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Article Summary: This is Hogan Ouren's Story, told through his reminiscences. Hogan Ouren was born in Norway, immigrated to Canada before he was 18 years old, and to the United States shortly thereafter. He freighted across the Nebraska plains to Colorado on several occasions. This article presents his unique description of his travels.

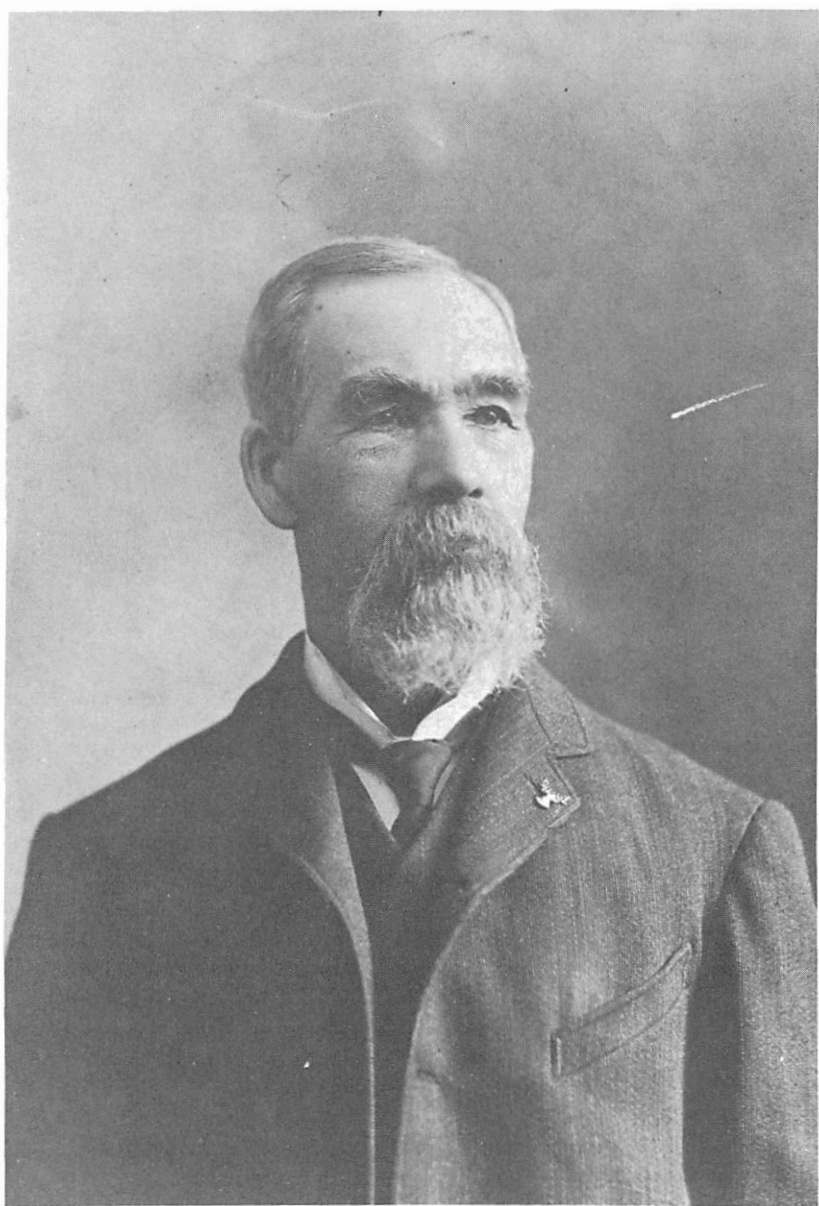
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Photographs / Images: Hogan Ouren; The Rev Moses F Shinn; Hogan Ouren's Travels Map; Hogan Ouren, C Gregory Ouren as a baby, and William Gregory



*Hogan Ouren. Courtesy of Mary Ellen Jones, Jacksonville, Florida.*

## HOGAN OUREN IN NEBRASKA AND COLORADO, 1861-1866

### INTRODUCTION

Hogan Ouren, born in Norway on October 14, 1835, emigrated to Canada at the age of 18. After working in railroad construction near Quebec for a short time, he crossed the border into the United States and began what was to be a long and adventurous life in his adopted country. On several occasions he freighted across the Nebraska plains to Colorado. Ouren died on October 17, 1920, at Los Angeles, California. The originals of the following reminiscences (written about 1907) are now in the possession of one of his grandsons, William H. Ouren of Omaha. Hogan Ouren's unique description of his travels has been substantially unedited.—Patricia Gaster, Editorial Assistant.

### HOGAN OUREN'S STORY

My name is Hogan Ouren. I was born on a farm about 40 miles NorthEast of Christiania [now Oslo], Norway, on the 14th of October, 1835. My Father, Mads Hanson Ouren, served as Captain in the short war with Sweden previous to Norways union with that Country in 1814. I was the youngest, and am now, the only survivor of 9 children, three of whom died in this Country. My Father died when I was scarce 8 years old, leaving practically no property and my Mother, the Daughter of a once wealthy Farmer, had a hard enough struggle to keep me in a country school. This, however, she did and succeeded so well that shortly before her death, some 6 years after my Fathers death, her last moments was cheered by the news that I had secured a place as clerk in a large General Store in Christiania The Capital of Norway. The death of my beloved Mother was not only a severe,

but I may almost say a permanent blow, as thoughts of her kindness and devotion moisten my Eyes, even now, though past 71 years.

During the latter part of my 3-1/2 years service as clerk I had begun to think of America as my future hope, and subsequent events greatly hastened my thoughts about Emigration. My Employer failed in business, a dishonest failure it proved to be afterwards, and the creditors retained me to assist in the Inventory and disposal of the Assets. This, with the allowance by law for servants of wages and board for a stated periode in such cases, and what little I had saved from my former wages, inabled me to pay for passage on a sailing vessel to Quebeck and before the Ice was out of the Harbor of Christiania I had started on my long voyage. I was then less than 18 years old, and the undertaking, as I look at it now, could hardly be called sane and senseable.

Of the 400 persons, on bord the *Deodata*, not one had I seen before that I know of and neither did I know a single person in the Country where I was to land and seek my fortune. A stranger to their language, their customs, without money, without friends. It is not necessary to describe the Ocean voyage. There was nothing out of the ordinary. In the Seven weeks at Sea there were some storms of course, but our Anker dropped before Quebeck at last in the Spring of 1853 and I landed with the rest, very glad that the long journey was over.

Fortunately for me and many others without money to proceed further, labor was needed and through Interpreters some forty of us hired out to work on a railroad bridge across the Sorrie river not far from Quebeck at one dollar pr day. Some Swedes of the party were miners from Norway and as we had become well acquainted on bord ship I went with them as a "miner" and received \$1.50 pr. day. Either this [these] Canadians were easily decived or they overlooked deficiencies in the young boy, who anyone could see from the clothes I then wore, was neither a miner nor even a laborer, but I drew my 1.50 pr day regularly, even after I had been given lighter and more suitable work.

I came to America with a fixed purpose of becomming a Citizen of the United States and my first thought was to learn their language. Having this in view applied for board and lodging with a Family that spoke English but I soon learned that they spoke French as well and perhaps a little better. However, I had made no mistake for this French Canadian Family were exceedingly kind to

me, treating me as a member of the Household, and with two grown Girls as teachers, my progress in the Language was very rapid. The others of the 40 men, who worked at common labor, were placed under a boss of their own nationality who could speak English. He was, unfortunately, much given to dissipation and so unreliable that the Headman or Superintendent of the work had to discharge him. After that, I gradually became his successor—not in dissipation—but in acting as interpreter and also in handling the men. My wages, however, remained the same, but as I started in with fully double what I was worth I felt that even with increased responsibility I was still getting all my services was worth, if not more.

My French friends charged me only the pittance of 1.50 pr week for board so in a short time I had 65 dollars saved—more than enough to take me to Chicago—a Place I had in view at the beginning. One day, when I made this known to my Superiors, they strongly advised me to stay. The Superintendent, undoubtedly from the best of motives, told me that I had been advanced as fast as practicable and that better positions awaited me if I staid as soon as I, by service and Experience, became qualified for them. My longing for the United States, however, prevailed over his kindly arguments, but I have often since looked back with much regret at the parting with friends who had done so much for me, and who, I am intirely satisfied entertained nothing but the best wishes for my welfare. In looking back over my long life, my short stay in Canada I must count among the happiest times of that periode.

What a contrast after my arrival in Chicago. There I was robbed of everything I had except my working clothes, and that too by a countryman of mine. While I was absent at work he and his wife—I boarded with them—left the City for New York, I heard afterwards, and took with them a leather trunk containing all my clothes and Money besides. It was getting towards fall and in my reduced condition I was obliged to seek work at a Stonequarry 25 miles South of Chicago for the winter. Returning to Chicago in the Spring, I first hired out as a Sailor on the lakes but later begin buying Shinglebolts and making Shingles. During the summer of 1854 I visited Manitowoc, Wisconsin, meeting there Mr. Prytz, my former Employer at Christiania, Norway. He had been sent to America by his friends after serving one year in Prison for fraudulent practices connected with his failure and at that time so

reduced in circumstance that he appealed to me for assistance to reach his home in Norway. I gave him \$5, all I could spare at that time.

