

LIFE SKETCH OF ERIC GOUDY MIDTBOEN HOGAN
(Norwegian spelling: Erik Gautesen Midtboen Haugen)

Eric G.M. Hogan was born on the farm of Ramberg, in the parish of Uvdal, clerical district (prestgjeld) of Rollag, county of Buskerud, Norway, June 23, 1802, son of Gaute Ericksen of Aaker farm and Margith Knudsen. He was christened in the Hol parish church.

When he came to America he adopted the American spelling of "Hogan" for his name instead of "Haugen" which was the name of the farm where he lived in Norway. "Midtboen" was a previous farm name which he retained. It was a Norwegian custom to add to the name of a person the name of the farm or place where he lived.

Her first married Kari Sondresen in 1827. She died after giving birth to two still born children and in 1829 he married Helge Knudsen of Norstebe farm. Little else is know of his earlier life.

In 1836 he and Helge were living comfortably with their five children on their Haugen farm. One day while standing on the street of a nearby village, Grandfather Eric overheard some men talking about the wonderful possibilities and opportunities in America. They spoke of the privilege of having as much land as one could care for and of the religious freedom in that great new country. He was greatly impressed with these tales and made up his mind that he would go to America as soon as he could dispose of his property and make ready. He was eager to tell his wife and thought she would approve of the change, but to the contrary. She was not at all pleased with the thought and did not take him seriously. When she found he really meant to go she was very sad indeed. Her people were opposed to the move and thought, as she did, that it was a very foolish venture. It was not for the Gospel that he was pulling up and leaving his native land. He had not heard of the Gospel as yet, but the urge to go to this new land was overwhelming.

Could one criticize his wife and her people for assuming that he had lost his reason? He was prospering well in Norway. His good wife cried and plead with him to abandon this wild scheme. Her family continually pressed her with the fear of dangers that beset people in such an undertaking, especially in the small sailing vessels then available. Some of their family, if not all, might lose their lives. Furthermore, if they succeeded in crossing the ocean they would be unfamiliar with the strange language. However, all arguments to dissuade Grandfather Eric were futile. His reply was: "If it does me no good at all, it will be better for my children." Still Grandmother Helge held to her unchanged opinions of such a momentous and dangerous trip.

At last Eric said, "Well, I am going; we will separate; I will take two of the children; you may take two and we will cast lots for the fifth one." This proposal was too much for Grandmother Helge and her reply was, "Where you go, I will go too."

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He sold his farm to his brother Knute for \$500.00 and they bade farewell to their loved ones and their native land in 1837. They traveled thirteen weeks on the ocean and their hardships began with the burial at sea of their little four year old daughter, Helge, their third child.

Another sad experience happened to the family. Upon arriving in America and while crossing some water in a small boat, the boat was upset. They had kept all their money, in gold coin, in a small box wrapped in their bedding. The gold dropped into the water, ten to twelve feet deep. By motions and signs, they finally succeeded in making the crew understand what happened. Some of the money was recovered, but about \$200.00 was lost. Grandfather Eric always maintained that the crew did not try very hard to recover the coin but went back later and did a more thorough job for their own gain.

The Hogan family stayed in Chicago for a short time in 1837, where their fourth child, little three year old Margit, died. From Chicago the family moved to a farming section near Ottawa, Lasal County, Illinois, where a few families from Norway lived. Here they rented land for four years and saved to get themselves a team of horses. Harriet, their sixth child, was born here, the first native American of the family, February 1, 1830. Then they moved 180 miles to Iowa, Lee County, where land was cheap. Only ten miles west of Nauvoo, it was here in January, 1843, that Elder Gudmon Hougus, a Norwegian missionary from Illinois, met them and converted them to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day-Saints. Grandfather Eric was reared in a Lutheran home and he was always of a deeply religious nature. This new religion appealed to him very strongly. Soon, with the Hogan's and many of their neighbors converted, a branch of the Church was organized in the community, mostly of Scandinavian people. While in Lee County, Elizabeth was born in 1841, Margaret in 1842, and Regena in 1844.

The converts next moved to Nauvoo, but sold their farm in Nauvoo and left that city April 17, 1846 and went to Garden Grove, Decatur County, Iowa, a settlement and resting place for the westward moving saints. On the way there, Paul, their 10th child was born, their 2nd boy, at Keokuk. They stayed at Garden Grove a short time, then proceeded toward Council Bluffs in 1847. Grandfather Eric and his children built a cabin at Plum Hollow, cleared 15 acres of land and raised 700 bushels of corn. He gave the only horse he had at this location to Heber C. Kimball to go with the pioneers in the spring of 1847 to the Salt Lake Valley. This year they buried a third child, five year old Margaret.

On their leaving for the west Helge, the mother, drove a horse team just newly acquired, and Eric the father, their first child, Goudy, 18 years old and their daughter Kari (later called Caroline), 16 years old, took turns driving an ox team, with perhaps, ten year old Liv (later called Lavina) beside them.

