

H. HARCOURT HORN

(1845-1933)

Henry Harcourt Horn was the first court reporter employed by the federal district court in Minnesota.

Born in England in 1845, he served three years as a Captain in the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, a famous infantry regiment of the British Army.

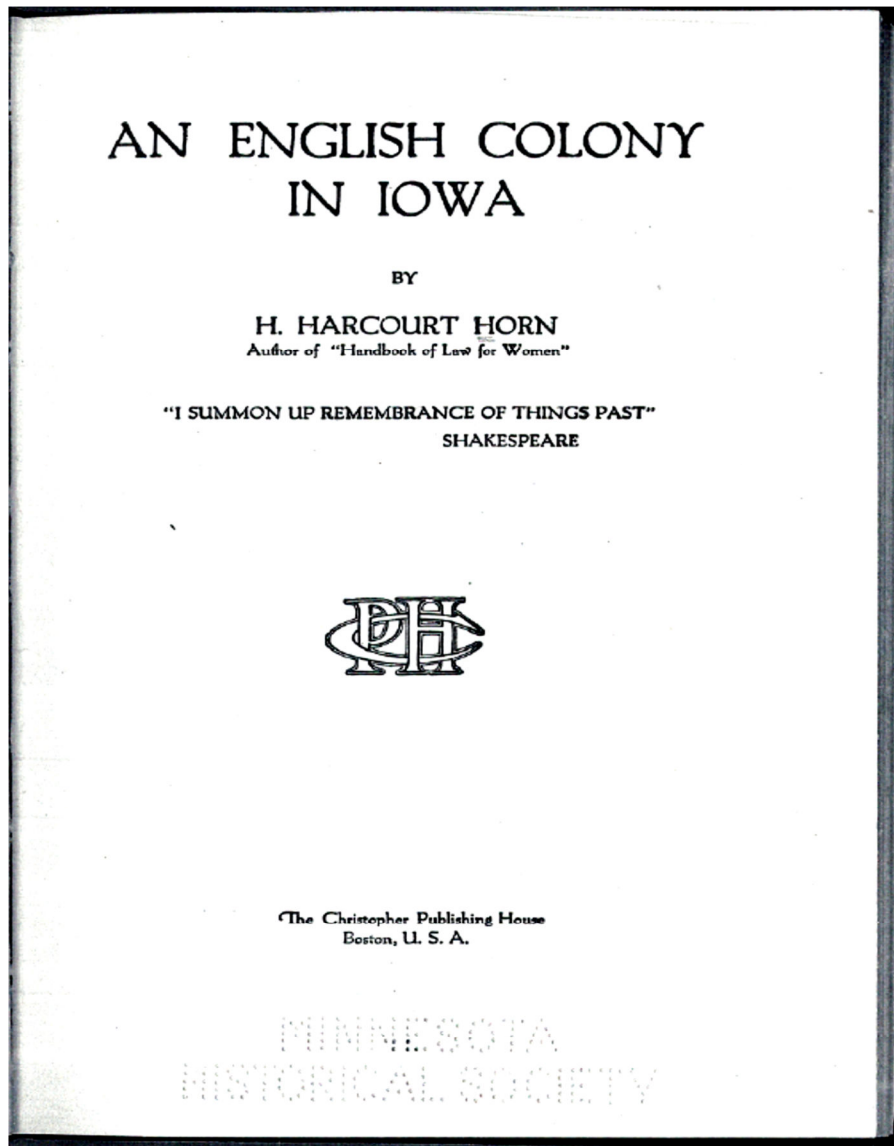


The Capbadge and Hackle of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

In 1868, in an odd replication of history, he and some young comrades moved to the American heartland – Decorah in Northern Iowa to be precise – to establish an “English Colony” where they attempted to recreate English country culture and pursue upper-class pastimes such as foxhunting. In 1931, now in retirement, he published *An English Colony in Iowa* and donated a copy to the Minnesota Historical Society. It was reviewed in the quarterly journal of the Historical Society:

A charming picture of social life and conditions in An English Colony in Iowa around Decorah in the late sixties and the seventies of the past century is presented in a recently published volume by H.

