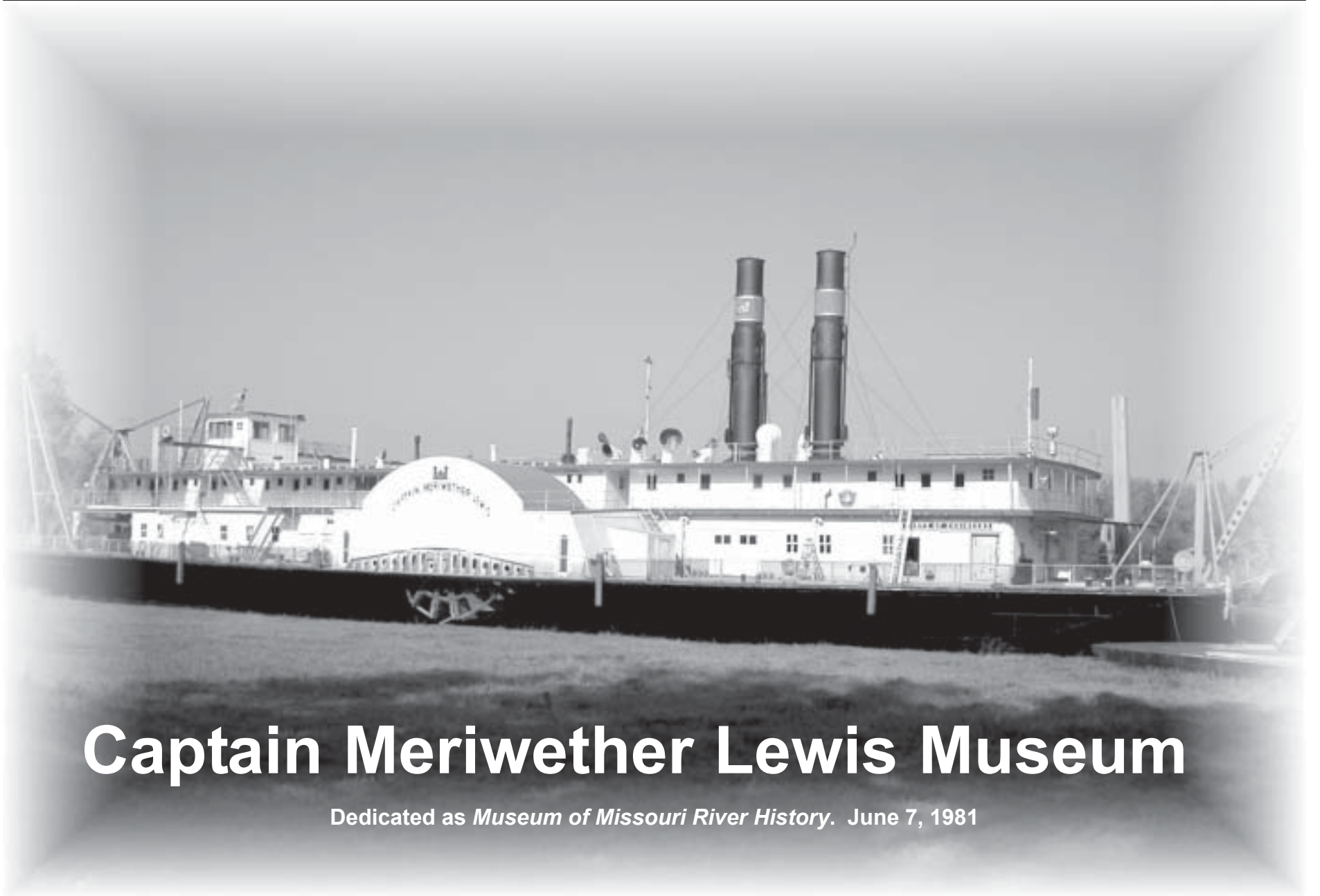


# BROWNVILLE'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

1854 - 2004

The Village of Firsts Remains on the Frontier Edge



## Captain Meriwether Lewis Museum

Dedicated as *Museum of Missouri River History*. June 7, 1981

The following article was printed in *The Brownville Banner* - 1988

### BROWNVILLE, NEBRASKA TERRITORY HISTORY

Long before Richard Brown crossed the Missouri River to establish his claim cabin on August 29, 1854, Indians of the OTO and Omaha tribes lived here. Fifty years before, Meriwether Lewis and Captain Clark had passed this site. Brown staked out 320 acres as allowed by the Federal Townsites Act, and named the infant town Brownville. Brown was the first settler in Forney County. This name was changed to Nemaha.

The small settlement remained an obscure trading post. One of the very early citizens, writing home had said of Brownville, "... it contains few women and no ladies." But that was quick to change when in 1858 the Brownville House was built, and John L. Carson started a private banking business with his partner B.F. Lushbaugh.

The first Land Office in Nebraska was opened in Brownville on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1857 for land pre-emption. Settlers with wives and children poured into Brownville to register their claims to land. Registrar, Colonel George Nixon in 1863 registered the first land claims under the new Homestead Act to Daniel Freeman. Freeman was the first person in the United States to file under this Act of Congress. It happened in Brownville! There were 333 filings for 18,000 acres during the first month of business.

Brownville thrived and prospered. Success was to be found everywhere. Robert W. Furnas, who had arrived in Brownville with 18¢ in his pocket, was elected the third Governor of the State of Nebraska. Thomas W. Tipton defeated no less a figure than J. Sterling Morton in a race for the United States Senate, and served until 1875.

With nine lawyers and eight doctors, a clothing store, a milliner-dressmaker, drug store, boot and shoemaker, forty to fifty steamboats still regularly plying the Missouri River, Brownville's population by 1870 had exploded to 1,305 persons.

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Editor, Stephen Hassler

**LOG CABIN HOMES  
FILLED MOST NEEDS;  
HISTORIAN NOTES UTILITY**

(Article taken from *The Bulletin of the Brownville Historical Society*, Brownville, Nebraska, Volume 8, Number 3, September, 1964)

For several years the homes of Brownville were constructed of logs, but with the establishment of steam saw mills, frame construction was used more and more. A log cabin built in 1855, superior in many ways to the majority in the locality, was described as follows: The main room was 14 x 18 with a lean-to kitchen and a loft. A ladder served as a stairway to the loft. A fireplace made of rough stones and plastered with clay was at one end of the room. The walls were covered with newspaper secured in place by tacks driven through bright, one inch squares of red flannel.

A big four-poster cord bedstead stood in one corner with a grass tick covered with a featherbed, and this covered with a gaily colored counterpane or patchwork quilt. A little stool stood near to assist one to scramble to the top of the bed. Underneath the four-poster was a trundle bed for the children or grown-ups if company happened to come.

The floors were usually covered with gunny-sacks and slough grass for carpets. The cook stove was the main source of heat during the winter.

