

4802 Laurel Grove Ave.
North Hollywood, Calif.
Oct. 6th 1961.

Mr. Roy L. Ijams
1264 Wayne Ave.
Topeka, Kansas

Dear Cousin:

Your letter of Sept. 24th has been received. I feel very grateful to receive such greetings from one who is almost an entire stranger and more conversant with my ancestors than I am myself.

In reply to the many suggestions you make, I will attempt to answer your questions pertaining to my Ohio kindred, etc.

I was born Sept. 2d. 1840. at Logan, Hocking Co. Ohio. My father, Isaac Ijams, died of some lung trouble about three weeks before I was born and my mother (Lucretia Allen, a native of Ohio as far as I know) died soon after my birth, leaving me an orphan before I was twenty-four hours old.

I was taken into the family of my mother's sister, Mrs. Clarrisa Lieb, who lived near Lancaster, Ohio. There I remained until I was four or five years old and was then removed to my father's sister, Mrs. Samuel S. Bright, who lived near Logan, Ohio. Mr. Bright, had a large family of his own. My principal occupation was chore boy. Being under the administration of a guardian, I was shifted about from place to place, without any choice of a home, until I was ten years old when I became administrator of my own affairs.

From now on, it was necessary for me to earn my own living which I did as a farm hand wherever I could get a job at \$4.00a month. I sowed flax, harvested it, spread it out to bleach, gathered it in, broke and hackled and skucked it over a board, then passed it thru the reeds of the loom and wove it into the cloth of which my clothing was made. I worked as a farm hand until I was eighteen years old, when I left Ohio.

In returning to Rushville, Ohio where my ancestors lived, my father had two brothers, William and John. I only saw them once when I was fourteen years old. I visited about a week in the families with the children.

Uncle John lived near Rushville on a farm. He had quite a family as I remember them. The oldest one was an old maid named Lou. The eldest son was Joseph. The next was Isaac, then William and Wesley and Vincent and Elizabeth.

Uncle William lived in the town of Rushville, but later moved to Logan where he kept a store. He married a Miss Kate Stevens. Their children were three daughters, all of whom moved to Washington near Seattle, and four sons, Edward, James, Thomas, and Wilbur, all of whom came west to Arizona.

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Edward married a Miss Gillespie in Calif. afterward moving to Arizona. They had four children two of whom are dead and two living. The oldest one, Shdon, has a family of five boys and lives near Phoenix, Arizona.

Edward, suffering from cerebral hemorrhage, left his home in Arizona and came to spend his last days with me. His widow is still living in comfortable circumstances at Safford, Arizona.

My father had two sisters, Eliza, who married a Mr. Bell, and lived at Mt. Pleasant, Ohio, and Mary Ann who married Joseph Ijams, who was a well to do tobacco merchant living in Rushville, Ohio.

Three children were born to Mary Ann and Joseph Ijams. William Edwin, Caroline, and Joseph Henry Harrison. Meeting with financial reverses, the family moved west, about 1856, stopping at Springfield, Ill., for a brief period where Edwin completed his education. Later, the father joined his family at Iowa City, Iowa.

Edwin founded the asylum for the deaf and dumb at Iowa City, beginning in a small way with sixteen pupils. Later accommodating one hundred. His mother was matron of the institution. His brother, who was fourteen months younger than myself, was one of the teachers. Dana Stone, who married Edwin's sister, Caroline, was steward. The balance of the officials were mutes.

Later Edwin resigned the superintendency of the asylum and became a lecturer on religious subjects. He was physically rather frail but mentally very strong. He was benevolent to a fault. He never let his left hand know what his right hand was doing. In his discourses, when referring to heaven, he always spoke of the better land where he now is.

Joseph Henry Harrison (christened by President Harrison himself at the mother's bedside) after the resignation of his brother went to Washington D. C. and took a position in the deaf and dumb asylum there under the supervision of a Mr. Galidette. Abraham Lincoln, while inspecting the institution, observing Joseph's gracefulness in using the sign language, pronounced him so competent that he appointed him superintendent of the seventh oldest deaf and dumb asylum in the United States located at Knoxville, Tenn. He remained there until his death.

The Ijams, whom you mention at Knoxville, was probably the son of Joseph Henry Harrison Ijams.

About 1858, I left Ohio coming west to Iowa City where I was associated with my Uncle Joseph and for the following two years visited the county seats of all the counties demonstrating and selling the patents of different farming implements. By this association, I gained the confidence in myself necessary to assist in removing the obstructions to advancing civilization.

At this time the war clouds were overshadowing our home and not being an advocate of war, joined a company of volunteers going

westward in search of gold and adventure.