In the Fall I returned to Chicago but worked, during the winter of '54 to '55, in the Lumber woods of Northern Wisconsin at a place called Sandy Bay—40 miles north of Manitowoc. Many exiting incidents occurred during this cold winter. Once while helping to unload a Vessel on Lakeshore about Christmas time, I fell backwards from a rolling scow into the Ice cold waves and was saved with difficulty. Later on the Mate of the Vessel in jumping from the railing to the scow below, missed his calculation and landed in the Water in the small space between scow and Vessel, which every now and then was closed by the scow slamming against the Vessels sides. The man was therefore in imminent peril of being crushed, but we pulled him out safely just before a vicious wave slammed the scow and vessel together.

At another time, while engaged in cutting out logs frozen in the Ice of the Milldam and pushing them through a cut channel to the Mill, I undoubtedly saved a man's life. The cut out Ice Cakes would be joined together again and form a treacherous ground to walk on. The young man in question, Mr. Harrison, had stepped on one of these Ice cakes that broke loose and was slowly carrying him downwards. Not knowing how to swim he called lustily for help, and seeing his predicament, I rushed towards him over the broken Ice and was able to reach him with my long log pole just as he was going under. I, myself, had broke through and was floundering in the Icy water but was able to catch hold of a log and pulled Mr. Harrison out at the End of my pole. Mr. Harrison was so deeply moved by his narrow Escape from drowning that he became a serious convert to religion, and for many years that I knowed him afterwards he was faithful to the new life that had its beginning on the Millpond at Sandy Bay.

In the Spring we all went back to Chicago on the first Vessel that called. The summer of 1855 was spent in Chicago. My Brother Ole had come from the old country and we were making shingles together. We also buildt a small 2-story frame house for rent which later burned, causing me another serious loss as we had no insurance. Before this, I had furnished the means to Establish my Brother, who was a shoemaker by trade, in a shoeshop and as I boarded with the tenants of the burned house I again lost everything and was furthermore somewhat in debt.

I don't remember very clearly what I done between the time of this fire and the fall of 1856, but at that time I bought a span of Horses and took a contract from the C.B. & Q. R.R. Co. [now the Burlington Northern] to cut, and deliver at their tracks in Octavia, Ill. all the wood standing on 40 acres of land belonging to the Company at 1.25 pr cord. I hired the wood cut for 60 cts. pr cord leaving me 65 cts. for hauling. The winter of '56 to '57 was a record breaker for severity and snow. There was 5 months of good sleighing and I could haul 6 cords a day, making at that time fairly good wages.

In the spring of '57 an Event took place that had a very important bearing on my future life, and to explain which it will be necessary to go back a year or two. While engaged in the Shingle business in Chicago, I had become acquainted with a Family named Harrison and there I met and became acquainted with Aurora Frederica Petterson who afterwards became my wife. We were married in Chicago by Pastor Shogren, a Swedish Methodist Minister, on the 14th day of March, 1857. I was then 21 years and 5 months old and my wife 2 years younger.

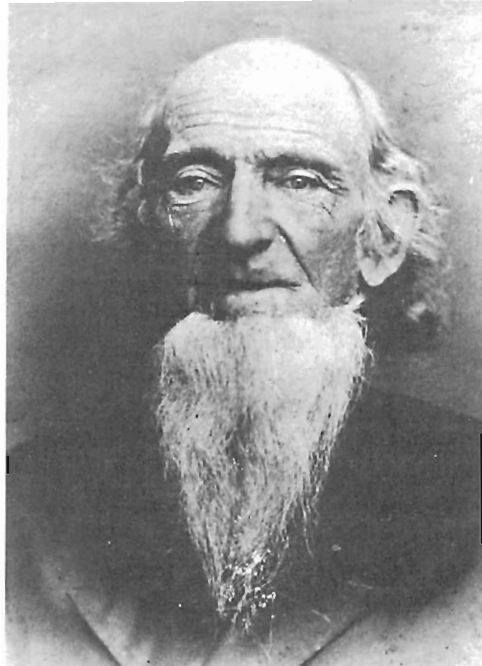
I had disposed of my team and it was necessary to find work of some kind. The vessel owners offered big pay for the early trips and I hired out at \$45 pr month to Captain Berg, owner of the Schooner *Warren*. Fine weather in the last days of March, combined with high fr[e]ight charges, induced many Vessels to start out and the *Warren* was one of these. Becalmed for two days north of Milwaukee boded no good, at this time of year, to the Experienced Sailor. Captain Berg was walking the deck of the old Schooner *Warren* watching the flapping sails when I entered the deck from the Cabin being unable to sleep and restless for some reason, probably suspicious of the unusual calm. It was half past two in the morning of April 2d, and having determined not to go back to bed again although previlledged to do so, I decended to the Cabbin for my Overcoat and was comming up the stairway when met by a chilly blast from the North that caused me to grab the railing for support against the wind. I yelled to the mate asleep in the Cabbin, who came running in his night clothes, and both of us leaped on deck rushing for the ropes with the rest of the crew and the sails came down except the jibb which was blown to shreds.

As it was the Vessel fairly trimbled under the bare rigging, and at this very moment, a small schooner we had seen close to us the

day before capsised and went down with all hands. Huge waves begin to roll Emediately, and it turned so cold that the spray carried by the fierce wind over all parts of the Vessel froze and covered deck, Sails, ropes, and yards with a glace of Ice. In order not to drift South of the Milwaukee Harbor we made short Sails and stood out from Land till daylight, when about noon the next day, we succeeded in making port, running fast aground inside the Harbor. Several Vessels in an attempt to Enter had missed the channel and were beached south of the intrance, others kept comming with tattered Sails and broken Masts. One struck the Pier and knocked out its intire bow; rebounding and floated into the river with cargo of Lumber protruding several feet through its broken bow. At Chicago many Vessels went ashore and 15 men drowned outside the Harbor. 65 Vessels were wrecked in this Storm on Lake Michigan alone, and in my Experience On Atlantic, Pacific or the Lakes I never saw a worse one.

Later in the season, the Schooner *Warren*, with a load of cord wood, struck on the bar at the north entrance to Chicago Harbor. A heavy Sea was running and the second blow was so violent that the stanchions came up through the deck, creating an impression that the bottom of the Vessel had caved in. The Schooner being now fast in the sand, the waves sweped [swept] the deck from Stem to Stearn filling the hole through the oppening in the deck, washing the deckload of wood overbord, and driving the Crew hastily into the rigging. It was too Early in the morning for anybody to be around and nothing could be done but awaite developements. I said that the Crew were driven to the rigging. Not all; a faithful Swede—a Sal[t]water Sailor—remained at his Post at the wheel, despite the fact that wave after wave railed [rolled] over him. He was either waiting for the Captain's order to retire or perhaps watching and awaiting the time which came later when the unfortunate vessel, pounded over the bar and afloat once more, should need his guidance to save it from new dangers. The Schooner's Stearn had been completely knocked in, but when boosted over the bar it floated on its cargo of wood in the hole and we succeeded in making fast to some piling on the South side of entrance. Some 3 weeks or more Elapsed before repairs could be completed and during that time I was retained as watchman on full pay. The rest of the Crew was discharged. The *Warren*, although an old vessel, was found to be exceedingly strong, having been built by the Government for the revenue service. When ready





*The Rev. Moses F. Shimm.*

for sea I went in her again but not for long. I never heard what became of her but hope she did not become the Coffin of anyone.

During my several years of seafaring, both before and after my marriage, I was out in several severe storms and things happened that become common occurrences in a Sailor's life. For instance, a man disappeared one night from the *Venus* out on Lake Michigan, and as we were scudding before a fresh breeze we concluded he must have been knocked overboard by the focksail [forecastle] boom. He was a newcomer, a fine pleasant fellow, happy and well contented with his improved condition. Another Sailor was washed overboard from the Schooner *Geo. Hanson* by one of the great waves that had swept away our deckload of Rail Road Ties, our Galley, and deckrailing, except [for] a few posts here and there. This man—an Irishman of Powerful build—was holding a rope at the time and this rope saved his life. We hauled him in from the dark, swirling angrea waves, as if he had been some big fish.

On Aug. 5th, 1858, our first baby was born. We named him John Edward. In the Spring of 1859 we moved to Point Sauble, Mich., but came back to Chicago after spending a year in the woods of that place. I had contracts for getting out Shingle Bolts and I was also making Shingles. During the winter of '60 to '61 I was again engaged in the Shingle business in Chicago when a friend, a Mr. Larson, talked [about] one of the Colorade goldmines, lately discovered. He had been out there the previous season, secured some mining property and was going back in the

Spring. We formed a partnership, bought 4 mules and a wagon, 80 kegs of Blasting powder and other supplies in Chicago, had the whole shipped to Marengo, Iowa, than [then] the terminus of the Rock Island and the only R.R. in Iowa at that time.

We left Chicago early in March, [1861] and arrived in Marengo, where our 900 mile trip to Central City, Colo., with a 4 Mule team begun. Prairie fires had blackened the low, smooth, rolling hills of Iowa, and added to the dismal appearance of the sparsely settled country, the frost was going out of the ground, making the roads nearly impassable. Several times we had to unload and carry a part of the load over the worst places after the doubling of teams had failed. Two men, Thomas and Brown, started with us from Chicago and they had a team of their own and we assisted each other when accation [occasion] required.

