Isaac Ogden & Milinda Reed

of

Hempstead & Union Counties, Arkansas

by Timothy Dean Hudson

Isaac Ogden was born in Montgomery County, North Carolina on 19 August 1797, the son of Rev. Benjamin Ogden and Susannah Moore Ogden [1]. Ben and Susan Ogden settled in Montgomery County, about the mid-1790s and remained until after 1810, when they moved to Tennessee. Benjamin received a land grant in Stewart County, Tennessee in 1815, but he sold this land the next year in preparation for moving his family to the west side of the Mississippi River.

By 1816 or 1817, the Ogdens had arrived in what was then southwestern Missouri Territory, an area put into Arkansas Territory in 1829 and now the State of Arkansas. Benjamin Ogden settled in what is now Union County, Arkansas, a few miles from modern El Dorado. At that time, this region lay in Hempstead County.

On 29 August 1820, the Hempstead County Court selected Isaac Ogden to serve on a jury [2]. Later that same day, the Court selected Isaac, his brother, Stanley, and brother–in–law, Seth Bradley, to serve on another jury to try William Robinson for selling liquor to Indians [3].

About 1821 or early 1822, Isaac married Milinda Reed [4], the daughter of Robert Reed and his wife, Helen, of Hempstead County, Arkansas [5]. Milinda's birth occurred on 21 December 1801 [6] in the Bellevue Valley of Sainte Genevieve District, French Colony of Louisiana, which became property of the United States in 1803 through the Louisiana Purchase. After Congress created Missouri Territory in 1812, the Ste. Genevieve District became what is now southeastern Missouri [7]. The Reeds left there and moved to southwestern Arkansas Territory and settled in what soon became Hempstead County, now Howard County, Arkansas. They had arrived in Hempstead County by August 1820 [8].

Although few records exist during this early period to document their residence, all indications are that Isaac and Milinda Ogden lived in Hempstead County, Arkansas Territory during the 1820s, when their three known children who survived infancy were born. The eldest, Isaac Nathaniel Ogden, was born on 28 November 1822, followed by Lousettie S. on 28 October 1824 and Robert in about 1828 [9]. They were Isaac and Milinda's only documented children [10]. Contrary to mistaken beliefs by earlier Ogden researchers, William Ogden living in Union County in the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s was not their son [11].

It appears that after their marriage, Isaac and Milinda lived on the land his father had cleared and put into cultivation, located in present–day Union County, about two miles east of what is now El Dorado, south of Highway 15. They lived there in 1830, along with Isaac's parents and sister, Temperance [12]. Union County had been carved from Hempstead and Clarke County in 1829, although the portion where Benjamin lived, south of the Ouachita River, had belonged to Hempstead. Along with their children, Isaac and Milinda had one female slave aged 10–24 living with them.

A few years later, on 27 May 1835, Isaac, his father, Benjamin Ogden, and Union County Sheriff John H. Cornish all witnessed the will of James Holmes of Franklin Township. Later, on November 2nd, Isaac and Sheriff Cornish swore before the court that they saw James Holmes sign the paper said to be his last will and testament [13].

On 27 October 1835, the Arkansas Territorial General Assembly selected Isaac Ogden as a Union County Magistrate or Justice of the Peace [14]. Isaac Ogden and his brother, Stanley, both served as Union County grand jurors in November 1835, and on 9 July 1838, the Court paid them $4.00 each for their services. Isaac again served as a grand juror for the April 1838 court session, for which he received payment of $5.00 in July 1838 [15].

During that early period, Union County consisted of a much larger area than today, encompassing territory later divided into several modern counties. The county seat lay at *"Ecorea Fabria,"* on the Ouachita River, now the city of Camden. At a court session held there on Tuesday morning, 10 October 1837, the Court appointed Isaac Ogden, Needham Reynolds, and Jesse Owens to hold elections for Franklin Township, the region encompassing present day El Dorado where the Ogdens lived. At a session held at Ecorea Fabria on 9 July 1838, the Court appointed the Ogden, Reynolds, and Owens

> *Judges of Elections in Franklin Township and that the house of Messrs. Rust & Wadson be the place for holding the elections for said Township.*

On this same day, Isaac began handling the affairs of his father's estate, as Benjamin Ogden had died the preceding year.