In the spring of 1860, we turned our backs on the Missouri river and started west on a very hazardous journey which lasted exactly four months to a day from the time I left the Missouri river to the day I pitched my tent on the Pacific shore in Oregon.

The crowd never started. It was only the strong and athletic and highly favored that reached the golden shore, for the reason, long tedious drive at intervals, stampeding of stock, fighting of Indians, falling by the wayside of some of our numbers by natural causes and sickness, others by the hand of the assassin, the crossing of dangerous streams, all of which added to the tediousness of the journey.

About fifteen or twenty men constituted our original party. As we advanced into the hostile Indian zone, other groups joined us for mutual protection until our company had grown to about one hundred people and about twenty or thirty wagons.

Arriving at Kearney crossing on the Platte river, the tax being \$25.00 a wagon for crossing, we decided to remain on the north side of the river.

The government gave us an escort of one hundred and ten Winnebago Indians under the leadership of a white man who was called lieutenant. These Indians, who came from Fort Reno on the headquarters of the Missouri river, were in the custody of the government and were well equipped with horses and ammunition. However, they proved more of a detriment than a benefit, because in the mornings when we broke camp, these Indians vain of their equipment, would get on their horses and swing out to the foothills. Then, when we would be about an hour on our way, would overtake us with much noise and clanging of sabres, and would report Indians in sight, necessitating our going into camp and preparing for an onslaught with the attending fear and confusion of an attack. But, the enemy never arrived.

This continued day after day until we came midway between Kearney and Laramie to a place called Pawnee Springs where we camped a few days to rest.

By this time the patience of the entire party had become exhausted. A meeting was called, and a resolution was passed that we would push on without the escort. At this meeting, I was chosen as leader of the party. When I informed the lieutenant of our plans, he protested, saying that we were under his protection and subject to his orders. However, we insisted on leaving as our stock were getting thin and we were making no headway. He then said, he would report us at Fort Laramie and have us arrested and prosecuted for disobedience, but the dye was cast, and we informed him we would carry out our resolution regardless of his orders. He then selected a choice horse, saddled it and rode down the bank of the Platte river which at this point is about a mile and a half wide, the entire bed being of quick sand, and being movable, causes very swift currents, into one of which the lieutenant lost his horse and was obliged to lie, practically naked, on an island until morning. After being severely bitten by mosquitoes and horse flies, he was not in a very good humor to make his report of our conduct at Laramie. Signalling the emigrant trains on the south side of the river, he was eventually rescued and was at Laramie to meet us.

On Monday morning we broke camp and started again on our perilous journey meeting with very little opposition, but a great deal of anxiety as the enemy were signalling all along the line leaving us anticipating an attack at any time. Aside from a few skirmishes, we arrived at Laramie in due time without any loss of life.

As we were within about four miles of Laramie, about four o'clock in the afternoon, while looking out for a camp for the night, we discovered a body of Indians coming from the south apparently to meet us and being in an anxious frame of mind, we were unable to discriminate between friendly and hostile Indians, necessitating our going into camp and forming a corral as was customary for protection.

We immediately sent two men across the river in a canoe to notify the authorities at Laramie of our plight. Meanwhile, we spent an anxious night, watching and waiting, every moment expecting to be attacked and massacred, but the Indians moved on quietly into the hills leaving us unmolested. As soon as we were able to communicate with Laramie, we learned that these Indians, three hundred strong, were in the custody of the government and had taken their horses, ammunition, and equipment and escaped from governmental control.

The charges were dropped against us and after the authorities had informed us that they could give us no protection having lost their horses and Indian escorts, inquired as to what we wished to do. It was the unanimous sentiment that we continue our journey regardless of the dangers awaiting us ahead. When asked who was captain of the train, someone answered "that white headed boy" meaning myself, and I was therefore commissioned by the government to escort the train to Grand Round Valley at the foot of the Blue Mountains in Oregon.

Aside from a few minor skirmishes with the Indians we proceeded in a harmonious frame of mind, pooling our interests together until we arrived at Fort Hall on the Snake river about one hundred ninety miles north of Salt Lake. We were rising along about eight o'clock in the morning, the sun beamed forth with uncommon revulgence, there was not a cloud in the sky, and nature seemed to be at repose with all mankind. I was thinking of the dear ones at home and wondering if they had set a chair at the table for me, when all of a sudden there came a cloud of sorrow, and without any warning, half of our number fell victim of the poisonous arrow and tomahawk wielded by the hand of the enemy. The train following us was entirely wiped out. The stock, provisions, and wagons of fourteen families were taken, leaving them destitute. The fight lasted all day until sunset when only a fragment were left to proceed on the journey. Many, frantic with fear and sorrow, buried themselves in the open crevices of the lava banks of the river and were lost.