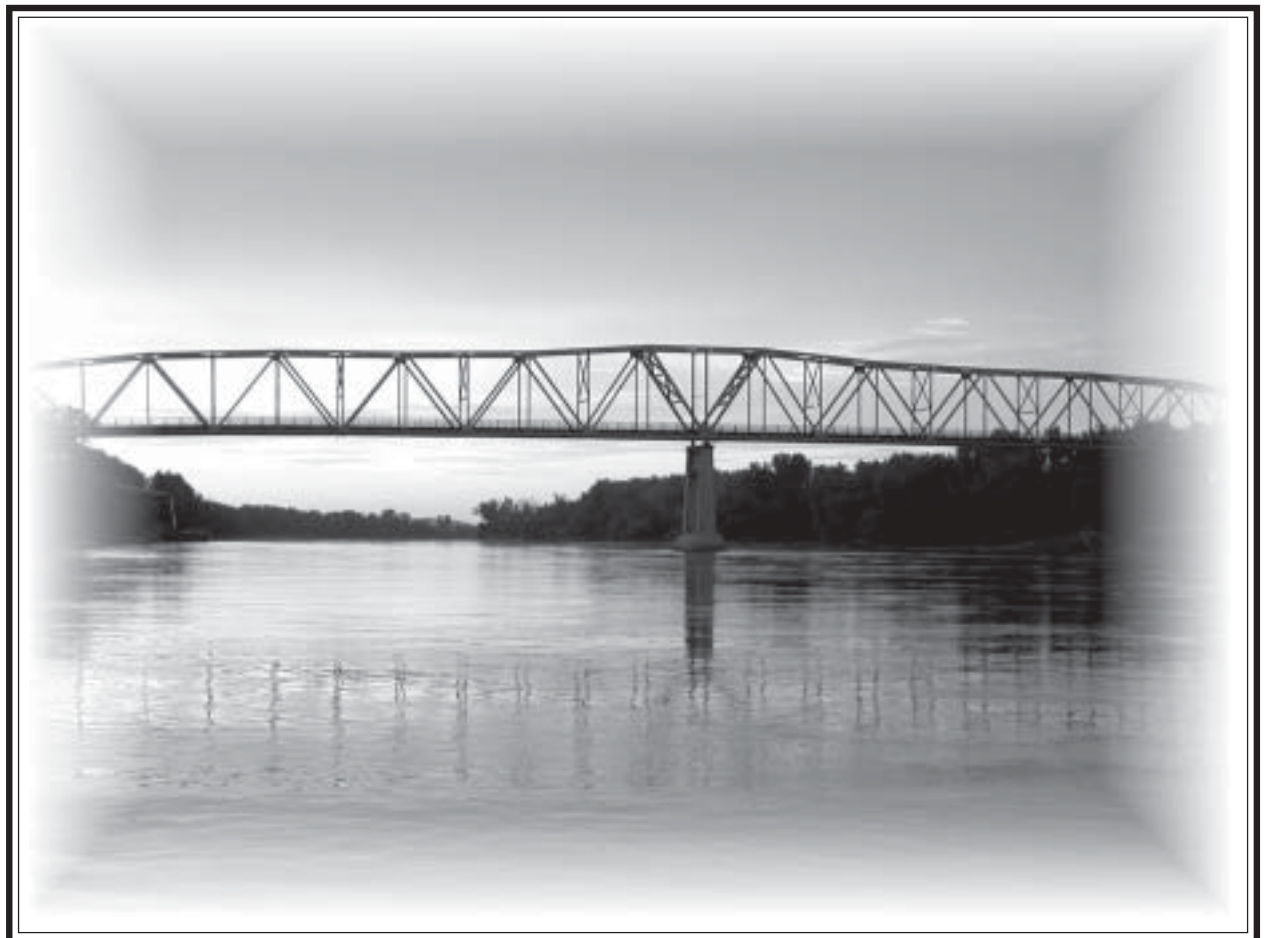
The kitchen was a very attractive place, with stove and other conveniences. The walls were hung with strings of red peppers, mangoes, popcorn and seed corn tied with shucks and hung with wooden pegs. Gourds were used for dippers, and some with holes near the handle held rice, dried corn

and other necessities. A grease lamp or candle gave light by which to work in the evening.

In the yard was a well with long wooden sweep

from which hung the bucket. Near the well was the split log watering trough. Large iron or copper kettles which were used in making hominy or soap, stood nearby.

Hubert Garret, *A History of Brownville, Nebraska*.



Patterned after the South Omaha Bridge, it is now on the historic register of historic structures.

Reprinted from the  
Nebraska Advertiser  
July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1856

**FOURTH OF JULY**

The Fourth of July passed off in the happiest manner. The attendance from our own and adjoining counties of this Territory was large. Good feeling, sociability, harmony and a "good time in general" was the order of the day. The public exercises were creditable indeed. The vocal music, under the supervision of Captain Thurber and Lady, was as fine as any we ever listened to. The Declaration of Independence was read by Mr. Lake in a clear, audible, and impressive manner. In regard to the Dinner, all that is necessary for us to say is that "Uncle Ben White" presided over getting up and arranging the edibles. All delicacies and substantial of the season weighed down the tables: Buffalo meat, Venison, Roast Sheep and Pigs, and Barbecued Ox, enough to have fed the whole territory. After "doing justice to the tables" an hour passed agreeable in delivering sentiments and responses. It was "good to be here."



Second Annual Fourth of July Parade

**Cruise the River of Lewis & Clark**

River Adventures

Dinner Buffets

Murder Mysteries

Captain's Luncheons

Charter Cruises

private parties  
business meetings  
weddings  
school trips

*Ride the Spirit of Brownville*



and view the  
Lewis & Clark Campsite of  
July, 1804.

402-825-6441

River Cruises, Box 96, Brownville, Nebraska 68321



**HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO REFURBISH  
SIGNS OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

(Article taken from *The Bulletin of the Brownville Historical Society*, Brownville, Nebraska, Volume 8, Number 3, September, 1964)

The pink signs marking the sites of historical interest in the Village are being repainted under the direction of J.R. Childers. Adding an interesting note to the Brownville scene, they are also a means of telling some of the facts that make the old town so appealing.

When they were first erected several years ago, visitors often stopped to read the placards on them which gave additional information. Years of sun, wind, and rain have faded the lettering, some signs have been broken, and placards have disappeared.

At the August meeting, the Board of Directors decided to have the signs renewed in order to better inform visitors of Brownville's historic past. Mr. John Rippey is preparing plastic placards which will be much more durable than the original cardboard sheets.



**Pride of America**

A recent bronze creation by local artist and sculptor, Tom Palmerton.



**The Spirit of Brownville with a tour group in May, 2004.**

**Our Romance With The River**

From an article by Jane Smith, Copyright 1997.

Our romance with the river... and each other...began on July 4, 1957. We had our first date on that evening... and on it we discussed the fact that we had been separately to Brownville earlier in the day for the first special event held by the newly formed *Brownville Historical Society*. Newspaper accounts of that day said that 10,000 people showed up to tour the Captain Meriwether Lewis river boat. So as we danced and watched fireworks, we talked about Brownville and the river. Many years later, we are still talking about Brownville and the river. The river truly does "get into your blood."

We were married in 1961. On our honeymoon, we looked at a river boat in Omaha that might be for sale and at the hulk of one beached in a corn field. At that time, Randel was a bank examiner and I was the manager of the Auburn Chamber of Commerce. We moved into an old brick house high on a Brownville hill. We could look down and see the river. Every time we saw a tow boat coming up the river, we would race down to see it pass. Even though our fathers were both farmers and our acquaintance with the Missouri River was minimal, we were both smitten with it.

Randel became more and more wrapped up in the idea of a Brownville boat, and convinced Bob and Melva

Sage to participate. The four of us spent many weekends traveling over the Mid West looking at boats that might be for sale.

Eventually, we purchased what became the Belle of Brownville in Houston, Texas. It took six weeks to bring her through the Intercoastal waterway, across the Gulf of Mexico, up the Mississippi, and up the Missouri to Brownville. We were both working full time, but we got to spend two weeks on the upbound odyssey. They were two of the most memorial weeks of our lives. The boat didn't have a generator, so we cooked on a charcoal grill and tied our clothes on a line and drug them through the river behind us to wash them. We jumped into the river with a bar of soap in the evenings.

We spent the next 27 years running the Belle, first at Brownville, then at Bellevue, and then in Omaha.

In 1981 we added the 150 passenger *Spirit of Brownville* to our fleet. The addition of the Spirit enabled us to keep an excursion boat on the river at Brownville, our first dream, and run the Belle in the metropolitan Omaha area where a larger population provided greater financial return.

Our romance with the river and with the Boats has been a central focus of our lives. But as the writer of Ecclesiastes says, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity...." Our romance with the river will continue, but at a more mellow pace.



**BROWNVILLE LYCEUM**

Future home of a Brownville restaurant, providing daily specials, sandwiches, coffees, wines, plus atmosphere within a space of wall-to-wall books of local and regional interest. Books will be provided by the self-proclaimed "King-of-Books", who has designated Brownville an 'international Book Town'.

**Watch for the opening this summer.**

228 Main Street Brownville, Nebraska 68321

The following article was printed in *The Brownville Banner*  
Vol. ?? - 1988

## THE MARKETS

from the *Nebraska Advertiser*  
Brownville, June 2, 1859

Corn, bushel .....	40¢
Oats, bushel .....	40¢
Coffee, lb. ....	15¢, 16¼¢
Chickens, dz. ....	\$2.00
Eggs, dz. ....	10¢
Fresh beef, lb. ....	6-8¢
Pork, 10 lbs. ....	\$5.50 - \$6.00
Potatoes, bushel .....	40¢
Butter, lb .....	10¢
Whiskey, gallon .....	30-40¢
Lumber, cottonwood, 100 ft .....	\$1.00
Cheese, lb .....	25¢
Lard, lb .....	10¢
Nails, keg .....	\$6.00
Beans, bushel .....	10¢
.....	
.....	