In the court session held on 8 April 1839, the Court ordered a road laid out from the Union County Courthouse to Lawrence Scarborough's house, *"passing near the houses of Isaac Ogden and Stanley Ogden."* At the next court session on July 8, the Court approved the route of the road *"from Scarborough's Landing to Lawrence Scarborough's house passing near the house of Isaac Ogden,"* the first county road in that vicinity. This road ran from Scarborough's Landing on the Ouachita River (now Champagnolle) south to the Louisiana line [16].

Between 1838 and 1840, Isaac served as administrator of his father's estate, requiring him to travel and appear before the county Probate Court for the sessions held in April and July 1839 and January and October 1840 [17].

Shortly before January 1839, Isaac and Milinda moved about eight miles south of his parents' farm near modern El Dorado and began clearing and making improvements to a 160–acre tract of government land. In January 1839 they settled on the property with their family, consisting of Milinda, Isaac, their three children, and two enslaved workers. By putting this property into cultivation, Isaac acquired *"preemption rights"* to the land, a legal right entitling him to purchase it from the government before it was offered for sale to the general public at auction.

On 31 October 1844, Isaac Ogden, his brother, Stanley, and brother–in–law, Drewry Andrews, all travelled to Little Rock to file his preemption claim at the government Land Office. Stanley and Drewry made affidavits on Isaac's behalf, stating that Isaac made improvements on the land

> *…which consisted of about ten acres cleared & fenced as well a log dwelling house, corncrib, & shelter for horses & a weat* [sic] *house; that said Isaac cultivated the said Improvement in said year in Cotton and Corn and potatoes; that in eighteen hundred and forty the said Isaac had enlarged his said clearing to about twenty acres, and in the said last mentioned year he also cultivated the same in corn potatoes and cotton; that the said Isaac with his said family has continued to reside on the said quarter section in his said dwelling house as a housekeeper from January eighteen hundred and thirty nine to this present time and has cultivated...said quarter in Cotton and Corn every year since having enlarged his said Improvement to about Sixty five acres...*

Isaac's own affidavit stated that

> *I Isaac Ogden of the County of Union & State of Arkansas being sworn state that I have come to the Land Office at Little Rock to establish my right of preemption by virtue of the Act of June 1st 1840...and I further state that I entered upon the said Land so claimed by me in my own right and exclusively for my own use and benefit...*

The affidavits show that Isaac received an education and could sign his own name, whereas his brother and brother–in–law merely made their mark to their affidavits. Their new 160.21–acre farm cost Isaac $200.26¼ in cash. It was located one–half of a mile due west of present–day Pleasant Grove and five miles southwest of old Hillsboro, just a short distance east of the Lockhart/El Dorado road. Milinda and Isaac's descendants occupied this land for the next one hundred years [18].

In October 1845, citizens of his local region elected Isaac Ogden as one of the School Trustees, along with Green Newton and John Herrin. The three of them presented their requested bond

before the Union County Court on 15 October 1845 for the faithful performance of their duties as School Trustees [19].

On Saturday morning, 10 April 1847, the Union County Circuit Court heard the case in which Isaac Ogden sued William J. Owens for a debt. The Court found that the Ogden's *"demand is founded upon a certain obligatory"* note for $191.13 dated 4 February 1845. Owens had paid a small portion of the debt, leaving due $189.63. The Court ordered Owens to pay Ogden this amount, plus interest of 8% [20]. On 15 November 1847, Isaac filed a claim with the Union Probate Court for a note owed to him by William C. Lucas, deceased. The note was for $42.03 and was due 21 May 1845. The court ordered the administrator to pay Isaac this money [21].

