
Guide to the

BROWN FAMILY COLLECTION 1893-1982

8 linear inches

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Collection Number: 68

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Biographical Sketch

Otis and Netta Brown

Otis Brown, the City of Irving's co-founder, was born in Ohio in 1879. In 1902, he took a job on a Rock Island Railway survey crew. The crew worked in Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas. In the fall of 1902, the crew, headed by J. O. Schulze, was assigned to survey a 10-mile section between Dallas and Fort Worth. While working the survey, Schulze suggested to Brown that they start a town along the line.

The crew boarded on the ranch of Henry Britain, which was located about eight miles west of downtown Dallas. Schulze and Brown purchased 80 acres of land from Britain on which to establish their town. The two men spent most of 1903 preparing the town site by cutting trees and blasting stumps on the heavily wooded tract.

During this time, Brown met Netta Barcus, who was a teacher at the nearby Kit community school. Netta Barcus, born in 1880, was the daughter of W. F. Barcus and Katy Barcus. The Barcus family moved to the Western Heights section of Dallas in 1886. W. F. Barcus came to Dallas to serve as the editor of The Christian Messenger. In 1890, he opened a bookstore in downtown Dallas. In 1904, he was elected a Dallas County Commissioner. Otis Brown and Netta Barcus were married in the summer of 1903. The young couple built the first house in the soon-to-be launched town of Irving.

On December 19, 1903, Brown and Schulze held a lot auction on their town site. That day approximately 40 town lots were sold. At the time, the only structures in the town were the almost completed railroad depot and Otis and Netta Brown's new house.

Over the years, Otis and Netta Brown had five sons, and Otis Brown had a wide range of employment. He sold real estate in Irving and the surrounding area, worked as a farmer, bred cattle, owned a dairy farm, and built the town's first golf course. In 1914, he was elected Irving's first mayor.

The Browns celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary and the 50th anniversary of the founding of Irving in 1953. Netta Brown died at the age of 77 on April 4, 1958. Otis Brown died three months later on June 28, 1958, at the age of 78.

Lynn Brown and Kay Brown

Irving Lynn Brown, born June 17, 1914, was the youngest son of Otis and Netta Brown. Lynn Brown attended Irving schools, graduating from Irving High School in 1931. After high school, he spent several years working, then enrolled in the University of Texas, from which he graduated with a degree in civil engineering in 1941. He worked for a brief time for the United States Geological Survey before joining the U.S. Navy during WWII.

After the war, Brown returned to Irving and began work with his brother, Stanley, as Brown and Brown, Architect and Engineer. In 1949, he went into business for himself designing residential subdivisions, streets, and water and sewer systems.

In 1948, Lynn Brown married Mary Catherine (Kay) Fakes of Dallas. She was born in 1916 and received a degree in commercial art from SMU. For a time, she worked as a clothes designer for Red Fox Athletic Clothing and for Neiman Marcus. The couple made their home in Irving, where they raised their daughter. The Browns were heavily involved in community activities.

Lynn Brown was elected mayor of Irving in 1959. He served four consecutive two-year terms, 1959-1967. The 1950s and 1960s were a time of rapid growth in American suburbs, and Irving, during part of this time, was considered the fastest growing city in Texas. In addition to his service as mayor, Lynn Brown also served on the school board, and was president of the local Chamber of Commerce, the Dallas County Municipal League, and the Irving Symphony Orchestra.

In 1988, the Browns moved to Virginia to be closer to their daughter. Lynn Brown died in 1990. Kay Brown died in 2003 at the age of 86.

Sources:

Irving Archives Collection 9: Otis and Netta Brown Papers

Irving Archives Collection 13: Lynn and Kay Brown Scrapbooks

Oral History Interview conducted by Estelle Bates with Stanley, John, and Lynn Brown, 1975. Irving Archives, Oral History Collection.

Rice, Joseph. *Irving: A Texas Odyssey*. Chatsworth, California: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1989.

