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May 6, 1936

Mr. Charles A. Pressler  
3812 Avenue M  
Galveston, Texas

My dear Mr. Pressler:

I am interested in your letter and have enjoyed the search to find something about your grandfather. I have found two men who remember him.

One of these men is Mr. William Backus (whose address is Glen Lily Road, Bowling Green, if you care to write to him). He is eighty-nine years old. His mind is clear. He said he came here in 1867 from Canada and he worked for Mr. Charles Ott. He said that Mr. Ott was a stone contractor and a skilled workman. He said that he was a fine man and he had but one fault, and that was that he always did more than the contract called for. Mr. Backus said that Mr. Ott carved one of the four Corinthian capitals of the columns at the Court House. The Court House was finished in 1868. He made the stone fountain and the small figures which were originally around the fountain. These figures were removed when the fountain was enlarged. He did the stone work on several of the business houses which are still standing around the square and down Main Street.

He had a "very large contract for the stone work" on the large brick residence of the cashier of one of the banks. He was doing some very fine carving on the columns. The contract amounted to \$5,000. he said. He, Mr. Backus, had put up the stone platform for the porch. Suddenly one morning the cashier had disappeared. Later the bank had to be closed. Many people here lost their savings. It may have been this incident which caused your grandfather's financial loss. The other man who remembers Mr. Ott is Chief of the Fire Department, Mr. John Moltenberry. He was born in 1864 and remembers him as a friend of his father who was also a stone mason. But he told me several facts about him which Mr. Backus later told me more of. Neither of them knew of any activity of his of have the public square left as an open park. It is quite possible though that he was active in the movement. Both of them say that he has a nephew here, Mr. Dan Ott, son of John Ott, a painter. I know Mr. Dan Ott, but I have not seen him recently. He is, I understand, a night watchman for the Kentucky-Tennessee Light and Power Company. He may be able to give you further information.

We have no city directory for that period.

Yours very truly,

Margie Helm  
Librarian

P. S. Dr. J. O. Carson also remembers him. He said that the columns which were to have gone into the Calvert residence of the \$5000 contract were later changed and used in the Turpin building which all three of the men remember that he did. This building is still standing on the square. The residence of the above mentioned contract is now the Ogden building on our campus.

M. K. H.

Note not on the letter:

Two of the capitals of the Court House columns were carved by Sam(?) Johnson and the fourth one by Pierce Malone, says Mr. Backus. He himself

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worked on the Court House too. He remembers that he and another young man had to "dress down" the four columns in 1868 for the finishing touches and had to miss a horse race at Gordon's Race Track in Jackson's Hollow.