

This an old letter that Thomas Brown, grandson of the immigrant James Brown, wrote to Henry Robson's grandson, Edward Robson in Michigan. This letter was written so someone in the family would have this history of the Brown, Crawford, McNee, Gemmel, Hymers, Hutson families as well as mentioning many, many others and their way of life in and around Bovina. My cousin, Sandra Robson Zimmer of Michigan inherited this letter and sent me a copy. We decided that if you would like to publish it on the Delaware County, NY Genealogy and History website we would love to share it.

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From Thomas Brown (Apr. 21, 1936)  
Alhambra, California

To Edward Robson  
Belleville, Michigan

Every time I take a trip East and meet many of y relatives, I am struck by the fact, among the younger generation at least, that outside of the fact that our ancestors came from Scotland in the early part of the nineteenth century (1800 to 1810) they knew very little of the early history of the Brown family and their ancestors, and that particular branch that settled in and had its origin in that part of the country know as Bovina, Delaware County, New York. The writer at some little pains has gathered up a few acts which may be of interest to some after the present generation has passed away. While the facts are in the main correct, I may not always be able to arrange them in the order in which they occurred.

In making a history of the Brown family, there are other families closely connected with them, namely Crawford and Robson families, also McNee, Gemmel and Hymers families as well as the Hutson Family, who were related on my grandmother's side.

This is the third time I have attempted this narrative and I may tire of it so do not know how much of a record I am going t make.

In the first place, my Grandfather, James Brown was born in 1760 in Hawick, Scotland and must have been around 50 years of age she he emigrated to this country. His cousin, also names James Brown, I think came with him. The cousin married Ellen Lambert in New York in 1804, which records I get from an old Bible on the flyleaf of which says "brought from Scotland and presented to Ellen Lambert previous to their marriage in 1804." From this, I gather they came to this country previous to 1804 and just when my Grandfather went up into Delaware County, I can only surmise but the lease which is my possession is dated January 20th, 1808 so it was prior to that. My Grandfather paid \$400.00 for the lease which was originally issued to Alexander

Simpson and wife, Margaret on January 1, 1804. The lease states that \$16.00 was to be paid on May 1st, 1809 and the same thereafter until 1814 and then forever after the rent was to be \$32.00 a year. The lease was witnessed by Wm. McGibbon, James Davie and James Gibson.

The tradition is that there were four Scotchmen, James Brown, James Davie, Alexander Moore and William Henderson, who came into Delaware County together. James Brown settled in Bovina on what was later known as the Thomas Brown place, later the Amos place and now a part of the Gerry Estate. James Davie on what was later known as the Nicoll place. Alexander Moore settled near Cabin Hill Church and William Henderson near a lake which, when I was a boy, was known as Henderson Lake.

When my Grandfather settled in Bovina, the land was held by a grant which had come down from the English Crown and leased to the settlers who could make improvements and could not be disposed as long as he paid his rent. Later on the collections of the rents

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led to the Anti-Rent War, which is a matter of history and referred to in all histories of the times.

My Grandfather was a bachelor when he went into Delaware County and the lease above mentioned states he was a resident of New York. He married a widow named Isabel Forsythe Crawford.

The following quotation is from a records written by his Grandson, Wm. Crawford of Andes dated February 1884:

“Robert Crawford married Isabel Forsythe and emigrated from Hawick, Scotland to Schoharie County, New York. He had a grist mill there. He died there leaving three young children: Jennet, John and William Crawford. The widow, Isabel Forsythe Crawford married James Brown of Bovina, Delaware County, New York. The children of this marriage were Thomas, Rachel and Andrew Brown. Thomas born in 1812, Rachel 1814, and Andrew on June 11, 1816.”

Whether my Grandfather knew his wife in Scotland or not I do not know, but she was about 16 years younger than he.

Delaware County was organized March 10, 1797, and about that time there seems to have been quite an extensive emigration from Scotland. Scotch Mountain in Delhi and the towns of Bovina and Andes were principally settled by Scotch. The ground being very hilly and heavily timbered, mostly hard wood, beech,

birch, maple, cherry, etc. The timber had to be removed before anything could be raised. My Grandfather's farm was a rather smooth piece of land for that country and my father was born there in a log house. The old chimney was still standing when I was a boy. About my father's boyhood, they seemed to have cleared the land by chopping down the trees in the winter, then in the summer burned the brush and piled the logs in heaps. That was heavy work and I have heard him tell of the logging bees, the neighbors gathering with their oxen to help pile the logs so as to burn more readily. I think I have heard him say that my Grandfather hoed in his first crop, cut it with a sickle and treated it with a flail. It was customary in those days, if any job was too heavy for the family, to call for help from the neighbors, which made each community very sociable and schools and churches were started and developed as the country was settled.

