

## EARLY HUGHES LIFE IN AMERICA

I was born on a kitchen table in Englewood, Colorado on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1928. Named David Ralph Hughes after my father. But I was called for years 'Sonny' and then in school 'D. Ralph.' Only after I went to West Point with a military career was I routinely and thereafter called Dave or 'David.'

From the beginning when my father was born on the Hughes Ranch in 1898, he was always called 'Ralph' rather than David. And his father was Eben, not a David. Which David name came to him, then me, and my first born, down through our Welsh family name because we were descended from a long line of noted Welsh Calvinist Methodist ministers. Dating back at least to Reverend Dafydd ap Hugh (David, son of Hugh) in 1588 in Llandefriog, Wales. Which meant I was actually at birth, David Ralph Hughes the Eleventh (XI).



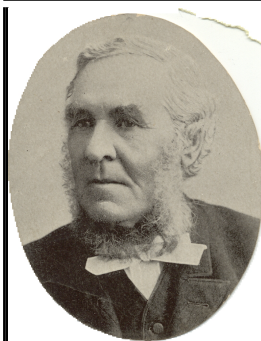
## Early Life (1)

Category: Early Life

Published: Sunday, 23 January 2011 03:04

Written by dave

Hits: 8682



Reverend  
(Y Parch)

Richard  
Hughes  
1825-1898

While I will trace that proud, if not richly endowed, Hughes lineage back into Wales to 1588 in other chapters, suffice it to say for now that my Great Grandfather Reverend Richard Hughes with wife Sarah Rees after 22 years ministering to the faithful in Southern Wales immigrated to America, sailing on the steamer 'Idaho' from Swansea, Wales in 1870 with nine children. My grandfather Eben was 2 when they arrived.

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*Y PARCII. RICHARD HUGHES, EI BRIOD A'I BLANT  
Cyn eu Dyfodiad i America.*

All nine children of Sarah and Richard Hughes, are pictured, before they sailed for America from Swansea, Wales, in 1870. Eben Hughes, my grandfather, the youngest, is on his mother's lap.

At first they settled in Le Sueur, Minnesota, where Richard bought a 100 acre farm from the money his

congregations in Wales generously saw him off with. Ministers from smaller places both in Wales and America could not support themselves and their families only from their church income, so routinely they tilled the land too. With his eldest sons William, David, Richard John plowing and putting in the crop. Reverend Hughes, thrilled by the “Great West,” the reasonable returns from their farm, and from what he felt was an excellent educational system, happily pursued his pastorate while raising his family. But the very cold Minnesota weather was so hard on his wife Sarah, after 4 years her physician recommended they move to a place with milder climate.

Fortuitously he got the call May 1874 from the Welsh C.M. Church of Long Creek, six miles west of Columbus City, Iowa which needed a minister. There and around Cotter, Iowa he farmed, preached, traveled the western states, affectionately becoming known as the ‘Bishop of the West’ to his death in 1898 while on a trip to see his son Eben, “on the Great Divide” (actually referring to the Palmer Divide that splits the Arkansas from the Platte riversheds) in Colorado. It was within that hard working, large family with devout-beliefs Iowan congregation, where young Eben grew up.

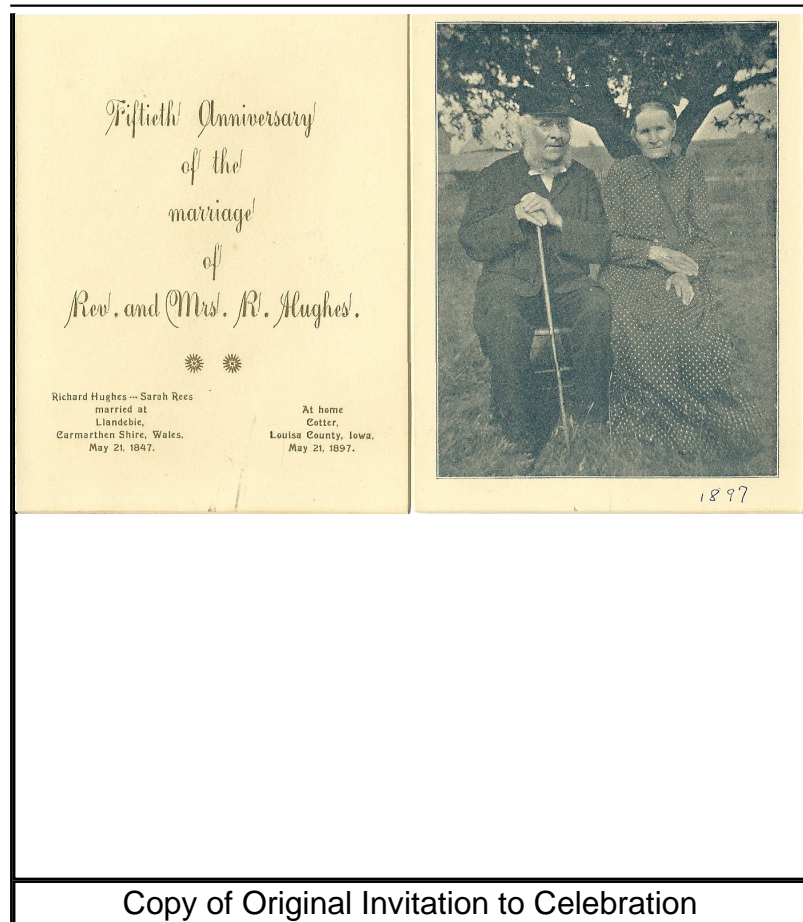
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The last tribute to Reverend Richard Hughes was given on the occasion of their 50th Wedding Anniversary by both the congregation and his family in 1897 near Cotter, Iowa. They were Memorialized by a 1902 book - in Welsh and English, tracing their lives and Richard's Welsh Calvinist Methodist lineage back to at least 1588.