## PROPERTY VALUES DOUBLE IN ONE YEAR

from the *Nebraska Advertiser*  
Brownville, June 9, 1859

Brownville has 48% of total taxable property in Nemaha County – according to the latest returns from the County Assessor's Office. We present these figures without comment; believing they will speak louder than ordinary newspaper paragraphs. We would like to know, however, if any town or county in the west, or elsewhere, can show a more healthy and cheering advance? Don't all speak at once. We have selected several footings of columns as follows:

Acres of land taxed .....	8,159
Value of Same .....	\$260,490
Assessed Value per acre .....	\$2.95
Number of horses .....	643
Value of same .....	\$36,630
Assessed value her hd .....	\$55.41
Number of Mules .....	103
Value of Same .....	\$12,525
Assessed value per hd .....	\$119.29

A team of matched mules would be valued at \$238.60 which is equal to 80.8 acres of land at \$2.95 per acre. EDITOR'S NOTE: January 8, 1988 – To convert all these figures to the present (1988) estimate the value of your farmland today, then multiply by 80.8. You will discover the team of mules would cost you \$48,000 more or less. The work produced by the mules will equal the work done by a modern day Garden Tractor. Times were tough in 1859.

## BROWNVILLE MILLS NATURAL FOODS



**NEBRASKA'S OLDEST HEALTH FOOD STORE IN  
NEBRASKA'S OLDEST TOWN.**

www.BrownvilleMills-Ne.com  
116 Main Street Brownville, NE 68321  
(402) 825-4131 (800) 305-7990

## BROWNVILLE CIVIL WAR CENTENNIAL

Article taken from  
*The Bulletin of the Brownville Historical Society*,  
Brownville, Nebraska, Volume 5, Number 1,  
September, 1961

Brownville was one of the few Nebraska towns large enough a century ago to enlist troops for the Civil War which began April 12, 1861.

On the large red boulder near the cannon adjacent to Main Street is a commemorative tablet marking the approximate place of enlistment on June 9, 1861 of Company C, First Nebraska Regiment. The enlisted men embarked by steamboat to Omaha to join other companies of the regiment. Captain J. D. N. Thompson was in command of the company. Other town enlisting companies for the First Nebraska were Plattsmouth, Nebraska City, Florence and Omaha.

Numerous residents of Brownville, Peru, Nemaha and other points in the county served in various units as officers and privates.

Robert W. Furnas, later governor, was commissioned Colonel by President Lincoln. He served in the field in the Indian wars which the tribes timed with the greater conflict. Protection of the former settlements against hostile tribes was a vital necessity and drew much Brownville military manpower. Theodore H. Bedford, Brownville surveyor, was commissioned a Captain and served at Fort Kearney on the Platte.

Thomas W. Tipton, later U.S. Senator, became Chaplain for the First Nebraska Regiment. John L. Carson, Brownville banker, was a Captain in the northern forces.

It has been suggested that the centennial of Company C be observed as a part of the festival activities.

## Merchants of Brownville



The Merchants of Brownville welcome you with the ambiance of a river village, and everything from art and antiques, books and collectibles, to ice cream and natural foods, all available in the shops on Main Street, Brownville, Nebraska

### BROWNVILLE, A CITY OF MANY FIRSTS

When Nebraska Territory was finally, officially organized, it was divided into eight counties for political purposes. At that time the area that would become Brownville was located in Forney County. In August of 1854, Richard Brown from Oregon (Ogden), Missouri, canoed across the river and began construction of an 18 by 18 foot cabin. When the boundaries of Forney County were established it was officially stated that Brown's cabin was the only voting site/precinct in the entire county. As merchants and settlers arrived, a stone wharf was built and a steam mill opened. Late in the year Dr. John McPherson arrived with a printing press and all the necessities worth a reported \$3,500 to establish a newspaper, which he promptly traded for talk interest in the townsite.

It has been unofficially noted that almost at once Brownville became the largest city in the territory, an honor it would hold for many years. 1855 was a year of feverish activity in the territory, as Nebraska suddenly opened up for settlement. That spring Brown completed his cabin, established a ferry on the Missouri River with the flatboat "Nemaha County" and along with B.B. Frazer, hired L. Coate to survey the townsite of Brownville. The ink was scarcely dry on the plat map when Nemaha County was divided from Forney with Brownville named as the county seat. From a population of zero the town exploded into life and in March was incorporated as a city of second class.

In April of 1856, Robert W. Furnas arrived, and with Robert Valentine Muir, the *Nebraska Advertiser* was established with Furnas as editor. Muir also started a flouring and lumber mill on the opposite river bank which would later furnish the maple and walnut used in his extant, 1868 house. 1856 also saw the construction of Taulbird Edward's Nebraska American House, became the first hotel in Nebraska and was a popular stopping place until it was washed away by a flood some years later. 1856 also saw the establishment of a stagecoach link to Rock Port and talk of a railway to be known as the Northern Missouri & Brownville Railroad. Nothing came of the railroad, but the idea was constantly on the entire community's minds as Brownville became an important port on the Missouri River.

In 1857 the U.S. Land Office opened in Brownville, laying the foundation for Daniel Freeman's filing the first homestead in the U.S. there at one minute after midnight January 1, 1863.

1858 saw the establishment of the Congregational Church by Rev. T.W. Tipton. For a brief time Tipton also conducted Brownville College in the church building before selling the

structure to the Methodists in 1861. Robert Furnas established the "Nebraska Farmer" in 1859, the year of Nemaha County's first county fair, and the following year Furnas took part in another Nebraska first when he sent a telegram to St. Joseph, Missouri.

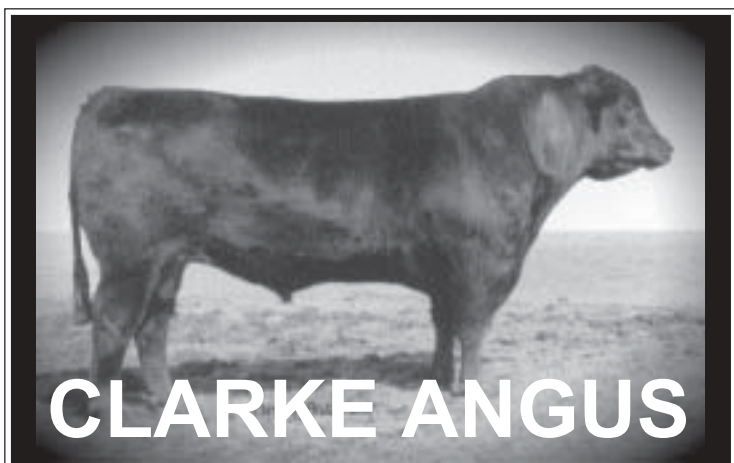
In August of 1868, local express agent, J.K. Bear calmly took \$12,000 from the company safe and spent the rest of the day paying all his personal debts with the stolen money. Bear even left the owners a note stating he was 99% sure he would be caught but simply couldn't resist the 1% chance he might actually make good his escape. Bear also predicted his wife wouldn't really miss him. Unfortunately, the express company posted a reward and sure enough he was captured and sentenced to a year in the state penitentiary at Lincoln. He was right about his wife too, as she promptly filed for divorce. Although there was much publicity about the already light sentence, Bear received a pardon after serving only three months. Interestingly, he returned to Brownville as soon as he was released and remarried his former wife, leaving the city's residents completely baffled.

In 1870, Brownville played host to the Nebraska State Fair and the possibility of a railroad was reborn. On the strength of potential federal right of way grants and the promise of soaring real estate values, produce price increases and construction jobs, the Brownville, Ft. Kearney & Pacific Railroad was incorporated. Local interest was high and grading was pushed to Tecumseh. Unfortunately, the economic conditions of the country were in turmoil and the land grants did not materialize. The railroad corporation was absorbed by the Midland Pacific to form the Nebraska Railroad Company. Ten miles of track were hastily laid enabling a train to use the tracks. The result was that the local bonds were paid out but the promised rail service proved nonexistent. In 1883, the Supreme Court held that since "at last some vehicle" used the tracks, albeit only one time, the city had to make good on the bonds. This led to a ruinous increase in local taxes, the population fled, suddenly the idea of moving the county seat to a more central location was revisited, and in 1885 Auburn wrestled the prize from Brownville.

