

Brown, Joseph R., 1805-1870.

M595

Joseph R. and Samuel J. Brown and family papers, undated and 1826-1956.  
30 microfilm reels.

## INTRODUCTION

This microfilm reproduces personal papers (undated and 1826-1956) of the prominent Minnesota pioneer Joseph Renshaw Brown, his son Samuel Jerome Brown, and other members of the Brown family. It consolidates into a single, integrated collection several units in the Minnesota Historical Society that previously were filed separately.

The microfilm was produced in part with a grant of funds from the Joseph R. Brown Heritage Society.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

### Joseph Renshaw Brown

Joseph Renshaw Brown was born in Harford County, Maryland, on January 5, 1805. He was apprenticed to a printer in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, but ran away to Philadelphia and enlisted in the army in 1820. He was posted to the fifth regiment of the United States Infantry, which had been sent to what is now Minnesota in 1819 to build Fort Snelling.

After leaving the army in ca.1825, Brown remained in the area, and in the ensuing years he was at various times a fur trader; farmer; lumberman; stagecoach line owner; justice of the peace, clerk of court, and register of deeds; printer; newspaper editor, owner, and publisher; and United States Indian agent in what are now Minnesota and South Dakota. Actively involved in politics, he served in the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature, was a delegate to the conventions that organized the Minnesota Territory and drafted the state's constitution, and served in the Minnesota Territorial Council and Legislature. He also invented a steam wagon (a steam-powered traction engine) and was associated with the development of several Minnesota communities, including Oliver's Grove (now Hastings), Henderson, and Lake Traverse (now Browns Valley).

During the Dakota Conflict of 1862, while he was absent from Minnesota on business related to the steam wagon, Brown's house near what is now Sacred Heart, Minnesota, was

burned and his family captured but later released. Following his return to Minnesota he served as superintendent of the Indian prison at Mankato, participated in the military campaigns against the Dakota Indians, and was special military agent at Fort Wadsworth, Dakota Territory.

Brown was married to Susan Freniere (ca.1816-1904), a member of the Sisseton tribe of Dakota Indians. She was the daughter of trader Narcisse Frenier and Abigail "Winona" Crawford. Her mother later remarried Victor Renville, and Susan was raised together with their son Gabriel Renville. The Browns had 12 children, including Samuel Jerome (see below) and Ellen, who married John Smith Allanson. Joseph R. Brown died in New York City on November 9, 1870, and was buried in Henderson, Minnesota.

### **Samuel Jerome Brown**

Samuel Jerome Brown, the son of Joseph R. and Susan Freniere Brown, was born near Lake Traverse in Iowa (later Dakota) Territory in what is now South Dakota on March 7, 1845(?). He was one-eighth Dakota Indian and was considered an official member of the Sisseton tribe. During the Dakota Conflict of 1862, along with other members of his family, he was taken captive and later released. He served as an interpreter and the superintendent of government scouts at Fort Wadsworth, Dakota Territory. In April, 1866, after learning that a "false alarm" of new Indian attacks had been dispatched to St. Paul, Brown rode 150 miles through a snowstorm in an attempt to intercept the message and prevent panic among the settlers in western Minnesota. The effects of the ride left him confined to a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

In subsequent years Brown was a teacher and lay missionary at the Episcopal mission at Crow Creek Agency, Dakota Territory; superintendent of the government industrial school at the Sisseton Agency; active in the campaign to win annuities for Indian scouts and in other efforts on behalf of the Sisseton and Wahpeton tribes; and editor of *Daybreak*, a publication devoted to the educational and religious interests of American Indians. He also was involved in business and real estate ventures and was a partner in Brown, Renville and Company, an agency for locating land on the Sisseton Reservation.

Brown was interested in the history of western Minnesota and Dakota Territory, especially in relation to the Dakota Conflict of 1862 and its aftermath. Toward the end of his life he wrote historical reminiscences and articles and engaged in correspondence with such historians as William Watts Folwell, Warren Upham, and M. P. Satterlee.

Samuel J. Brown and his wife, Phebe, had four children. He died in Browns Valley, Minnesota, on August 29, 1925.

#### **RELATED MATERIALS**

Two other collections of papers pertaining to Joseph R. Brown that are not included on the microfilm are cataloged separately: Items related to the Joseph R. Brown steam wagons, 1862-1936 (filed as P670); and Joseph R. Brown account book, 1857-1876, 1916 (filed as M102).

## ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPERS

The Joseph R. and Samuel J. Brown and Family Papers, which measure eight cubic feet and are divided into three series, and a set of processors' notes are reproduced on 30 microfilm reels:

Correspondence and Other Papers, undated, 1826, 1847-1927,

1948-1956 (6.6 cu. ft.), reels 1-25.

Financial Records, 1862-1916 (0.4 cu. ft.), reels 25-26.

Volumes, 1838-1908 (1.0 cu. ft.), reels 26-29.

Processors' notes (2 folders), reel 30.

A Reel Contents List enumerating the contents of each microfilm reel begins on page 12.

The loose manuscripts in the **correspondence and other papers** series are arranged and microfilmed in a single chronological sequence, as are those in the **financial records** series. Although many previously undated manuscripts were assigned dates during preparation of the papers for microfilming, some remain undated. Undated items in each series are filmed at the beginning of the series. Partially dated and questionably dated items generally, but not always, precede those that are fully dated.

Dates in brackets were supplied by the archivists who processed the papers and prepared them for microfilming. Although an effort was made to verify the dates of some items questionably or provisionally dated, it was not possible to do so in all cases. Therefore, all dates in brackets should be treated with caution. Caution should also be used with any unbracketed date written in a different hand on an otherwise undated document; these dates, whose sources are unknown, have not been verified.

Some exceptions have been made to a strict chronological arrangement. Whenever possible, enclosures are filed immediately after their covering letters rather than under their own dates. In some instances legal documents are filed under the date on which they were drawn and in other instances on the date when they were filed, and some financial records are filed under the earliest date in the document while others are filed under the latest date. On occasion certain groups of related papers -- such as those pertaining to particular topics or

events; items in the Dakota language and their English translations; and notes, drafts, and final versions of reminiscences, articles, and speeches -- are filed together under a single date or date span. These groups of papers may be identified by handwritten or typewritten targets.

Each of the five sets of **volumes** is arranged chronologically.

**Correspondence and Other Papers, undated and 1826, 1847-1927, 1948-1956. Reels 1-25.**

This series includes letters, notes for and drafts and final versions of historical reminiscences, articles, and speeches; financial records; newspaper clippings; photographs and other family memorabilia; plat maps; and other materials relating to Joseph R. Brown and Samuel J. Brown, the Dakota Indians, the business and real estate ventures of Joseph R. and Samuel J. Brown, and other members of the Brown family and related families.

Geographically the papers pertain mainly to the area of Browns Valley in Traverse County in what is now western Minnesota, and to Dakota Territory, especially Fort Wadsworth and the Sisseton Reservation in what is now South Dakota. Most of the papers in the series date from the years 1860-1925.

The papers reflect Joseph R. Brown's wide-ranging activities as a fur trader, Indian and special military agent, soldier, townsite and real estate developer, inventor, newspaper editor and publisher, politician, local government official, and legislator, as well as his relations with the Dakota Indians and other prominent pioneer families.

The papers also reflect Samuel J. Brown's lifelong interest in and involvement with Dakota Indians (he was one-eighth Dakota and was a member of the Sisseton tribe) as an interpreter, superintendent of government scouts, missionary school teacher and lay missionary, and Indian industrial school superintendent; editor of Indian-oriented publication; campaigner for annuities for Indian scouts and other benefits for the Sisseton and Wahpeton tribes; and memoirist and lay historian of the Dakota Conflict (1862-1865) and its aftermath; as well as his involvement in business and real estate ventures, some of the latter on reservation lands.

Information on the Dakota Indians is found in the undated section and throughout the series, much of it related to the Dakota Conflict of 1862 and its aftermath, the imprisonment of the Dakota and their removal to Dakota Territory, the service of Sisseton and Wahpeton scouts with the United States Army, attempts to win government annuities for the scouts, and the opening of the Sisseton Reservation to white settlement. Many aspects of Dakota life and culture are documented, including tribal government, education, religion, trade, annuities, and relations with white settlers and the United States government. Some of the materials are in the Dakota language; several are accompanied by English translations.

Correspondence of the Brown family and related families is also found throughout the series, including letters written by various members of the Brown, Freniere, Allanson, Rice, Hines, Parker, Robertson, and Carli families.

