

England Higgins 1828/9-1908

Mike Ford

Friends of Loxley Cemetery
Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 26 October 2022



Early Life

England Higgins (England) was born in Chippenham, Wiltshire in 1828/9. Birth Certificates were not mandatory until 1875, so all we have is an entry in the Parish Register for the 18 January 1829. Interesting to note that England's father was also called England and he was a Weaver by trade.

England's early life in this Garrison Town was unremarkable. He shared a house in Wood Lane with an elder brother & sister (Thomas & Eliza) & younger sister (Jane) together with his parents (England & Sarah).

In the 1841 Census, at the age of 12, he is listed as working in a Cloth Factory, possibly with his father.

At the age of 22, England was listed as an Agricultural Labourer in the 1851 Census.

BAPTISMS solemnized in the Parish of *Chippenham* in the County of *Wilt* in the Year 1829

When Baptized.	Child's Christian Name.	Parents Name.		Abode.	Quality, Trade, or Profession.	By whom the Ceremony was performed.
		Christian.	Surname.			
18 28/29 No. 1937.	John Son of	John England	Lee	Chippenham	Wooler	W. Short
18 29 No. 1938.	George Son of	Daniel Anne	Lee	Chippenham	Weaver	W. Short
18 30 No. 1939.	Maria Wife of	William Sarah	Sutton	Chippenham	Woolmaker	W. Short
18 31 No. 1940.	Thomas Son of	William Emma	Sutton	Chippenham	Wooler	W. Short
18 32 No. 1941.	William Son of	William Sarah	Sutton	Chippenham	Wooler	W. Short
18 33 No. 1942.	Thomas Son of	Mary Daniel	Sutton	Chippenham	Wooler	W. Short
18 34 No. 1943.	John Son of	John Elizabeth	Sutton	Chippenham	Wooler	W. Short
18 35 No. 1944.	England Son of	England Sarah	Higgins	Chippenham	Weaver	W. Short

Army Life

Following in his fathers footsteps, England completed his Attestation to join The Kings Regiment of Foot (8th Foot), on the 27 September 1852. It is interesting to note that England stated that he was 19 years of age at the time, when he was actually 23/24. The reason for this could have been that he considered himself too old to 'sign-up' as a new recruit.

His early army days were spent in the Regimental Barracks at Gosport in Hampshire. In 1846 the 8th Foot had commenced tours of duty to India to support the British East India Company in the administration of this vast continent. These continued for the next 14 years. In 1857, the local Indian regiments began the Indian Mutiny & England was shipped there.

Transcription courtesy of Find My Past.

my past
Record Transcription:
1851 England, Wales & Scotland Census
Wood Lane, Chippenham, Wiltshire, England

Household Members								
First name (s)	Last name	Relationship	Marital status	Sex	Age	Birth year	Occupation	Birth place
England	Higgins	Head	Married	Male	62	1789	Labourer On Road	Chippenham, Wiltshire, England
Sarah	Higgins	Wife	Married	Female	60	1791	-	Chippenham, Wiltshire, England
Eliza	Higgins	Daughter	Unmarried	Female	24	1827	Charwoman	Chippenham, Wiltshire, England
England	Higgins	Son	Unmarried	Male	22	1829	Ag Lab	Chippenham, Wiltshire, England

