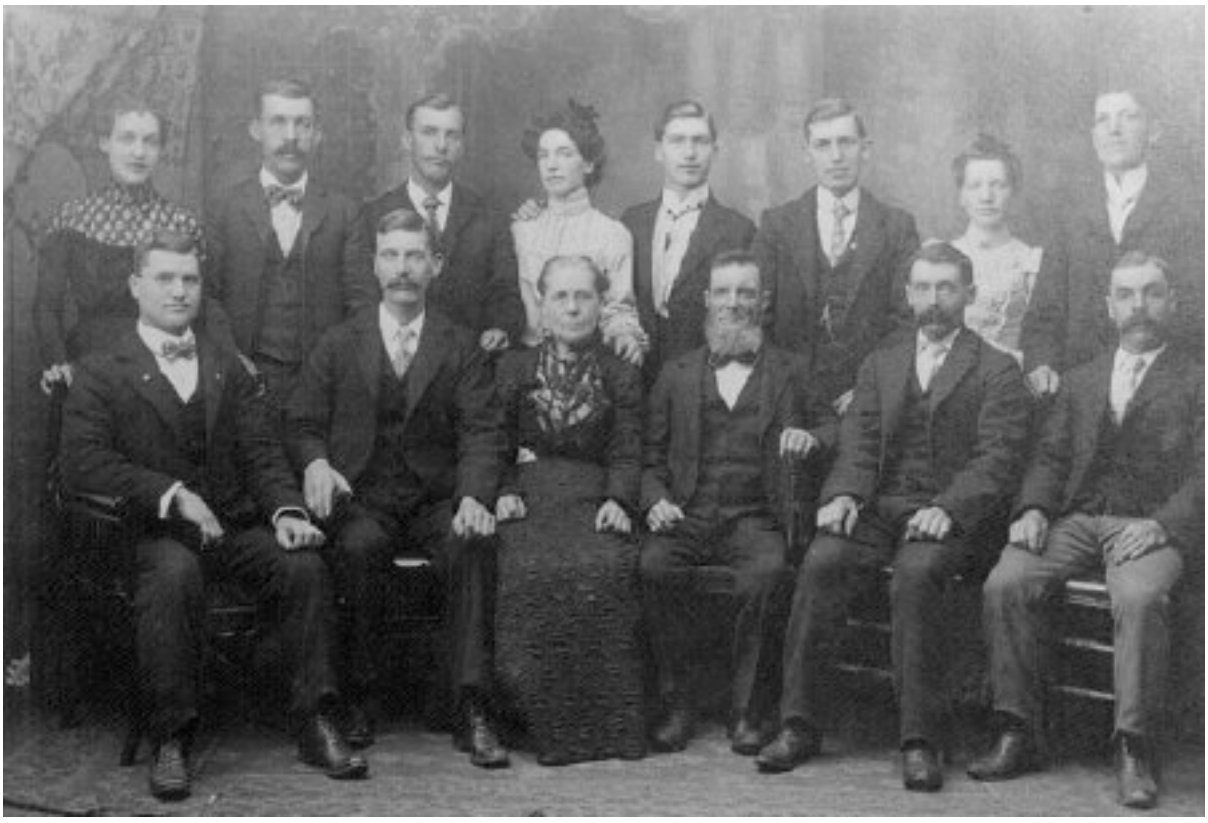
# Albert Brain's Story

*As told to Annie Brain and Judith Chase - December 27, 1952*

I am the oldest of a family of thirteen Children. Really there were fourteen, but one died very young. My mother gave birth to nine boys straight running, then three girls and then another boy. My brothers and sisters:

1. Albert Brain - born 27 Sep 1860 - died 27 Aug 1956 - age at death 92 years
2. Robert Brain (Bob) - born 19 Jul 1862 - died 12 Mar 1961 - age at death 99 years
3. James Brain (Jim) - born 28 Jun 1864 - died 27 Dec 1919 - age at death 55 years
4. Timothy Brain (Tim) - born 1863 - died 1965 - age at death 102
5. Simeon Brain (Sim) - born 29 Aug 1867 - died 1933 - age at death 66
6. Sidney Brain (Sid) - born 30 Aug 1870 - died 1958 (1956?) - age at death 88
7. Samuel Brain (Sam) - born 6 Oct 1873 - died 1961 - age at death 88
8. George Brain - born 21 Feb 1875 - died ?
9. Ralph Brain - born 15 Apr 1877 - died ?
10. Elizabeth Brain (Lizzie) - born 25 Oct 1878 - died ?
11. Caroline Brain - born 14 Sep 1880
12. Annie Brain - born 4 May 1882 - died 1952 - age at death 70



Caroline Brain Rohrer - James Brain - Simeon Brain - Annie Brain Hotchkiss - Ralph Brain - Samuel Brain - Lizzie Brain Tingle - Sidney Brain

George Brain - Robert Brain - Emma Fields Brain - Enos Brain - Albert Brain - Timothy Brain

Among us, my brothers and I have lived a total of 431 years, which makes an average of 86 1/5 years.

