uncounted in the 1870 Census, and Amaritta died five years later at age 88. Alexander was most likely living with his daughter Margaret English, when he died in 1879, well into his 99th year. The local newspaper took note of his longevity. He was the last of the generation that bridged the defining years of the country's

7. Two of Alex English's sisters, Lizzie and Mary, would later marry Joshua Best's younger brothers, Thomas and Isaac, further uniting the Lewis, Best and English families.

history, from the Revolutionary War that formed a nation through the Civil War that threatened to tear it apart. Alexander and Amaritta, as well as many of their descendants and relations, are said to have been buried in the Lewis Family Cemetery, the location of which is yet unknown.

## **The Children of Alexander and Amaritta Lewis**

**Mary Celine Lewis** (1809 to after 1904)

**Joshua Davidge Best** (1802 to 1852)

### *Their Children*

Eli Richard Best (1832 to 1913)

Margaret Newman Best Yarbrough (1833-59)

William L. Best (1836 to 1864)

Mary E. Best Pearson Farmer (1837 to 1900)

Isaac Joshua Best (1840-1902)

Thomas Calhoun Best (1841 to 1871)

Sarah E. "Sallie" Best (1843-84)

Samuel Rainey Best (1845 to 1884)

Currie Best (1849 to 1900)

Mary Celine married Joshua Best in Chester County, South Carolina, about 1830. They and four of Joshua's siblings accompanied the entire Lewis family in their migration to Talladega County six years later. The Best brothers were all farmers, apparently sharing a driving ambition to establish plantations. In the late 1840s, when the mad rush of settlers to east Texas was underway, Joshua and Mary Celine moved with their eight children to DeSoto Parish in far western Louisiana, where her brother William Rainey Lewis, his wife and infant daughter lived on the adjoining farm. Mary Celine gave birth to another son in Louisiana. Whatever they reported in letters to their relatives back in Talladega County was enough to motivate Joshua's sister Nancy and her husband Robert McElhenny to join them. It's said that Joshua established a large workforce of enslaved people, but his ambitions would never be realized—he died in 1852. His 20-year-old son Eli Richard Best took over the farm and married six years later.

Joshua Best's family would become rooted in Louisiana, and there is no record of their ever returning to Alabama. Margaret, the elder daughter married in 1853, but apparently died in childbirth six years later.

In 1857, Mary E. Best married Michael Garland Pearson, a well-to-do young merchant in Mansfield, the parish's county seat. In December 1861, he enlisted in the 19th Louisiana Infantry Regiment as a sergeant of Co. H, known as the DeSoto Creoles. His rank was a testament to the respect his intellect and maturity commanded. They defended northern Mississippi at Shiloh, Corinth and Vicksburg before joining the Confederate Army of Tennessee in 1863. Following the Battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, he was promoted to captain and was wintering outside Dalton, Georgia, in February 1864 when he was granted a furlough to visit his family. Realizing the impossibility of traveling to and from DeSoto Parish in the time allowed, he chose to spend his furlough with Mary's relatives in Talladega County. The Best, Lewis and English families welcomed him, and he learned that Sam Lewis and Jim English were also stationed in the enormous camp at Dalton. He returned to camp carrying food and clothing for them. Captain Pearson and Emma English exchanged letters in the months that followed, a time when he was distraught from having not received mail from home over the past four months. Jim English's letters often mentioned seeing Captain Pearson until, in early June 1864, with the defense of Atlanta well underway, he wrote with the sad news that Captain Pearson had been killed on May 25 at New Hope Church.

Four of the five Best sons—Eli, William, Isaac and Samuel—joined Louisiana regiments and served close to home

during the Civil War. On April 8, 1864, Federal troops advanced upon Mansfield, and in the battle that followed, William Best was among the reported thousand Confederates who died that day. About 1867, Mary Best Pearson married Jesse Farmer, a local farmer. By 1900, she was widowed, sharing her home in Leesville, Louisiana, with 90-year-old Mary Celine, who died four years later.

**William Rainey Lewis** (1811 to after 1870)

**Christian (Ann) Ray** (1825 to after 1880)

*Their Children*

Mary Elizabeth Lewis Tabor (1848 to 1918)

James A. Lewis (1850 to unknown)

Samuel R. Lewis (1852 to unknown)

John R. Lewis (1854 to 1915)

William P. Lewis (1859 to unknown)

Neal J. Lewis (1863 to unknown)

William and Ann married in 1847, in Talladega Co. before moving to DeSoto Parish, Louisiana, where they lived on a farm adjoining the property of Joshua and Mary C. Best (his sister). They owned three slaves. About 1854, William purchased land near Rusk in Cherokee Co., Texas, and established a farm there. Rusk is about a hundred miles west of DeSoto Parish. They farmed 85 of their 410 acres, with corn their primary crop. William's personal property (primarily his ownership of slaves) was assessed at \$6,600 in 1860. At the outset of the Civil War, William was too old to be drafted, and his four sons, too young. After William's death sometime in the 1870s, his son James took over the farm and was caring for his mother and three younger brothers there in 1880. Nothing more of their family is known.