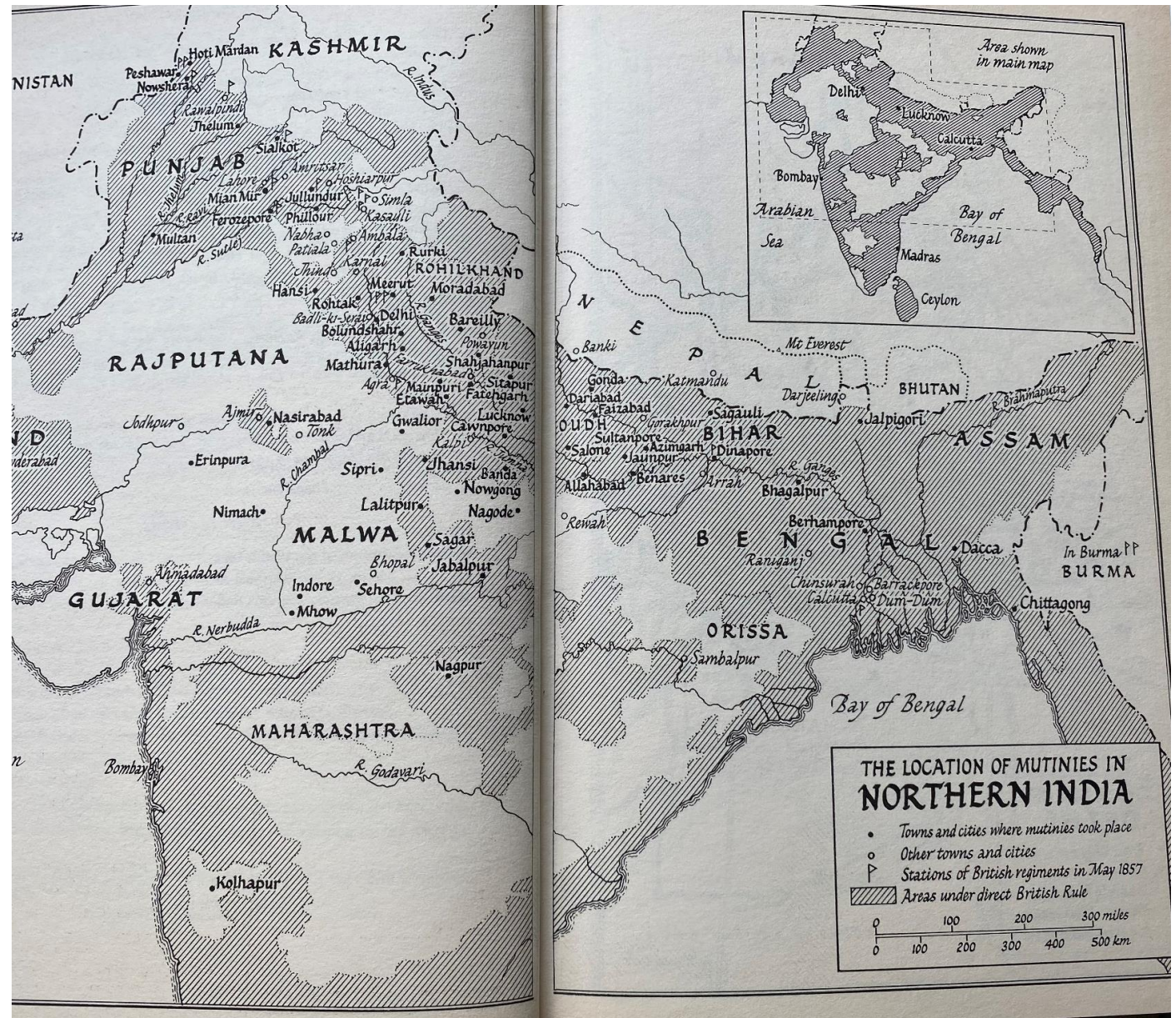
England Higgins's Census Details	
First name(s)	England
Last name	Higgins
Relationship	Son
Marital status	Unmarried
Sex	Male
Age	22
Birth year	1829
Occupation	Ag Lab
Birth place	England
Birth town	Chippenham
Birth town as transcribed	Chippenham
Birth county	Wiltshire
Birth county as transcribed	Wiltshire
Street	Wood Lane
Town	Chippenham
Parish	Chippenham
City	-
County	Wiltshire
Hamlet	-
Parliamentary borough	Chippenham
Municipal ward	-
Registration district	Chippenham
Archive reference	HO107
Piece number	1836
Folio	535
Page	16

Indian Mutiny (1857-8)

There were various reasons why the previously loyal Indian Regiments took-up arms against their employees, the British East India Company (BEIC). All the native regiments had British Officers who in a great many cases were seen as aloof. There was also a lack of career progression for able Indians.