After spending a day in adjusting conditions, and burying our dead, we moved on the following morning one hundred strong.

In closing up, I have only touched the high spots, have only scraped the surface, there is no romance in this story, and none to verify my statements, as they are now in that silent land and traffic runs over their dust.

Two years later, I returned to Iowa City, remaining there only three months, when I guided a second party to Boise, Idaho. From then on I went from one point to another thru the different states with gold and adventure my chief interest, always attracted by distant allurements, until I finally arrived in Southern California where I married and ceased to wander on.

About 1870, I went to Julian in San Diego County, Calif. where a recent discovery of gold had been made. There I met Miss Edith Shaw, a native of Louisiana, born in a tropical country where tender plants are reared and tender hearts are found. Being robbed of her home and her dear ones by the cruel war, she drifted to California to meet her two brothers with whom she lived. To be self sustaining, she taught the school at Julian where we eventually met and were married Feb. 25th. 1872.

After my marriage it was necessary for me to change my rambling into industry so my wife's brother and I pooled our interest, built a saw mill, and supplied the community with lumber necessary to build up the surrounding territory. When the mines begin to diminish in value, I followed various interests, added a flour mill to the saw mill, had a bee apiary, and a trading post for the Indians.

My family consisted of four children, two sons and two daughters as follows:

Hettie Camelia, born Jan. 8th 1873
Died Mar. 4th. 1892 at the age of 19 years
Isaac Edwin, born June 4th. 1874
Katie May, born May 15th. 1876
William Frederic, born May 11th. 1879

Isaac has never married and always lived under the same roof as myself.

Katie married John Haas (born June 19th. 1867) on Nov. 15th. 1895. He died Dec. 11th. 1917. Of their union three children were born. Addie C. born Nov. 22d. 1896. married to Perry Mulholland., Edith M. born Feb. 20th. 1898. married to Warren Hull. Earl M. born Feb. 23d. married to Dorothy Hall.

William married Marguerite Fiedler in 1909 and is now living near Stockton, Calif. They have four children, who represent the pioneer type in mental and physical qualifications. William, Helen, Edith, and Robert.

Leaving the vicinity of Julian, I moved to Santa Barbara in 1884, remaining there about a year, when I again moved to San Fernando Valley where I now reside with my son Isaac and daughter Katie since the death of my wife June 1st. 1914.

I have dictated this letter to one of my friends, Miss Cora Becker, who has kindly consented to type it. I would like you to feel at liberty to select whatever you wish that you think would be appropriate for your book.

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In conclusion, referring to my own personal experiences, achievements, etc., having been the vanguard of civilization in the West, I have arrived at the place where I cease to care to wander on and am now on the review of life. I have outgrown the teachings of my boyhood days of so many different creeds and now follow the only one universal creed, the uplifting of man.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) Isaac C. Ijams.

Covered Wagon Era Figure Passes



Funeral services were conducted Thursday from Steen's Mortuary for Judge Isaac C. Ijams, who came to Los Angeles in 1865 and who crossed the continent three times on horseback.

—Wisehart Photo.



One of the Last of the Real Pioneers, Death of Judge Isaac C. Ijams Mourned By All

Lived in valley 84 years.
Crossed continent three times
on horseback.

One of founders of Boise, Idaho.
Helped build Fort Douglas at
St. Lake.

Came to this section when Los
Angeles had but 10,000 inhabi-
tants.

Helped build San Diego.

Helped to survey valley.

Fought in many Indian battles.

Voted for Lincoln at Boise.

Age was 97 years, five months
at twelve days.

NORTH HOLLYWOOD — All
southern California joined in
mourning in Fernando valley in mourn-
ing the loss of its most disting-
uished pioneer citizen, Judge
Isaac C. Ijams, whose funeral
services were held Thursday from Steen's
Mortuary. With many officials and
prominent citizens present, a
beautiful and impressive service
was conducted with Rev. R. R.

Hollywood, William Frederick of
Stockton.

Born in Logan, Ohio, Sept. 2,
1840, he attended a log cabin
school in the woods when his
father was judge and merchant
in the town. He first crossed the
continent to Oregon in 1860; the
second time to Boise, Idaho, and
the third to Montana where he
explored for two years. Judge
Ijams came to Los Angeles
through Camp Cody, mined two
years in Kern county and drove
a 6-mule team hauling freight
from San Pedro to Walkers Ra-
sin for a year. Then he spent 18
months in San Diego. Mined a
year in Mexico and arrived at
Calabasas in 1884 where he home-
steaded 160 acres, surveyed the
valley and was elected Justice of
the Peace for 16 years. In 1898
he moved to Lankershim to what
is now known as Studio City
where he bought 100 acres. He
died at his home, 4202 Laurel