In 1894 Willa Cather noted how the village had dwindled, "even the Lone Tree Saloon is falling to pieces, and that, in a western town, is a sure sign everything is gone." Not quite everything was gone, however, in 1939 a WPC bridge over the Missouri was constructed and in 1956 a local historical society formed. Today virtually all of Brownville, once Nebraska's largest town, is on the National Register of Historic Places and though it is a far cry from its claimed peak of 3,000 souls, makes a truly fascinating weekend visit. — Jim McKee, Lincoln, Nebraska

## FURNAS HOUSE





**CLARKE ANGUS**

Photo by Danny Bradshaw

**Bulls, Heifers, & Show Calves**

PLUS  
Angus Halves & Quarters

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**Raising Angus for 58 years**

Contact Roger V. Clarke or Tim Clarke at:  
**402-274-5718 or 402-274-5721**

## Brownville's Dream of a Railroad Ultimately Hastened Its Decline

As early as 1857, with Nebraska's life as a territory only three years old, Brownville, NE was looked upon by many as the natural terminus of the Mississippi & Missouri River Air Line (railroad). To that end a group of Brownville merchants met in hopes of securing not only the railroad but a bridge over the Missouri as a link to the east. Although Brownville was already an important port for steamboats along the river it was apparent to every village in the territory that the railroad would soon overshadow river shipping and for a community to prosper or even exist, at least one railroad was an absolute necessity.

On May 28, 1867, David Moore of the Air Line visited Brownville, and on the strength of his mere arrival local investors incorporated the Brownville, Fort Kearney & Pacific Railroad. Within three days it was reported that \$100,000 had been subscribed, that \$750,000 had been additionally committed for construction on the Missouri side and 70 miles of trackage would be begun that fall. In order to hasten construction in Nebraska, Otoe County set aside \$1,000 for a survey while the Brownville City Council voted a similar amount in order to send a delegation to Washington to secure federal land grants for the project.

On January 7, 1868, voters approved \$350,000 in bonds for the railroad by a vote of 523 to 483, but only if the federal land grant was approved. When the land was not granted, another vote approved \$250,000 in bonds without the land provision. By December of 1869 the route of the railroad was set, proceeding from Brownville to Tecumseh, then to Beatrice and thence westward across the plains. The actual construction was placed in the hands of two companies from Ohio and Indiana but in order to complete the deal it became necessary to turn over all of the railroad's assets and even a good portion of the capital stock. There was at least token opposition to this seemingly wholesale gift

as the county commissioners withheld \$78,000 of the bond's proceeds, which they placed in trust to be turned over to the contractors when the railroad had been completed and regularly scheduled trains were running. By November of 1871, the first spike was finally driven and a land grant of about \$20,000 approved.

By the following spring it had become painfully obvious that control of the railroad was now no longer in Brownville's hands, but that summer a depot site was dedicated and the populace remained positive. As summer waned it was announced that all grading and bridging had been completed as far as Tecumseh. Then, without warning, Joel Converse, representing the Indiana contractor, suddenly tore up the first 10 miles of track and "loaned" it to the St. Louis & Trunk Line Railroad (Midland Pacific) to which the Brownville line was to ultimately connect at Nebraska City.

1873 opened with a recession and by fall of 1874 it was clear that Converse had absolutely no intention of completing the Brownville route. Quickly the county announced plans to sue the trustees to at least recover the \$78,000 they had left in their care, only to discover the funds had been transferred to a G. Moodie. Unfortunately, there apparently was no such person. Just when everything looked its blackest, the Brownville depot was completed and on February 1, 1875, service began on the four mile section between Brownville and Nebraska City and the "day was pronounced the happiest ever known in . . . Brownville." That July the Brownville, Fort Kearney & Pacific was merged with the Midland Pacific and named the Nebraska Railroad Co. even though Converse was unable to produce the 12,000 shares of stock he claimed to have voted in the consolidation. In 1878 the railroad line had been extended to Nemaha, but it was not the service Brownville had dreamed of or desperately needed to connect inland and to the west. Worst of all, the bonds and interest payments continued at a ruinous pace.

In a law suit brought against Converse, a circuit court sided with Brownville, only to be overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court. Then in 1883 the county seat was moved to Auburn. With a dwindling tax base and constant debt, taxes reached a staggering 17 cents per dollar.

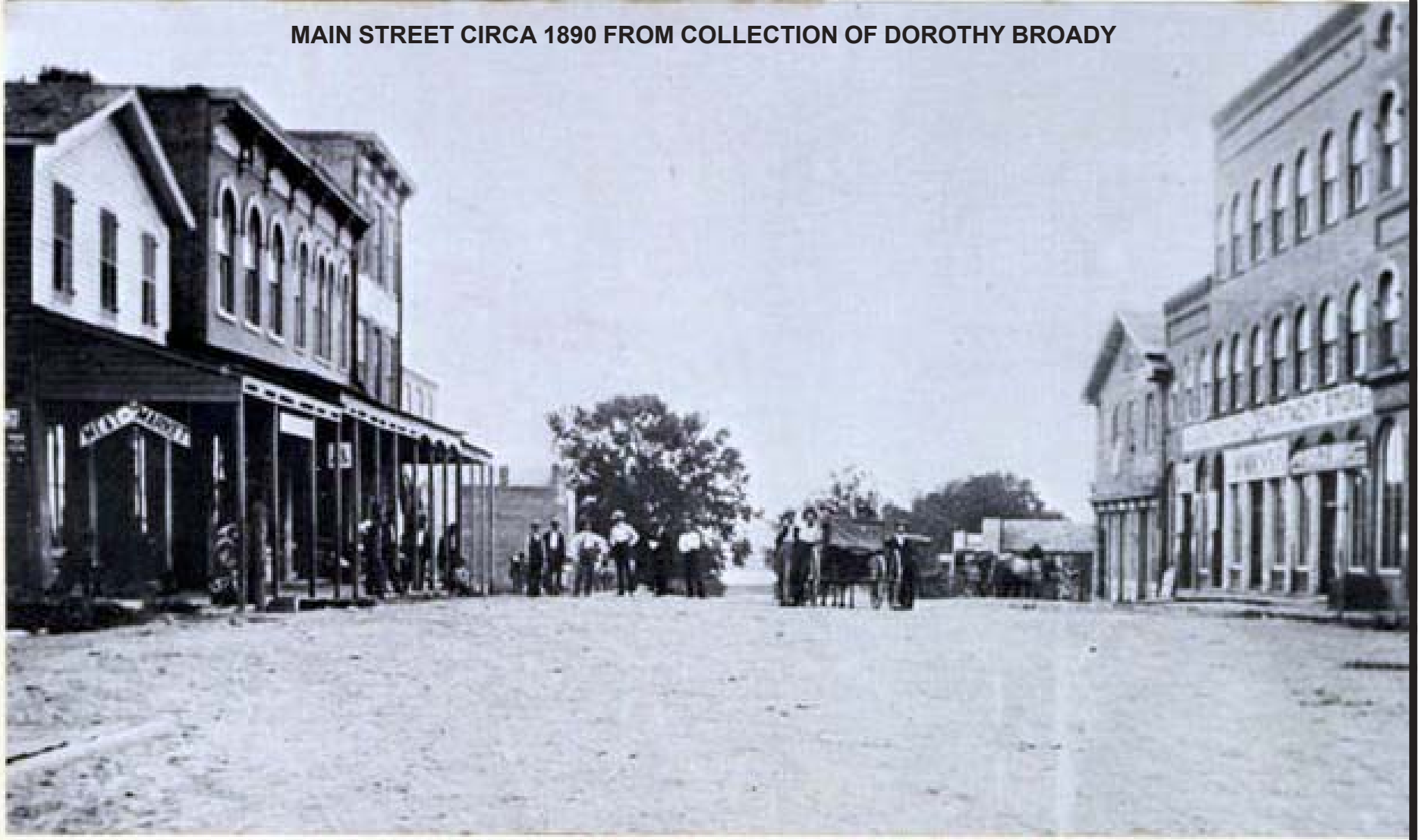
In 1951 the Burlington, which had been providing limited service to Brownville, closed the depot. The building was then used by the U.S. Corps of Engineers until 1969, when it was taken over by the Brownville Historical Society. Thus, the railroad, which was to have been Brownville's salvation, proved an albatross around her neck and its debt hastened the city's already precipitous decline.

