



Marlborough-Blenheim
Atlantic City, N. J.

July 27th '30

My dear Genie

In gathering further data relative to Grand-father I have jotted down a few facts from my memory.

He was born in Feby 1822. I think it ^{was} on the second of that month, (when I reach home I can send you the correct date, if you wish it).

While working at his trade, a carpenter, in Liverpool he took a series of instruction at a night school in architecture, what knowledge he acquired there was of great help to him in his building.

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contracts in Fairfield and later
in Omaha.

Hearing of the possibility
of a government aid trans continent-
al railroad being built from
the Missouri river to the Pacific
coast and desirous of being in
line with a large city that
should be built at the Eastern
terminus of the road he
determined to take his family
West to the river where he
would have a chance to obtain
some larger contracts and be
identified with the growth of
the new development
He had been saving his money
in Fairfield in order to be pre-

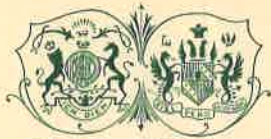


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pared to make the move.

He bought a pair of horses and a covered-wagon and in mid-summer of 1853 they drove West across Iowa to the village of Council Bluffs. At that time there was talk, in fact many serious and convincing rumors, from Washington and other Eastern cities, that the railroad would start in Council Bluffs and take the route that is now the main line of the Union Pacific. Land speculators came from different parts of the East and in 1853 a company was organized to buy sufficient land on which to locate the



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new City of Omaha. Under the land laws of the Government it was necessary to pay Uncle Sam \$600. for the number of acres required and the money must be paid in gold coin. - a canvas was made and Father was the only one they could find who had that amount in gold and ^{he} was induced to let them have it by their giving him satisfactory assurances that he should receive a deed for five full blocks, when the new town was platted, and on which he already held a claim (squatters I assume) The deed for these blocks was



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afterwards granted and placed on record from the Mayor of the town to Mother - the property was Block "D" and the four blocks East & South of it, ~~most~~ ^{part} of which is still owned by the Thomas Davis Real Estate Co.

(My authority for the statement about the actual payment of the \$600. gold obtained from Father came from Byron Reed (Abie's father) who stated that he was present when the coin was furnished and paid to the Government.

Their first home was a small cottage located at the South East corner of 11th & Farnam St & it was the first frame house built



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in the town.

Their second home in Omaha was a two story substantial brick house at the South East corner of 9th & Howard St. being a part of Block "D." this was erected and occupied in 1857

His most important building was the Nebraska State House (Territorial) built at the corner of 9th & Howard St opposite the Herndon House. I did not know that he had any part in the building of the Herndon but your information may be correct. I remember that he told me the reason why he & Uncle Edward left England for America. They had many discuss-



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ious over this most important
move and in reaching a favorable
conclusion they reasoned that
young men without means
could not hope to meet with
success against the aristocrats and
extensive land owners of the
Kingdom, particularly as the laws
all seemed to be against the
poor man and in favor of the
wealthy class. He said he did not
know of a country anywhere
where these conditions were as
marked as in Great Britain.

His indomitable courage was
proven when he was operating his
saw-mill in Owaba out of which
he made most satisfactory profits

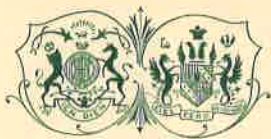
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To obtain logs for his mill he found a tract of cotton-wood timber in Iowa north of Missouri Valley where quite a goodly quantity of large trees were growing known as the "Beebe land". He bought this property and during the winter months cut down the trees and prepared them for rafts and in the spring and summer they were floated down the river to his mill in Omaha.

You can readily imagine how very difficult it was to transport the heavy logs down a stream as difficult to navigate as the Missouri - full of snags and sand-bars. He succeeded in this ~~task~~. Machinery & equipment were not obtainable at that time, being long before railroads had ~~come~~ been built,



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made the task almost insurmountable

When railroads came and put the small local saw-mill out of business, he converted his saw-mill into a flour-mill and used the name of the State Mills

In December of 1869 he sold the flour mill at a good profit and was induced by Edward Sinker to buy a half interest in his Machinery & Foundry business in Indianapolis Ind and to this city he removed his family in the spring of 1870.