Harcourt Horn, a member of the colony (Boston, 1931. 91 p.). The writer relates that when he arrived at Decorah in 1868 he found "quite an English colony there, some living in the town, others on farms scattered over the country roundabout." He presents interesting characterizations of some members of the colony, and he devotes a chapter to the amusements of these people and another to their customs. ¹



¹ 13 *Minnesota History* 110-111 (1932). This picture of the title page is from the copy of the book at the Historical Society.

In 1880 Horn and his family relocated to St. Paul, where he studied law, was admitted to the bar and learned shorthand. He eventually became employed as the first court reporter or "stenographer" as the job was called for the United States District Court. The 1899 *Minnesota Legislative Manual* listed the agencies and employees of the federal government located in the state, and included his position and annual salary:²

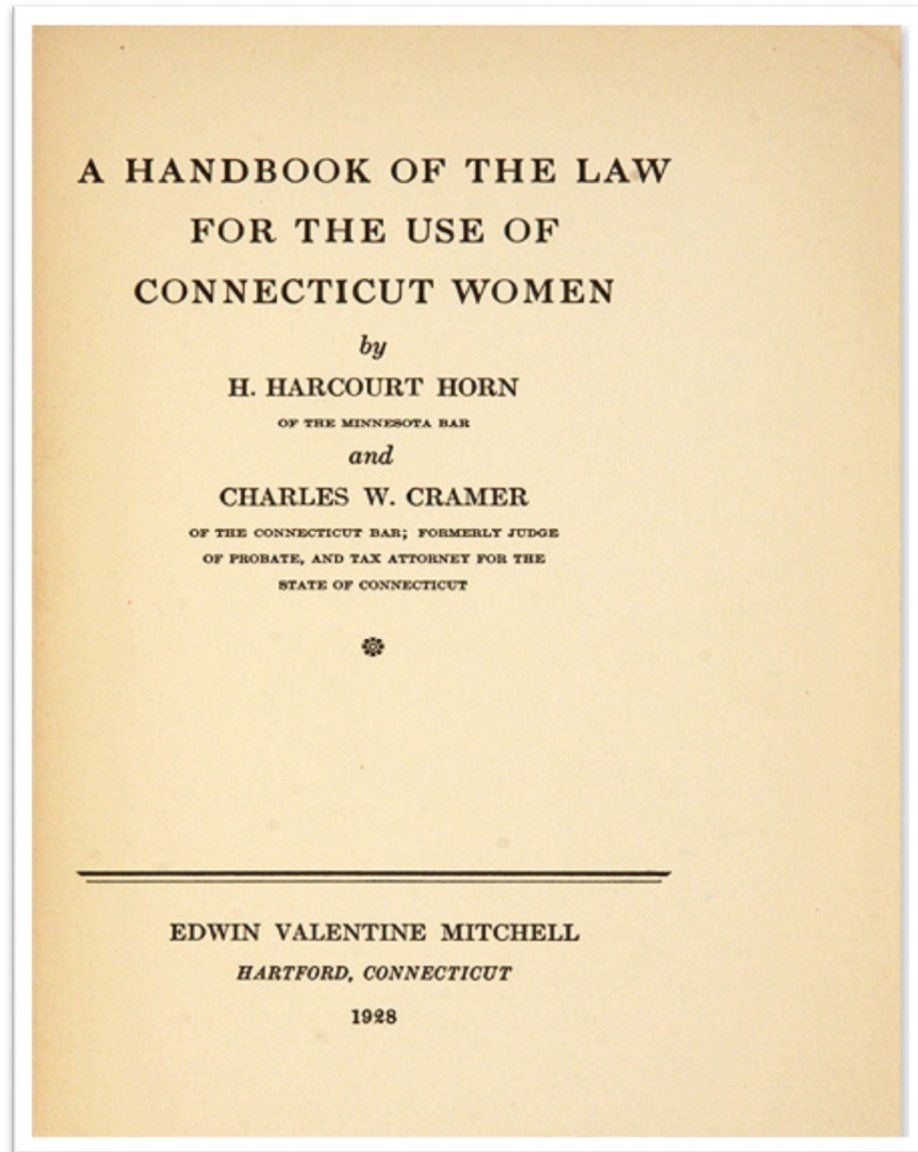
UNITED STATES CIRCUIT AND DISTRICT COURTS.—MINNESOTA.—*Continued.*