My father (Andrew Brown) and his sister and brother as well as the Crawford children must have attended the same school as I did and one of his teachers was named John Wilber. Reading, writing and spelling and arithmetic were what they studied and my *father* was a good reader. The pens were made of goose quills, which the teacher had to be able to make and keep in order. Bramleys, Blacks, Biggars and Hyzers were some of the names I have heard him speak of.

Wolves, bears, deer and panthers were common. I have heard him tell of hearing the wolves howl but he never saw one wild, but deer were a common sight often coming into the open and licking up the salt put out for the cattle. Oxen were the motive power and besides the oxen, they had cows, chickens and a flock of sheep and sometimes in order to bring the stock through the winter they would

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have to drive the cattle into the woods and cut limbs from the standing trees so the cattle could eat the small twigs and bark. It was called browsing. Hogs were also an important part of the livestock besides furnishing meat for the family, there was always a market for the surplus but it had to be taken to Catskill or Kingston and sold to traded for supplies for the household. A trip took a week or more. For sugar, each farm had a sugar camp and sugar was made by collecting the sap from the maple trees and boiling it in an open pan out of doors, to a thin syrup, then sugaring off later at the house. Nearly everything was made by hand and barter, the medium of exchange, not much money but still they raised large families, never seemed to want for anything, were well informed. My father being a good reader, also had a good voice for singing and used to lead the singing at Flats Church about two miles below Delhi. During the visits I have made to Delaware County in recent years, there are some people who still tell me how my father and Guerdon Paine used to stand in front of the congregation and lead the singing. He also used to play the violin and was somewhat of an actor and used to amuse us children by singing and dancing, would play the violin, then sing, then recite a comic verse and so on which never failed to bring down the house.

My father was about 16 when my Grandmother died and about 19 when

Grandfather died. Uncle Thomas was about 24 when Grandfather died and Aunt Rachel about 22, I think. The home was quite a place for young people of the community to gather and Uncle Thomas seems to have been quite a leader in the community. He was about 6 feet tall, straight and well proportioned. My father was not quite so tall, a little heavier set and not quite so straight but both were rather above the medium weight but carried no fat.

The Flats Church so called by being located on the Flats below Delhi seems to have been the center of the community. It was located about ten miles from the Brown house but the family seems to have been regular attendants during their earlier years. It was one of the first churches in the community, having been organized in 1805, and the members came from the radius of ten miles or more.

Uncle Thomas married Mary Ann McNee, about 1840, and about the same time Rachel Brown married Alexander Mable and my father seems to have lived with Uncle Thomas for some time. I have heard him say he was always the boy and Uncle Thomas did all of the business. Uncle Thomas seem to have had some standing in the community, was Captain Brown, a captain in the militia. Under the laws of the State of New York, all males of a certain age, had to receive military training and after Uncle Thomas retired, my father was elected Captain, and I recall as a boy hearing him addressed as Captain by some of the older inhabitants. Uncle Thomas also served as Supervisor of the town of Bovina for 2 years about 1855-56. I was about 8 years old when he died and used to like to go over there when a boy.

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Aunt Rachel married Alexander Mable about the same time Uncle Thomas married and lived on the Little Delaware about two miles from Delhi. Aunt Rachel died about 1814 when her baby boy was born. The baby was named John Brown Mable who grew up to be quite an influential citizen of the community. His wife's name was Davidson and they had two children, neither of whom grew up and he died about 1816.

Henry Robson married my father's oldest half sister, Jannet Crawford about 1824. They lived in Bovina for some years about 1830 to 1835 moved to Michigan about 20 miles west of Detroit near Belleville where they raised a large family of children. When they were leaving New York, they had several children and Aunt Rachel asked if she might not keep her namesake, Rachel and they left her and Uncle Thomas made a home for her until she married James Nicoll about 1858.

The half brother, John Crawford married Mary Ann Shaw about the year 1828 and settled on a farm near the Brown homestead. They had a family of four children, William H., Isabel F. Robert and Jeanette. I will not follow this family records any farther at this time.