**Margaret Rose Lewis** (1813 to 1890)

**Alexander C. English** (1806 to 1851)

*Their Children*

Mary English (1839 to April 20, 1840)

William Alexander English (1841 to 1842)

Harriet Emmareta (Emma) English (1843 to 1901)

James Samuel Crawford (Jim) English (1844 to 1931)

Margaret Sarah (Sallie) English Weatherly (1846 to 1902)

Laura Jane English Williams (1848 to 1933)

Thomas Parker (Tommy) English (1850 to 1871)

As detailed in the English Family History, the Lewis family's move to Talladega County reunited them with the Englishes, a family they had known in Chester County. On Nov. 22, 1838, 25-year-old Margaret Rose Lewis married Alexander C. English.

**Elizabeth Ada Lewis** (1817 to 1909)

**Isaac Abner Adams** (1816 to 1854)

*Their Children*

James Alexander Adams (1842 to 1863)

William Giles Adams (1844 to 1846)

Mary Jane Adams Shepherd (1848 to 1911)

Samuel Augustus Adams (1850 to unknown)

Sarah Ellie (Sallie) Adams (1852 to unknown)

Isaac Abner Adams II (1854 to 1905)

The English and Adams families maintained a close relationship through the two Lewis daughters, Margaret Rose and Elizabeth Ada. Elizabeth Ada Lewis was described as petite and proudly red-haired; it was said that she ate a sweet potato every day to maintain the color of her hair. She married Isaac Adams on April 11, 1839. He was the son of James Monroe and Mary Ann Giles Adams, who had also moved to Talladega County from Chester County, South Carolina. In the 1840 census, newlyweds Isaac and Elizabeth Ada were farming near his parents, her parents and her cousin William Linn Lewis, as well as the related family of Nancy and Robert McElhenny. The 1850 census described Isaac's farm in modest terms: eighty acres, valued at \$600, forty of which were tilled. He owned four slaves: three girls, ages 1, 8 and 18, and a five-year old boy—obviously none of them was a farm laborer. Elizabeth Ada gave birth to six children, one of whom died in infancy. Their sixth child was born six weeks after Isaac's death at age 38 in 1854 and was named for him.

Elizabeth Ada's sister Margaret Rose English had been widowed three years earlier, which no doubt strengthened the bond between their two families. Both had sons named Jim—James Alexander Adams, born in 1842, and James S.C. English, born in 1844—and the two boys became as close as brothers. In 1862, Jim Adams enlisted in the 30th Regiment of the Alabama Infantry. Disease was rampant in the Confederate camps, and when Jim Adams's health began to fail, he was transferred to an Army hospital in Talladega. He died there in July 1863.

After the war, Elizabeth Ada continued to farm with the help of her teenaged sons Samuel and Isaac. In September 1870, her daughter Mary Jane married William Green Shepherd, the 28-year-old son of one of their neighbors. That year's census valued her property at \$900. Living with Elizabeth Ada and her sons were Eliza Adams, a 40-year-old black woman and her four young children. It's quite possible that Eliza had been the 18-year-old slave that the Adams owned in 1850. She was described in the 1870 census as the family's domestic servant.

In 1880, when Elizabeth Ada was 58 years old, her son Isaac had taken charge of the farm with his wife Mary. Also living on the premises were two of the servant Eliza Adams's sons: 26-year-old Henry Adams, with his wife and children, and 21-year-old Tom Adams; both were farmers, both illiterate. Eliza had apparently died. Henry would name his daughter Ada.

At the turn of the century, Isaac Adams continued to farm, along with his wife Mary and their children: Janie (17), William (14), James (10) and Ada (5), and his 83-year-old mother, Elizabeth Ada. Their nearest neighbors were Isaac's sister Mary Jane Lewis Shepherd, her husband and their seven children. Eliza's son Henry, then widowed, rented a farm nearby.

Elizabeth Ada, the last of Alexander and Amaritta's children, died in 1909 and is said to have been buried at the Lewis Family cemetery (locale unknown).