The 1850 federal census shows that Isaac Ogden had developed one of the largest and most profitable planting operations in the vicinity, with one hundred acres of improved land, including fields in cultivation or pastureland. He had only 60 acres of unimproved land, with his farm valued at $3000. His farming implements and machinery were valued at $500, and his livestock holdings and 1849 crop production included [22]:

1850 Union County, Arkansas Federal Census, Agricultural Schedule
Farm of Isaac Ogden

Livestock as of 1 June 1850								1849 Farm Production							
Horses	Asses/mules	Milch cows	Working oxen	Other cattle	Sheep	Swine	Value livestock	Bushels Indian corn	Bales, Ginned cotton	Bushels of Peas & beans	Pounds of wool	Bushels sweet potatoes	Pounds butter	Value, homemade mfg	Value of Animals Slaughtered
6	--	10	4	20	24	100	1200	1000	26	100	--	200	100	100	160

The census enumerator listed Isaac Ogden as the owner of eleven enslaved people, including males aged 58, 19, 10, two young males aged three years, and female slaves aged 34, 30, 24, 18, and 4, all listed as having a black complexion, and one female slave aged 28 listed as *"mulatto"* [23]. The older enslaved man is undoubtedly Lewis Ogden, formerly owned by Isaac's father, Benjamin Ogden, but emancipated six months before Benjamin's death in 1837.

Lewis Ogden lived in Union County as a free man of color during the late 1830s and 1840s, and he acquired ownership of Lucinda, a female slave who was presumably his wife. Laws required Lewis to have a male guardian during the 1840s, but laws changed in the latter 1840s, presumably making it safer or simpler for Lewis to be listed as Isaac's slave by 1850. Lewis and Lucy and their family followed Isaac's son, Robert, to Brazos County Texas in the mid–1860s [24].

The entry for Isaac Ogden on the 1853/54 Union County Arkansas Tax List shows that the tax collector *"went to his house,"* with Isaac's farm consisting of 320 acres of land valued at $960, six slaves of taxable ages valued at $3000, four horses at $300, and fourteen cattle at $125, for a total of $4385 in taxable property. Isaac did not pay a poll tax, presumably due to his advanced age [25].

Between 1850 and 1857, Isaac greatly increased the size of his plantation in southern Arkansas by making a number of land purchases:

28 Aug 1850 – Isaac purchased 80 acres of government land from Mishoon tubba, a Choctaw Indian, part of the scheme the United States government concocted as compensation for forcing the Choctaw peoples to move from Mississippi to Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. Isaac must have sold this 80–acre tract soon afterwards, for he was not taxed for it in 1853/1854, nor was it mentioned when his children distributed his land after his death [26].

12 Nov 1851 – As Isaac's younger brother, Stanley Ogden, prepared to leave Union County, he sold his 159.31–acre farm to Isaac for $1200 [27].

11 Nov 1856 – Isaac purchased 40 acres of vacant government land that adjoined his farm at the Champagnolle Land Office for $40.00 [28].

14 Nov 1856 – Isaac Ogden appeared at the State Land Office in Pine Bluff, where he paid $20.00 for a 40–acre tract of *"swamp and overflowed land"* that Arkansas had bought from the U.S. government [29].

18 Aug 1857 – Isaac Ogden made his last government purchase this day, paying cash for a 40–acre tract of land at the Champagnolle Land Office, paying $1.00 per acre [30].

18 Aug 1857 – On the same day, Isaac presumably made a personal land transaction while in Champagnolle, buying a 38.27–acre tract of land that adjoined his own farm from W. J. Paul and E. T. Cook, of the former firm of E. T. Cook & Co., for $20.00 [31].

These purchases took Isaac Ogden's farm from 160 acres in 1850 to around 560 acres by 1857.