My father's half brother, William Crawford went to western New York when quite a young man and from there to Michigan about 1830 and married Catherine

McKenzie either in New York or Canada. He took up land near Belleville, Michigan and at the time of his death had a fine farm of 480 acres. His children were three, two girls and a boy, the boy died when a young man. The oldest girl married Myron Smith of Lawton, Michigan. I have visited there. There were three girls and one son. The son, Crawford died but left a family a widow and two sons.

Going back to my father's boyhood, my Grandfather with the help of the Crawford boys and his own sons seems to have cleared up the farm and he evidently helped to start the Robson and John Crawford families and he died in 1836, aged 76 years. Isabel Forsythe Crawford Brown died in 1833, aged 57 years.

My father, Andrew Brown married Jeanette McNee, February 12, 1846. He was about 29 years when he was married and his wife about 24. She was a sister of Uncle Thomas' wife. There was another sister, Nancy who later in life married Silas D. Hilton, she being his second wife. There were also three brothers, John, Peter and James McNee. My father, I think, lived at least a year or more with Uncle Thomas as James, my oldest half brother was born there. Some time prior to this time, my father had bought the 160 acres immediately west of the homestead place. I have heard him say that the parties in possession of the farm were not very good neighbors. They blamed them for stealing a hog which had been butchered and disappeared and Uncle Thomas had a search warrant made out but they did not find the hog, but a short time after that their barn was burned, and they blamed the neighbor for setting the fire. It was rough farm and no buildings so my

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father built a new set of buildings on it near a spring about one-half mile from the homestead of Uncle Thomas' place and that was where I and my numerous brothers and sisters were born and raised. There were five children born to my father and Jeanette McNee, four boys and one girl, three of the children died, named William Cameron, Thomas Alexander and Mary Ann, died in the month of September 1855 and Jeannette Brown, wife of Andrew Brown died November 26, 1856 leaving two boys, James F. about 9 years of age and Andrew John about 7 months. My father carried on with hired help for about four years, then married my mother who was Jane Hymers, born May 17, 1831, of Meredith, New York. She was a member of the Flats Church, a daughter of Thomas Hymers and Susan Gemmel. Thomas Hymers was a native of Roxburyshire, Scotland and came to this country some time about 1820. His wife, my grandmother came from Scotland about the same time. A tradition is that they come on the same ship, came up the Hudson to Catskill by boat and on the stage of Delaware County, the women riding and the men walking.

My grandfather Hymers' farm was about eight miles from Delhi in Meredith. There were four children born to my grandparents, my mother, Jane, Isabelle, George and Mary. My grandfather was one of several who signed a bond as surety for someone and the party defaulted and he lost his farm. He gave up all he had but Uncle George bought the farm and run it until his death in 1863. My grandmother

Susan Gemmel died, I do not know just when and my grandfather married a second wife by the name of Little, whom I remember. Aunt Isabelle married William Middlemass about 1860, one son George was born about 1861 and still lives in Delhi. He married Jennie Huber and they never had any children. Aunt Mary married Thomas Niven about 1872. They had one son, Thomas who married Mary Hazlett. They lived in Treadwell and have no children.

My grandfather Hymers had one brother John who came from Scotland and married and raised a large family, three boys, Thomas, William and John and several girls whose families I have lost track of. My grandmother, Susan Gemmel, had several brothers and sisters, one Uncle Hugh as my mother used to call him, lived on Rose Brook in Stamford, with whom our family were very intimate when I was a small boy. There were four boys and two sisters in the first family, his first wife died and he married her sister and four children were born to them, three boys and one girl. One of the older boys, James was a soldier in the Civil War and was shot through the neck in the battle of Fair Oaks, was carried off the field for dead but recovered and lived to be quite an old man. The family was about our most intimate friends during my boyhood days and I may have more to say about them later.

Going back to my father, Andrew Brown, I remember him as a very hardworking, very conscientious, very religious man as were most of the people of his day and age, very strict and had very decided views on politics and matters of the day and was well informed, inclined to reason things out and when he arrived at a conclusion, he always had good ground for his convictions and his opinions were much

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respected in the community. My mother, Jane Hymers was about 30 years old when she married my father. She had been a school teacher before her marriage and I have met some of her scholars and I think she had the reputation of being a good teacher. Her last school I think was the Fergusenville Academy, a school conducted by a man named James Oliver. She was also a member of the Flats Church and she and my father seemed to have a wide acquaintance around Delhi and vicinity.