## ***Eben and Ellen Hughes - My Grandfather and Grandmother's - Life***

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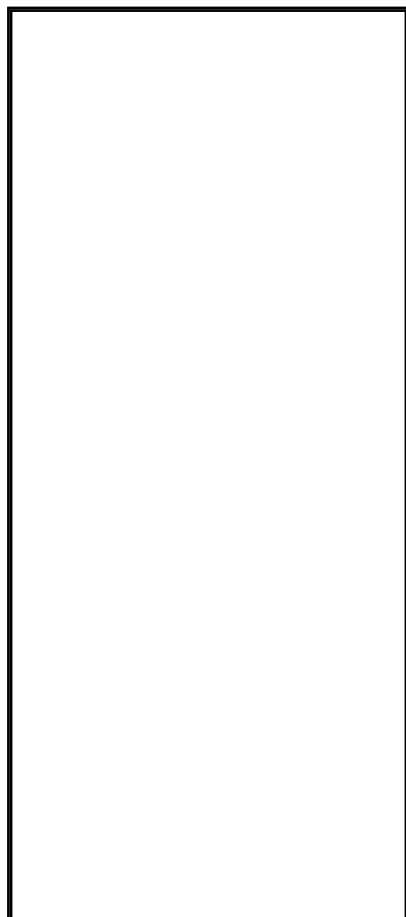
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While most of the other 7 children of Richard and Sarah remained in the midwest, (the 8th one, Richard John, died after being kicked by a horse) young Eben left Iowa to 'go West' in 1888 when he was 21.

He first lived in Omaha, Nebraska as a student, in 1889. I think he lived with a Welsh family there, for it was also where he met Ellen Jones.

My grandmother Ellen immigrated from Northern Wales in 1888 at 24 years of age with 16 year old Annie Jones who accompanied, her after her brother, William Jones had preceded both of them.



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Here is a rare  
photo taken of

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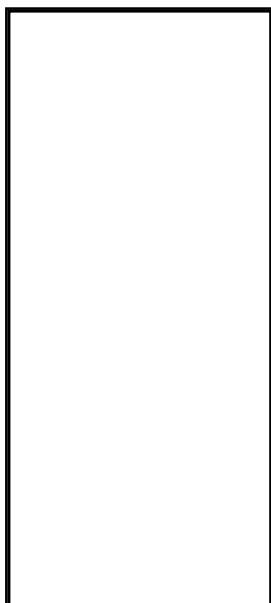
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William, Annie and Ellen, soon after they all were together in America. They sent that picture taken in Mankato, Minnesota to send it back to their family in Anglesey.

And a seperate photo of William, probably when he was still in Wales. He looks a little younger.



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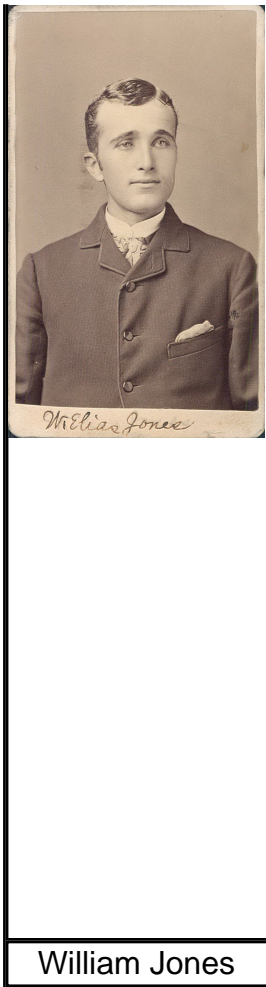
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William Jones, Ellen's brother from Wales as a younger man, who immigrated in the early 1880s to America for reasons that legally he would never inherit his deceased father's farm, and the family didn't think he wanted to farm so left Wales before 1883. He was always referred to as 'Uncle Will', lived and worked in Denver with his carpenter skill. He never married. Was remembered in family lore for first visiting the Hughes Ranch almost 40 miles southeast of Denver by bicycle - over those dirt rural roads!

