



Walter P. English (1867-1916)Elected 1984

W. P. English was a prolific composer of marches, and a tuba player and circus bandmaster. He was a member of the Barnum and Bailey Circus Band 1897-1907 (which toured Europe at the turn of the 19th century) and was a friend of fellow composer Russell Alexander, who played euphonium in the same band. English led the Barnum and Bailey band in 1907, and was bandmaster with Sells Floto in 1911 and 1912. He and Karl King became good friends, apparently during their mutual tenures with Sells Floto in 1912 and subsequent years. English's "Royal Decree" March was dedicated to King, and King returned the favor by dedicating "Garland Entrée" March to his friend English.

Music composed by W. P. English – how many do you know?

Aeolian Waltzes (Boos, 1897) Arizona Club March (York, 1909) Beyond the Rockies March (Barnhouse, 1905) Clair's Triumph March (Barnhouse, 1900) Culinary King March (Smith, 1917) Floto's Grand Pageant March (Jenkins, 1915) The Girl of Eagle Ranch March (Jenkins, 1914) Howdy Pap March [composed with Karl King] (Barnhouse, 1913) Instantaneous Rag (Jenkins, 1915) Jewell's Triumphal March (York, 1908) King Bombardon March (Basses Conquest) Martin's Boast March (Martin, 1915) Mile-a-Minute Galop (Barnhouse, 1903) Neel's Fashion Plate March (Barnhouse, 1902) New York London and Paris March (Barnhouse, 1903) Princess Clothilde Mazurka (unpublished) Relpetrom March (York, 1907) Royal Decree March (Barnhouse, 1916) Royal Pageant March (Boos, 1895) Salute to Alexander March (Barnhouse, 1902) Tent City March (Fischer, 1907) Under White Tents Galop (Boos, 1894) Under White Tents March (Dixie Music House, 1907) The Volitant March Wild Fire Galop (Barnhouse, 1909)



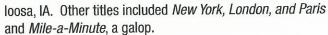
WALTER P. ENGLISH (1984 inductee)

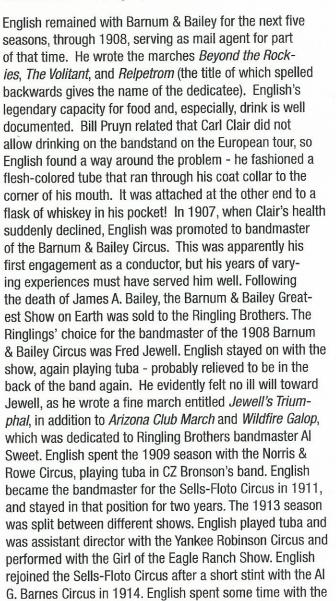
by Charles Conrad, WJU #1525

The history of circus music has had quite a few unforgettable characters, and one of the most colorful was Walter Paul "Woody" English, a big, bald and congenial tuba player with a mustache like a walrus and a seemingly unquenchable appetite for music, adventure and booze, not necessarily in that order. English was born 20 March 1867 in Salt Lake City, but the family moved to Dallas while he was young. He must have gotten his start in music guite early, as Carl Neel and English became friends in the 1880s in the goldfields, and Neel reported that English was playing bass, piano, and tuba in saloons and music halls, including at Silverton, CO. His first documented circus experience was with the Great New York Circus in 1891, and he spent the 1892 season with the McMahon Show in Oakland. The following year, English claimed he played with 9 different shows. One of these was the Great Western Band, a 14-piece concert band under the direction of Charles Wray. English was back in the employ of Joseph McMahon in 1894 and 1895, the first year with the Howe & Cushing Shows, and the next season with the Sands & Astley Two-Ring Circus. English was listed as both a tuba player and composer for these outfits, but his only published work from the period is the 1895 Royal Pageant. He split the 1896 season between two circuses, the Harris Nickel Plate Circus and the Cooper & Co.'s Great Southern United Show, which was likely another McMahon operation. He finished the 1897 season with McMahon's Harris Nickel Plate Circus. When McMahon died during the season, English moved to the Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth Band under Carl Clair just in time for the five-year tour of Europe that lasted until 1902.

English wrote several circus marches during this time, including *Clair's Triumph* in honor of his bandmaster. His *Aeolian Waltzes* from 1897 are reminiscent of the waltz sets of "Waltz King" Johann Strauss, Jr., who was conducting his own orchestra in Vienna at the time. *Neel's Fashion Plate* was most likely written after the return from Europe, when English appears to have played with the Walter L. Main Fashion Plate Circus under Neel's direction after the close of the Barnum & Bailey season. The brilliant, but fiendishly difficult, clarinet and piccolo obbligato to the last strain was added after a complaint from the clarinet section that the original clarinet part was boring. He also dedicated a march entitled *Salute to Alexander* to one of his closest friends and a band mate on the European tour,

Russell Alexander. English was then associated with the largest publisher of circus band music, C. L. Barnhouse Co. of Oska-





Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Show and played in Denver with

sional concert bands. His health began to weaken early in

1916, and he died 4 June 1917, at age 50, of heart failure.

Frederick Innes' Band, considered one of the top profes-