However the spark that probably caused the start of the Mutiny was the BEIC's decision to introduce new rifle cartridges which were rumoured to have been lubricated with a mixture of pig & cow fat. It was therefore hardly surprising that the local troops, consisting of Muslims & Hindu's, rebelled. Pigs are considered taboo by all Muslims and the cow is held sacred to the Hindu's. Native soldiers refused to use the new cartridges & were gaoled as a result. Their comrades stormed the gaols & released the prisoners. Other native regiments joined in the Mutiny & soon the north of the country was in open rebellion.

Map extract taken from 'The Indian Mutiny 1857' by Saul David (Penguin Viking, 2002).



Aftermath

Prior to 1858, the British East India Company (BEIC) operated as a sovereign power on behalf of the British Crown. The uprising ultimately led to the dissolution of the BEIC with the British Raj taking over their powers on the 1 November 1858. At the same time, Indians were promised rights similar to those held by other British subjects, in a proclamation issued by Queen Victoria. However, the grant of these rights were slow to be realised. This led to the growth of nationalism which culminated in the grant of Independence in 1947, 75 years ago this year. Jullundur now lies just inside India, in the province of the Punjab (see map).

Map extract from The Times Concise History of the World (1982).



England in India

England's company was sent to a cantonment (camp) in Jullundur which is in the Punjab, in the foothills of the Himalayas. They arrived in May/June & were immediately involved in the action. The Punjab was known as the arsenal of India and, following native regiments capture of several magazines in the area, the 8th Foot were sent on a 24 mile night march to secure the magazine at Phillour on the river Sutlej. England's Military Record states that he received The India Mutiny Medal (without clasp), which means that he was not involved in the famous reliefs of Lucknow or Cawnpore, nor the defence of Delhi. However, England did receive injuries, which led to him being sent to the Invalid Depot in Chatham, where he appears on the 1861 Census. These injuries caused England to be 'invalided-out' of the Army in 1864.

On discharge from the army, for some unknown reason, England appears to move to Sheffield. He was never billeted in Hillsborough Barracks on Langsett Road nor did he have any known association with the city.

Photo courtesy of the The York & Lancaster Regimental Museum, Clifton Park, Rotherham.



Married Life

On discharge from the Army, England next appears in the records in 1865 in Sheffield, when he married Eliza Rawlins, from Sutton-in-Ashfield, in the now demolished St Phillips church in Shalesmoor. I believe that this was Eliza's second marriage as she has a daughter (Lydia) who was born in 1862. England & Eliza went on to have 6 children (Mary Anna, John England, Anne Elizabeth, William England, Bertha Elizabeth & Mabel), although the record implies that only 4 of them survived into adulthood.

England & Eliza are first listed as living at the famous Wadsley Cave House in the 1871 Census. At the time England was working as a Quarry Labourer. This period may have been that during which the family became involved with Loxley Chapel. In the 1881 Census the family had moved to 'Hillsboro' (further details unavailable).

*Photo courtesy of Picture Sheffield
(www.picturesheffield.com), ref. u10879.*



Living in Sheffield

The 1891 Census shows that the family have moved to 11 Woodland Street, off Langsett Road, Sheffield. Woodland Street is no longer there as the old terraced houses were replaced by the Langsett Estate in the 1960's.

In 1901 the family had moved to 42, Hawthorn Road in Hillsborough. The house still stands today. The Census stated that England is still working as a General Labourer at the age of 73. Obviously his Army Pension was insufficient to fund family life. His wife (Eliza), had died in January of that year. He is living with his youngest son (William) & daughter (Mabel).



Death in Sheffield

England's life finally came to an end in 1908. He was said to be 81 years of age.

His passing did not go un-noticed. A notice in the local newspaper stated that as well as the youngest children acting as Chief Mourners, the coffin was accompanied by members of the Sheffield & Hallamshire Veterans Association. The coffin, which was draped in the Union Jack flag, was given a 'guard of honour' by the old soldiers.

England's last resting place was Plot No H1, which is to the north-west of the Chapel. He joined his wife in the plot. It is an area of the Cemetery which has yet to be cleared by our volunteers, so we are yet to find out whether he has a gravestone and what any inscription might say.

We hope to complete this story in a future edition of the FoLC Newsletter.

Extract courtesy of H Waterhouse (Friends of Wardsend Cemetery).