Selected List of Authors and Subjects, 1847-1916

The following selected list of authors and subjects in the correspondence and other papers series of the Joseph R. and Samuel J. Brown Papers was compiled during the processing of that collection prior to its integration into the consolidated collection that is reproduced on the microfilm. It omits references to items found throughout the series such as Brown family letters, business correspondence, and general information on the Dakota Indians. The data sheets unit of the processors' notes, which supplement this description of the papers, gives more detailed information (see page 9, below).

1847-1861

Subject:

J. R. Brown as justice of the  
peace, Crawford County,  
Wisconsin Territory

1862-1865

Authors:

Luxbury, A.  
Osborn, David L.  
Reed, John A.  
Rice, Charles S.  
Riggs, Stephen R.  
Rose, Robert H.  
Sibley, Henry H.  
Wilkins, Martin G.  
Williamson, John P.

Subjects:

Sibley Expedition  
J. R. Brown as superintendent of  
the Indian prison at Mankato,  
1862-1863  
Fort Wadsworth, Dakota Territory  
Brown, Searles & Downie  
Steam wagon

1866-1870

Authors:

Corse, John M.  
Crawford, Charles  
Davy, Capt. P. B.  
Reed, John A.  
Rose, Robert H.  
Smoot, Samuel S.  
Thompson, Benjamin  
Wilkins, Martin G.

Subjects:

Census of Lake Traverse Indians,  
1867  
J. R. Brown & Sons  
Steam wagon  
International Steam Transportation Co.  
Death of J. R. Brown, Nov. 9, 1870

1871-1875

Authors:

Anderson, Samuel G.  
Combs, William S.  
Gilfillan, James  
Mix, Edward M.  
Reed, John A.

Selected List of Authors and Subjects, 1847-1916 (cont.)1871-1875 (cont.)

## Authors: (cont.)

Shillock, Daniel G.  
Smoot, Samuel S.  
Welles, Henry T.  
Wilkins, Martin G.

## Subjects:

J. R. Brown estate  
Steam wagon  
Indian certificates  
Sioux Half-breed Scrip

1876-1880

## Authors:

Combs, William S.  
Donnelly, Ignatius  
Hare, Bishop W. H.  
Sanborn, John B.  
Steers, Walter  
Whipple, Bishop Henry B.

## Subjects:

S. J. Brown pension  
Crow Creek Agency (Lower Camp  
School; S. J. Brown, instructor)  
Missionary work with Dakota

1881-1885

## Authors:

Becker, George L.  
Marshall, William R.  
Nelson, Knute  
Parker, Melvin W.  
Pittman, G. W. M.  
Sanborn, John B.  
Sibley, Henry H.  
Trott, Hermann  
Waldron, John M.

1881-1885 (cont.)

## Subjects:

Missionaries  
S. J. Brown pension  
Sioux Half-breed Scrip  
Democratic Party  
Thompson, Benjamin

1886-1890

## Authors:

King, Charles and William B.  
Mix, Edward M.  
Rice, Edmund  
Sanborn, John B.  
Trott, Hermann  
Williams, E. S.

## Subjects:

S. J. Brown pension  
Democratic Party  
Sisseton Agency - government school

1891-1895

## Authors:

Holcombe, Return I.  
Johnson, Richard W.  
Marshall, William R.  
Sanborn, John B.

## Subjects:

Opening of Sisseton Reservation  
for settlement  
Brown, Renville & Co.  
Renville, Gabriel  
Democratic Party  
Birch Coulie monument

Selected List of Authors and Subjects, 1847-1916 (cont.)

1896-1900

Authors:

Eddy, Frank M.  
Holcombe, Return I.  
Kyle, James H.  
Maxwell, C. A.  
Nelson, Knute  
Pettigrew, R. F.  
Sanborn, John B.

Subjects:

S. J. Brown pension  
Sisseton and Wahpeton Business  
Committee  
Indian Appropriations Act

1901-1905

Authors:

Chase, George S.  
Clapp, Moses E.  
Holcombe, Return I.  
Maxwell, C. A.  
Volstead, Andrew J.

Subjects:

S. J. Brown pension  
Indian Appropriations Act  
Thomas Freniere estate  
Brown family history  
Sisseton and Wahpeton claims case  
Renville, Gabriel  
Land patents for Indian allotments

1906-1910

Authors:

Folwell, William W.  
Clapp, Moses E.

1906-1910 (cont.)