Scope and Content

The Brown Family Collection is made up of material relating to Otis and Netta Brown and Lynn and Kay Brown and their lives in Irving. Otis Brown was Irving's co-founder and its first mayor. Lynn Brown was his youngest son and served as Irving's mayor from 1959-1967. The collection provides insight into the lives of both families and their involvement in the life of the city of Irving at its agricultural beginning and during its rapid expansion as part of the post-WWII suburban growth. The collection is arranged in eight

series and housed in one manuscript box, one ½-size manuscript box, and an oversize folder.

Series I is made up of correspondence to and from Otis and Netta Brown and Lynn and Kay Brown. Of particular interest are: a letter from Otis Brown to Mrs. Glenn Davies, owner of the local newspaper, in which Brown relates the story of the founding of the city, 1944; a letter from R. M. Hudson, editor of Irving's first newspaper, and his wife Mary to the Browns, 1949; Netta Brown's hand-written recollection of her family's early days in Dallas in the late 1880s; a hand-written copy of Netta Brown's A History of Early Irving, 1949; and a photocopy of an invitation to Lynn and Kay Brown to attend the luncheon for President John Kennedy on the day he was assassinated.

Series II consists of real estate records relating to Otis Brown's land sales. Included is an abstract tracing the ownership of the land on which Irving was established from the original head-right up to 1912.

Series III is made up of personal documents relating to the activities of both Brown families. Some of the notable items are two Red Cross certificates awarded to Netta Brown for service during WWI, c. 1919, and for attending a Red Cross training class, 1920; a promotional tri-fold produced by the Irving Board of Trade promoting the advantages of farming in Irving, 1904; Lynn Brown campaign material, 1959 and 1961; a radio script from "The Last Call" a program that originated from Irving Lanes bowling alley on which Lynn Brown was a guest, 1961.

Series IV consists of documents relating to City of Irving events. This series includes material on the city's 75th anniversary celebration, 1978, and a copy of the 1982 "State of the City Address." Also included is a copy of the program from the "State of the City Address" that is signed by six previous mayors.

Series V is made up of 36 photographs and seven negatives. The photos pertain primarily to Lynn Brown's terms as mayor, 1960s. Also included are photos of Otis and Netta Brown and their family on their 50th wedding anniversary, 1953. Four of the negatives in the collection are of an airplane that was forced into an emergency landing in a field near Irving in 1916. All the photos and negatives have been digitized.

Series VI consists of publications. Most of the material is newspaper articles relating to Lynn Brown as mayor and his family, 1960s. Due to their poor condition, the articles were photocopied and the originals discarded. Of particular interest is the July 2, 1904, issue of the Irving Index announcing that the post office was moving from Kit to Irving. Also in the series are three magazines containing articles on Irving subjects: one discusses Frito-Lay Corp. opening a plant in Irving, 1967; one contains an article about the construction of a Southwestern States Telephone Company building in Irving, 1960; and the third is an article from Architectural Forum discussing the ugliness of rapidly expanding suburbs and using Irving as the prime example, 1960.

Series VII is made up of artifacts. Included in the series are decals and bumper stickers promoting the city's 1964 Golden Anniversary celebration. The event was the 50th anniversary of the city's incorporation in 1914. Also included is a Southwest Bank and Trust Company calendar with a picture of the 1975 Irving High School Football team on it, 1975-76.

Provenance Statement

The Brown Family Collection was donated to the Irving Public Library by Kay Brown during the 1970s. The collection was later transferred to the Irving Archives. Prior to its donation to the library the material was in the possession of Lynn and Kay Brown.

Literary Rights Statement

Permission to publish from the Brown Family Collection must be obtained from the Irving Archives, Irving Public Library.

Note to Researcher

See also:

For more information on the Brown family:

Collection 4 City of Irving, Office of the Mayor, Lynn Brown Collection, Irving Archives;

Collection 9 The Otis and Netta Brown Papers, Irving Archives;

Collection 13 Lynn and Catherine Brown Scrapbooks, Irving Archives.

