

NEBRASKA STATE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(1) Fred Browning 1452 So 17th St  
Omaha Neb  
March 30 1837

I was Born March 15- 1858 at St Joseph Mo.  
my Father (Henry Browning) was Born April 28- 1831  
at (See House) Prussia Germany at the age of 17. 1848  
he came to America landed at New York City after a  
8 weeks voyage on a sailing vessel, he was a painter  
by trade, remained there a short time. Proceeded to  
Rochester, Chicago and to St Joseph Mo.

My Mother was Born July 20. 1834 at (Arntz) near  
Berne Switzerland, her maiden name was Margaret Foster  
came to America in 1852 landed at New Orleans La  
after 9 weeks on a sailing vessel. Came up to St Joseph  
Mo. They were married in 1853 at St Joseph Mo

Father came up to Omaha Neb. January 1861  
Mother with us 3 children came up on the first  
Steam Boat in the spring of 1861. we got as far  
as Plattsmouth Neb. our Boat was disabled and finally  
sunk so we had to go overland up to Canada.  
arriving at the Platte River. the River was high and  
Ice floating and looked dangerous to cross  
but a man had a small skiff. Promised to take us  
across.

Mother never did forget how she felt, with us small children in that small skiff, the River being wide and ice floating swift down the stream.  
But he finally made it, and we landed at La Platte and thence to Omaha in a farm wagon

We first lived at 13<sup>th</sup> & Farnam st., and in 1863 Father built a 2 story frame Building on the N.E. corner of 11<sup>th</sup> & Farnam During the Civil war, built a two story Brick on Douglas st. between 11 & 12 lived there a year or so. Then in 1868, built a Home in Hartman Ad. SW 17 st. bought several acres of land, and lived there over 60 years, when he died in 1929, at the age of 98

U.P.R.R  
Company in 1863, started to build the road bed for the R.R. at the foot of Davenport st. I was 5 years old and remembered it. The Company was to build the first 100 Miles before the Government was to Ade them, after a year or more, they layered track as far as the Loup River. (Colombus) and had to build an expensive Bridge. They only had 98 Miles built, so to make up the first 100 Miles, they layered tract 2 Miles up the River bottom from Davenport st.

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and the Government measurement was taken from  
that Point.

I attended mostly German Schools until I was 8  
then to the first Public school located on Jackson so  
between 12 & 13 so then to Mr Beels. School on  
Jefferson Square. at the age of 12 I went to the  
Pacific st School. 9<sup>a</sup> Pacific. until I was 14  
in 1871 was the Chicago Fire. our school gave  
an entertainment for their Benefit. I recited Haman  
Progress. we realized a few hundred Dollars. and it was  
sent to the relief Committee at Chicago. Ill.

1872 at 14 I went to work in the German News Paper  
called the (Beobachter) It was Published by Ed Rosenthal  
of the Omaha Daily Bee. Judge Bennetka was Editor  
I was promised the first opening as Cab. in the  
Bee. but was disappointed. So I quit the Printing  
Business. and went to work in a grocery store  
for Myer & Raaffka. 10<sup>th</sup> Dodge. after 6 Month  
I went to Fred Lange Grocery 13<sup>a</sup> Jackson  
remained with him. until 1874. then with  
J H Ish. Drager between 13 & 14 st on Farnam st  
was there until fall of 1876

(4)

Stephen + Wilcox Dry Goods Co. got the Preacelge  
as Post Trade at Camp Conby. 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Hts  
at Red Cloud Agency. Nebr. and Clay Deer was  
to Manage it. I knew him well. asked me  
if I wanted to come out their. he would give  
me a job. I always wanted to go West. and  
I excepted it. so in the fall of 1876. I left  
Omaha. went by Rail Road to Sidney Nebr. then  
by stage up to the Agency. I remember Paying  
40 dollar. R.R. fare to Sidney + and 10 dollar. Stage  
fare. I remained their all winter. In may I made  
a short visit to my home in Omaha. Returned to  
the Red Cloud Agency.

3 Plainsmen that I knew. was going up to the Big Horn  
Basin<sup>Wyo</sup>. They names was Ed Moran. Fred Kennedy  
and J. Battisee. So Chis Thieaman and I decided to  
go along. They had a 2 horse wagon. after getting  
our supplies we started for Fort Laramie Wyo  
then up the North Platte River to Ft. Fetterman  
forded the River. and Proceeded north to Ft. Reno on  
Powder River. where Chis Thieaman and I remained  
and went to work for the Post Trade. J. R. Snyder  
and the Plainsmen proceeded N. West to the Basin  
my work was wherever I was wanted. Store. Officers Bar  
or Soldiers Bar. Business was good. and we keep busy

Mr Snyder had a 4 Mule team.. and wanted some one to take a load of supplies up to Gen Merritt summer camp on Tongue River, about 100 Miles where he had a Tent store.. I volunteered to take the supplies there.. alright he said, we loaded about 2000 lbs into the wagon.. was to leave in the morning well in the morning our 4 Mules were gone.. So I went along the River Banks.. and found the trail were they crossed. I told Mr Snyder I would follow the trail and find them if Possible.. I traveled about 15 Miles.. and finely sighted them.. so I rounded them up.. and by night I was back ready to make the trip the next Morning.. The report was a Soldier Killed a Man.. and stole our mules.. Rode one and the rest followed.. I heard later he picked up a Pony.. and left the Mules to Roam

Well the next Morning.. I started out.. with C Thiaman as body guard.. we camped on Crazy Woman Creek Clear Creek Big Piney Prairie Dog Goosenecks and at Soldier Creek we met the Gen Merrit returning from Tongue River.. to camp on Big Goose Creek.. So we returned with them.. and we delivered the goods to the store keeper and remained there a few days and returned to Ft Reno.. on Powder river.