– Jim McKee, Lincoln, Nebraska



This caboose is still at the station in Brownville, Nebraska.

MAIN STREET CIRCA 1890 FROM COLLECTION OF DOROTHY BROADY



MAIN STREET CIRCA 1890 FROM COLLECTION OF DOROTHY BROADY



The historical aspect of Brownville is a popular one.



Brownville's seven hills at sunset, from across the river.

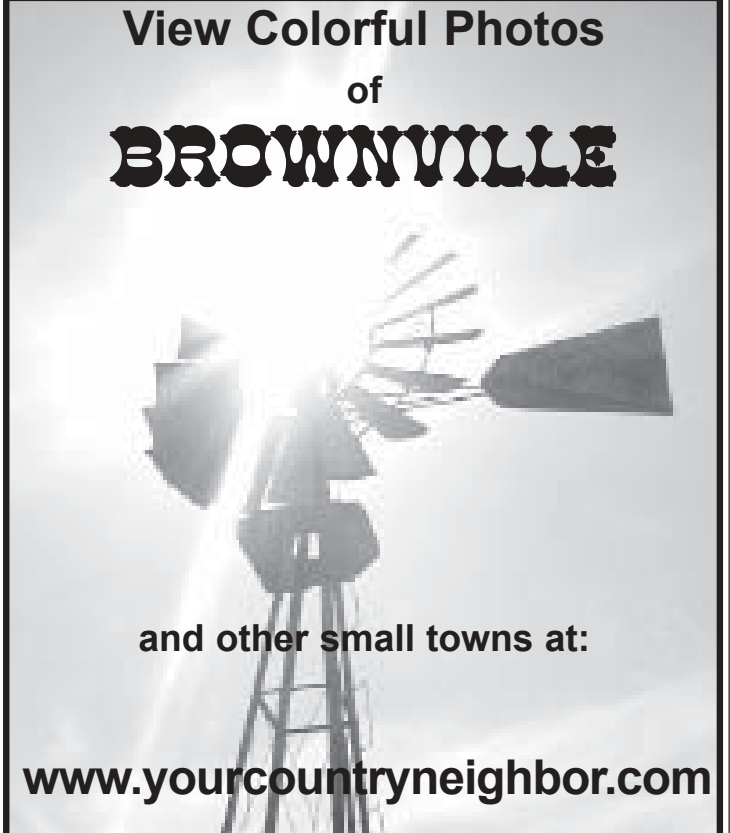


Photo by Joann Dahlenburg

Historic outfits circa 1870 worn by Richard Cox, his wife Debbie, and daughter Demi.



View Colorful Photos  
of  
**BROWNVILLE**




and other small towns at:

[www.yourcountryneighbor.com](http://www.yourcountryneighbor.com)

# BROWNVILLE CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

## JUNE THROUGH DECEMBER 2004

- June 5  
4:00 p.m. *Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration Series*  
Steve Sylvester, Peru State College Dean of Arts and Sciences -“The Corps of Recovery”  
Brownville State Recreation Area
- June 11 & 12 *Brownville Village Theatre Show – 38<sup>th</sup> Season Opening*
- June 11, 12, 13 *Brownville Concert Series* Anna Bergman – Cabaret performer  
Contact 402/825-3331.
- June 12  
4:00 p.m. *Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration Series*  
Dale Clark, former Stuhr Museum Education Director-Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery Through the Eyes of a Crew Member  
Brownville State Recreation Area
- Garden Walk*  
Furnas Arboretum Open House and private garden tours
- China Showcase Tea*  
Opera House  
For more information, call 402/825-4651.
- June 14  
10:00 a.m. – noon *Passport Program*  
Re-creation of the Military Camp Life of Lewis and Clark includes sketching, music, and other camp activities  
Meriwether Lewis Museum on the riverfront
- June 16 *Tour de Nebraska*  
Take the Steamboat Trace to the Furnas Connector Trail on a trek through Brownville
- June 18 & 19 *Brownville Village Theatre Show*
- June 19  
4:00 p.m. *Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration Series*  
Bill Kloefkorn, Nebraska State Poet-Poetry from the Perspective of Crew Member Patrick Gass  
Brownville State Recreation Area
- June 21  
10:00 a.m. – noon *Passport Program*  
Re-creation of the Military Camp Life of Lewis and Clark includes sketching, music, and other camp activities  
Meriwether Lewis Museum on the riverfront
- June 25, 26, 27 *Brownville Village Theatre Show*
- June 28  
10:00 a.m. – noon *Passport Program*  
Re-creation of the Military Camp Life of Lewis and Clark includes sketching, music, and other camp activities  
Meriwether Lewis Museum on the riverfront
- July 2, 3, 4 *Brownville Village Theatre Show*
- July 3  
4:00 p.m. *Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration Series*  
Dr. Richard Fruehling, Grand Island-Medical Aspects of the Lewis and Clark Expedition  
Brownville State Recreation Area
- July 4 *Freedom Day Celebration*  
Annual Fourth of July Celebration  
For more information, call toll-free 877/559-6005
- July 5  
10:00 a.m. – noon *Passport Program*  
Re-creation of the Military Camp Life of Lewis and Clark includes sketching, music, and other camp activities  
Meriwether Lewis Museum on the riverfront
- July 9, 10, 11 *Brownville Village Theatre Show*
- July 10  
4:00 p.m. *Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration Series*  
Matthew “Sitting Bear” Jones -When the Oto Met Lewis and Clark  
Brownville State Recreation Area
- July 11 *Brownville Concert Series*  
Ju-Young Baek – Violinist  
Contact 402/825-3331.
- July 12  
10:00 a.m. – noon *Passport Program*  
Re-creation of the Military Camp Life of Lewis and Clark  
Includes sketching, music, and other camp activities  
Meriwether Lewis Museum on the riverfront
- July 15 *Brownville Village Theatre Special Performance*  
*200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lewis & Clark Brownville Encampment*
- July 16, 17, 18 *Brownville Village Theatre Show*  
*A Tail of History: Reunion of Newfoundlands*
- July 17  
4:00 p.m. *Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration Series*  
Daryl Hersemann, Peru State College-Student perception of the Expedition  
Brownville State Recreation Area



**Brownville Village Theatre**  
Our 2004 Summer Season!  
June 11 to August 15  
**See How They Run**  
**Petey's Choice**  
**Arsenic and Old Lace**  
**Murder on Arrival**  
**Boeing Boeing**

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Box Office: (402) 825-4121      Box 95 Brownville, NE