It was April when we crossed the Missouri on a ferry at Council Bluffs. Omaha and Council Bluffs was than very small, insignificant Towns with only a few Hundred inhabitants each.<sup>1</sup> If anything, I think Council Bluffs the largest of the two. On the West side [of] the river we proceeded to Fremont, over the old Military road, crossing the Elkhorn river about 8 miles above the present City of Elkhorn. Further west, about 70 miles from Omaha, we crossed over to the south side of the Plat river at what was known as Shinns ferry<sup>2</sup> kept and opperated by Dick Shinn, a Son of Rev. Moses Shinn, well known in Omaha as a Pioneer and an Uncle of Frank Shinn, a promenent lawyer and Citizen of Carson, Iowa.

From now on the road, which follows the Plat to Denver, except the last 90 miles, was generally very good and almost a dead level. Fort Kearney<sup>3</sup> on the south side of the Plat river nearly opposit to the present thrifty Town of that name—(Kerney)<sup>4</sup>—had a few companies of Soldiers, and outside the Government Reservation, a few Sod-Houses occupied by a tough population, trafficking with the Soldiers and the large travel to and from the mines. Between Shinns ferry and Fort Kerney there was no Settlers, except distant Ranches<sup>5</sup> Established to furnish Feed and Shelter for this travel and west of Kerney this [these] ranches became fewer and further apart. At Cottonwood Springs<sup>6</sup> the few stunted trees along the Plat had intirely seased and we now regarded ourselves as having fully entered the great American Dessert<sup>7</sup>—an Oppinion I still retain in a somewhat modified form.

At O'Fallons Bluff,<sup>8</sup> near the Colorado Line, the road passes over a high ridge, runing so close to the river that this diviation of the road became a necessity. In accending from this ridge, the road is very hard and smooth and so we took advantage of the down grade to trot our teams to make up for the slow advance on the other side. Thomas and Browns team were in front with 18 kegs of Blasting powder as a part of their load and we followed close behind with 80 kegs in our wagon. At the foot of the Hill, for some reason or other, it became necessary for the front team to stop, perhaps to adjust some part of the harness, when to our horror it was discovered that one of Thomas and Browns wooden powder kegs had broken, and some of the powder found its way under the Endgate into a feed box and had mingled and rattled merrily with a small log chain, a frying pan, coffee pot, and other hardware carried for convenience sake in the feed box. In the wagonbox itself the black stuff had scattered about in the bottom of the box, and much time was consumed in making things safe. We never trotted with our loads of Powder after that.

Beyond O'Fallons there is much sand and here we met Thousands of Indians, Cheyennes and Arrappahoes, very friendly and even jolly, young Bucks running races on their fleet ponies with the squaws. Sometimes a Dozen or more joining in a race with boisterous glee. At one place east of Julesburg we came upon an incampment of several thousand, their white Tepees covering the Plat bottom from hill to river. Formerly the travel had followed the river to Denver but, as the Plat makes a large bend northward, a Company had built a toll road across this bend, known as the cut off road, because it cut off 30 miles from the river road. We took this short cut, although, at that time, there was one stretch of 29 miles without water. We made this 90 miles in 3 days.<sup>9</sup>

Denver in '61 was not much of a Town, but it made up in quality what it lacked in quantity. Almost the first thing I saw was the Sheriff shooting a man to death in one of the few streets in Town. The man was leaning against a wagon wheel and the Sherrif must have fired at least 1/2 doz. times before he sank to the ground. The Sherrif claimed he was a desperado.

The next day we drove to Black Hawk in the mountains, 40 miles west of Denver and than the Center of the Colorado mining district. Here we found an em[p]ty log cabin in which to store our Powder and we placed the Kegs on their Ends side by side on the dirt floor. For greater security I decided to sleep in the Cabin and

spread my blankets on the dirt floor also as there was nothing in the cabin in the shape of furniture, but I soon found, after laying down, that it was not without inhabitants. Rats or mice, or both, run around in troopes, fighting, squeeling, rushing hither and thither over the bedcloths, hardly mindfull of my face until a crisis was finally reached . . . one of them, in apparent pure develtree, run up my pants leg when forbearance seased to be a virtue. I became busy at once, but although I certainly was in a condition to have made it very unpleasant for his ratship, I thoughtlessly made a few jumps up and down and the rat escaped in the confusion. That particular rat was perhaps willing to quit and let bygones be bygones, but fearing his numerous relations I took the precaution to remove my bed to the top of the powder Kegs and there I slept the sleep of the just untill morning. Our powder was soon sold at 12.00 pr. Keg of 25 lbs. It cost us 3.00 pr. Keg in Chicago. We also sold our teams and wagon and had some Idea of starting a store, but before anything came of it Mr. Lawson joined a prospecting party going to southern Colorado.

Left thus to my own resources I went down to Denver and begin to buy a few of the worn out Oxen that had come across the plains with loads of supplies. These poor Cattle, sore footed and exhausted, were sold at Auction almost every day to the highest bidder for cash and could be quickly recrutred [recuperated] on the nutritious grasses near Denver. As I said, I bought a few—about a Dozen, I believe—and sold them soon after at a very good proffit. Had I only had sense Eneugh to continue in the business I might have made an independent fortune and become one of the first Cattle kings of the plaines.

As it was, I had formed a good oppinion of the Country and decided, while I was awaiting Mr. Lawsons return, to go back to Chicago and bring my wife and two children to Colorado. I bought an excellent span of mules and a wagon in Denver, but before starting east, made several trips between Denver and Central City and done considerable teaming in the mines also. At one time, I took a small load of miners supplies to Georgetown [west of Denver] before the place had anything but a couple log cabins and before the place had any name even. We called the camp Trailrun, and I think I was the first man to bring a team and wagon to the place.

Sometime about the 1st of July (1859), I started for Chicago driving my mules as far as Marengo [Iowa] 900 miles, at the rate of

50 miles pr. day. I had 3 Passengers, viz. Mr. Sloath of Chicago, Mr. Ray, a Lawyer from St. Louis and a Mr. Butter [Butler] of Massachusetts, who claimed to be a Nephew of General [Benjamin F.] Butter [Butler] of national fame.<sup>10</sup> On the plains we seen large herds of Buffalo and Antelope, as ended we had going out. Also the usual amount of Indians. We also met, and camped near, several sections of Mormon Emmigrant Train going to Salt Lake City. They had dances in the Evening, and in daytime many would walk along the slow-moving ponderous wagons pulled by 6 yokes of Oxen. . . .

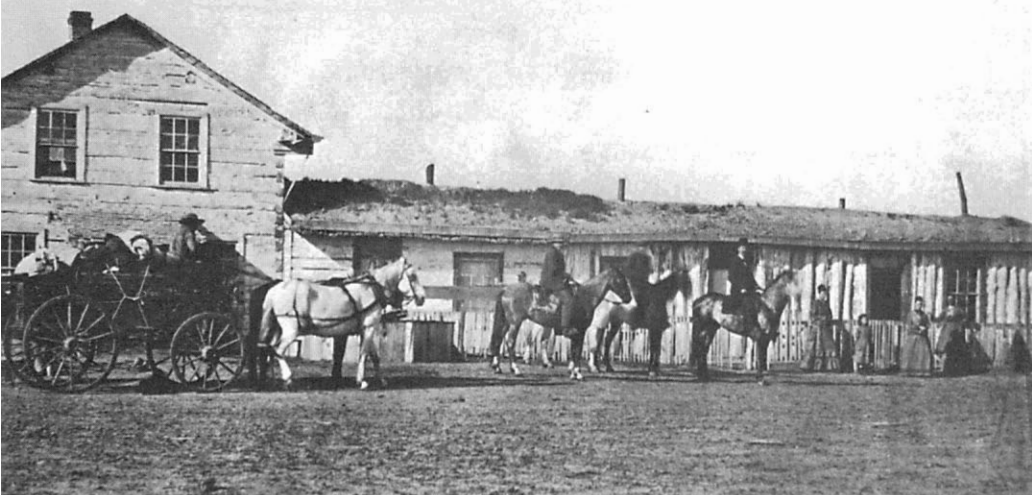
The only excitement, however, on the whole trip was 30 miles east of Kerney when struck by a full grown Cloudburst and Ciclone combined. The Wagon, with wheels locked, was Slid along for a couple of rods, than overturned, the men blown about and clutching the tall grass. The water now fell for a minute or two in such quantities that breathing would soon have become impossible had it continued. The wide Plat bottom had in that time been covered to a depth of 20 inches or more and the flood was rushing through the wagonbed with boughs [bows] and cover with such force as to carry away everything therein, except a box of quartz weighing 600 lbs which Mr. Sloath was taking to Chicago to experiment on. It was fierce but could not have lasted more than 5 or 6 minutes. Nothing was broke except the boughs [wagon bows], but our provision, extra clothing, cooking utensils, and trinkets were gone. Even Buffalo robes had been intirely swept away through the tall grass and into the Plat river more than a quarter mile away. That night we slept on the ground in our wet clothes and slept sound at that. It was very warm.