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I remained with Mr Snyder until March 1, 1878 when an Expedition was formed at Ft Reno. To go to North Eastern Part of Wyoming, on a Indian Campaign. Capt Pallack was in Command. had 4 Co of Cavalry and 4 Co of Infantry, a long wagon train, and 6 Pack trains. 10 Men and 60 Mules, in each train.

I hired out for Pack Train service, we left the Fort March 1. traveled south up the Dry Forks of Powder River about 20 Miles then east between Pumpkin Butter heading towards Belle Fourche River, Little Powder, then headed towards the Little Missouri River, north of the Black Hills, we circled around that Country, and returned to the Belle Fourche River, where we left the Wagon Train. It was left there on account of the Gum Bo. The frost was coming out of the ground and it was impossible to pull a wagon through it. So our Pack train had to carry all supplies for the Camp after spending 25 days in the region, and seeing no signs of Indians, we returned to Ft Reno.

We had 25 Cheyenne Indian Scouts, with Frank Gerard in charge, he was chief Scout for Gen Crook. After a Month or so with the Pack Train I received a Voucher and had it cashed in Omaha Neb. at the Military Headquarters. I remained in Omaha until my Parents celebrated their silver wedding in June

(v)

I returned to Wyoming they changed the name of Ft. Reno  
to Ft McKinney and moved the Barracks up to  
Clear Creek, about 50 Miles north.

It was named Ft McKinney after Lt McKinney was  
killed by the Indians, in battle with the 4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry  
under command of Gen McPherson in January 1877.  
Lt McKinney had a presentiment that he would be killed by the Indians  
in the first battle they would have, and it proved true.

1878 a Pony express or Stage Line was laid out from  
Rock River Wyo to Echeta Montana through Ft Fetterman  
Ft McPherson Ft Custer Montana. I took charge of it  
from Ft Custer to Echeta on the Yellowstone River  
45 Miles, first I had a Pony, later a Buckboard  
it was a tri weekly route up one day back the next  
had to cross the Yellowstone and Big Horn Rivers every  
day, in all kinds of weather, after 2 months and  
no pay day, our Boarding House Keeper was keeping  
for money... so I got a man in my place  
and I rode back to Ft McPherson to find out what  
to do, while there Patrick Bros of Omaha took over  
the line, but I did not go to work for them.

1879. Chas McLeod and I squatted on a section of Land  
South of the Fort. Built a log Cabin, had a Bar  
Charly wanted to have a Dance Hall. So I sold out to  
him. Received some cash, and balance of 400 dollars  
he promised to pay, but I never got it.

(8)

1879. I left the Big Horn Country for Cheyenne Wyo where I had a Sister. I went to work for the Quartermaster at Camp Carlin in the Commissary Dept. in ~~1880~~ Major Lord was in Command remain there in that Dept. until May 1880 a Scouting expedition left here in June for Colorado. 2 Co of Cavalry and 4 Pack Trains I hired out for Pack Train Service from Camp Carlin went overland to Ft Sanders near Laramie City then west toward North Park. then south over the Mountain Range into Middle Park remained in that Vicinity for several days. then proceeded N.W to North Park. after about 30 day. we returned to Camp Carlin. had no trouble with the Ute Indians

in 1881 an Expedition to Utah to locate a new fort Duchane. we shipped to Green River Wyo. from there we went south about 100 Miles. followed Green River and went back to Green River City on the east side gone about 10 day.

Then we were ordered to Park City Utah. were they were forming a Command to go into the Uinta Valley to locate the fort in that Vicinity. we traveled south through Heber. south east through Strawberry Valley Deep Creek and into Duchane Valley. where they located Ft Duchane

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While in Utah I received a letter from Home to come at once, as Mother was very sick so I came to Omaha and Mother was better. I remained a short time, and went back to Wyoming that summer the Q Master, layed off several hundred Men. I was included.

So for a while I worked for a grocery man by the name of Jenkins, and to the U.P.R.R. Station Eating house. I took charge of the Bar I was there a short time, until Mr T Moore Chief Park, sent for me to come back to work in Park Train as President Arthur was to <sup>take</sup> make a vacation in Yellowstone National Park, and the Park Train was to carry his supplies. I hardly commenced working at my new place. I did not want to quit so I refused to go. But I felt sorry many times after that, that I did not go, for I never was in the Park.