Isaac Ogden also engaged in various other activities with his relatives during the 1850s. On 9 April 1852, his brother–in–law, James Goff, mortgaged to Isaac

> *…all my cows and calves, heffers* [sic] *and steers all my hogs farming utensils also my growing crop of corn cotton potatoes rice and tobacco* [sic]...,

for $400 due on or by 1 January 1855 [32]. Presumably, Isaac had loaned money to James. On 28 July 1857, Isaac Ogden and his nephew, Stanley Dowing, served as jurors on the *"Inquisition…on the dead body of Negro man belonging to H. G. P. Williams."* Both men received 75¢ for their service on the inquisition jury [33].

Isaac Ogden did not live long after purchasing his last tract of land in 1857. He died on 28 September 1859 of *"inflamation* [sic] *of stomach and bowels"* after suffering for ten days [34]. His family took him north to his father's old farm, which Isaac had helped to settle about forty years earlier, and buried him in the family graveyard, beside what are believed to be the burial sites of Isaac's parents and sister, Temperance. Isaac's tombstone reads:

Isaac Ogden
Born Aug. 19th, 1797
Died Sept. 28th, 1859
Aged
61 Years 1 Month
9 Days
He was a member of the
M.E. Church South
Happy souls thy days are ended
All they mourning days below
Go by angels' band attended
To the arms of Jesus go.

His family installed a footstone at the base of his grave inscribed with his initials, *"I.O."* The M.E. Church South was the Methodist Episcopal Church South, the name of the southern branch after the religion split over the issue of slavery, and the church to which Isaac's family attended during this period [35].

On 27 April 1860, for $2000, Isaac's daughter, Lousettie, and her husband, James A. Croswell, sold to Nathan and Robert Ogden, *"...all our Interest both present and future the following described Tracks of land..."* The Croswells sold their interest in the precise lands that Isaac Ogden had purchased between 1846 and 1857 [36]. Nathan, Lousettie, and Robert had apparently begun making plans to handle their parents' estate, given that Milinda was then already suffering from *"Consumption,"* or tuberculosis, and they undoubtedly knew on April 27th that her illness was terminal.

Milinda survived Isaac by only eight months, succumbing to the disease on 18 May 1860 after suffering for three months [37]. Her children buried Milinda beside Isaac on Benjamin Ogden's old farm. The gravesite is located in a wooded area, and in 1984, a logging company broke their tombstones at the base. Milinda's tombstone reads:

Milinda
Consort of Isaac Ogden
Born Dec. 21st, 1801
Died May 18th, 1860
Age
59 Years 4 Months

2 Days
He took thee from a world of care
in everlasting bliss to share.

Her footstone says *"M.O."* [38].

The lives of Isaac Ogden and Milinda Reed reflect the transformation of southern Arkansas from frontier settlement to a mature plantation society.