Children born to Albert Brain and Caroline Grindle:

1. Florence Elizabeth Brain - born 2 Feb 1886 - died 13 Jul 1973 - age at death 87
2. Frank Thomas Brain - born 29 Feb 1888 - died 26 Nov 1955 - age at death 67
3. Albert Alfred Brain "Fred" - born 16 Oct 1889 - died 1 Mar 1970 - age at death 81
4. Gertrude Brain - born 11 Aug 1892 - died 2 May 1993 - age at death 101
5. Earl Brain - born 5 Dec 1894 - died 19 Feb 1980 - age at death 86
6. Lester Brain - born 18 Feb 1896 - died 20 Feb 1965 - age at death 69
7. Edith Brain - born 10 Nov 1897 - died 24 May 1923 - age at death 26
8. Annie Rhoda Brain - born 28 Nov 1899 - died 19 Dec 1958 - age at death 59
9. Emma Caroline Brain - born 20 Oct 1902 - died ?

My grandparents names on my father's side of the family were James and Mary Brain. On my mother's side of the family, my grandparents were John and Susie Fields. My parent's names were Enos and Emma. Your grandmother's maiden name was Caroline Grindle.

Well, I am going to tell you exactly where I was born, so if any of you go back you can find the place. I was born in Glostershire, England, 1/2 a mile north of Little Dean, in the first house north of the magistrate's courthouse in Little Dean. At that time it was a thatched cottage. I was the first child, my mother wasn't 20 at the time.

The Forest of Dean, where I was born is 19,000 acres that used to be King Charles II's hunting ground for deer. Of course, he didn't want the deer destroyed, so there was a law against killing them. They would do the people of the country alot of damage by getting in the gardens and so on. Before King Charles II died, he made a decree that part of this 19,000 acre should should be kept open for the people to run their stock on in compensation for the damage the deer had done, and that is the way it is up until this time. The people of England have been trying to change that law ever since.

You see, it's the timberland and the timber gets big in one part and they cut it out and then plant new forest. They fence it up until the timber gets big enough that the stock can't do it any damage, then they open it up to the stock again. England's a great country to raise a fine grade of oak (Hoak) lumber.

Well, when I went to school first, it wasn't necessary for a school teacher to have a certificate to teach school. Schools were taught by women in their own homes. If they could read and write a little, they could have children come in and teach them. They called these schools, "Dames Schools." They had the schools right in their own kitchens. You had to pay by taking

twopence (4 cents) every Monday morning. I went to that school from the time I was about six until I was about ten.

Then we moved to Little Dean, the village nearest where we were living up until that time. Then I went to the National School which was run by the Church of England, but you still had to take your money on a Monday morning. I went to that school for about twelve months.

Then one day a farmer came after me, I wasn't quite eleven years old at the time. He asked my dad if I could come and work for him by doing little jobs. I chopped kindling, got the cows, shined the shoes for Sunday, weeded onions in the gardens, and did all kinds of errands.

He didn't give me any wages until I had worked for three weeks. Then he gave me three shillings (that is 75 cents in our money.) I took this three shillings home to my mother in my hand. I thought, "This won't be enough and my father and mother won't let me go back." They thought it was pretty small, but they didn't say anything so I went back and worked for the farmer all summer. I worked from about 6 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock at night on the long summer days. I was still 11 years old at this time and my hair was pretty red and I had alot of freckles.

The farmer's wife had a different menu for every day of the week. Thursday was the day I liked - we had rice pudding that day. Another day I didn't like so well. They didn't make lard in those days, they just cut the fat bacon off the hog and cooked it in the oven. The farmer liked this fat bacon and he expected me to eat it too - but I just couldn't. I pretty nigh starved for awhile.

During this time my father was working in the mines and we were living in the country in the middle of the Forest of Dean. I would leave home early in the morning and come home to sleep every night after work. The next summer I worked for the same man; he raised my wages a little bit.