In 1883 I returned to Omaha, and started in Grocery Business. Father helped me borrow 1000 dol. I bought a lot, put up a Building 20 x 40. Stocked it up with Groceries & Gen Merchandise and got along fine, when I was Prospering, and wanted to enlarge my Business, my Creditors wanted their money, so I paid them off, but it kept me down.

(10)

I took a great deal of interest in Politics I was a delegate of the congressional Convention held at Lincoln Neb. to nominate a candidate to represent this district. So after the first Ballot we nominated W. J. Bryan of Lincoln and we elected him by a large Majority. For his second term. Douglas County was cut out, but he was elected by a small Majority, anyhow.

When W. J. Bryan was nominated for President of U.S.A I did not want to be a Gold Reparatur, so I registered as a republican, and was chosen as a delegate for County, Congressional and State Convention for McKinley for President, and he was nominated and elected. I always admired Wm. J. Bryan I think he was one of the greatest statesman this country ever had.

1904 I was nominated and elected for County Commissioner for Douglas County. There was a Bond, proportion of 200 thousand dol. up, for to pay off the County Floating Debt. It was defeated, so we had to assume the debt so the Assessor raised the valuation of all corporations and large business, and our Board of Equalization stay with him, and letting the <sup>less</sup> same as year before we realized enough funds to pay off the debts, and we were soon on cash Basis, and continued so for several years. I served 2 terms.

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In my last term as County Commissioner we  
Built a New Million Dol. Court House  
after receiving Bids from 33 Contractors  
from all Part of the Country we found  
that Caldwell & Drake from Youngstown Ohio  
were the lowest Responsible Bidders their  
Bid was 823 Thousand Dol. the Heating  
Plumbing &c was separate.. we gave them the  
Contract after agreeing to Pay the Union Scale  
of Wages and no extras. They had some trouble  
with some unions, and one day someone while  
under construction, tried to Blow up the  
Building. They done about a Thousand Dol  
Damage. And the Contractors Paid the Damage  
and had no further trouble

I was Chairman of the Board and appointed  
each Chairman of all Committees. the Chairman  
of the Building Committee did not suit the  
Bosses of my Party but I stood Pat. they all  
Made good and the Building stands for itself  
it was honestly Built and no graft.. you could  
not Duplicate it today for 1 Million or half  
my name is on the Corner stone also in Bronze  
on the Inside of the Building.

(12)

for the last 25 years I was always doing something  
after selling out my store. and Paying most of my debts  
I was a Salesman or in Assessors office. Store Keeper  
Precinct Assessor &c. after doing Business for 30 years  
with a Bank. they refused to take the interest on my  
Note. wanted the Principal too. so they sued me  
and so left me without any credit. I did not want  
to go into Bankruptcy. I would have been better off  
today. if I did. In the last 50 years. I never was  
once out of debt. I have seen Omaha grow  
from a small Village. to a great City. But  
my Property was always in the wrong part of the City.  
our Property was worth more 50 years ago than  
it is worth now. Father built 25 houses in Omaha  
and I built 2. at that time they were not  
Modern. Interest & Taxes. eat them all up.  
we Pioneers had to pay for grading. Sidewalks. Sewers  
and several district Improvements. Water & Gas Connections  
so you see what it costs to own property and the assessor  
always raised the Value. at the same time. that was alright  
in good times. but when hard times come. and People could  
not pay rent. Houses going down. need repairs &c. Taxes and  
Insurance went on just the same. So had to let Taxes  
wait and Pay Penalty. until a Person put a Mortgage on  
it. and some years after. you have to give it up

(13) March 30/1937

I have 3 sons and 1 Daughter now they are all  
Married, the oldest son<sup>1</sup> is now Locomotive Engineer  
for the U.P.R.R. he is a widow now, has 2 children  
one son <sup>Walter</sup> in Long Beach. Calif. with the Edison  
Power & Light Co., and one in the Traffic Dept.  
here in Omaha, my daughter Edna has 3 sons  
1 daughter, she is a Widow, she at Present is  
living at Long Beach. Calif. left here in 1936

1937 next October the 19<sup>th</sup> I will be married  
50 years, always lived in the same house  
my son Albert and his 2 children are with  
me and Wife and I depend on him for a living  
I am 79 years old, and retired last year.

I could write of thousands of incidents of  
things that happened here in Omaha and out west  
from 1876 to 1883, and in Omaha since 1861

Mr Sheldon I don't remember Mr Allen the Traitor  
for those day we would not ask there name unless  
working with them. I remember Pratt & Ferris long  
Wagon Train that started from Sidney to the Black  
Hills in 1876

over

(14)

Mr Sheldon I don't know ~~whether~~ what I have written would interest you read it over and let me know what sort of Question you <sup>are interested in</sup> this would help the State Historical Society for I would like to join let me know what kind of a Qualification I must have.

I know Charles A. Goss chief Justice of Supreme Court when he was in Omaha

I will inclose your Copy. of my Memories of the Winter of 1876. 1877 at Camp Canby  
4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Hgt  
Red Cloud agency

Your  
Fred Brunning

1452 4017 15

Omaha

Nebr

that Picture the World Heard took of me  
my Friends say don't look a bit like me