That brings my narrative down to about the time of my own birth which occurred December 25, 1860. I was the oldest of nine children born between that date and July 12, 1873 when my youngest brother was born and my mother died March 6th, 1877 aged 45 years, 9 months and 19 days. The children were the writer, Thomas Cameron born December 25, 1860. George Hymers, May 7 1862, Jeanette Isabelle, August 3, 1863, Susan Jane, December 2, 1864, Marly Margaret September 7, 1866, William Crawford, December 7, 1868, Henry Smeallie, May 5, 1870, Rose Ella, November 6, 1871, Alfred Ashton, July 12, 1873. In August 1870, Mary Margaret and Willie C. both died and also grandfather Hymers, three deaths inside of a week. I was 9 years old at the time.

Going back to my father's business from the time of his first marriage in

1845, he assigned his interest in the homestead place to Uncle Thomas in 1849. He received \$1,000.00 for the same. The farm my father acquired was rough and somewhat steep. The farm directly south called the Ladd farm was to be sold to satisfy a mortgage and my father tried to buy part of it, but finally purchased all of it. When he first acquired it, his brother-in-law, James McNee lived on it for several years, my father retaining part of it. On April 1857, a heavy snowstorm broke down the roof on part of the barn and killed several cows. The old barn which stood on the Ladd place had a history, one of the two men ever to have been hung in Delaware County, broke jail and was caught in that barn, I think before my father was born.

This narrative would not be complete if I did not give some details of myself and my brothers and sisters who were very numerous and my two half brothers older. My earliest recollection as I recall was being asked to come to the window and look out. It was the first snow of the season and the ground was all white. I mind going into mother's bedroom and being shown my sister Nettie (Jeanette). We were all raised in a cradle and I was placed in the foot of the cradle to rock the baby to sleep. I thought it great fun at first but used to get very tired of it as being the oldest had often to mind the baby when I wanted to be doing something else. My brother George a year and a half younger than I weighed a pound more than I did when he was 4 and I was 5. I started to school when I was 5 hers old, my first teacher was Anna George. A girl Katie Grant started the same time and we were great rivals in our spelling class. We lived a mile and a half from the school house and the teacher boarded around among the different families. They always hired a man for the winter term, they had to do the janitor work and keep order among the big boys. Some winters we had 45 scholars in the old school house, the seats

extended around the sides of the room with the desks in front with part of the desks for the smaller children in front. Simon Goodman was my first winter teacher then David Ogalvie, then David McMurdy for four terms, Wm. Allaban, Dan McMullan, Clark Hogaboom, Andrew Darling for two terms, Dan Chamberlin and the last Walter H. Phyfe. In the summer after Anna George, Anna Worden, Belle King who after married John Bigger, then Violet Gladstone for several terms. Of my teachers I think David McMurdy made the most impression on me. Andrew Darling was fine and Walter H. Phyfe was among the best. Walter H. Phyfe was a second cousin of ours. His grandmother's maiden name being Katherine Forsythe while my grandmother's name was Jeanette Forsythe. Katherine Forsythe's husband was John Hutson and there was a large family, John, William, Robert, Walter, two girls at least, one of which married John Phyfe and died leaving two boys, Watler H. and Robert Eston. John, Wm. and Robert Hutson all had families and were among our friends in the early days. Time will not permit me to go extensively into my school days but I might mention the names of some of the families besides the Browns, Nicoll, and Grants, Hymers, Dickson, Bartholomew, Bramley, Liddle, Russel, Wight, and later on others but my particular chums were Will Amos and Will Wight, Alec Grant. The school was known as the Biggar Bollow School, so named from a family by the name of Biggar on whose land the schoolhouse stood.