As stated, this was the only incident of note and I will not tire the reader by a further description of the trip through Iowa to Marengo, except to relate a little joke that some soldier boys played on us, or tried to play on us, at a temporary camp a little south of Council Bluffs. A drunken Soldier was refused a ride on our wagon from Council Bluffs. While we halted for dinner, he had managed to reach this camp to which he belonged, very wrathly on account of this imaginary slight. The other boys seeing an opportunity for fun pretended to assist him to get revenge, and when they seen our wagon, a small company of them decended the hill, fully armed, and approached our wagon in a threatening manner. I confess I was at a loss how to take it, but my three passengers drew their revolvers and ordered the squad to

halt, at which they broke out in a peal of laughter and explained that the whole thing was a joke. Wonder how many of those happy farmer boys are alive now.

At Marengo I left my mules in charge of a German farmer and took the train for Chicago. On my arrival there I found that some 40 persons, from the naborhood of my birthplace in Norway, had arrived in Chicago and departed to various places only a short time before. Among these were a Brother and Sister, both married, and their children and some cousins, and the rest were people with whom I had been more or less acquainted with in the old country. This [these] 40 persons who arrived in this country in the spring of 1861 claimed, so I was told by several of them, to have been influenced in their choice, by a certain letter I wrote to my Brother Herman. This letter had been written some years before, going rather extensively into conditions here, and although, very conservative, summed up by advising my Brother to come and offering financil aid in case such aid should be needed. This letter became rather famouse in that little naborhood, certainly not from any literary merrit it possessed, but because it was written in confidance by one Brother to another and because it treated of a subject that had become interesting to a great many people. People came to see it and others borrowed it until so worn, though written on very strong and fine paper, that at last it had patches like a worn bank note. The letter even was sought by the Authorities who, were generally opposed to immigration, and after reading it, owing to its conservative tone, declared to be a truthful and well written letter, but rather of small encouragement to the average Emmigrant. However, this [these] People came, and if I had unknown to me at the time anything to do with their comming, except my own kin, I have the satisfaction to know that their comming has proved a great blessing to nearly all, if not all of them, and I have yet to be informed of a single one that regreted it.

I found my wife and children in good health and the necessary preparations were made for moving west. We must have started in the later part of August [1859] but I have forgotten the date. Our journey was over the same road I had already travelled twice, so there is naturally little to be said on this subject. The weather, however, was warm and the road dry and dusty. The intention was to proceed direct to Denver, but when Elkhorn, Neb., was reached, My boy John, than [then] 3 years old, was taken sick and a halt was made there for medical attendance. His case yielded



*McDonald Ranch, Cottonwood Springs, Nebraska, built in January of 1860 by Charles McDonald.*

ratily [readily] to treatment, but before we could resume our journey, I was taken with fever and Ague which proved so troublesom and protracted that we were forced to stay at Elkhorn during the winter. My fever and Ague continnued of and on during 4 or 5 months but it was intermitten, comming on every other day and feeling quite well the day off. Besides, I sometimes would break it for a week or more at a time but it would return as soon as any hard work or exposure was attempted.

Before leaving Chicago I had laid in a stock of cheap drygoods and notions to trade on the plains, and now, that I found we were here for the winter at least, I suplemented this with a small stock of Groceries from Omaha and opened up a small store in the little Hamlet near the Bridge over Elkhorn river. Mr. Sylvester [Sylvanus] Dodge,<sup>11</sup> Father of General Dodge and of Nathan P. Dodge, the Banker of Council Bluffs, owned a farm nearby and would drop in at the store and we soon became great friends. This friendship continued for many years after I had returned and settled in Iowa—in fact until Mr. Dodges death which accured at Council Bluffs sometime in the Eighties Mr. Dodge was an excellent man and a true friend. Some of our customers at the Store were Pawny [Pawnee] Indians and Omhas from their Reservation 80 miles north.<sup>12</sup> They would camp near us on their hunting trips.

On one of this occations when there was a large party of Omahas camped near us, a half-breed Negro and an Indian took by force from a Mr. Billiter a quarter of fresh Beef he had for sale in a Blacksmith shop near the Bridge. The Half-breed drew a long

ugly knife and the two grabbed the Beef and made off with it across the Bridge, where others helped to cut it up and put it on 2 Ponies. Mr. Billiter was badly scared and it was sometime before he made his trouble known. When at last aware of what had happened, 5 of us armed ourselves for pursuit as it would never do to allow such a high handed robbery to go unpunished. An Emigrant camped at the west end of Bridge had seen the Indians and gave us the direction they had taken. He said there were 15 of them, armed only with Bows and Arrows and they had two Ponies between them.

We started in pursuit, running much of the time, and overtook the party about 5 miles away crossing the Rawhide Creek in the direction of the Plat river. They threwed down Bows when we ordered them to surrender, and we drove the 15 of them before us back to Elkhorn. The two ponies were taken from them and held as security for a satisfactory settlement, and knowing that a much larger party of Indians to which this 15 belonged were camped close by, we sent word to the white settlers up and down the river, to provide against possible trouble, although we could hardly believe that the Indians would resort to violence. Some 60 Omahas appeared the next day. They had interpreters with them and seemed anxious for peaceable settlement. Many whites were also on the ground and, as the half-breed had wisely disappeared—he was not with the 15 either—we fined the tribe \$10. and let them take the beef which, of course, was no good to us after the handling it had had.

When the fever had been broken for a week or so, I begin to think I could do some work and would start up the Plat with a load of goods, trading with farmers, stage stations and Military posts. At first the fever would return before I had got far and would have to return weak and exhausted, but as the winter advanced the disease wore itself out and I was able to go as far west as Cottonwood Springs. When absent from home on this [these] trips, My wife would tend the little store and even trade with the Indians.

At last I felt strong enough to undertake a trip to Denver, loading my team with suitable goods for the trade. I think I started the 12th of Jan. 1862 and this time kept on the north side of the Plat as far as Fort Kerney. I travelled in Company with two young boys who had teams of their own, whoes kindness to me on this trip I can never forget though I have forgotten their names.



In crossing the river on the Ice we, together with many others, broke through and no amount of doubling availed to get the wagons out. Not even after being unloaded. We had worked on this problem till long past midnight and Men and teams, hungry and exhausted had to give it up temporarily, and started for Doby town<sup>13</sup> for rest and refreshments, leaving piles of goods on the Ice. We did not go to bed, but as soon as there was daylight we returned to our wagons in the river, much refreshed by feed and warmth and our poor animals showed their appreciation and gratitude by giving us a united pull that lifted the wagons out of the soft sand onto solid Ice. Reloading our goods, we once more moved onward. The weather had been and still was very cold. Some of the Ice, frozen to our wagons that night, was carried clear to Denver.

In a few days after my severe exposure at Kerney, I became aware that something must be the matter with my feet. They begin to swell and this swelling extended to my legs, crawled slowly up into my body, chest and head. This swelling continued until I reached Denver. At first I was able to attend to my team, but later on I became so stiff and shortwinded that my travelling Companions had to help a great deal and at last do all the work except driving. One day, at Pat Malalies Ranch,<sup>14</sup> I felt pretty bad and told my friends that I realized how much of a burden and hindrance I was to them and that I would stay where I was until I got better. Those young men—strangers to me—refused to go on without me. We argued the matter till noon when I surrendered. They would care for the team morning and night and do all my other work. When on the road I was to lay on my blankets on top of my load with lines tied up, my team between theirs, and when we came to any place in the road requiring attention to the team, I would be notified by the driver ahead. In this way we travelled nearly 200 miles. From what the Doctor told me in Denver, these kindhearted boys undoubtedly saved my life.

On the last afternoon of this illfated journey we encountered a fierce Blizzard. It came almost without warning, after a mild day and we were able to make the Toldgate ranch, 8 miles from Denver, with the greatest difficulty. It was already dark and all places that could shelter man or beast occupied. Across a deep ravine, filled with the drifting snow, stood an empty abandoned log cabin, without floor, Doors, or windows. The snow lay a foot deep on the dirt floor and into this hovel we moved for what little

shelter it could afford. I remember wading through the deep snow, assisted by both of the boys. They brought an ax, chopped down some of the pine rafters, swept away the snow in front of the fireplace, and made a roaring fire. A bed was made by putting all our blankets and Buffalo robes together, and, with me in the middle, I was made as comfortable as possible. The storm ceased about midnight, followed by bitter cold and the next day we rolled into Denver. Doctor Steinberg, who was called to attend me, assured me that my case was not yet serious but that it would soon have run into dropsy. The great swelling of my whole body was caused, he said, by water accumulation between the true and false skin—a not uncommon result of fever and ague when followed soon after with exposure and hardship. Mr. Lawson, who had returned from his prospecting trip, came down from Blackhawk, took charge of my team and load, and disposed of the goods. My dear friends and Benefactors had gone on to South Park and I have not had the pleasure to see them since. I was cured in about a week and soon started on the homeward trip.

There was always somebody going back east, and as travelling in the stage was very expensive, I had no trouble in securing a couple passengers. The weather had moderated, the roads were good, and we had made good time up to March 20th when we had got as far as Plumb Creek<sup>15</sup>—35 miles west of Kerney. It was late enough to put up for the night, but being out of feed and provision we wanted to reach Kerney the next day and concluded we would drive 6 miles further to the next ranch. This proved to have been a great mistake as the place had changed hands and the new owner had not yet had time to supply himself with anything except a sack of Flour, a piece of bacon, and some whisky. There was absolutely nothing for the poor mules to eat, but as we had already made a big drive, decided to rest till morning and then go on to next ranch for feed and breakfast.

