

News from Nan

BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE, GENEALOGY, FAMILY HISTORY

BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE: EVA ROBINS (DICK'S GRANDMOTHER, AUGUST 18) (AI-ENHANCED)

AUGUST 18, 2025 | DICK

This post merges text published in this space in 2018 with historical context provided in 2025 by AI Assistant Perplexity.

About my paternal grandmother, Eva Robins Johnson



1970s: Grandma Eva with Anna, Tim (great-grandson), and Ellen (great-granddaughter)

My paternal grandmother, Eva Irene Robins, was born on August 18, 1898, in Norfolk County, Ontario, Canada. She was the middle child in a family of five sisters (one brother lived only a short time). She married Alfred Johnson on August 25, 1915, in Tonawanda, New York. She and Alfred had three children, Kenny, Harold, and Evelyn. Harold was my father. Eva also helped to raise her sister Estelle's son, Lloyd.

Eva and Alfred lived most of their lives in the area around Buffalo, New York, with the exception of a short stay on a farm in Elgin, Ontario during the early 1920s.

In the 1950s, Eva and Alfred moved to Southern California along with all three of their children and Eva's youngest sister, Mildred. In Lemon Grove, California, they lived just down the street from where I lived on Dayton Drive. Later on, after Alfred died, Eva's daughter's family, the Starrs, moved to Whittier. Eva moved with them and also followed them later to Orange County.

Grandma Johnson always had a lot of "irons in the fire." She used to host big dinners at her house on Dayton Drive and invite the entire family.

While living in California, Eva once had a knitting machine that she used to knit all sorts of garments. She also got interested in making ceramics for a while. We still have some ceramic Christmas ornaments she made.

Background: Norfolk County, Ontario in the 1890s

This is part of the summary provided to me by AI Assistant Perplexity as I was preparing the post. I found it to be interesting and enlightening in explaining the environmental and economic environment of the part of Canada where Eva was born.

When my grandmother was born, the Robins lived in Norfolk County, Ontario. Norfolk is West of Buffalo, NY. It was (and still is) a farming area near Lake Erie.



The part of Ontario, Canada, where my grandma Eva was born

In the 1890s, the local economy centered on farming with crops such as fruits, vegetables, and grains. The area's soil was considered poor by the mid-19th century, leading to frequent abandonment of farms.

Both Eva's father, John Robins, and later on, Eva and Alfred, had a hard time making a living farming in Norfolk.

The county's population was rural and relatively stable. Communities such as Simcoe (the county seat) were active centers. Norfolk was known as the "Long Point Settlement" and was settled by United Empire Loyalists and early European immigrants in the 19th century.

◀ 1898 ▶ 2018 ▶ 2025 ▶ BUFFALO ▶ CALIFORNIA ▶ ELGIN ▶ EVA ROBINS ▶ LEMON GROVE ▶ NEW YORK
▶ NORFOLK COUNTY ▶ ONTARIO ▶ SIMCOE ▶ TONAWANDA ▶ WHITTIER