The stream near which the schoolhouse was situated was then called Grant's Brook after one of the first settlers in the community. The stream is now known as Biggars Brook after the family of the same name who still occupy the same farm. The creek was a never ending source of amusement of the scholars both summer and winter, in the summer the swimming holes on the flat up the stream being deep enough to be over our heads in some places so that we learned to swim. It was a race to see who could get to the swimming hole, undress and get into the water first, our bathings suits were what nature provided and the late John Biggar and Mat. Lambert would slip up and get possession of our clothes and would put us through stunts which must have been quite a show before allowing us to dress and get back to school in our allotted time. I received most of my education in this school. My mother died in the spring of 1877 and I attended the next winter which was all the schooling I ever got until after I was 21 when I had one term at the Delaware Academy in Delhi. After I quit school, it being necessary for some one to help with the care of the stock, it fell to me to assume that job. David McMurdy, a former teacher spoken of above was conducting an academy and my brother George got to attend the school for two following winters. He walked the three miles night and morning. During the winters following my mother's death, I cared for the stock and my father saw to getting Nettie and Susan and the three younger children, Henry, Rose and Alfred to school after the snow came.

After my mother's death, the first summer we had Anna Merritt for a housekeeper, then for some time after that Belle Gemmel lived with us as housekeeper until the girls, Nett and Susan could manage the housekeeping. Belle Gemmel was a cousin of my mother's, a great favorite with the family. My oldest half brother Jim had gone to Iowa in the early 70's and he came home on a visit about 1880 and the next year came again and married Belle and took her to Traer, Iowa where one son, Gemmel was born and who now lives at Red Oak, Iowa, married to Mary Hunter and has three children, Jeannette, James Hunter

*(the rest of the sentence was not copied on the top of page 8)* James Forsythe Brown was born Feb. 8, 1847, and died Jan. 8, 1817.

Going back to my early boyhood, I am going to use the pronoun we, which includes my brothers and sisters. We were always expected to help at any job we were able to do. I mentioned my first job, rocking the cradle and there was always a baby and I think Nett was really the best nurse maid but all had to help. We all learned to mill as the principal business was dairying, butter being made and packed in 100 lb. firkins, during the summer and sold in the fall. Most of our living came from the farm, the skimmed milk being fed to calves and hogs. We also had a small flock of sheep, 20 or 25 head. The hogs were butchered in the fall and packed in brine for the next summers supply of meat. In the fall we generally killed one of the sheep and the custom was to trade a quarter or more with some of the neighbors so as to have it fresh longer. Then we always fattened a young calf in the spring, and had veal for a time. There was always plenty of meat in our diet and we used to get tired of the salt pork during the



summer. It was always very fat which I very much disliked, in fact, I still dislike fat meat, or I should say the fat in the meat. Whenever a cow or calf was butchered, the hide was always taken to the tannery at Delhi and made into leather. It took a year or more to tan a hide, but there was always leather in the house and father who was mechanically minded, used to make most of the shoes for us children when we were small and always kept them in repairs, bought the sole leather by the side. As we got older, we boys had cow hide boots made for the winter. They were heavy and coarse and made for snow in the winter. Some time instead of having our foot wear made by a shoe maker in Andes, we had a shoe maker come to the home for a week or so and make footwear for the family. The men had boots made out of calf skin for dress up but I never had any, shoes coming into fashion as I grew up. My father built his building near a spring as I mentioned before. He also set out an orchard into which he grafted a number of varieties of good apples, Rhode Island Greenings, Spitzenburgs and others; then later, he had a number of other varieties grafted so that we always had plenty of apples, then on the Ladd place, there were a number of pear trees and some plum and cherry and wild strawberries, raspberries and black berries in their season.

In the spring of the year, we made maple sugar. We had one camp on the hill of old trees, hard to work and vessels to catch the sap were crude, home made wooden spikes and wooden troughs, but later tin buckets which we hung on the trees, then later metal spikes. First we boiled the sap in an open fireplace, but later build a sap house and boiled inside. It was about the hardest work I ever did but still we liked it. Father being a hard working man, we were early taught to work, George and I both having small scythes. I can remember when nearly all the labor was by hand, grain cut with a cradle or a sickle and threshed with a flail but when I was around 7 years old we got our first mowing machine, an old Buckeye which did business for a good many years.

I am going back to my grandfather's cousin, James Brown a native of Ayrshire, Scotland. He came from Scotland about the sometime my grandfather came and settled in New York City and was in business there. His wife, Ellen Lambert died and left one daughter Margaret M. who was I think about the age of Uncle Thomas. She had no other relatives in this country and used to spend her summers at Uncle

Thomas' in fact, had a room built on to his house for her summer residence. She was like a sister to Uncle Thomas and my father and we were taught to call her Aunt Margaret. She spent her winters in Catskill with a family by the name of Story. She also used to visit in New York City. She used to make our family and Uncle Thomas' family a good many presents; in one of her visits to New York, she got an opportunity to buy a second hand piano if my father would pay freight from Kingston which he did. It was always a source of a great deal of pleasure, not only to our family but to our neighbors and friends in the community. (James Brown died in Catskill Feb. 18, 1840, aged 68 years, 9 months.)