Container List

Series I. Correspondence, 1940s-1960s

Box 1

Folder

1 Correspondence, 1944 and 1949

Contains a letter written by Otis Brown to Mrs. Glenn Davies of the Irving News in which Mr. Brown details the founding of the town of Irving in 1903. The file also contains a letter from R. M. Hudson, the editor of Irving's first newspaper from 1908-1915, and his wife Mary to Otis and Netta Brown thanking them for their latest correspondence, Feb. 18, 1949, attached is a newspaper picture of the Hudsons on their 64th wedding anniversary.

2 Correspondence, 1949, 1951, and n.d.

Contains Netta Browns hand-written recollections of her family's move to Dallas in 1888 and their early days in the city, n.d.; and letters from an F. Wade to Netta Brown inquiring about the early history of northwest Dallas County, 1951. The file also contains two hand-written copies of Netta Brown's History of Early Irving and the final printed copy, 1949.

3 Correspondence, 1960-1963

Contains a letter to Kay Brown thanking her for judging a baking contest, 1960; a letter from Lone Star Gas Company manager, Joe Glover, congratulating Lynn Brown on his re-election as mayor, 1961; photocopies of the invitation asking the Browns to attend the luncheon at the Trade Mart for President John Kennedy, Nov. 22, 1963; a photocopy of a letter on behalf of Mrs. Kennedy thanking the Browns for their letter of condolence, Nov. 22, 1963; a photocopy of a letter to Mayor Brown from President Lyndon Johnson thanking him for his good wishes, Dec. 3, 1963. Also included is a letter to the mayor about evening postal service in Irving; an invitation to a banquet on the occasion of the Abbatial Benediction of

Reverend Anselm Nagy, 1964; and a letter from The Young Dancers Studio of Ballet to the mayor regarding a water shortage, 1966.

Series II. Real Estate Records, 1893-1912

Box 1

Folder

4 Abstract of Title, 1912

Contains: "Abstract of Title to Part of Town of Irving" for Otis Brown, May 1912. This abstract details the land transactions in the Bennett Survey from the time of its head-right through 1912. Part of this survey is the land that eventually became the original town site of Irving.

5 Abstract of Title, 1927

Contains: "Abstract of Title to Lots 1-2-3, Block 2, Brown's 1st Addition to Town of Irving," 1927.

6 Deeds, 1893, 1895, 1909, and 1912

Deed in which W. A. J. Mitchell buys 160 acres from Mrs. E. A. Cameron, 1893; Release of Lien from Mrs. E. A. Cameron to W. A. J. Mitchell, 1895; deed in which Otis Brown buys three acres from D. E. and Clara Britain, 1909; map of Otis Brown's Third Addition, March 1912.

Series III. Personal and Political Material, 1904-1966

7 Certificates and Flier, 1904, 1919, and 1920

Contains two American Red Cross certificates awarded to Netta Brown; one is in recognition of her service during WWI, n.d., and the other is for completion of the Home Hygiene and Care of the Sick course, 1920. The file also contains a promotional flier from the Irving Board of Trade extolling the virtues of the farm land in Irving, c. 1904.

8 Résumé, Campaign Material, etc., 1916-1985

Photocopy of the newspaper article describing Virginia Schulze's first Valentine tea, 1914; photocopy of the minutes of the Irving City Commission's meetings May, July, and August 1914; Kodak film mailing envelope, 1916; Lynn Brown's résumé at the time of his graduation from college, June 1941; a Lynn Brown campaign card, 1959; a Brown campaign flier, c. 1961; radio script from "The Last Call Show," Sept. 9, 1961; Irving Public Library note card, c. 1962; map of Irving's attempted annexation of the Trinity River bottoms, 1962; and a city proclamation recognizing Toastmistress Day.