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Notes

1. Ogden Family Graveyard (El Dorado, Union County AR), tombstone of *"Isaac Ogden"* (19 Aug 1797–28 Sept 1859). Union County AR Deed Record A, pp. 300–301 (Will of Susan Ogden, dated 31 May 1844, recorded 7 February 1845).
2. Hempstead County AR Order Book (1819–1822), pp. 41, 48–50.
3. Hempstead County AR Order Book (1819–1822), pp. 55–56.
4. Marriage records for the early years of Hempstead County, Arkansas do not exist. The marriage date for Isaac and Milinda is approximated based upon the birth of their eldest known child, Isaac Nathaniel Ogden, which occurred on 28 November 1822,
5. Hempstead County AR Letters, Sales, Bills, Inventories, & Appraisements (Book G), pp. 396–398 (Estate of Robert Reed, 5 January 1844); Probate Book C, pp. 415–417 (Estate of Robert Reed). On 5 January 1844, one of the heirs of Robert Reed was *"Malinda Ogden of Union County Arkansas,"* and on 15 October 1849, one of the seven heirs of Robert Reed was "Isaac Ogden in right of his Wife Malinda Ogden."
6. Ogden Family Graveyard (El Dorado, Union County AR), tombstone of *"Milinda, Consort of Isaac Ogden"* (21 Dec 1801–18 May 1860).
7. 1850 Union County AR Federal Census, Harrison Township, p. 268b, Household #801, line #3: Isaac Ogdern [sic] (age: 53; birth: NC); line #4: Malinda Ogdern [sic] (age: 50; birth: Mo). 1860 Union County AR Federal Census, Mortality Schedule, Johnson Township, p. 2, #35: Malinda Ogden, age at death: 58; married; birth: Missouri.
8. Hempstead County AR Order Book (1819–1822), p. 41. In the August 1820 Term of court, *"The Sheriff returned into Court the following panal* [sic] *of grand jurors to the present Term of this Court to wit:…Robt. Reed."*
9. Olive Branch Cemetery (Caledonia, Union County AR), tombstones of *"Isaac Nathaniel Ogden"* (28 Nov 1822–1 July 1877) and *"Lousettie, Wife of J. A. Croswell"* (28 Oct 1824–7 Nov 1875). 1850 Union County AR Federal Census, Harrison Township, p. 268b, Household #801: Isaac Ogdern [sic]. 1860 Union County AR Federal Census, Johnson Township, P.O. Hillsboro, p. 239/29, Household #192: Robert Ogden. 1870 Brazos County TX Federal Census, P.O. Brazos, p. 26b, Household #32: Robert Ogden. These three census records put Robert Ogden's birth about 1828. His precise date of birth is unknown.
10. Union County AR Deed Record J, pp. 323–325 (James A. and Lousettie Croswell to Nathan and Robert Ogden, 27 April 1860). 1830 Union County AR Federal Census, p. 143, line #12: Isaac Ogden. 1840 Union County AR Federal Census, p. 221, line #8: Isaac Ogden. On 27 April 1860, James A. and Lucetta Croswell sold Nathan and Robert Ogden *"...all our Interest both present and future…"* to 440 acres of land for $2000, land that Isaac purchased from the United States government between 1844 and 1857. Their present interest was as heirs of Isaac, while their future interest was as heirs of Milinda, who died one month after they made this transaction. On June 13th, Nathan and Robert Ogden were in full ownership of the land Isaac Ogden had owned, and on that day Nathan and his wife Elizabeth sold half of it to Robert. The remaining portion of Isaac's old plantation that Nathan did not sell to Robert was owned by Nathan and his heirs well into the twentieth century.
11. Union County AR Marriage Book B, p. 56 (William Ogden to Sibly E. Livingston, 19 February 1852). 1850 Covington Co AL Federal Census, p. 158b, Household #412: Jesse Ogden. 1860 Union County AR Federal Census, Van Buren Township, P.O. Lisbon, p. 281/71, Household #489: Wm. Ogden. A careful examination of these records shows that in 1856, a minister married William Ogden and Silby E. Livingston *"according to the forms of the regular Baptist church,"* whereas Isaac Ogden and his family were staunchly Methodist Episcopal. In 1860, William lived in Van Buren Township near Lisbon, on the other side of the county from Isaac's farm. He was born about 1824 in Alabama, a time period in which we know Isaac resided in Arkansas. In 1860, William had a Sarah Ogden, aged 66 and born in North Carolina and a Sarah Ogden aged 20 and born in Alabama living with him, whom we can only assume are his mother and sister. This family description is completely different than that of Isaac's, and fits that of Jesse Ogden, who lived in Covington County Alabama in 1850. Jesse's family structure matches that of William, in terms of the two females named *"Sarah,"* and William also named his eldest son, *"Jesse."* William Ogden served in the Van Buren Township Union County Home Guard during the Civil War. He married Miss Elizabeth R. McKenzie on 22 April 1866 (Union County AR Marriage Book B, p. 347). He was a partner of the mercantile firm of Ogden & Yarborough and had many business dealings recorded in Union County between 1859 and 1870. He appears to have left Union County during the 1870s.
12. 1830 Union County AR Federal Census, p. 143, lines #12: Isaac Ogden; #13: Thomas Craig; #14: Benjamin Ogden.
13. Union County AR Deed Record A, p. 38.
14. Carter, Clarence Edwin, comp. and ed. *The Territorial Papers of the United States: The Territory of Arkansas, 1819–1825.* Vol. XIX. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1953, p. 873. *"Arkansas Gazette"* (Little Rock, AR), 3 November 1835, p. 3, columns 3–5.
15. Union County AR County Court Record Book A, pp. 62, 65, 68
16. Union County AR County Court Record Book A, pp. 55, 62–63, 79–80, 83–84.
17. Union County Arkansas Probate Book ABC, pp. 1, 2, 3, 6, 10.