Aunt Margaret, as we were taught to call her, died in the early 70's, leaving her property in equal shares to the children of Thomas and Andrew Brown. Uncle Thomas was married in 1840 (Feb.), and died in Feb. 1869, his wife, Mary Ann McNee died about 1856. They had five children, Jeanette, the oldest died when about 19 and John J. died in February 1869, a week after his father died. Belle, Maggy and Will ran the farm for one year, then Belle married David Nicoll, a young United Presbyterian preacher and moved to De Witt, brother Jim worked for them, then they rented the place to Walter Amos and went to make their home with Belle in Iowa. David and Belle were parents of four children, one died in infancy, but three boys, William A., Thomas Edward, and George David, grew up; Will living in Red Oak, Iowa, his wife, Sadie Brown no children; T. Ed. living in Detroit, Michigan, with a wife and stepson; and George in West Union, married Ethel Amos in Indiana, they have two sons, David and William. Uncle Thomas' youngest son Will never married, was a traveling salesman for the Spoor Mackey Company, a wall paper company of Chicago, and died there late in 1924.

My father died November 19, 1883, his death was caused by blood poisoning. He was butchering a hog and was sticking a hog and it threw its head and tore his thumb. He went into the house and rolled it and paid but slight attention to it, in about a week, his arm swelled up and they treated it for erysipelas and we did not realize him being dangerous until he suddenly died.

The following Resolution of Respect were adopted by the Session of Cabin Hill Church:

"Whereas it has pleased God to call Himself, our esteemed member, Mr. Andrew Brown

Resolved.	1st	That in the death of Mr. Brown, we recognize the ruling of God whose ways are not our ways Wisdom of Him who doeth all things well.
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the temporal interest in the general steady attendance on the ordinances appreciation of the services of God's house, afford an example to us and all our people worthy to be pondered and imitated.	2nd	That the willing labors of our late member to advance and spiritual concern of the congregation, his work of the whole church, his and keen
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mindful of the in such an hour as ye think cometh."	3rd	That in the sudden removal, we are called to live ever divine exhortation "Be ye also ready for not, the Son of Man
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<p>household the fatherless find father and mother forsake</p>	<p>4th That we tender our heartfelt sympathy to the orphaned and commend them to the care of Him in who mercy and whom promise "When thy thee, the Lord will take thee up."</p>
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Our mother had died in March and after my father's death, there were seven of us children, I being the oldest 22 years, Alfred the youngest, 9 years. George and I bought the personal property and assumed charge of the farm and hired our sisters, Nett and Susan to keep house. My brother George and I had both been teaching school when father died. I taught the Cabin Hill school four winters, one winter on Lake Delaware, two winters on Dingle Hill, and one winter in Davenport. George taught two winters and then he assumed care of the farm during the winter. In January 1889, George married Margaret Glendenning on one night and the next night Nettie married Anderson Rickelton and moved to Iowa. George elected to stay with his father-in-law the summer of 1889 but in the fall he bought my interest in the stock and assumed charge of the farm leaving myself free to find other occupation. I took the Davenport school the following winter and in the spring of 1890 went to Iowa. My oldest brother James had gone to Iowa about 1872, had acquired 440 acres of land in Tama County, and improved it and came to New York and married about 1880. The other older brother Andrew J. went first to Iowa in 1877. He returned on a visit and taught the Gladstone Hollow school the winter of 1882 and spent the following years in Iowa and New York. He worked at the carpenters trade and taught school in the winter until about 1887 when he went to Blairsburg, Iowa and went into the mercantile business with his cousin, Cameron McNee. He returned in January 1890 and married Violet Armstrong of Andes. One son, James A. was born in 1891 and on account of his health, the family moved to Olathe, Colorado where Jim grew up, went into the army in 1918, was discharged from the army in 1920, married Elsa Leight Williams after coming out of the army and died about 1927. (Andrew J. Brown died December 17, 1938)