During the night, however, the wind had changed to N.E. and brought with it a howling Blizzard. Had we acted immediately, it is possible we might have succeeded in retreating to Plumb Creek, as that would have been going with the wind, but we didn't at first deem such a step necessary and by 10 o'clock the storm was raging with such force that movement in any direction was too hazzardous. Neither was there any let-up for four days. On the second day it became necessary in order to save the mules lives to remove them from a stable, drifted full of snow, to the one room

sod house where the rest of us passed the time as best we could. The poor starved Brutes were tied to a heavy Cedar post at the End of the counter, supporting the Earthen roof, and the jolly ranchman poured out a tin plateful of whiskey for each, which to our surprise they eagerly drank, licking the plates as if wishing for more. Cottonwood saplings, secured for firewood, were dragged into the room, and the bark chopped up into small bits mixed with flour and water, constituted the only food the mules had during this dreadful time. Towards evening on the 4th day the storm had moderated and I was able to take the mules back to Plumb Creek, where Thos. French administered to the wants of man and Beast. The next morning dawned clear and bright, showing a snowfall during the great storm of about 14 inches. A long mule train came along to break the road, and with them I rejoined my companions, bringing with me much needed supplies.

At Fort Kearny my passengers left me, going to St. Joe,<sup>16</sup> and I faced the melting snow, slush, and mudd and flood for 22 days in making 200 miles to Elkhorn. The weather turned quite warm and the snow melted rapidly. Arrived at Shinns Ferry the Plat was beginning to break up and Boon Creek, a small tributary, was overflowing its banks, running fully 1/2 a mile wide. I might have to wait a couple weeks before the ferry would be in operation, and anxious to get home and save heavy expense on the road, I decided to proceed down the Plat bottom to Platsmouth, north of Omaha, and west to Elkhorn, fully 75 miles out of my way.

Boon Creek, 3 miles East of Shinns ranch, was the first obstacle in my way. I had left Shinns House immediately after dinner and it must have been near 2 P.M. when I came in view of the floods. I would gladly omit what followed my arrival at Boon Creek as I am really very much ashamed of it, but it forms a rather important part of the history of the particular trip across the plains and I will tell it with the rest and expose myself to well deserved criticism. I had been told that a ford existed near a large Cottonwood tree and pointing for that I drove through a quarter of a mile of water, increasing in dept untill it reached about 3 ft. when near the creek bank. I could tell where the channel was by the more rapid flow of the swollen stream. Into the Icy current, full of floating Ice, I urged my team, hoping to reach the opposit bank by swimming a rod or so. Insted, the current swept us down stream, the wagonbed floated off and capsised, trowing me into the water, intangled in the wagonbows from which I finally cleared meself to get a last

glimps of various articles floating down the rapid current to the Plat river, not more than 1/2 mile distant. The wagon bed had lodged against a projecting cake of Ice, and the mules with the running gear seemed to rest against the steep bank on the same side from which they started, standing appearantly on their hind feet.

The rest I will tell in as few words as possible. I got the mules out first, and after several visits to the wagonbed on the opposit side, I brought it across by tying the harness lines to it and after working in the water till nearly dusk arrived at Dick Shinns, nearly froze and with a cold that laid me up for a week. About this time several teams had arrived and was waiting to cross on the ferry. One day Mr. Shinn and 3 or 4 of us undertook to make a trip to see how the ferry would behave. When in midstream the old rope broke and we had free passage down the river untill we succeeded in attaching our craft to a large Cottonwood that had fallen into the river. Leaving the ferry we walked back a couple miles to see what use we could make of our lesson in navigation. All hope of a speedy crossing on the ferry having disappeared with the broken rope, we next inspected Boon creek, which was still there with 8 ft of water in the channell. From marks on the alluring Cottonwood, there must have been at least 5 ft more at the time of my "unpleasantness." I, at least, had learned something and the rest was willing to go up the Creek 20 miles to cross on a bridge and in couse of time in spite of the worst roads I ever saw, we arrived at Platsmouth. Here too the Country was flooded. The ferry was not yet in commission and it took 3 days of hard work to get it ready. The overflow of the Plat was running in a separate channell, fully 4 ft deep, which had to be forded before the ferry was reached. Here a Mr. Whitney lost one of his Horses by drowning. Several of us jumped in the water and unhitched the Horse from the wagon but he seemed bent on self destruction, plunging and strugling going down stream and into deeper water, when we finally had to let go of him. The rest of us reached the ferry in safety and was ferried over. I barely stopped in Omaha to feed, than drove all night and reached my home at Elkhorn about daylight.

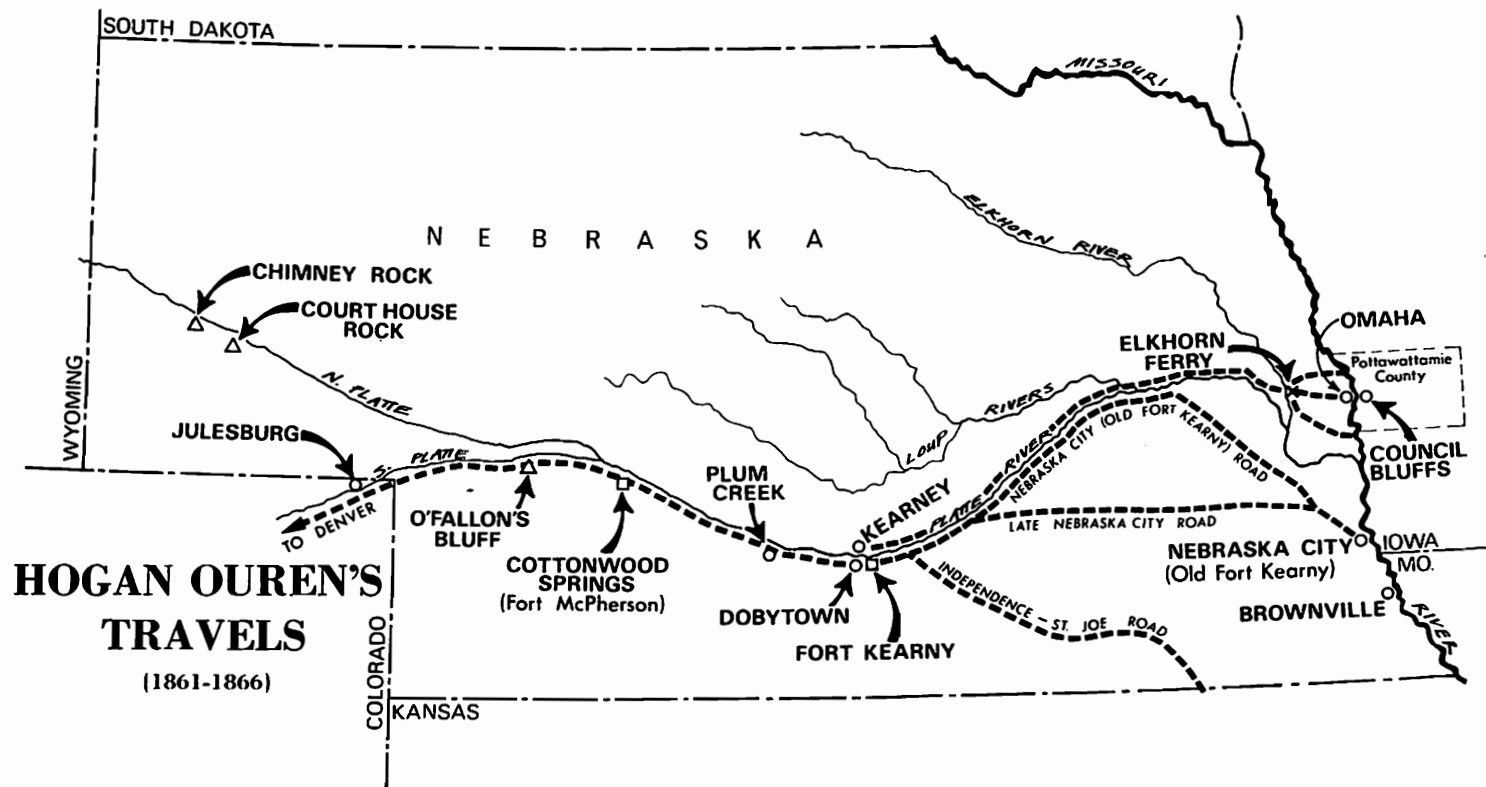
I found my wife and children well but anxious about me as I had not been able to communicate with them for a long time. At the East End of the bridge over Elkhorn river the ground was covered with men and teams awaiting a safe crossing. The bridge had withstood the flood, but the river had cut a wide and deep channell

through a high grade on the west side and in this channel a man, who ventured to cross it, had capsized his wagon and lost his load of Flour and apples.

The next day after my arrival, I road one of my mules and thouroughly explored this channell. I found that the stump of a Cottonwood tree, burried in the grade but washed bare by the flood, had caused the trouble and offered to pilot teams through for \$5., putting my own team in front and guarantying safety. One four mule team, with a load of merchandise, I headded this way, clear to Freemont, every foot of the 13 miles being under water. For a while I made good money, but watching me from the bridge, the safe track to one side of stump was no longer a secret and the rest of the teams no longer needed a pilot. Besides, the water which had covered the intire low tract of land between the Platt and Elkhorn rivers gradually recceeded, though roads remained bad for a long time.