He invested with Eben in one section of the Hughes ranch in 1912.

Ellen had what her later family thought was TB. From Omaha, Nebraska, she wrote to the executor of the estate who was sending her stipends from what her father left her, that she was getting sicker, but saw a doctor and she was on her way to Colorado. For one reputed 'cure' for TB was to live at a high-dry altitude, which Colorado offered in spades.

She first met Eben Hughes there in Omaha and departed for Colorado from Council Bluffs. They both headed seperately for Denver, Ellen with Annie. (In the end, Ellen, living the rest of her life in Colorado was 'cured' of whatever ailed her by Colorado air, and lived until she was almost 90.)

They arrived in Denver, and contacted other Welsh immigrants who had become part of a growing Welsh community some of whose families lived in downtown Denver. Eben took a room in the 'Hughes' Building (no blood relation) in the 1500 block of Stout Street. Ellen and Annie had a room in another building close by. Eben fell in love with Ellen and they married in June, 1891. They first lived in rented room #5 in the Root Building at 2411 15<sup>th</sup> Street, in downtown Denver. That building is still standing and still known as the historic Root Building on

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the National Register. Eben first got a job as plasterer.



Ellen worked with her Aunt Annie Jones as a dressmaker who also lived in the Root Building as did Ellen's brother William Jones. He had employment as a carpenter.

Their first born was Leila Eva Hughes, born October 11, 1892. No physician attended according to the records. By her birth they had moved to 3534 Marion Street, Denver. It was obvious that Colorado improved her health from the time she wrote back to Wales from Council Bluff's that she was getting sicker, to getting married and bearing her first child within a year.

Edward William Hughes was born to Eben and Ellen in 1893. By then they lived at 560 South Water Street – near the Platte River. Eben also worked for a time for

Union Pacific RR, and at the Stockyards that were not far from where they lived. Which work with livestock probably helped prepare him for his plans to homestead a ranch.

Walter Richard Hughes was born in 1894 while they lived at 656 South High Street where Eben was listed as a Dairyman. He worked 10 acres of land, grew and sold produce as well as milk. That would have been on the outskirts fringe of south Denver where small farms could be.

Here is a 9 Minute video showing where, in Denver, Colorado, my grandfather Eben and grandmother Ellen lived from when they were first married and the current addresses (different buildings in most cases) after they were married, and gave birth to Leila, Edward, and Walter - before they Homesteaded in Elbert County in 1898 (where my father David Ralph and Mary were born)

At the end of the tape are three places I lived in the 1940s, also in Denver.

Just click on '[Earliest Hughes Colorado Homes](#)'

## ***Hughes Family Leaving Denver for Good***

Between 1895 and 1897 Eben was obviously looking for an homesteading opportunity. He did not appear in

Denver telephone directories in 1896 or 7. The growing family apparently had moved to Elbert County, at least 40 miles from Denver in 1896 or 7 where he found the land was that they would claim as a homestead by 1898 and turned into a cattle ranch.

The last two of five Eben-Ellen Hughes children, including my father and Mary, were born on the ranch. It was while the Ranch House was being constructed they lived in a 'soddy' – sunken rooms covered over with timbers and sod from the fields. My father David Ralph was born in that soddy, September 13th 1898. Its precise location, just off the 1 mile dirt road – wagon track actually - from the Ranch House to the gate at the county road, is still findable with reference to large old Cottonwood trees that sprung up there some in the sunken ground, surrounded by empty plains.

Below is close to the spot, according to my aunt Leila Hughes who pointed it out to me when I visited the ranch when I was a boy in the 1930s.

Mary, the last born of Eben and Ellen was born in the ranchhouse.

In the photograph Rebecca Hughes Clark, my daughter stands nearby in this 2005 photograph, while grandsons Justin and David (sons of Rebecca's brother, my son Ed) stand right at the sunken ground where the dugout was

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alleged to be. It's a half mile from the farmhouse they were building.



Where the Dugout was on the Hughes Ranch where my Father was born.

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