Subjects:

Susan F. Brown estate  
Sisseton and Wahpeton claims case  
Moscow Expedition, 1863  
J. R. Brown monument, Henderson,  
Minn.  
Death of Phoebe Robinson Brown  
(Mrs. Samuel J.)

1911-1916

Authors:

Folwell, William W.  
Satterlee, M. P.  
Upham, Warren

Subjects:

Minnesota - history  
Traverse County - history

**Financial Records, 1862-1916. Reels 25-26.**

Included in this series are invoices, receipts, deeds, and dunning letters related to the steam wagon invented by Joseph R. Brown, J. R. Brown and Company, and Samuel J. Brown's business and personal financial dealings. A separate folder contains waybills, 1868-1905, of Jas. J. Hill and Company, First Division St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company, Great Northern Railway Company, and Great Northern Express Company.

**Volumes, 1838-1908. Reels 26-29.**

This series comprises five sub-series: miscellaneous volumes (vols. 1-4, 1838-1884); Samuel J. Brown letterbooks (vols. 5-13, 1899-1908); Joseph R. and Samuel J. Brown account books (vols. 14-21, 1849-1893); pocket account books (vols. 22-27, 1866-1868, 1882); and Samuel J. Brown memo books (vols. 28-37, 1865-1896). The miscellaneous volumes consist of Joseph R. Brown's justice of the peace docket, Crawford County (after 1840 St. Croix County), Wisconsin Territory, 1838-1841; Samuel J. Brown's pocket diary, written while he was a scout and interpreter at Fort Wadsworth, Dakota Territory, 1865; a Joseph R. Brown letterbook, containing letterpress copies of letters sent, 1865-1866, mostly from Fort Wadsworth; and the constitution of the Sisseton and Wahpeton nation, 1884(?), written mostly in the Dakota language. A Volume List giving the volumes' titles and dates precedes the volumes on reels 26-29 and is incorporated into the Reel Contents List on pages 12-14, below.

**Processors' Notes. Reel 30.**

For additional information on topics dealt with in the Brown Papers and authors represented in the collection, researchers should consult the processors' notes. They consist of two units: 1) "data sheets", created during the processing of the Joseph R. and Samuel J. Brown Papers to supplement the inventory to that collection; and 2) the inventory to the Joseph R. Brown and Family Papers. These two collections are now integrated into the single, consolidated collection that is reproduced on the microfilm.

A note to researchers regarding use of the processors' notes is filmed at the beginning of reel 30.

## THE MICROFILM

Introductory "flash" targets, sometimes followed by lists, identify the various units of the collection on the microfilm. Folder titles have been filmed as targets for the correspondence and financial records series. A running title beneath each film frame gives the title and publisher of the microfilm and the frame number. Targets may identify enclosures, severely defective pages, incomplete items, and materials filmed at reduction ratios other than the standard 14-to-1.

While the majority of the Brown papers are generally legible and in good physical condition, many are not. Some materials are worn and dirty, and text may be incomplete due to tears. Some items may be difficult to read due to faint, faded, smeared, or smudged pencil and ink or stains caused by pressure-sensitive tape; or because typed originals or carbon copies are faint or "fuzzy". The passage of time has, in some cases, caused ink to bleed through the paper and the color of paper to darken. Some of Samuel Brown's handwritten notes and drafts, copies of letters, and other items are written in pencil on poor quality, discolored, or tan-colored paper, resulting in poor contrast between the colors of the text and the paper, which makes them especially difficult to reproduce. Finally, as a result of correspondents' efforts to conserve paper, some letters exhibit cross-writing (handwriting across the initial text on a page at right angles to it) and extremely small handwriting in the margins.

Two techniques have been used in an effort to increase the legibility of certain items on the microfilm. Sometimes a page is filmed more than once at different camera settings, with a target identifying the intentional duplicate exposure. In a few instances, photocopies have been filmed in place of faded, discolored, or otherwise defective documents when the photocopies produced superior film images.

Samuel Brown's notes and drafts present other problems in addition to those associated with being difficult to read: some items not identified on the microfilm as such may be incomplete; the pages of some items may not be in correct order, because it was not always possible to determine their proper sequence; and the pages of some items found--and filmed--together may not belong together.

In citing materials from this microfilm edition, include the following information:

A letter

[Author] to [recipient], date of letter, reel number, frame number. Joseph R. and Samuel J. Brown and Family Papers. Microfilm edition. Minnesota Historical Society.