18. Little Rock, Arkansas Land Office Preemption Claim #4610 (Act of June 1, 1840), Isaac Ogden, 31 October 1844 (NE¼ of Section 5, Township 19 South, Range 14 West, 160.21 acres). Gates, Paul. *History of Public Land Law Development.* Washington, DC, 1968, pp. 224–226.
19. Union County AR County Court Record A, pp. 256, 261.
20. Union County AR Circuit Court Record B, pp. 154–156 (Isaac Ogden vs. William J. Owens, Case #193, debt of $191.13).
21. Union County AR Probate Book ABC, pp. 278–279.
22. 1850 Union County AR Federal Census, Harrison Township, p. 268b, Household #801: Isaac Ogdern [sic]. 1850 Union County AR Federal Census, Agricultural Schedule, pp. 475–476, line #12: Isaac Ogden, farm owner.
23. 1850 Union County AR Federal Census, Slave Schedule, Harrison Township, p. 567, column 2, #23: Isaac Ogdenn [sic]. He owned eleven slaves.
24. Union County AR Deed Record A, pp. 55 (Emancipation of Lewis by Benjamin Ogden, 28 June 1837), 146 (Lewis Ogden, a free colored man, mortgaged his slave, Lucinda to Hill & Sargent, 18 March 1841).
25. *Tracks and Traces,* Union County Genealogical Society, Vol. 8, No. 1, May 1986.
26. Champagnolle, Arkansas Land Office Choctaw Certificate #890, Isaac Ogden, assignee of to Choctaw Indian Mishoon tubba (NW¼ of SW¼ of Section 4 and NE¼ of SE¼ of Section 5, Township 19 South, Range 14 West). Isaac received a patent for this land on 19 August 1852. There is no known record of Isaac disposing of this property.
27. Union County AR Deed Record G, pp. 141–142. The description of the land is the NW¼ of Section 4, Township 19 South, Range 14 West.
28. Champagnolle, Arkansas Land Office Cash Entry #4997, Isaac Ogden, 11 November 1856 (NW¼ of SE¼ of Section 5, Township 19 South, Range 14 West, $40).
29. Arkansas State Land Office #3251, Isaac Ogden, for the SW¼ of SE¼ of Section 5, Township 19 South, Range 14 West.
30. Champagnolle, Arkansas Land Office Cash Entry #7026, Isaac Ogden (SE¼ of SE¼ of Section 32, Township 18 South, Range 14 West).
31. Union County AR Deed Record J, pp. 742–743. Isaac Ogden purchased the NE¼ of NE¼ of Section 6, Township 19 South, Range 14 West.
32. Union County AR Deed Record G, pp. 363–364.
33. Union County AR County Court Record E, p. 253.
34. 1860 Union County AR Federal Census, Mortality Schedule, Johnson Township, p. 2, #34: Isaac Ogden.
35. Ogden Family Graveyard (El Dorado, Union County AR), tombstone of *"Isaac Ogden"* (19 Aug 1797–28 Sept 1859).
36. Union County AR Deed Record J, pp. 323–325 (James A. and Lousettie Croswell to Nathan and Robert Ogden, 27 April 1860).
37. 1860 Union County AR Federal Census, Mortality Schedule, Johnson Township, p. 2, #35: *"Malinda"* Ogden.
38. Ogden Family Graveyard (El Dorado, Union County AR), tombstone of *"Milinda, Consort of Isaac Ogden"* (21 Dec 1801–18 May 1860).

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