

As we appropriately thank and worship our Savior this time of year for his atoning sacrifice in our behalf,

I thought it might not be too out of place to think of loved ones who have gone before. Let me tell you some things about Henry C. Hall who was born October 11, 1858. I'll begin with the subject of

"Horse Drawn Street Cars"

Before street cars were electrified, the cars were pulled by horses along wooden rails that were capped with a thin strip of steel.

This enterprise, which spread from city to city beginning in the 1850's was a major operation.

The Vanderbilt family wealth was generated, initially, from their horsecar holdings.

Following are some U.S. statistics concerning horse-powered street car lines in the year 1880.

No. of Horsecar Railways: 415

No. of Cars: 18,000

No. of Horses: 100,000

Yearly Hay Consumption: 150,000 tons

Yearly Grain Consumption:

11,000,000 bushels

Miles of track: 3,000

Passengers Carried: 1,212,400,000

Employees: 35,000

Investment:: \$150,000,000.00

Some mules were employed on the street railways. They had advantages and disadvantages. One disadvantage was a mule's stubbornness. It would often just lie down and refuse to work or it would head for the "car barns" where it knew there was hay and grain to eat

On the positive side, a mule could be toilet trained.

Horses could not be trained in this respect. Consequently their accumulated excrements were knee deep in some areas of New York City and the odor was unbearable. This was the era of the long skirt and you can well imagine Madam's problems in "keeping her skirt clean".

My Grandfather, Henry C. Hall, was the first man to drive the street railway car when it was introduced into Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 1882. Cedar Rapids employed mules to pull the cars.

My grandfather, Henry C. Hall, of whom I speak, was born in Lafayette, Allen County, Ohio on October 11, 1858. My great grandfather, also named Henry C. Hall, was a merchant who owned a small store in Lafayette. Unfortunately, he died on October 20, 1858 leaving five children: Clarissa, Hannah Ellen, Esther, Mariette and Henry C. who was 14 years old at the time. Tragically, Elizabeth Staley, Henry's wife, died two years later.

Great grandfather's will was probated and gives an interesting account of about 100 persons who owed him money. My father and mother, Howard and Florence Tracy Hall, in 1949, made an effort to locate his store only to find that it had been torn down the day before they arrived.

Henry C., the youngest of the children, was sent to live with his grandfather William Hall. On obtaining his majority at age 21 years, he received, in cash, his portion of his father's estate.

With part of his cash, he bought a team of horses and a wagon and started west, buying and selling scrap iron on the way. The farther west he went, the more valuable the scrap iron became. Upon reaching Mount Vernon, Iowa he stopped to rest and stayed awhile. He had now travelled over 600 miles.

While there, he met Mary Ann Woodcox and, after a short courtship, married on November 29th, 1883. It is rumored that Mary Ann's parents, Alfred Woodcox and Naomi McElroy, for unknown reasons did not fully appreciate the sterling qualities of my grandfather. Consequently, Henry had to steal his bride-to-be with the help of a ladder to a second story window. They then continued west to Cedar Rapids where grandfather sold the horses, the wagon and the rest of the scrap iron. With the proceeds, they purchased a home on Second Avenue (also called Eagle Street). (I have been unable to determine the location of their home from the old-time maps). Their oldest children, Saint (Sam) and my father Howard were born there.

Soon after taking up residence my grandfather obtained the street car driver position already mentioned. The pay was good and he enjoyed his work, but grandfather seemed to really believe in Horace Greeley's admonition, "Go West Young Man, Go West" and eventually he moved west again.

If any of you have anything to add to this brief story, please communicate with me. HTH-December 1992

After four years of mule-team streetcar driving, he and his young family boarded a train for Pocatello, Idaho where they again bought a home and grandfather went to work as a locomotive fireman on the Oregon Short Line Railroad. Eugene and May Naomi were born here. Eugene was born on November 30, 1890 and died one month later on December 31, 1890. I have researched "on site" in the Pocatello area for the location of their home and also for the burial site of Eugene without success. May Naomi was also born in Pocatello on March 28, 1892.

Sometime later, the Railroad built a branch line in Cache Valley, Utah. Henry then transferred to the new branch line, sold the Pocatello home, moved to Ogden, Utah, and bought a home at 2783 Pacific Avenue on the west side of the Railroad Switching yard. Ralph, the youngest child was born in Ogden, Utah on July 30, 1894.

After seven years on the Cache Valley Line, he transferred to the Southern Pacific Railroad as a Brakeman where he again worked for seven years.

The railroad yards in Ogden were growing at a rapid rate and, in fact, had become the most important railroad terminal west of Omaha. As a result, the Pacific Avenue home along with other homes on the west side of the tracks were purchased by the Railroad.

Henry and Mary Ann then acquired a property and built a home at 126 Binford Avenue where they resided until they departed this life.

In the northeast corner of the property Henry built a two story horse barn for a transfer business he had embarked on.

This material on my grandfather up to this point has been obtained from Linn County Iowa Histories, General U.S. histories of the period, taped interviews of my mother and father, and brief, written histories of Howard and Florence Tracy Hall.

My early recollections of my Hall grandparents began about 1927 when I was seven years old. We visited there quite often and played with our cousin Betty Hensley who also was about seven. We envied Betty very much because grandma Hall gave Betty money to buy one candy bar every day.

Betty's mother May Hall Hensley had died of tuberculosis and was being raised by my grandmother Hall. In addition to the huge horse barn which had a driveway running to it on the east side of the property, there was a neatly trimmed hedge in front, a grape arbor (a cool place to be in on a hot summer day), and a small, well trimmed lawn.

Playing in the barn was forbidden but I remember playing there anyway with Betty, my brother Eugene, and two neighborhood negro girls.

The home was wood frame with a small porch on the south where there were two rocking chairs. The house was painted gray.

The living room was always dimly lit. I remember those old twisted, greenish cords descending from a high ceiling terminating in a wavy glass shade on which there was a switch to turn the light on. The bulb was probably only 40 watts.

I relished the treat that grandma always had for us children but had a hard time forgiving her for telling me that there was no Santa Claus.

The main attraction in grandma's living room was the Edison Phonograph. We would crank it up and listen to jazzy saxophones and comedians telling jokes.

Interestingly, the steel needle on an Edison moved up and down as it followed the track. While in all other brands of phonographs of that day the needle wiggled from side to side in a horizontal plane as the record revolved.

Grandma Hall was a short woman with very deep-set eyes. We have a good picture of my grandfathers family. Grandfather Hall was a stalky man with a moustache. He always went to a barber-shop for a shave (not uncommon in those days).

Grandfather Hall was a far-sighted man who quickly changed from using horses and wagons in his transfer business to using motorized trucks. At this time his business was located at 231-25th street. In addition to transferring baggage, he did moving of all kinds and sold kindling wood, coal, and baled hay.

My father, Howard, was a partner in this enterprise during its early years.