My father and mother got me a copy book and I would study it myself at home.

The next winter after I worked for the farmer the second summer, I worked for my grandfather who was working for the English Government planting trees. That was right after my twelfth birthday. That was in the Forest of Dean on Bradley Hill. That was 80 years ago this summer (1952). The government paid me ten pence a day or 20 cents in our money.

So then the next spring, my father took me into the mines to work. The boys could go in under low places. There were thin layers of coal. The boys could hitch onto the fifty or sixty pounds of coal and drag them into the runway where the men could load the coal. This was in 1872 and the union had just gotten the eight-hour day. We had to be in the mines by 7 o'clock. We had to leave home at 6 o'clock in the morning.

Anyhow, I hadn't been working in the mines very long when there was a law passed that boys shouldn't work in the mines until they were 13 years old, and I was sent back home from the mines. I got six months more school on the benefit of that law. The law wasn't very strict though, and my father took me back in a little while before I was 13.

Because I was the oldest boy in the family they needed my help. I worked with my father in the mine for over two years until I was about 16 years old. Then my younger brother Bob got old enough and my father took him into the mine. Then I had to go to work for another man.

Each boy had to work with a man. Some of these men that you worked with were pretty good and some weren't so very good. Some had more sympathy than others. Perhaps I shouldn't mention the name of the man I worked with, who was just an extra good man. I'll tell you anyway, he was the man that I worked for in the mine and his name was Thomas Meek. He sympathized with me and gave me good advice. I don't know but what some of it has stayed with me up 'till now. When I came to this country, I thought that if I ever went back I would go and see that man, which I did in 1914. He was 73 years old at the time. He didn't know me, but I told him who I was. So when he found out who I was he wanted me to come home and fixed up a lunch for me. I think I rewarded him a little for what he had done for me when I was 30 years younger.

One of the things he said was, "Albert, always do as well as you can, until you can see a chance to do better." He was good in every way.

Well now, of course working in the mine, my mother gave me a little pocket money every two weeks. Not very much - about a schilling. I used to give her all the money I earned; that is customary in England for a boy and I don't know but what a girl, until they are 20 years old. So my mother gave me a little pocket money and I saved it.

Then when I was 19 years old, I had enough so I bought ten ewe lambs. There was some open land - government land that we could run them on. So I looked after them and put a little more money into the flock, and finally in about four years I had about $500.00 worth. That was when I married your grandmother, I was 24 1/2 years old then. I was considered pretty well fixed for that time. When I was considering going to America, my mother's cousin, Amos Grindle, came to me and wanted to know why I wanted to come to America, for I was pretty well fixed.

After we were married, we lived for two years in Colafield, where Flo was born, and then we moved to a little farm named Tibbs Cross Farm. Your grandma and I didn't have much furniture and the house was a big old place with lots of rooms, but we only occupied two. There were three bedrooms upstairs and four downstairs. I used to take a candle and go through all the rooms after dark just to make sure that everything was all right. Frank was

born there. Cinderford was the little town about two miles away. We'd walk down carrying Flo and Frank and walk back again.

I worked at the mines 16 years in England. You know the danger that a person is in - a man's in danger from the time he goes in. in the morning until the time he comes out at night. I have been fortunate in getting no more than a broken big toe joint. I have been in the mine working by myself and see no one but the driver who would come just four times a day, and you get to be very, very careful. You've got to be sounding the roof to see if it is solid. You've got to have good tools. You are working by an artificial light. The loneliness of the mine is something a man can hardly comprehend. Sometimes when the machinery goes wrong, you can't holler down the mines to find out what is wrong because the mines are so deep. Sometimes we would be in the mine until 10 o'clock at night. Sometimes, there will be some Christian men there and they would start singing hymns; and I have never heard hymns sung more heartily in any church than in the mines. I have been in the mine at night when we have been working three shifts - go in at 7 and come out at 3, in at 3 and come out at 11, and in at 11 and come out at 7 in the morning. The worst shift, from 11 at night until 7 in the morning is the most lonely. There is cracking and other noises - you'd think there was a ghost around. It is the most fearful thing.

I had read quite a lot about America and inquired every chance I got when anyone came back; all through my youth in a way. I thought it was a wonderful country, that the opportunity was so much greater than it was in England. So finally, I made up my mind to come to this country. I sold out what stock I had and made provisions to come. We had two children born to us in England, and your aunt Flo was the oldest - 2 1/2 years old. I had bought the tickets to come to this country for all of us, but she took sick with the measles. The law wouldn't allow you to come on ship with any disease. My brother-in-law and sister (grandma's sister), (uncle John and aunt Roda) advised us to leave her. We intended to come right back, but it was 17 years before her mother went back and got her.