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Then the mother became desperately ill. The caravan was stopped. That night while all were around her bed, the company doctor present announced she could not live until daybreak. She was partially unconscious but apparently realized what was going on about her and overheard the remarks of the doctor. It made her very sorrowful to think of leaving her large family. Later during the night she had a vivid dream. She saw three boys standing by her bedside. She saw a valley and a road by some springs, also a tract of land that was unfamiliar to her. The next morning she was much improved and said, "Last night one of you said that I should not live to see this day, but I shall go to the valley in the mountains and I will yet have three more sons."

During that winter of 1847-48 they stayed at Council Bluffs, Iowa. A third son, Charles Peter, was born here January 22, 1848, he being the first of the three boys she saw in her dream. Early in the spring of 1848, they started again for the valleys of the mountains. They arrived at the mouth of Emigration Canyon September 22, 1848. On beholding the Salt Lake Valley, Helge said, "This is the valley I saw in my dream."

The following morning, Grandfather Hogan rode north on horseback to what is now South Bountiful. He selected a building spot near a clear cold water spring and there chose to establish his farm. He returned to Salt Lake City and reported to President Brigham Young who gave him permission to locate there and blessed him in his efforts. When they were driving along with their few belongings, Grandmother Helge immediately recognized the road and the springs as those she had seen on the plains in her dream and upon arriving at the farm location, without designation by her husband, she exclaimed, "This is the spot of ground I saw in my dream!"

On March 7, 1850, Joseph, second son of her dream, was born to the family. He is said to have been the first white child born in South Bountiful. Then on July 10, 1852, the eighth birthday of their daughter Regena, Eric, a third dream boy, their thirteenth child, was born. Thus was her dream now fulfilled completely.

Just a month after Joseph was born, April 12, 1850, little Charles Peter, first of the dream boys and born a Council Bluffs a little over four years before, died, and his death was said to be the first of any pioneers in all Bountiful.

Four years after settling in South Bountiful, Grandfather Eric was called as one of the first missionaries to go to Norway. He labored with President Canute Peterson. From this mission he returned to Utah in October, 1855, bringing with him a large company of immigrating saints. They crossed the Atlantic in the ship, "James Nesmith."

In 1858 he married Ingeborg Maria Jensen, and in 1862 he married Hannah Nilsson. No children were born to Ingeborg but five children were born to Hannah, the three middle ones dying in childhood during the diphtheria epidemic in December, 1878. The five children were: Hyrum, Josephine, Ephraim, Amelia Marie and Charles Francis.

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Grandfather Eric was so anxious for the children in the community to be educated that he built an extra room on his house to be used for a school. He later assisted in building a small school house, which was located across the street from where the present South Bountiful LDS Ward Chapel stands, 790 W. 1500 S. He even attended some of the classes here himself.

He was a tiller of the soil in very deed, plowing every available spot of ground, even among the willows and around spring holes. At the time of the invasion of Johnston's army, before leaving home to go south, he took time to plant potatoes and then dug them on their return.

He was described as a large, sturdy Norseman, very gentle and kind and with a keen sense of humor. One time some boys went into his garden and did a good deal of damage to the watermelon patch and vegetables. He let them have their fun and knowing who they were, good naturedly asked them in his broken English, when he saw them, "Well boys, how did you like my melons and turnips?" After that, he had no more trouble on garden raids.

His son Eric, third of his mother's dream sons, spoke of Helge as his "little mother," saying that she could stand under his father's big outstretched arm. In one of the later pictures of them together Helge wears a flowered calico dress made from material purchased of some of the first dry goods brought into the valley by wagon freighters. She was very proud of this dress. She made it herself and wore it only on Sunday or for special occasions. After an event she would take off and fold it carefully and put it away. It was her "Best dress" for many years.

In those days the people of South Bountiful went to East Bountiful to church, a distance of two or three miles. Grandfather Eric, who always drove fine horses, was very generous in giving his neighbors rides over to church.

He sponsored all kinds of wholesome recreation, especially dances. Seldom did he ever miss a dancing party in the community if it were at all possible for him to be there. His entire life was one of service to his own family, to his church and to his community.

He died in South Bountiful (Woods Cross) on June 22, 1876, at an age of seventy-four, and eight years later he was followed by Grandmother Helge. She was then seventy-five. Hannah Nilsson, Eric G.M.'s fourth wife and the mother of five children, died October 4, 1916, at an age of 82 years.

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Truly the words of this good man came true when he said through his coming to America his “children would be blessed.” He now has a very large posterity living in the valleys of the Rocky Mountains and elsewhere throughout the United States, enjoying the blessings of the Gospel. Temple work has been done for hundreds of his ancestors and other relatives.

And surely the life of this dear little Grandmother Helge was spared for a purpose, and we, her posterity, are here because of her faith, courage and endurance. What a wonderful heritage is ours through these noble Scandinavian forebears!

Compiled by Ora Haven Barlow (631 So. 11th E., SLC), a great grandson through Regena Hogan Stoker, and Elsie Hogan Van Noy (189 M St., SLC), a daughter of Eric, 3rd dream boy of Helge. Both this Eric and this sister Regena were born on the 10th of July, she in 1844, Lee County, Iowa, and he, 1852, at the “dream site” in South Bountiful. (10 July 1966)