You were born in a frame house across the St East from Father's brick house at the South East corner of 8th & Howard St on the block that Father gave to your mother as a



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wedding present. This block & improvements, were exchanged by your father & mother with Uncle Augustus for Forest Hill at the time the latter moved from Omaha to New York

The school at which your mother was a week-end boarder and which was founded by Bishop Talbot, was known then as Brownell Hall in honor of Bishop Brownell of Hartford Conn, a liberal contributor towards its support & establishment, ^{the same name} This school is still in operation ^{under} in Omaha in a flourishing condition under the auspices of the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska To correct your notes slightly I want



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to add that the family traveled from Omaha to Indianapolis in 1870. by rail and by steamboat.

I do not know where Uncle Edward's children now are. The last I heard of the oldest son, cousin John Davis, he was in Spokane, Wash.

I don't know the name of the Inn in Chester Eng which was kept by Grandfather's father, in fact I did know about this.

I don't know the name of the ship on which Father & Mother sailed from Liverpool.

When I made my first trip to England in 1909 I visited the Church of England in Hawarden in which Father & Mother were



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married, and ^{at} our request we were shown by the Parish Clerk the original written request of Father & Mother for a marriage license - their signatures resembled their handwriting of latter years.

In this Church Gladstone & Lady Gladstone are buried and their marble monument is in an addition to original building.

In the grave-yard surrounding the Church building we found many stones marked "Davies" indicating that they were quite a large & prominent family.

I regret now that I did not make more diligent inquiry of Father & Mother as to our family tree while they were still living.

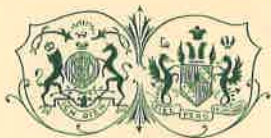


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I want also, Genie, to correct your record as to my leaving Indianapolis to go to Omaha to take a position with the First National in Feby 1872

The facts are that Grandfather was not satisfied with the future of the machinery & foundry business in Indianapolis. He had had two years of it, and longed to get out of it. One day in February, 1872 a telegram came from your father to my father stating that if Fred wanted to learn the Banking business and would come at once he had a position for ^{him} - a small beginning - I had then been in Sinker Davis & Co's office for seven months as a bookkeeper. We all talked it over



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and Father & Mother decided for me that I had better go back to Omaha & that they would sell the business as soon as they could and return to Nebraska.

I was very fond of Father & I told him I would stay with him until we could all move back together.

I don't think the wisdom of the move was ever questioned. It was best for me as has been demonstrated - and I was shifted from one of the best men who ever lived to another of God's Noblemen, all of whose acts have gone down in history indicating a character of great goodness that every relative of his can always be proud of. His memory is very dear to me.



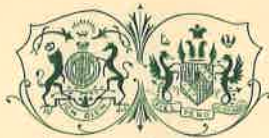
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Now since I have written at considerable length because you have, very properly, given me a chance to say a few things about those whom we both love with our whole hearts

I hope I have not tired you out.

As I look back as far as my mind carries and without being optimistic, I regard Father as a most remarkable man. He succeeded in nearly everything he undertook. He was honest in all his dealings. He was industrious & painstaking and he was always thrifty. Economy was one



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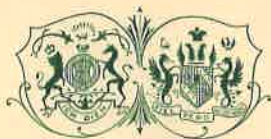
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of his watchwords and ^{he} was not in the least penurious.

When I recall the awful times he had in financing the Sinker-Davis business during the panic of 1872-3, with the men's pay-rolls coming every two weeks requiring heavy cash means and collections and sales of their output almost nil, I simply wonder how it was done.

He worked it all out almost alone, no rich and powerful men were available as associates and his means were limited

It took keen courage to take his little family to the Missouri river through an Indian country when all was wild and unprotected. It took cool nerve and a level



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head to meet all conditions that the real pioneers of those early days in Iowa and Nebraska were subjected to.

Of course Mother was a wonderful helpmeet, a hard worker and was willing, without complaint, to do without things that many another woman would have craved for.

I agree with you that we have every reason to be proud of our immediate ancestors, they surely "stack up" most creditably with others that we know, and I am glad of an opportunity to proclaim with all honor their great and wonderful accomplishments.

Congratulations on your 63rd birthday



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Wish I could have seen you on that day - I was 77 on the 10th of June and am glad to add that I am well & full of "pep", having fully recovered from my illness of March & April.

Will be home again in about three weeks. Leave here about Aug 16. Aunt Nellie & the girls join me in sending love to you & Meredith.

If you should print what you are collecting about Father & your Mother, please send me a copy. Am returning herewith the notes you sent me.

Affectionately yours
Uncle Fred