# BROWNVILLE CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

## JUNE THROUGH DECEMBER 2004

July 17 & 18	<p><i>Second Annual Quilt Show</i> Whiskey Run Creek Winery For exhibit information, call 402/825-4601.</p> <p><i>Brownville Village Theatre Show</i></p>
July 19 10:00 a.m. – noon	<p><i>Passport Program</i> Re-creation of the Military Camp Life of Lewis and Clark includes sketching, music, and other camp activities Meriwether Lewis Museum on the riverfront</p>
July 22	<p><i>Brownville Village Theatre Special Performance</i></p>
July 23, 24, 25	<p><i>Brownville Village Theatre Show</i></p>
July 26 10:00 a.m. – noon	<p><i>Passport Program</i> Recreation of the Military Camp Life of Lewis and Clark includes sketching, music, and other camp activities Meriwether Lewis Museum on the riverfront</p>
July 29	<p><i>Brownville Village Theatre Special Performance</i></p>
July 30 & 31	<p><i>Brownville Village Theatre Show</i></p>
August 1	<p><i>Brownville Village Theatre Show</i></p>
August 2 10:00 a.m. – noon	<p><i>Passport Program</i> Re-creation of the Military Camp Life of Lewis and Clark includes sketching, music, and other camp activities Meriwether Lewis Museum on the riverfront</p>
August 5	<p><i>Brownville Village Theatre Special Performance</i></p>
August 6, 7, 8	<p><i>Brownville Concert Series</i> Liz Callaway – Cabaret performer Contact 402/825-3331.</p> <p><i>Brownville Village Theatre Show</i></p>
August 9 10:00 a.m. – noon	<p><i>Passport Program</i> Re-creation of the Military Camp Life of Lewis and Clark includes sketching, music, and other camp activities Meriwether Lewis Museum on the riverfront</p>
August 12	<p><i>Brownville Village Theatre Special Performance</i></p>
August 13, 14, 15	<p><i>Brownville Village Theatre Show</i></p>
August 28	<p><i>Brownville Concert Series - "A Gift from the River"</i> Contact 402/825-3331.</p>
August 29	<p><b>150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of Brownville</b></p> <p><i>Brownville Concert Series - "A Gift from the River"</i> Contact 402/825-3331.</p>
September 19	<p><i>Brownville Concert Series</i> Mike Metheny – Jazz Trumpeter Contact 402/825-3331.</p>
September 25 & 26	<p><i>46<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Flea Market</i> Main Street-Something for everyone! Contact Don Hoffmeyer at 402/825-4651 or Harold Davis at 402/825/4131 or toll free at 877-559-6005</p>
October 9 & 10	<p><i>Old Time Autumn</i> Crafts, antiques, music, and wine For more information, call 402/825-4651 or toll-free 877/559-6005</p>
October 17	<p><i>Brownville Concert Series</i> Ian Hobson – Concert pianist Contact 402/825-3331.</p>
October 31	<p><i>Brownville Concert Series</i> Nicolai Janitzky – Baritone recitalist Contact 402/825-3331.</p>
November 19, 20, 21	<p><i>Brownville Concert Series</i> Jason Graae – Cabaret performer, singer, actor Contact 402/825-3331.</p>
December 4	<p><i>Christmas Tour of Homes</i> For information, contact Jody Anderson at 402/488-0070</p>
December 17, 18, 19	<p><i>Brownville Concert Series</i> International group with Nebraska roots Contact 402/825-3331.</p>

### The Palmerton Art Gallery Depicting Nature and Life



Mr. Palmerton is currently producing a collection of sculptures to be displayed throughout the Henry Doorley Zoo, including the *Garden of Senses*. Soon to be announced is an eight-foot tall sculpture of explorers Lewis and Clark with their canine companion Seaman, sculpted for the *Missouri River Valley's Visitor Center* at Nebraska City.

Palmerton's paintings and sculptures are included in many art collections in the United States including the Ford Motor Company, the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, and the Nebraska Hall of Fame in Lincoln.



The artist with his sketch pad and Frosty.



Fine Arts Concert Hall

## Brownville Concert Series Kicks Off 2004 Season

**Brownville, NE:** Before announcing the star-studded season of 2004, the Brownville Fine Arts Association and the Brownville Concert Series want to express their deepest appreciation to their many supporters who, despite these challenging economic times, so generously donated both money and time to make the 2003 season such a resounding success and to allow them to continue to pursue their mission to bring great music to the people of Southeast Nebraska and surrounding areas.

The 2004 Brownville Concert Season starts out with a big bang by presenting the extraordinary South African singer/actress Natalie Gamsu in cabaret at 7:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday night, March 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> (preceded by a gourmet dinner on Saturday) and in concert at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup>. The New York Daily News declared, "She is an enormous talent with a big rich contralto /mezzo....Her ballads blow you away." Born in Namibia and trained at the University of Cape town, South Africa, she established a loyal following on the South African cabaret circuit with her solo cabaret shows and with the acappella group, *Not the Midnight Mass*.

Since 1992, Natalie has lived and worked in New York. She made her Manhattan debut at Eighty Eight's and has since headlined her own show for four seasons. She has appeared at the Algonquin, the Russian Tea Room, The Firebird, and the Cabaret Convention at Town Hall. She produced her first sold out performance at the New York Society for Ethical Culture with her three-piece band. In 1994, Natalie won the Backstage Bistro Award for Outstanding Vocalist and that same year was nominated for a MAC Award for Outstanding Debut. In 1997, she won the MAC Award for Outstanding Female Vocalist.

Ms. Gamsu has performed in musicals as Sister Hubert in *Nunsense* (for which she won a Dalro Award), as the Old Woman in *Candide* (for which she won a Vita Award for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical), and as Woman of the World in *Blues in the Night*. Natalie was a regular cast member of Blair Fell's long-running live soap opera *Burning Habits*, in which she recreated the role of Hecuba Baboom, the crooning clairvoyant. She made her London Debut at the ICA in Gary Carter's *Acts and Revelations*. In 2001, she released her first solo CD of adult contemporary vocal music, rhythmically driven with ethnic influences.

And that's just the beginning! Here is a taste of what's to come. The Cypress Spring Quartet will perform in Concert at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup> with remarkable, spirited and engaging playing of the music of Wolfgang Mozart, Benjamin Lee and Maurice Ravel. Kansas City jazz vocalist Kathleen Holeman will appear in cabaret Friday, April 30<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, May 1<sup>st</sup> (preceded by a gourmet dinner on Saturday) and in concert on Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>. She can croon a ballad as if she wrote it, belt out a big band tune, cry the blues and scat all over a standard. She has created a sound all her own, while still being able to quote a style from Billie Holliday, Ella Fitzgerald or Sarah Vaughn.

Those who like a hot Latin beat should hold onto their seats as the series presents in association with Young Concert Artists, Inc. classical Marimbist Naoko Takada in concert on Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. She plays a thrilling marimba, moving with speed, grace and extraordinary accuracy. If you have any doubts that a solo mallet instrument can sustain your attention throughout and entire concert, Naoko will change your mind! Want more? Stick around for a Master Class after the concert.

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Get ready for a sultry summer offering of singer Anna Bergman in cabaret Friday, June 11<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup> (preceded by a gourmet dinner on Saturday) and in concert on Sunday, June 13<sup>th</sup>. Talented and tantalizing....sophisticated and sexy! To spend an evening enjoying a performance of Anna Bergman is to experience the riches and beauty of the world in song. Listen for her on "Live at the Mill" on Nebraska Public Radio to be broadcast from Whiskey Run Creek Winery in Brownville on Friday, June 11<sup>th</sup>.

There's more! Violin virtuoso Ju-Young Back performs in concert Sunday, July 11<sup>th</sup> and gives a Master Class afterwards. Critics acclaim her for "sumptuous expression in all registers of the instrument". This continues a long association with Young Concert Artists that has brought thrilling talent to Southeast Nebraska.

August gets really hot! Emmy Award Winner, Liz Callaway will appear in cabaret Friday, August 6<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup> (preceded by a gourmet dinner) and in concert on Sunday, August 8<sup>th</sup>. Well known to Broadway audiences in Miss Saigon and as the Cat "Grizabella" who mesmerized all with her rendition of "Memory", Liz finally makes her debut in little ole Brownville.

Again, we got jazz with a capital J! Mike Metheny performs in concert Sunday, September 19<sup>th</sup> with Todd Strait on drums, Bob Bowman on Bass and Paul Smith on piano. A master of the Trumpet and flugelhorn, Metheny and his trio will add a special magic to a "cool" autumn afternoon. Back by popular request is pianist extraordinaire Ian Hobson in concert Sunday, October 17<sup>th</sup>. British born, Ian is a musician of tremendous versatility who has earned a worldwide reputation as a pianist, conductor and teacher.

Wait, there's more to come! Baritone Nicolai Janitzky appears in Brownville in Concert Sunday, October 31<sup>st</sup> just before making his debut at New York's Carnegie Hall in February 2005. Mr. Janitzky, First Place winner of the Marilyn Horne Foundation competition, will spend several days in area schools talking to students about his work and introducing them to the world of vocal recital.

That tough act is admirably followed by Jason Graae in cabaret on Friday and Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> (preceded by a gourmet dinner on Saturday). "Jason raises versatility to new heights. He's a comic, a character actor and a balladeer. The ultimate tribute to his talent is a feeling, by show's end, that the evening has just begun." (Variety Magazine)

And the finale of the season is the popularly requested return of The Singing Waiters in concert on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. The acclaimed international group of six great talents with Nebraska roots returns to Brownville for the traditional spectacular Christmas Gala.

To order tickets or your very own 2004 Season Calendar call 402-825-3331 or 402-274-3661. Nowhere else can you enjoy this high caliber of talent in as unique a setting that offers both high tech lighting and sound in a small, intimate atmosphere that brings you as close as possible to the performers. If you haven't experienced a Brownville Concert, you are missing something truly special.