It must have been well into May 1862, when, with my Family, I again started for the mines of Colorado. Our trip across the plains was without incident. Dick Shinn had, by paying a dollar, recovered several articles lost in Boon creek from some Indians that had found them after the water went down, lodged in bushes and trees along the bank. My wife was a great help in putting up and taking down the tent, night and morning. We rose early and were usually under way about sunrise. We seen the usual sights of Indians, Buffalo, and Antelope. At Denver only a short stop was made, and in another day we arrived at Black Hawk, the end of our journey. Mr. Lawson had again left for new mines in Utah and Idaho, and I found proffitable work hauling quartz to the stampmills. I continnued this work untill fall, when I bought a half interest in a ranch and the winter of '62 to '63 was spent mostly on horseback, driving cattle to and from this ranch.

Owing to the dishonesty of my partner, Morton Griswold, assisted by his Brother Levy, this investment proved a disastrous failure. During the fall and winter I had buildt a two story frame House, going in debt for much of the material and labor, expecting to pay from my winters earnings. When this failed me I natureally found myself in a tight place, but eventually I worked out of it. I had traded my team for the ranch interest and believing that I could still make money treaming, I bought a span of young Horses on Credit. This was not untill towards fall and after I had worked for some time in the mines.



During the fall and winter of '63 and '64, teaming in the mountains being dull, I made a trip to the Misso[uri] river for a load of goods. This trip was also attended with many hardships. The winter was unusually severe and the Indians had burned nearly all the ranches and murdered many People west of Kerney, so there was neither feed nor provision or shelter to be had. Such of the ranchmen as still remained were in Emminent perril of Life and propperty and naturally demanded very high prices. As high as 12 cts. pr. pound was paid for hay. I slept on the ground and my Horses was tied to the wagon with heavy blankets strapped to them. Soldiers were scattered along the road from Kerney to Denver in Companies, at the Military posts and small squads elsewhere. I arrived home about Jan. 1st, 1864, and found my little girl sick. She died soon after; viz. Jan 12th. My load, that I had brought, consisted mostly of Flour, which after keeping a while I was able to sell at a good price. Than I begin looking for work, and as the high prices of feed had driven most of the teams out of the mining district, I found plenty to do at good pay. I could make from \$20. to \$25. pr day, with an expense of about \$14. including my own living.

However, after a month or two I sold my team to stop the high interest I was paying and accepted a position with the Fisher Mining Co. at \$5. pr. day. I had charge of their teams and teamsters, bought up a large quantity of wood for them scattered through the mountains in accessible places to their Mills and claims, superintended the building of roads, and attended to many odds and ends above ground.

Sometime in the forepart of June, '64, Mr. Aborn, their superintendent, asked me to help him organize and accompany an Expedition to the St. Louis [San Luis] Valley in Southern Colorado. The trip would occupy about 4 months and my pay \$120. pr month and expenses. I accepted gladly and was at once set to work buying mules, Harness, wagons, tents, and provisions for a party of 22 persons, besides camp utensils and all other paraphernalia for a trip of that kind. The party was to consist of miners, teamsters, and surveyors besides the head men, viz. Governor [William] Gilpin,<sup>17</sup> owner of a Mexican grant 50 miles square to be surveyed and prospected; Mr. Aborn, representing the Fisher Mining Co. of New York; Redwood Fisher, Civil Engineer; A Professor Hill of N.Y.; and myself. Mr. Aborn, while in nominal charge, really turned all the work over to me, having no

experience in such matters himself. We left Denver about July 1st, that is all of us except the 4 head men mentioned, and I never saw either of them only once, during the noon hour, on the whole journey of 300 miles untill we arrived at Fort Garland.<sup>18</sup> The men I had hired as miners, 10 or 11 in number, turned out to be exconfederates, paroled at Camp Douglas, Chicago, inclined to be troublesome to mannage at first, but by a little tact and diplomacy, I gained their good will and got along much better than at first seemed possible.

The Gilpin grant laid South of Fort Garland and extended to the Rio Grand [River] on the west and the crest of the Sangro de Christo range on the East, inclosing many Mexican villages and many thousands acres of fertile land. The inhabitants were almost exclusively Mexican with some halfbreeds and a few fullblood Navaho Indians. The summer was spent in prospecting and surveying this large grant. I mingled freely with the Natives, studying their easy language so successfully that in a short time I could make my way amongst them, buying from them fresh beef, milk and such vegetables as the country afforded. Mr. Gilpin had instructed me to pay them liberally, explaining that he wanted to make friends of them, and with the Companies money this task was easy as well as a pleasant one. I had plenty of leisure except when Camp was to be moved and on several occations was invited to accompany the "Head Bosses" on their various mountain trips. We also discovered several goldbearing Leads but not, as far as I have heard, of sufficient value to warrant developement. The Valley had plenty of Cattle and sheep and produced crops of wheat when irrigated, although the methods of farming were so premitive that it reminded one of old Bible times.

In the fall [1864] shortly before leaving, a farewell party was given at the County seat. Officers and Soldiers from Fort Garland participated and everything went on pleasantly when it seemed some offensive remarks had passed between them and our exconfederates, causing some anxiety as to possibel trouble. Mr. Aborn came to me to inquire if I could induce some of the carracters likely to be troublesom to go with me to another Town, called Plaza a Riva where a Mexican dance was in progress. I had no difficulty of getting the consent of the men, and accordingly, withdrew with the whole reble army, 9 in number. We rode our Horses—some had mules—6 miles and were wellcome by a large party of Mexican dancers, men and women.



The apparent good feeling was deceptive. The Mexicans had an old grudge against the boys and opened Hostilities with a shower of emty bottles. After that, as the Chinaman would say, "Hell bloak lose." In the long, low, narrow Hall, some 40 or 50 shots rang out, creating the wildest confusion and wounding 5 Mexicans, one a woman shot in the ancle. Most of the shots, as was shown afterwards, were fired against the ceiling, and all of them must have been fired by the reble army as none of them had been hit. The room was cleared except by a few, of which I was one, who didn't seem to have sense enough to get out. In acting as peasemaker between one of our boys and some Mexicans, I stretched out my arm to intercept a blow, holding in my hand a loaded revolver, unconsciously cocked perhaps at the beginning of the row, and the hammer comming in contact with a bench, about to decend on a prostrate Mexican. The revolver was discharged, the bullet lodging in a door casing close to where two men were standing.

This incident was related by me afterwards on the wittness stand, with the additional fact I forgot to mention above, that I didn't know it was my own gun that went off but suposed I had been fired at by some one, either in the room or outside of it. One of the boys was arrested but nothing came of it. The jury disagreed and the case was dropped. I understood some money had been paid to prosecuting Attorney. Owing to this arrist and prosecution, 9 of us were detained as wittnesses, and when finally discharged, the rest of the party had departed for Denver.

The ten of us followed as soon as we could, crossing the mountains at Sangre de Christo pass and decending to Huerfano—pronounced Wafeno—a little Mexican village at the base of the mountains. We had rode hard all day without any dinner and was very hungry when we arrived at the few doby houses. Ten mounted men didn't look very good to the Mexicans, and they had made a hurried retreat to the bush leaving their Senoritas locked in their Houses. Some of the boys had no trouble in picking the locks, but when the women refused to give us food we took possession of an Emty doby with a fireplace and spent the night telling stories and roasting squash and green corn, of which we found plenty.

Early in the morning we mounted our animals and rode 20 miles to Sam Hecklans ranch for breackfast. Sam Hecklan was an ardent Southern sympathizer, owning a Mexican grant of 10 miles

square, lived in old plantation stile with Mexican peones living in a village of cabins, and was, himself, married to a Mexican lady. He seemed to know all about us, was very glad to see us, and insisted that we stay several days. At meal time each of us had a peon waiter behind his chair, and the old planter seemed delighted with an arrangement that reminded him of antebellum days in his former southern home. The boys were equally pleased with their Hosts generous hospitality and we stayed with the old man 3 days. The warning I had received not to display my union sentiments with such surroundings, was hardly necessary. At last the hour of parting came and the old man seemed really much affected.

Nothing worthy of special notice happened on the way home. The journey to Black Hawk, of 350 miles, was made in 7 traveling days—an average of 50 miles pr day. At Home I found my wife and children well. Although losing our little girl we still had two children—a boy Francis William having been born Feb. 18th, 1863.

During the winter of '64 to '65, I worked as a timberman in the Bobtail mine for Mr. Sinsenderfer at \$6 pr day. When not engaged in putting stulls<sup>19</sup> of heavy timbers or building or repairing slide, it was my business to work in the sump or water hole under the bucket, sinking the shaft deeper by drilling and blasting in the water. This work was very dangerous and I had several very narrow escapes. Any unusual or dangerous work fell to me and my partner because we received a dollar more pr day than the other miners. In the summer of '65 I had a contract to sink a shaft 4 x 10—100 ft. deep—on the Burnside Lode, at Black Hawk, for which I received 38 dollars pr foot. This work yielded a good income—about \$12. pr day—but at the dept of 75 or 80 ft. the air became so bad that no miner would stay with me only a few days. At last, when within 8 ft. of completion, I could stand it no longer meself and sold out the contract to a Mr. Peterson.