I went to Iowa the spring of 1870 and spent three years working on a farm, the first year in Ida County, in Tama County and Hamilton County. A. J. and his partner were building a store in Blairsburg in the fall of 1890 and I helped on that, then in the winter of 1890-91 I taught the country school 4 miles south of Blairsburg, the summer of 1891, I worked at the carpenter trade going to Tama County to my brother Jim's place for haying and harvest, then back to Blairsburg in the fall. West Wilson from Chicago came

to Blairsburg and induced me to go to buying and shipping hogs to the Chicago market. I followed the business with various success until February 1892, I returned to New York and was married to Robenia Whitson, daughter of James and Marry McNair Whitson. They lived in Andes on a farm, about 8 miles from our home in Bovina. I had taught school in their district on Dingle Hill for two terms and her brother and sister were among my pupils. The understanding was that I was to go to Iowa and if I thought we would like it there she would go with me, which she did in 1892. Went to Blairsburg and

I continued in the hog business, having gone into partnership with another firm but it did not go very well, too many in business, so I retired in the fall and went to Ida County near my sisters intending to rent a farm, but when I got there the farms were all rented for the season, but there was a 240 acre farm for sale near my brother-in-law, Anderson Rickelton's place. We bought the 160 place paying \$35.00 an acre for it or \$5,600.00 and my brother James took the 80 acres at \$30.00 an acre for \$2,400.00. At the end of about four years, I bought the 80 acre farm from my brother and that was our home for nine years and where our four children were born, Andrew James, November 5, 1893, Arthur Whitson, July 26, 1896, Mary Isabel, November 13, 1898 and Helen Elizabeth, April 2, 1901. In all we lived nine years in Ida County on the farm, our Post Office address was Cushing, Woodbury County, five and one half miles and were seven miles from Holstien where we did our banking business. Our farm was a good one and our first crop, in 1895 a large crop. It was during the Cleveland administration and prices were very low, but we manage to get by but in 1896, McKinley was elected and things immediately began to improve. Our house was small and very poor, so in 1900 we built a good ten room house with a basement at an expense of about \$1800.00. Lumber and material being very cheap and also labor being very reasonable. Our first home was in a fine community, mostly Americans with a good school one half mile and we had a United Presbyterian church about four miles from where we lived. It was built on a corner of the David Nicoll farm, and he was the preacher, and his wife, Belle Brown, was my cousin and Uncle Thomas' daughter. Mr. Nicoll was an outstanding man in the community and represented the County two terms in the State Legislature.

Our crops were principally corn, oats, wheat, and hay, the corn and hay being fed on the farm to hogs and cattle which we shipped to the Chicago market. I was a small feeder but made the business pay. In the spring of 1901, we had an opportunity to sell our 240 acres for \$60.00 an acre, and the community was changing, the Germans buying the Americans out and their customs were different from ours so we sold. My oldest brother James had sold his land in Tama County and moved to Montgomery County, Iowa. He like it there and after looking over several localities, we bought a 200 acre farm three miles northwest of Red Oak in Montgomery County, Iowa, and moved there in spring of 1920. We moved our household goods, besides three good horses, and six hogs, two thorough-bred Duroc Jerseys. I never considered the farm in Montgomery, much if any better than the one we left in Ida County but we had a good house and the land nearly all in grass, the location fine, one quarter mile from a country school house and three miles from Red Oak, a County Seat town of about 5000. The community was very similar to the one we moved into in Ida County. We spent 17 years on the farm and always

like the community as well as the city and country around Red Oak, our location and farm being one of the best in the community, around Red Oak in view across the valley. Our family made a welcome addition to the country school (Summit Hill) and our four children received their primary education until ready for high school. I served as director at various times. The school were conducted on the township system, we had

seven schools. The Red Oak city school serving the other two districts as an independent district. I served as Secretary of the Township Board for at least two years and we always had fine teachers and our pupils always took high ranks in the city schools of Red Oak.

When we moved to Red Oak the automobile was a curiosity, no rural telephones around Red Oak. We organized a local company and built a line into Red Oak, and in conjunction with several other lines developed the Red Oak Mutual Telephone Co., which covered the whole county around Red Oak. I was president of the local company when the line was built, and also served on the Board of Directors of the consolidated company and was secretary and manager for several years. We had over 600 subscribers in our system and by an arrangement with the Bell Company free exchange with the city.

*This is the end of Thomas Brown's letter. Whether he wrote more and it was lost, I do not know.*