A volume

Volume number, volume title, volume date(s), reel number, frame number. Joseph R. and Samuel J. Brown and Family Papers. Microfilm edition. Minnesota Historical Society.

## REEL CONTENTS LIST

### Correspondence and Others Papers, undated and 1826, 1847-1927, 1948-1956

- Reel 1. Undated; 1826, 1847-1859.
- Reel 2. 1860-1863.
- Reel 3. 1864-1865.
- Reel 4. 1866-1867.
- Reel 5. Lake Traverse Indian Census, October 1867; 1868 - August 1869.
- Reel 6. September 1869 - 1870.
- Reel 7. 1871 - March 1872.
- Reel 8. April 1872 - September 1873.
- Reel 9. October 1873 - June 1875.
- Reel 10. July 1875 - 1878.
- Reel 11. 1879 - August 1881.
- Reel 12. September 1881 - August 1883.
- Reel 13. September 1883 - May 1885.
- Reel 14. June 1885 - 1887.
- Reel 15. 1888-1889.
- Reel 16. Samuel J. Brown's reminiscence of the Dakota Conflict, [ca. 1890s];  
1890 - May 1891.
- Reel 17. June 1891 - May 1893.
- Reel 18. June 1893 - May 15, 1896.
- Reel 19. May 16, 1896 - 1898.

**Correspondence and Others Papers, undated and 1826, 1847-1927, 1948-1956 (cont.)**

Reel 20. 1899 - August 1901.

Reel 21. September 1901 - 1903.

Reel 22. 1904-1905.

Reel 23. 1906-1911.

Reel 24. 1912-1918.

Reel 25. 1919-1927; 1948-1956.

**Financial Records, 1862-1916**

Reel 25. Undated; 1862-1882.  
(cont.)

Reel 26. 1883-1916.

**Volumes, 1838-1908**

Miscellaneous Volumes, 1838-1884

Reel 26. Volume 1. Joseph R. Brown justice of the peace docket,  
(cont.) 1838-1841, and financial records, ca.1852-1853.  
Volume 2. Samuel J. Brown pocket diary, May-July 1865.  
Volume 3. Joseph R. Brown letterpress book, 1865-1866.

Reel 27. Volume 4. Constitution of the Sisseton and Wahpeton Nation, 1884(?).

Samuel J. Brown Letterbooks, 1899-1908

Volume 5. 1899.  
Volume 6. September 16 - October 9, 1902.  
Volume 7. February 23 - June 11, 1903.  
Volume 8. ca.May 8 - July 17, 1903.  
Volume 9. July 24 - October 3, 1903.  
Volume 10. October 14 - November 11, 1903.  
Volume 11. November 24 - December 11, 1903.  
Volume 12. December 20, 1903 - January 6, 1904.  
Volume 13. ca.October 20, 1907 - March 1, 1908.

**Volumes, 1838-1908 (cont.)**

Joseph R. and Samuel J. Brown Account Books, 1849-1893

- Reel 27. Volume 14. Joseph R. Brown journal, 1849-1865.  
(cont.) Volume 15. Account book, 1864-1867.  
Volume 16. Account book, 1867-1881.
- Reel 28. Volume 17. Joseph R. Brown & Sons account book, ca.1870-1871,  
and private account book of S. J. Brown, ca.1872-1875:  
Volume 18. Samuel J. Brown account book, 1878-1887.  
Volume 19. Samuel J. Brown account book, 1878-1914.  
Volume 20. "Samuel J. Brown, Crow Creek Agency, D.T.," account book,  
ca.1879-1881.  
Volume 21. Samuel J. Brown account book, ca.1885-1893.

Pocket Account Books, 1866-1868, 1882

- Volume 22. 1866.  
Volume 23. 1867.  
Volume 24. November-December 1867.
- Reel 29. Volume 25. 1868.  
Volume 26. ca.January-February 1868.  
Volume 27. 1882.

Samuel J. Brown Pocket Memo Books, 1865-1896

- Volume 28. 1865-1867.  
Volume 29. 1874.  
Volume 30. 1875.  
Volume 31. 1880.  
Volume 32. 1881.  
Volume 33. 1889.  
Volume 34. 1889.  
Volume 35. 1889.  
Volume 36. 1891.  
Volume 37. 1896.

Reel 30.

**Processors' Notes.**