POSITION AND NAME.	Born.	APPOINTED FROM.		Where Employed.	Com-pensation.
		County.	Dis		
EIGHTH CIRCUIT.—Cont.					
<i>Deputy Clerk District Court—</i>					
Margaret L. Mulane,	Ireland,	Ramsey,	4	Dist. Minn., . .	\$1,500
<i>Clerk Circuit Court—</i>					
Henry D. Lang,	Minnesota,	do	4	do	3,500
<i>Deputy Clerk Circuit Court—</i>					
Miss Louisc B. Trott,	do	do	4	St. Paul,	780
<i>Deputy Clerk Circuit and District Courts—</i>					
J. M. Sheardown,	New York,	Winona,	1	Winona,	325.72
A. O. Eberhart, . . . . .	. . . . .	Blue Earth,	2	Mankato,	120.95
George F. Hitchcock, Jr.,	New York,	Hennepin,	5	Minneapolis,	1,243.07
R. C. Mabey, . . . . .	. . . . .	do	5	do	1,200
Thos. H. Pressnell,	England,	St. Louis,	6	Duluth,	1,281.71
L. A. Levorsen,	Norway,	Otter Tail,	7	Fergus Falls,	Fees.
<i>Crier—</i>					
Jas. E. Conway,	Ireland,	Ramsey,	4	St. Paul,	2,000
<i>Stenographers—</i>					
H. Harcourt Horn,	England,	do	4	. . . . .	1,000
Wm. A. Jackson,	Minnesota,	Hennepin,	5	St. Paul,	1,000

He served the court for nearly 35 years. Around 1919, he retired from stenography and with his family moved to Hartford, Connecticut. There he co-authored *A Handbook of the Law for Use of Connecticut Women* published in 1928.³

² 1899 Blue Book, at 671.

³ The picture of the book's cover on page 4 is from the website of The Lawbook Exchange.



H. Harcourt Horn died on April 10, 1933, at age eighty-eight. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* carried his obituary but inexplicably muddled his name:

Harcourt H. Horn
Dies in Connecticut

Former British Army Officer
Was First Court Stenog-
rapher in St. Paul.

Harcourt Henry Horn (sic), former officer in the British army and reporter in the United States District Court here for nearly 35 years, died Monday at his home and in Hartford Conn., an Associated Press dispatch said. He was 88 years old.

Friends in St. Paul recalled Monday that Mr. Horn moved with his family to St. Paul in 1880 after having helped to establish an English colony in Iowa. Mr. and Mrs. Horn were prominent in social affairs here.

He was educated in London and served three years as a captain in the Royal Fusileers (sic). With a group of younger Englishmen, he moved to Northern Iowa in 1868, where they maintained the traditions of English country life with fox hunts and other functions transported from their native land.

Mr. Horn wrote a book on life in an English colony in Iowa, a copy of which is owned by C. L. Spencer, 500 Summit Ave., former clerk and United States District Court here. Mr. Spencer recalled Monday that Mr. Horn took up the study of stenography and shorthand on coming to St. Paul and became the first court stenographer in St. Paul.

A former recorder of Hartford, England, Mr. Horn was admitted to the Minnesota bar shortly after coming to St. Paul.

The Horn family lived for a time on Laurel Avenue and had a summer home on Lake Minnetonka. They moved to Hartford about fourteen years ago.

Mr. Horn is survived by widow, Margaret Davidson Horn, a daughter, Miss Amy Horn, now living in England, a sister, Mrs. Alice Louisa Horn, also England, and three grandchildren, children of a daughter, not now living.

At the time of his death, Mr. Horn was living with his grandchildren, Miss Meia Bunce and John Bunce and Harcourt Schultz in Hartford.⁴

—H—

⁴ *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, Tuesday, April 11, 1933 at 9.