My brothers, Bob, Jim, and Tim came a year or so before I did. The next year my whole family came. They mortgaged their home to come here.

We came to America in 1888. Your uncle Tim had come first and before he left, I told him, "Now, Tim, whatever you write and tell me about America, tell me the truth." We came first to Lucas County, (Iowa) and got off the train at Lucas. Your uncle Tim met your grandma and me. Frank was a baby then.

The mines had been doing good up until that time, but the next summer after I came, the mines began to play out, and we didn't work any. I didn't make enough to hold my own. And while I didn't do very well the first year or so, I found that the chances for a man in America were much greater than they were in England.

Then I heard about the mine in Foster, (Iowa); so we moved there. I had spent all the money I had except $20.00 and I spent that to bring my furniture from Lucas to Foster. I was broke, you might say, and a stranger in a strange country. There were a bunch of other Englishmen, also. There was uncle Sid and Mr. Nunny and Mr. Furley. Mr. Ferley is Margaret's (Brain) uncle.

Going in the mine young, I learned most everything about mining and I could make pretty good wages. Now the wages were low at that time, but if one man could make two dollars a day, I could make three dollars. I kept track, and the least I ever worked for was $3.12 a day. That was in 1896 in Cleveland's administration. Those were pretty bad years but I finally did get started. I could save nearly all my wages since we had the boarders. I saved enough in about three years to buy nearly forty acres of rough land. That was our farm. I had learned a little bit about stock raising and I began to buy a little stock. There was alot of farmers who didn't have much stock, so I could pasture my stock. I made more out of pasturing horses and cattle on different bits of land. I quit the mines for a bit, but I went back when Frank could handle the team. On idle days when the mines weren't working, I cleared the timber and brush off and soon got it in cultivation, but I still continued to work in the mine.

It wasn't long until I had quite a little bit of stock around me, and finally I bought more land adjoining until I had 183 acres, and that is 4 1/2 miles northeast of Moravia. We did most of our trading in Moravia (Iowa) and we found they were pretty nice people to do business with, and so in 1926 we moved into Moravia to live. It was because of your grandma's not being well enough to live on the farm that we moved into the town. I went back to the farm and worked every day for about ten years. So at the present time, I have lived in Moravia for 26 years - ever since that time.

I came to Lucas in 1888 and stayed there for about a year. Then I came to Foster in 1889. I stayed there 3 1/2 years. Fred was born in Lucas County, one month before we moved to Foster. I worked in Foster for a month before I could get a house to live in. I stayed at a hotel. Fred was six weeks old when we moved to Foster. Then I moved to the farm and lived there 33 years.

Grandma went over to England in 1905 with uncle Sam and aunt Cora. This sister of mother's, Rhoda, knew that uncle Sam and aunt Cora were coming, but she didn't know mother was coming. They walked from the station up to aunt Rhoda and uncle John's. When aunt Rhoda saw mother, she thought at the outset that mother had come to get aunt Flo. Grandmother had come with the intention of letting aunt Flo decide for herself whether she wanted to come, but aunt Rhoda didn't want grandmother to take her back, so she didn't even introduce her to her mother. Aunt Flo went around to aunt Rhoda and asked, "Auntie, who is the other lady with them?" Aunt Rhoda said, "Flo that is your mother." So aunt Flo went and threw her arms around her mother's neck and immediately began making preparations to come

back, even though grandmother had said nothing about it. I really didn't think she would come, so I didn't send money enough with ma to bring her, but when she got over there she wrote and said that Flo wanted to come, so I sent money right away for her to come.

In 1914 I went back to England on a visit. I paid $35.00 for the last trip to England. I was gone about eight weeks. We started on the 11th of June and got back late August. It didn't seem to me that things had changed so very much except that I didn't know very many people. Some of the boys that were ten years old when I left would come up and call me Mr. Brain, although I didn't recognize them. There were so many of them that had died.

There was a little incident. We sailed on the last liner that came out of England from Liverpool before the First World War started; we had been out on the ocean for 2 1/2 days when war was declared between England and Germany. Instead of coming into New York where we were booked, they shipped us to Halifax, Novia Scotia. We were there about 2 1/2 days before they could get trains to ship us to where ever we wanted to go in the United States and gave us lunches and everything to support us on the way. I had folks in Ohio, so we went down there to visit.