**Samuel L. (Sam) Lewis** (1825 to May 1864)

**Ellen Elizabeth "Eliza" Towery** (1835 to 1910)

*Their Children:*

Mary Ellen Lewis Perkins (1852 to 1942)

Robert A. Lewis (1853 to unknown)

Elizabeth M. Lewis (1855 to unknown)

R.A. Lewis (daughter, 1857 to unknown)

Annie Laura Lewis (Sanders) (1861 to 1915)

James Samuel Lewis (1863 to 1910)



Samuel Lewis was the youngest of Alexander and Amaritta's children—the “baby,” sixteen years younger than their first born. The move of Mary Celine and William to Louisiana left Margaret Rose, Elizabeth Ada and Sam in Talladega County to care for their aging parents. In 1850, Sam was living on the English family's farm with Margaret Rose's family, which by then included five young children. Working alongside Alex, he could gain far more experience than on his father's small farm. Alex paid Sam one-fifth of the proceeds from each year's crop, and what he earned and learned allowed him to marry Eliza Towery on Dec. 18, 1850. She was from a family outside the Lewis family's circle of acquaintances.<sup>8</sup> Her parents, Walter B. and Malina Burks Towery, farmed 200 acres in the upper northwest corner of the county, an area that would later be known as Eastaboga and fall within the bounds of Calhoun County. Her father primarily raised livestock, the grain to feed them and, of course, some cotton. He purchased additional land there in 1852.

The agricultural census of 1860 credits Sam with a modest farm in the northwestern corner of the county, most likely acquired from his father-in-law, mainly raising sheep for wool and growing wheat, corn and a few bales of cotton. Their near neighbors were the Daniel Rather and Isaac Kirksey families.<sup>9</sup> Eliza had given birth to four children and was then expecting another. Everything for Sam looked promising before the Civil War. Due to his age, he was spared conscription until 1863 when the age limit was raised, leaving him no choice but to enlist in the 30th Alabama Infantry Regiment,<sup>10</sup> which was then paroled at Demopolis, Alabama. It was late summer, the time of year when he should have been harvesting his crops and enjoying time with Eliza and their six children. She had given birth to his second son just a few months before Sam was forced to enlist. His nephew Jim English was also stationed at the Demopolis parole camp and mentioned Uncle Sam in his letters home: “He is well and doing well. I don't think he likes camp very much. He says if he knew what he sees now, he would not have come down here.”

After departing Demopolis, Sam's and Jim's regiments joined the Army of Tennessee at Chattanooga, where they fought in the Battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, then moved to Dalton, Georgia, where the defeated Confederates suffered through the winter of 1864, training to defend Atlanta against Sherman's army. On Dec. 9, 1863, Sam wrote to Alexander and Amaritta:

*Dear Father & Mother,*

*A few lines to let you know I am well & in good health at this time, hoping these lines may reach you and all of the friends well. I have no news to write. We are in one mile & half of Dalton, though I expect you have heard of our retreat since the battle at Chattanooga. We marched two days and one night. The Yankees was too hard for us there. Where I was we whipped them badly. I was on the extreme right. We fought one day there, though I was not in the hardest of the fight. I have no anxiety of being in another. There is no fun in it. I think there were at least three to our one. We lost a great deal of government property in our retreat to this place. It is a big job to move an army. The Yankees followed us. Our rear had a hard fight with them.*

*How long we will stay here I cannot say. My own opinion is we will not stay here long. I think we will fall back to Rome or Atlanta before long. I think our little confederacy is drawing fast to a close. The soldiers are very much out of heart. There is very little fight in them. I think they are tired of the war and anxious to get home.*

8. The ceremony was officiated by the Rev. H.E. Taliaferro, a Baptist minister remembered for his writings and for organizing Negro Baptist churches after the Civil War.

9. Daniel Rather, a son-in-law of Isaac Kirksey, would soon relocate his family to Texas. In 1878, Jim English would marry one of Kirksey's granddaughters.

10. His nephew Jim Adams had also served with the 30th Regiment.

*Home is all the talk with them. There was sixteen left our regiment a few nights ago. They did not go far before they was taken up. They are now under guard at this time.*

*Our loss in the fight, I cannot tell anything about, though I think was heavy. We lost two men killed and several wounded in our regiment. There was two men wounded close to where I was standing. The balls sung round me tolerable thick. We was in the woods. We got behind trees which sheltered us very much. Tennessee is entirely ruined. There is no fences, nor no timber. The soldiers has burnt everything up in places. Anyone that has not seen the army or the destruction has no idea. I have not seen a dozen of houses since I have been up here. I saw James English a few days ago. He was well. John King is missing. We don't know if he was killed or taken prisoner. He was on picket the morning the fight commenced. John King was put on the same place where I was, and that is the last account we have had of him. The health of the army is tolerable good.*

To boost morale while the army regrouped and to stem desertion, furloughs were granted, allowing some of the men to visit their families. Perhaps due to Sam's having enlisted so recently, he was denied furlough. During the six months the 30,000 troops were camped in the forests surrounding Dalton, Jim English only located his uncle that one time. In early May 1864, the Yankees began battling their way to Atlanta. On May 7, Sam Lewis died in the Battle of Rocky Face Ridge near Dalton. He was 37 years old.

After the war, many of the Southern families faced rebuilding their farms without husbands or sons, and opted instead to start anew in Texas. About 1871, Eliza and her children moved to eastern Texas. Nothing more is known of them.

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