Prices of all commodities, owing to Indian trouble on the plains and the depreciation of paper money, had steadily advanced. During the winter just past, Flour sold at \$30.00 pr 100 lbs.; Coffe, \$1.00 pr lb.; Sugar, \$1.00; Potatoes, 25 cts pr. lb.; butter \$1.50; and canned fruit or vegetables of any kind \$1.50 pr. can. Supplies, too, were running low, and it might soon be a question whether goods could reach us through the hostile Indians. I had laid up no money in the 4 years of very hard work in the mountains and the future for a man with a family offered little encouragement. I

begin to think of moving out of a country so little suited to the raising of children and the making of a Home for old age. I accordingly sold my House in Chases Gulch and made other preparations to move. We went to Denver, bought a span of mules, wagon, tent & et. and started to cross the plains once more.

A part of the Colorado 1st<sup>20</sup>—a gang of cut throats—who, when not in the Hills as deserters, were quartered in squads at the ranches between Denver and Julesburg. A party of 14, of this so called Soldiers, were quartered at Paijon, 60 miles from Denver, where we camped the 2nd night. Only 4 of this squad remained at the station, the rest had deserted and came in for rations, generally after midnight. In the morning our mules were missing, and my suspicions that they had been stolen by the soldiers was verified by the statement of one of the men, whose time was out a year afterwards. I found and followed tracks untill in sight of Kaiwa [Kiowa] Creek, and thinking the mules might be there, I struck a bee line for the Creek, regardless of any tracks. The day was warm, I was in my shirt sleeves prepared only for a few miles walk, but distances are very deceiving in that Country, and when I arrived at the dry sandbed that seldom has any water in it, it was past noon and I was already very dry. I walked up and down this sand bed looking for muletracks and digging for water in moist places, using my hands and revolver without finding either.

I continued my hunt untill Evening when the question of how to pass the cool night ahead of me overshadowed even that of hunger and thirst. I know the cutoff road crossed Kaiwa Creek and that I would come to a station if I followed the Sandbed, but the distance would be much lengthened by crooks and turns. I, therefore took my bearings from the mountains and later observed the stars, walked rapidly untill quite tired out. I was sitting on the ground resting and contemplating the necessity of husbanding my strength to keep from freezing should I have to spend the night in the open when to my great joy I heard the bark of a Dog. I jumped up, took my bearing by a star, and after a couple miles walk came [to] Kaiwa Station where I drank a large quantity of ill smelling water and stayed till morning. It was 11 o'clock P.M. when I got there. As soon as it was light, I got up and walked 11 miles to where my wife and babies had spend the night sleeping in a covered wagon, or perhaps anxiously awake, listening to the howling Cayotes and the worse sound of galloping deserters riding up and down the hard road in search of new booty.

Finding that my mules were gone for good, I applied to the Captain at Camp Wardvill<sup>21</sup> for an Escort to help me recover them. This was refused on the ground that it was too risky to send a small party into the Indian infested country and could not spare the necessary number of men. I than hired a Government Horse from a Soldier at \$5. pr day and rode all over the wilderness between the cutoff and Platt, camping alone in the Hills away from anybody.

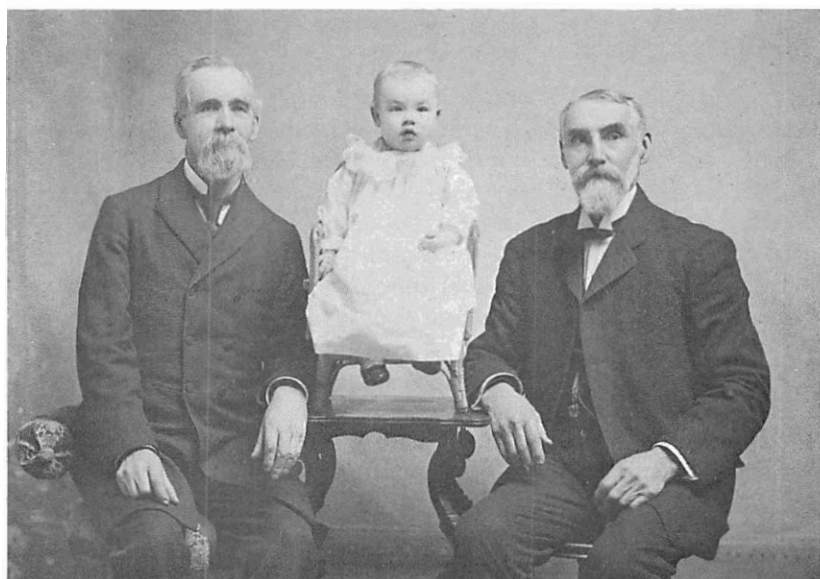
One day, at noon, I struck the Platt river and came upon 5 Deserters ingaged in rebranding some Government Horses—using the letter J to cover the heavy stem of the letter U so as to appear J.S. insted of U.S. They made no attempt at secresy but laughed and joked and carried on their work oppenly at a ranch kept by a French Cannadian and in the face of anyone that might pass along a public highway. I could find no trace of my lost mules, and returning to Camp, I removed our tent and wagon to Camp Wardvill and engaged to drive the waterwagon for the post at \$50. pr month and ration. This work was light, giving me plenty of leisure, and being determined to recover my Mules, I wrote to several parties up and down the road and also to Denver and Black Hawk. Mr. Lawson had returned to the latter place, and through Mr. Shumer, a friend to whom I had written, we were soon in correspondence. I authorized him to offer a reward of \$100. for the recovery of the mules and he had posters printed in Denver to that effect; but before this posters were put up a ranchman brought in the Mules and claimed the reward. Mr. Lawson compromised by paying \$80. and came on to Camp Wardvill with the mules and also a span of his own.

Travel over the plains was deemed very unsafe in those days and we waited some days to join one of the many large Trains going eastward.<sup>22</sup> A Captain, Elected by the parties composing such a train, was given command and his orders became the Law. In the morning the train waited for no one and woe betide the one that was left behind. Evidences of Indian outrages abounded. At one place a nightherder had been killed and mutilated, 8 Mules run off and wagons, Harness, and Loads burned. At another place a regular battle had taken place between a lot of Sioux Indians and a Cattle-train of wagons loaded with flour and driven by 22 "Bullwhackers." This ox train was attacked in daytime, and after seeing the Indians at a distance, had time to corral their wagons, fortify with sacks of flour from behind which they played their

repeating rifles so well that the Indians soon withdrew, leaving 3 dead behind besides many more they were able to carry with them. There were also dead ponies and cattle laying on the field but neither of the white men had been hit. The little battle had occurred the day before and we had camped overnight only a few miles away. Further down the road, at Rising Sun, the Soldiers had a scrimmage with Indians which we missed by just one day. Gunnysacks filled with corn had been used for rifle pits here and was still laying on the ground, two high, and in regular squares. It had got to be late in the fall and nights were cold.

At Rising Sun a light snow fell during the night, and my wife was invited by a Soldiers wife to sleep in the House and heard from her the story of the previous days excitement. Below Rising Sun the road was, and had been for some time, free from hostile Indians and we arrived at Fort Kerney without any mishap. Here the big train separated, some going to Omaha and others to Nebraska City or points further south. We crossed the Platt river to the northside and dropped out for much needed rest and a chance to care for the little ones, who of necessity had been neglected while traveling under the strict regulations of the large train. Our Baby—Geo. Edgar—born April 8th, 1865, was broken out with small sores, owing no doubt to lack of proper care—Care that could not be given him while a part of the big train. Our bed-clothes would become damp from contact with our boddies and the cold ground and hurriedly rolled up in the morning . . . with the tent strapped to the wagon bows on the outside, [the bed-clothes] would freeze at times so hard that I had to smooth them out by main force. On this bed and in this damp and frozen clothes we were forced to sleep and sometime on frozen ground too. It was indeed a hard trip, Especially for the little ones.

George was tough and hardy and soon was all right again when we made Elkhorn once more. I had intended to go direct to Omaha and perhaps cross over into Iowa, but at Elkhorn I met my friend [Sylvanus] Dodge and when I told him that I was looking for a place to winter he said I had come to the right place. He had a House I could move into and a grove nearby, where I could gather plenty of Dry wood, and all free of charge. I thankfully accepted this kind offer and so came to winter a second time on the Elkhorn river. After a little rest I resumed my former business while here, viz. freighting and trading with Stage and military Stations; at one time going as far as Black Hawk in the Colorado Mountains.



*Hogan Ouren (left), C. Gregory Ouren (seated between his grandfathers), and William Gregory. Courtesy of William H. Ouren, Omaha.*

Proffits were large and Danger great. An order of Government provided that no one, except in large parties and well armed, could travel on the plains and I would be held at the posts for several days at times, but when through trading, by means of diplomacy of my own invention, I always mannaged to move on. I never paid money for such previlledge, however.