# ST. DEROIN, NEBRASKA

The first town and retail store in Nemaha County were at St. Deroin, near the present village of Brownville. Because the land was owned by an Oto Indian, Joseph Deroin, it was established in 1853, before it was legal for settlers to possess land in what was called Indian Territory prior to the formation of the Nebraska Territory in 1854.

In August of 1854, Richard Brown paddled across the Missouri River and, with two friends William Hawk and Taulbird Edwards, built a cottonwood cabin near the river in what would, three months later, be named Fournay County. Whether by careful planning or considerable luck, the site proved a natural river crossing and stone landing point. Within two years the land owned by Brown and B.B. Frazer saw the establishment of: a school, a number of dwellings, two dry goods stores, a tinsmith, shoemaker, flour mill, hotel, physician, drug store, attorney, tailor shop, jeweler, and on January 16, 1855, a U.S. Post Office. The instant town was named Brownville in honor of its first resident.

All of this was accomplished before the town had even been surveyed, so by February of 1856 when A. L. Coate had completed the plat and the town was officially incorporated, the village already had a population of about 400. The original plat contained 174 blocks, one set aside for a park and another for a public building.

Among the first to arrive was 32-year-old Robert Furnas. Furnas had contracted with Dr. John McPherson, who brought his newspaper from Ohio and traded half interest to Richard Brown for town lots. Furnas agreed to edit and operate the Nebraska Advertiser, and later was given half of McPherson's remaining interest in the paper. Furnas' newspaper was a constant promote of the benefit of Nebraska and Brownville, helping to make Furnas one of the best known people in the territory. In 1856 Furnas decided to run for the territorial council and began campaigning in earnest. He could probably have spent a bit less energy in his effort as he received 100% of the votes cast for the office.

Furnas was also, along with J. Sterling Morton, a strong believer in Nebraska agriculture. In 1859 he founded the Nebraska Farmer in Brownville and initiated the Nemaha County Fair. Not only did he promote agriculture, but was also a farmer himself with a strong interest in fruit and tree cultivation, at one time selling several hundred trees to Nebraska Christian University in Lincoln's suburb of Bethany Heights. Furnas was also instrumental in securing Brownville as the site of the Nebraska State Fair in 1870 and 1871.

During the Civil War Furnas became a colonel in the Union Army, later organized the first school district in the state, was elected president of the State Board of Agriculture, founded the Nebraska State Historical Society, was President of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents and in 1872 was elected Governor of Nebraska.

Brownville, meantime, had become the county seat of Nemaha County in 1855 when Fournay County was divided. The county seat question was, however, in constant contest, and in 1858 it kept the prize only because the opposition was divided between eight other towns. In 1876 a petition election kept the county seat by only 200 odd votes, but 1855 saw the county government moved to Auburn, which was more centrally located and well established on the railroad.

The railroad was one of Brownville's primary problems, for although a connection with Nebraska City was built in 1875, a "real" railroad failed to develop as promised. The decline in river traffic, agriculture depression, and the county seat removal saw Brownville's peak population of 1,309 in 1880 plummet to its present 300+ figure.

Today the river town is experiencing a rebirth as a tourist attraction. Several of the original homes have been restored and some are opened to tours or operated as museums. From time to time through the summer and fall, plays are presented by Nebraska Wesleyan, antique shows are held and numerous gatherings are promoted. The steam boat "Spirit of Brownville" still plies the Missouri River, and the Nebraska State Historical Society operates a river boat museum on board the "Captain Meriwether Lewis." All this combined with the great view of the rivers and the fall colors make Brownville a great day or weekend trip.

— Jim McKee, Lincoln, Nebraska

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This Little Red Schoolhouse currently has crafts and gifts for sale.

## HISTORIC BROWNVILLE

on

## Scenic Byway 136



# Travel & Tourism

## Points of Interest

In the Brownville area, an old industry (with a new twist) has been reborn. Modern agricultural specialists raise grapes, raspberries, and apples for Southeast Nebraska Wineries. Apple-Raspberry is one of the varieties of wine sold at the Whiskey Run Creek Vineyard & Winery in Brownville and at the Kimmel Orchard Production Center near Nebraska City. Wine tasting and purchases may be made at the west end of Main Street in Brownville.

An authenticated campsite of Lewis & Clark is just inland from the River's present course.



### *Pride of America*

A recent addition to the shelves of the Palmerton Art Gallery.



Refusing to retire from the work that he loves, Tom Palmerton, with his wife Betty, maintain a studio in Brownville, a village about which I have heard Tom say, "This is a great place to work!" But Tom likes the fishing here, too.



Winemaker Robert Curtright wishes to express his appreciation to Brownville for all their support.

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Area artists display or create their works in various locations in Brownville. Visit Palmerton's Art Gallery, Barbara Bond's Gallery of American Folk Art, the Whiskey Run Creek Winery, and even the Sunset Hills Ice Cream Parlor for a wide variety of creations and mediums.

Prehistoric drawings are etched on a Missouri River bluff at Indian Cave State Park.



Walking to Oregon, Lewis and Clark travelers have found Brownville a welcome place to rest, and yes, to walk around. I am told by one that he has learned to measure distances by how many pairs of socks he wears out!

Continue on up the *Steamboat Trace*, your journey's next leg. And stop on back!

## NEBRASKA'S OTHER JOHNNY CARSON AND THE BANKS OF BROWNVILLE

On January 18, 1856, Richard Brown, the founder of Brownville, Nebraska, and four other men formed Brownville's first bank, the Nemaha Valley Bank, with \$50,000 in capital. That July an association with a Council Bluffs group was made to build a two-story brick home for the bank at Second and Main Streets with the upper floor designed to serve as a courtroom and Masonic Hall. The building was completed and occupied November 10, 1856.

The following year John L. Carson, who was born in Pennsylvania but had spent 1856 in Keokuk, Iowa, arrived in Brownville. On January 14, 1857, Carson joined Benjamin F. Lushbaugh in opening a private bank known variously as The Banking House of Lushbaugh & Carson, The Exchange Bank and the Brownville Exchange Bank. Their two-story frame building was on the north side of the street at #35 Main. During its first year of operation the partners reported average deposits of \$20,207.

Although the Nemaha Valley Bank was open only a few months, it changed hands several times before closing in 1857 during a local depression. When the charter was forfeited, John Carson was appointed as trustee to clear its remaining assets to satisfy its liabilities. The liabilities included a large number of \$1, \$2, \$3, \$5 and \$10 bank notes they had rather freely printed while the sheriff's sale of assets yielded only \$63, primarily for a stove, safe and still-warm printing press.

A new bank building was completed in 1859 for Carson & Lushbaugh and noted in the press as being "the most admirably arranged banking house in Nebraska." The following year Mr. Lushbaugh left the bank which was promptly reorganized as The Carson Bank.

1860 also saw Richard Brown building a new house on Main Street between Third and Fourth Streets. Unfortunately, Mr. Brown proved to be less than a favorite son,

primarily due to his keeping a slave and refusing to consider freeing him. On his departure, Brown's house was purchased by Carson. The house was then enlarged and ultimately passed to Carson's daughter, Rosanna. After allowing the house to be opened for touring beginning in 1958, it was ultimately deeded to the Brownville Historical Society in 1966.

On October 1, 1870, the Brownville State Bank was opened and though its two-story building is extant, the business closed in 1880. Unlike many of its competitors, however, they were able to repay their depositors 100%. In the meantime, the Carson Bank acquired federal charter #1846 in 1871, becoming the Carson National Bank, the fifth national bank in Nebraska. By 1881, the bank had average deposits of \$244,440, but Brownville itself was withering, its population in 1880 falling below 1,000. The following year the Bank was moved to Auburn and in January of 1887 became the Carson Bank of South Auburn with \$60,000 in capital and Carson as president. In 1890, the word "South" was dropped from the title and the bank is still in business today, one of the oldest continuously operating banks in Nebraska.

In 1897 Carson moved to Lincoln, becoming the sixth president of the First National Bank of Lincoln. Though he died just one year later, Carson's career featured banking, but his name appears as "receiver" on Daniel Freeman's original homestead certificate, he served as a regent for the University of Nebraska and was chairman of the Nebraska Farmer's Relief Agency during the drought and depression of 1870. Although this Johnny Carson never won national acclaim, his name did appear on a town in Nebraska, an honor even his considerably more famous namesake can't claim. Carson, Nebraska, thought not extant, was near the center of Nemaha County, east and a bit south of Auburn at the onetime junction of the Missouri Pacific and Burlington & Missouri River Railroads.