Series III. Personal and Political Material, 1904-1966

Box 1

Folder

8 April 18, 1966; city statistics sheet, 1966; and a DFW continued airport noise contour map, 1985.

Series IV. City Events

9 Diamond Jubilee Celebration, 1978

Contains material relating to the City of Irving's 75th anniversary celebration. The bulk of the material is concerned with organizing an auction of items to represent the original lot auction held on the day of the city's founding.

10 State of the City Address, 1982

Contains invitations to the address; a program signed by six previous Irving mayors; and a typescript of the address.

Series V. Photographs and Negatives, 1916-1967 (bulk 1960s)

11-12 Photos and Negatives, 1916-1960s

There are 36 photos in the collection. The bulk of the photos are of Mayor Lynn Brown performing various mayoral duties, 1959-1967; there are four photos taken at Otis and Netta Brown's 50th wedding anniversary, 1953; there are five photos of Lynn Brown's elementary school classes, 1920s; one of the naval ship the U.S.S. Constitution, 1931; and one of the Trinity River flood of 1908. Also included are six 8" x 10" photos of the groundbreaking for a building on the Ling Tempco Vaught grounds. In the photo are Lynn Brown, the mayor of Irving; Curt Waggoner, the mayor of Grand Prairie; and Tom Vandergriff, the mayor of Arlington, mid-1960s.

The series also contains seven negatives. Four of them are of a biplane that landed in a field in the Irving area in 1916; one is of a parade in downtown Dallas, c. 1910; one is of three people in front of Lucas's store on Main St. in Irving, c. 1920; and one is of three boys sitting on the steps of a porch, c. 1910.

Series VI. Publications, 1904-1970s

Box 2

Folder

1 Magazines, 1960, 1961, 1967

The file contains three magazines: The News, which was the Southwestern States Telephone Co. magazine, March 1960; Architectural Forum, January 1961; and Bandwagon, the company magazine of Frito-Lay, Jan.-Feb. 1967. The file also contains a page from the Bulletin Columbus Dental Society, June 1949.

2 Newspaper Clippings, 1950s

Contains photocopies of newspaper clippings relating, primarily, to Lynn Brown and Kay Brown and the Brown family. Included is the 50th wedding anniversary notice for Otis and Netta Brown, 1953.

3 Newspaper Clippings, 1960s

Contains photocopies of newspaper clippings relating to Lynn and Kay Brown.

4 Newspaper Clippings, 1950s-1960s

This file contains photocopies of loose scrapbook pages that held newspaper clippings about Lynn Brown and his activities as mayor. Due to their acidic nature, the original pages were photocopied and then discarded.

5 Newspaper Clippings, 1970s and undated

Contains photocopies of newspaper articles relating to the activities of Lynn and Kay Brown. Also included are photocopies of undated newspaper articles. These articles seem to span the 1950s-1970s, with the bulk concerning the mayoral activities of Lynn Brown during the 1960s.

Oversize folder 68-01: Newspapers, 1904, 1949, 1956, 1957, and 1961

Contains the July 2, 1904, edition of the Irving Index; 68-01 the December 2, 1949, issue of the Irving News-Record; the August 5, 1956, issue of The Irving News; a shopper insert from August 2, 1956; The Irving Shopping News, date unknown, 1956; four pages of the eight-page issue of The Irving Herald, January 12, 1957; and the front page of the Six Flags Gazette, Oct. 22-28, 1961. Also included in the file folder is a large 1975-76 calendar with a picture of the Irving High School football team on it and two large Irving Golden anniversary decals, 1964.

Series VII. Artifacts, 1964 and 1975

Folder

6 Artifacts, 1964 and 1975

Contains decals and bumper stickers promoting the Irving Golden Year Festival, April 11-18, 1964. Also included is a 1975-76 Southwest Bank calendar with a photo of the 1975 Irving High School football team on it (the calendar is in Oversize Folder 68-01 in Newspaper Cabinet Drawer 8).