In the Spring of 1866 I had bought a farm in Pottawattamie County, Iowa, of 300 acres in partnership with my friend Lawson and moved on to it on the 2d of April the same year. We ingaged in farmming and stock raising and kept the Stage Co. part of the time. In 1870, having sold out to Mr. Lawson and bought 120 acres near by, I moved onto my new farm which became the home of my family untill 1890 when we moved to Council Bluffs March 8th. During my stay at Living Spring—the name of my Home farm—I carried on the business of a merchant farmer buying and selling, as well as raising crops and Livestock. I was a pioneer in the now important business in buying Steers and fattening them for the market, selling to butchers in Council Bluffs and Omaha before South Omaha had any existense. I had great faith in the future of the rich and cheap Lands of western Iowa and added to my holdings from time to time untill at one time I owned 860 acres. This had been reduced, by sales, to about 700 acres at the time I moved to C. Bluffs.

Of our 9 children, two were born in Chicago, Viz. John Edward, Aug 5th, 1858, and Isabell, Jan 31st, 1861; Two at Black Hawk, Col. Francis William,<sup>23</sup> Feb. 18th, 1863, and Geo. E.P., April 8th, 1865. The rest were born at Living Spring, Iowa—Eltie May, March, 1867; Alexander, Dec 1st, 1868; Curtis G.,<sup>24</sup> Apr. 5, 18[72]; Harvey Oscar, Apr. 29th, 1873; and Minnie Isabell, July 17th, 1875. Three of the Nine are dead. Isabell died at Black Hawk, Col., Jan 12th, 1864; Eltie May at Living Spring, Iowa, Oct. 23d, 1867; and John Edward, the Eldest Son, at the same place, Aug. 6th, 1887. John was 29 years and one day old, married, and left a widow and two Sons,<sup>25</sup> now grown men.

We eventually bought a Home—124 4th St.—in Council Bluffs, and lived there untill 1905 when we moved to California. Much of the time since 1890 was spent in traveling. . . .

In this short and hurried record of a long and active, though unimportant life, I have necessarily omitted many things of interest to myself. For instance, in the summer of 1876 I went up to Watonwan Co., Minn., and bought 300 2 & 3 year old Steers and drove them through the than sparsely settled country of Minnesota and Iowa to my farm in Pottawattamie Co. It was a hard trip in the heat of July, exposed to the scorching sun by day and drenching rains at night, but the venture proved very successful in spite of a great stampeed at Spencer, Iowa, when the whole herd stampeeded in a Thunderstorm and scattered far and wide. It took us 5 days to get the herd together again.

About the year 1883, I think it was, the Silver City Bank was organized, in which I took an active part and was chosen one of its first Directors and Vice President. It was at that time my intention to have gradually converted my means into Bank stock but I changed my mind, and insted, sold my stock at a good proffit, to other parties. This I now think was a mistake, as I believe I could in time have acquired full control of this Bank which has been quite successful and has now [1907] a capital of \$50,000.

## NOTES

1. Omaha's population in 1860 was 1,883. Addison E. Sheldon, ed., *Nebraska Blue Book and Historical Register* (Lincoln: State Journal Company, 1915), 613.

2. This famous ferry across the Platte River north of David City in Butler County was in service from 1859 to 1872.

3. Fort Kearny, Nebraska, established in 1848 as the first of three forts located to guard the overland trails. The others, Forts Laramie and Hall, Wyoming, were garrisoned the

following year. Abandoned in 1871, the site of Fort Kearny, now a state park, was south of the Platte River about seven miles southeast of the city of Kearney. See Lillian M. Willman, "The History of Fort Kearny," *Nebraska State Historical Society, Publications*, XXI (1930), 215-315; Lyle E. Mantor, "Fort Kearny and the Westward Movement," *Nebraska History*, XXIX (Lincoln: September, 1948), 175-207.

4. Kearney was named in honor of General Stephen Watts Kearney (1794-1848), who served in the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. Until 1857 the name was always spelled without an "e" in the final syllable. Lillian L. Fitzpatrick, *Nebraska Place Names* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), 25.

5. Shortly after 1859, civilians began to settle in various spots along the Great Platte River Road traveled by Ouren. Their adobe or log structures were called stations if connected with the Overland stage or Pony Express; or ranches, if operated privately as hostleries, groceries, or saloons. Merrill J. Mattes, *Great Platte River Road* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969), 270-280.

6. Cottonwood Springs or Cottonwood Station, on the east side of Cottonwood Creek, famous Pony Express and overland stage station, also called McDonald's Station or McDonald and Clark's Rancho. Midway between Fort Kearny and Julesburg and blessed with an abundance of water and cedar wood, it became the logical place for later Fort Cottonwood (1864) and Fort McPherson (1866), about one-fourth mile west of the original station. Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, 275.

7. For a discussion of the changing perceptions of this region, see Everett Dick, *Conquering the Great American Desert: Nebraska* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1975).

8. O'Fallon's Bluff, west of Sutherland, Lincoln County, was a well-known landmark on the Oregon Trail. Since the bluff came nearly to the river, most travelers avoided any threat of Indian ambush here by taking a trail which detoured southward over the bluff.

9. About 100 miles east of Denver by the road along the South Platte was a cut-off on which a toll road was built in the early 1860's. It left the main-traveled river road and passed several miles south, along which the telegraph line from Julesburg to Denver was constructed in the fall of 1863. Place Name File, Documentary Resources, Colorado State Museum, Denver.

10. General Benjamin F. Butler, Union officer. He turned to politics after the war, became governor of Massachusetts in 1883, and was an unsuccessful candidate for President. Mark Mayo Boatner III, *The Civil War Dictionary* (New York: David McKay Co., Inc.), 109-110, 935-936.

11. Sylvanus Dodge and sons, Grenville M. and Nathan P., came to Nebraska in the 1850's from Peabody, Massachusetts, and settled on the Elkhorn River. They later made their permanent home in Council Bluffs, Iowa. Grenville Mellen Dodge (1831-1916) enlisted with Union forces in the Civil War and rose to the rank of major general. In 1866 he was appointed chief engineer of the Union Pacific Railroad. His work with the construction of the first transcontinental railroad was of primary importance. "Out of Old Nebraska," newspaper release, by Nebraska State Historical Society, July 10, 1963.

12. In present-day Thurston County, Nebraska.

13. Dobytown, near Fort Kearny, was established to care for the needs of emigrants and travelers, who were not permitted to camp on the military reservation. When the Union Pacific Railroad in 1866 reached a point opposite Dobytown (also known as Kearney City) on the north bank of the Platte, most businesses relocated there—and perpetuated the misspelling—Kearney. A remnant of Dobytown lingered on near the fort, where soldiers found recreation by associating with the "worshippers of Bacchus and Dealers of Cards," as a contemporary observer described it. When Fort Kearny was abandoned in 1871, Dobytown died with it.

14. Probably what is also identified as Millallas Station, located fifty miles west of Fort Kearny. Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, 231.

15. Plum Creek Station on Plum Creek, which flows from the southwest into the Platte River south of modern Lexington, Nebraska. It is best known today as the site of the Plum



Creek Massacre, August 7, 1864, which occurred during a concerted attack by the Cheyenne, Arapahoe, and Brule upon stations and ranches along the central and western stretches of the Platte Valley.

16. The Independence-St. Joe Road, which for most of its length followed the Little Blue River Valley, joined the trail about eight miles east of Fort Kearny. Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, 150-151.

17. William Gilpin, Colorado's first governor (1861-62) and a western enthusiast who knew the Rocky Mountain region well, encouraged settlement in this new region. He had lectured widely and had written a book about the West, describing its resources and prophesying its future greatness. LeRoy R. Hafen, *Colorado: The Story of a Western Commonwealth* (Denver: The Peerless Publishing Company, 1933), 154.

18. Fort Massachusetts was established on Ute Creek, near the base of Mount Blanca in southern Colorado in 1852 and was the first United States military fort in the state. Six years later it was replaced by Fort Garland, six miles south, which was garrisoned as long as Indians threatened the region. Hafen, *Colorado: The Story of a Western Commonwealth*, 54.

19. A round timber used to support the sides or back of a mine.

20. The 1st Regiment of Colorado Volunteers was organized in 1861 to oppose General Henry H. Sibley's Confederate forces, which were threatening Fort Union, supply center for New Mexico's Army posts, located south of Raton Pass. In 1863 small detachments of the 1st Colorado were assigned duty in different parts of the territory and in western Kansas and Nebraska to guard the trails and prevent Indian depredations. Marshall Sprague, *Colorado, A Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1976), 34; Wilbur F. Stone, *History of Colorado* (Chicago: J. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1918), I, 717.

21. Camp Wardwell was located one mile south of the South Platte River at the site of the present city of Fort Morgan. Initially called Camp Tyler, it was renamed Camp Wardwell and then in 1866 re-christened Fort Morgan. Don Brandes, *Military Posts of Colorado* (Fort Collins: The Old Army Press, 1973), 28.

22. For a further discussion of Indian unrest in Colorado during the 1860's, see LeRoy R. Hafen, *Colorado and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1948), 308-321.

23. Francis William raised his family of three children on the Living Spring farm. His youngest son, Horace Wayne Ouren, was the father of Mary Ellen Jones of Jacksonville, Florida, who now owns the picture of Hogan Ouren reproduced on page 218.

24. Curtis G. Ouren, founder of the former Ouren Seed Company in Council Bluffs, Iowa, is the father of Katherine Ouren Perkins, and of William H. Ouren, currently in possession of the original manuscript.

25. Louis Hamilton Ouren of Omaha, former officer of the Corn States Serum Company; and Edward Ouren, now deceased, former head of the Omaha Housing Authority.