Jim McKee, Lincoln, Nebraska



Some of the shops in Brownville have recently had a 'face-lift'. Mary's Emporium has expanded its inventory, the Sunset Hills Ice Cream Parlor has added lunch items to its menu, and the Land Office has a new tenant.

### FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE: *ALONG THE MISSOURI, LIFE EBBS AND FLOWS* by Timothy Egan

As for the empty middle, some riverside towns - Glasgow or Mound City, for example, both in Missouri - seem to be dying. But others, like Brownville, Nebraska, where Lewis and Clark camped, have reinvented themselves, which is why it may be too early to write an obituary of the plains.

In Brownville, next to giant cottonwoods, Randel and Jane Smith run a river boat, a paddle-wheeler called the *Spirit of Brownville*. They say it is the only excursion boat on the Missouri from St. Louis to Omaha.

The town used to be a bustling steamboat port and starting point for settlers. It was considered for Nebraska's capital. Now, fewer than 200 people live in Brownville. Brownville, settled in 1854, has dozens of historic buildings and a concert hall, and nearly every business - even the tavern - sells books, as part of a designation it was given as an "international book community." Barbara Bond, a former New Yorker, moved here because the pace was slow and the community was tight. "I like the isolation," said Ms. Bond, who runs a gallery of American Folk Art.

The feeling is contagious. On the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the year France gave up on middle America, many European travelers have discovered the old territory.

"I said to a group of Germans the other day, this river must be really boring to you," said Mr. Smith on a Spring day fit for a Huck Finn daydream. They said, "No, you have something we don't have in Europe - wild, undeveloped land."

The biggest complaint of modern travelers looking for traces of Lewis and Clark, Mr. Smith said, is that they can hardly find the river. Hundreds of miles of the lower Missouri are hidden behind levees. But when people find it, they are surprised at a place where silence is not uncommon, and the skies are full of river birds.

## THE CARSON HOUSE



Purchased in 1864 by John L. Carson, one of Nebraska's leading financiers. Now a museum furnished as in the 1880's.

# Churches of Brownville, Nebraska



## Worship at the Brownville Christian Church

**Sundays, 11:00 A.M.**

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Dr. Robert Chitwood, Pastor.



Methodist Church; continuous services since 1856.  
Sundays, 10:00 A.M.

## A Short History of the Brownville Christian Church

(From an article by Amelia Young)

The Christian Church was the first religious organization in Nebraska Territory. Founded in January of 1855, it's group erected a building just a few years later. In 1866 a tornado struck the city and damaged the roof of the Christian Church significantly. Later, after the burning down of another frame building and after years of holding services elsewhere, another structure, was dedicated in July of 1903. Today it serves as the Brownville Village Theatre. Today's modern structure is at Sixth and Main Streets, a few blocks west of downtown.



This 'Palmerton Bronze' Sculpture of Governor Robert Furnas overlooks the Arboretum in his name located between today's two churches of Brownville.

## Churches in the Early Days

From *The Centennial*, by Members of the Brownville Christian Church, 1955

The Christian Church, January, 1855

The Methodist Church, February, 1856  
(Continuous services since 1856)

The Congregational Church, June, 1858

The Presbyterian Church, October, 1858

The Brownville Union Sabbath School, November, 1858

Christ Church (Episcopal), October, 1863

The Baptist Church, February, 1859

The Roman Catholic Church, July, 1870

The Colored Baptist Church, February, 1882



The Furnas Arboretum is a garden between two churches. Something is blooming all season long.



## Lone Tree Saloon

## Brownville Mills

by Harold Davis

The Lone Tree Saloon was built in 1860 and was one of numerous Saloons and brothels that lined the early river community of Brownville, Nebraska Territory. Legend has it that Jesse James would stop and have a few while returning from visiting relatives in Nebraska City. The Lone Tree Saloon was also the place where Daniel Freeman made connections with the land agent who was attending a New Years Eve dance on the second floor. The agent filed his homestead on January 1, shortly after midnight.

In 1894 Willa Cather wrote an article for the "Lincoln Journal" in which she stated, "Even the Lone Tree Saloon is falling to pieces, and that, in a western town, is the sure sign that everything is gone." She was talking about the falling of Brownville into a decay mode.

In the late 1890's the Lone Tree Saloon was purchased by the Opelt's and they had a grocery store downstairs. He liked to do some gambling on the second story level. After the fire in Brownville, the second floor was also used as an opery house and was called the Opelt Opery House. This was done to appease some of the local women who did not care for their husbands engaging in such games of chance.

During the 1930's there was an apartment upstairs and another on the main floor. Then in the 1940's for a period of time the building was the River View Inn where Chef Alden would fix catfish, steaks and shrimp for your dinning pleasure. The bar and kitchen was on the main floor with the seating for dining on the second.

It was in 1953 when Courtney Miner purchased the building and started making whole grain flours and adding other health food products to the variety of items sold in the Mill. He also put the "NEMAHA" brand to the flours and such being manufactured. Today the "NEMAHA" and "LONE TREE SNACKS" brands are labeled on most of the items at the Brownville Mills.

The Mill has been featured in many books such as "Great Cooks of The Midwest", "Food Finds", "Midwest Living Magazine" and many allergy cookbooks. The latest featuring of the Brownville Mills has been on TV's Food Network and the program is *Food Finds* where you can watch a 30-minute program that talks about making cornmeal and corn pancakes plus Grama's Jellies, and Big Red Popcorn. The next airing of the program will be on June 2, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. Central Time.

To check out the variety of products carried you can go to our web site [www.brownvillemills-ne.com](http://www.brownvillemills-ne.com) or call 800-305-7990 for a price list of some of the products that are available from the Brownville Mills.



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## Approaching the 'Gold Coast' at Brownville; Nebraska Territory, 1855.

by Stephen Hassler

Imagine you are traveling up this river on a Steamboat in 1855. You are just minutes away from Brownville, a frontier town barely one year old in the new Kansas-Nebraska Territory and on the "coast" of the distant Rocky Mountain gold fields. It's the heyday of Steamboat travel on the Missouri River, and you are standing at the bow of a modern, steam-powered river boat. You are going to meet your brother, or your husband, or you are about to begin a lonely, but adventurous journey to Oregon or California. You can feel the deck vibrate beneath your feet as each blade of the paddle wheel breaks the river's surface. Your face feels a gentle mist as the bow cuts through the water and the river breeze is wet with spray. Five days out of St. Louis, and you are almost there!

---

From one of the seven hills in Brownville, children hurriedly abandon their desks and their teacher's objections to race toward the sound of the shrill whistle calling them from their studies. They race each other down the hills and through the streets of Brownville to the water's edge, eager to be the first to glimpse this majestic traveler from far away cities as it rounds the distant bend in the river. It brings adventure and adventurers, gamblers and pioneers, nails and plows. There is a young wife on the deck leaning to catch a glimpse of her husband's face in the teeming crowd. There is a brother or cousin, here to join a spiritus pioneer. There are workers readying the wooden cages of chickens and swine, crates

of tools, and sacks of seed; necessities for a new town. Pioneers, prospectors, preachers and planters, many of whom only intended to stop briefly at the 'Gold Coast' on their way to mine the slopes of Pikes Peak, plow the plains of Nebraska, or plant the seeds of a new life in a new land.

---

In your view from the deck you can see crowds of people waving from the stone landing. Workers and merchants, relatives and children, all eager to see the approach of the river boat *Nemaha*, and the unloading of a bountiful cargo from the great city of St. Louis.

Finally, after moments of intense exchanges between boatmen and shoremen, the *Nemaha* is secured, the bridge plank is lowered, and the passengers disembark. You step off your floating hotel and onto America's newest frontier, making your way through the noise and the crowd, the horses and wagons, carts and carriages. And then you see someone waving, and you realize it is the he who has been waiting for you, the one you have followed after. Your adventure together begins.

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Today the Missouri River at Brownville, Nebraska looks like the river pictured above, but riverboats like the *Nemaha* are only romantic history or museums. Still, Brownville remains a town on a new frontier. And the townspeople are there on Main Street to welcome you.

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