In 1935 your grandmother and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary with the whole family present except uncle Fred. Many other relatives including the Lancasters from Canada were there. It was held at the church and there were 47 around the table.

Sometimes I have wondered whether I have done any good for this country. You know, we worked in the mines on the average about 200 days a year, and I would mine about 4 tons of coal a day. We were only paid 75 cents per ton, so we still weren't making too much. Lots of days, though, I dug six or seven tons. For twenty years I figure I must have mined around sixteen thousand tons of coal. Then in the days when the mines weren't working, I cleared my 183 acres of land and raised quite a bit of livestock - mostly hogs and cattle which must have helped to feed quite a few people.

In an article about my birthday in the Moravia paper, the woman who wrote the article talked about my raising nine children, though of course they weren't all born on the farm. They have gone all over the country, and I'm not ashamed of any of them - I've never had to visit any of them in prison.

ALBERT BRAIN - September 1953

# Obituary of Albert Brain, Moravia Union, August 1956

Albert Brain, 95 Succumbs To Illness
Albert Brain, 95, long time resident of Moravia vicinity, died August 24 at the Lutheran hospital in Des Moines. He had been in failing health for some time, but not seriously ill until eight days before his death.

Albert Brain, son of Enos and Emma Brain, was born September 27, 1860, in Glouscester, England and passed away at the Iowa Lutheran hospital in Des Moines, Iowa, August 24, 1956 at the age of 95 years, 10 months and 27 days.

On February 9, 1885, he was united in marriage to Caroline Grindle. To this union nine children were born. Mrs. Sidney Helms of Martinsburg, Iowa; Fred Brain of Chugwater, Wyoming; Mrs Clarence Johnson of Orange, California; Earl Brain of Hedrick, Iowa; Lester Brain of Moravia, Iowa; Annie Brain of Des Moines, Iowa; and Mrs. Jonathan Chase of Russell, Iowa. Edith and Frank preceded him in death.

He and his family came to America in October, 1888, and settled in Lucas county where he was engaged in coal mining. About two years later they moved to Foster, where they lived for about one and one-half years. In 1893 they moved to the farm in Monroe county where they lived for about 30 years.

He retired from active farming in 1926 and moved to Moravia.

He was a faithful member of the Grace Methodist church where he attended church regularly.

He was also a long time member of the Masonic lodge.

He was preceded in death by his wife and two children. He is survived by his seven children, three brothers, two sisters, sixteen grandchildren, twenty-two great grandchildren, many nieces and nephews and a host of friends.

Funeral services were held Monday afternoon at 2:00 o'clock at the Grace Methodist church with Rev. John Grenfeld officiating. Burial was at Moravia cemetery.

Relatives and friends from a distance attending the funeral of Albert Brain were, his sisters, Mrs. Lizzie Tingle, Mrs. Caroline Robee, and Mr. and Mrs. Jack Tingle and daughter Judith, all of Washingtonville, Ohio; Mr. and Mrs. Roy Brain, Mr. and Mrs. Pearl Brain, Willard Brain, all of Newton; Dean Brain, Carl Brain, Henry Brain of Hedrick, and Miss Celia Brain of Iowa City, and Mr. and Mrs. Wilkerson, of Des Moines, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Jones of Hedrick, and Mr. and Mrs. Messersmith of Hedrick.

## More About ALBERT BRAIN:

Burial: Moravia Cemetery, Moravia, Appanoose Co., IA30
Education: Elementary
Military: None
Occupation: Coal miner - farmer
Religion: Methodist
Residence: 1956, Moravia, IA

Notes for CAROLINE GRINDLE:
See notes for Albert Brain.
Obituary for Caroline Grindle:

Mrs. Caroline GRINDLE Brain, wife of Albert Brain, well known in Moravia for several years, died at her home in Moravia at eleven o'clock Thursday morning, February 4th, 1937, after a short illness.

Although having been afflicted with asthma for several years, she enjoyed fairly good health and had the pleasure of having most of her family of eight children and several grandchildren present for the Christmas holidays.

Caroline Grindle was born at Collafield near Little Dean, Gloustershire, England, May 29, 1856. She was married to Albert Brain February 9th, 1895, and she and Mr. Brain came to America in October 1888. Thirty-three years of her life were spent on the farm three and one-half miles northeast of Moravia and during these years she was a loving and helpful neighbor in the community in which she made many and lasting friends.

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