

August 1, 1958

In accordance with the wishes of Edward Paul Brennan, his three daughters are turning over to the Chicago Historical Society seven scrapbooks which represent items taken from Chicago newspapers through the years from 1884 until his death in 1942. They are entitled "Chicago's Street Numbering System and Nomenclature". The particular subject of his interest was American history, with special attention to Illinois and Chicago history. As Chicago grew, he was especially concerned in the application of historical and meaningful names to the streets of Chicago. With the seven "official scrapbooks"-Vol 1 - 7 - there are also included four additional notebooks which I have made up and which comprise the following material:

- #1. This notebook which is really a biography of Mr. Brennan and contains the gist of his civic endeavors for Chicago; namely, (1) the adoption of his suggestion by the City Council of Chicago to have State and Madison Streets the base lines of Chicago's numbering system, and (2), the adoption of at least 300 of his suggestions for names of streets, as well as the policies he advocated for future street naming: i. e., one name on a broken link street and the legal rule of having 60 per cent of the property owners vote in favor of having a street name changed in the future.
- #2. An Index of the scrapbooks - (to some extent).
- #3. Reports on the street names and signs by the Committee on Streets and Public Safety of the City Club of Chicago.
- #4. Chicago City Club Bulletins, which contain information about street names and numbering.
- #5. New street name ordinances: 1913 - 1914.
- #6. Historical Markers Around Chicago (He advised the points of interest where they would be well placed and checked the data).
- #7. Correspondence: 1903 - 1929; 1933 - 1947.

RESUME: EDWARD PAUL BRENNAN; He was born June 30, 1866 in Chicago and died January 10, 1942 in this city. For the most part he was employed in the grocery store of his father, Matthew J. Brennan, and from 1893 to 1929 at Lyon and Healy.

1901 Suggested in a letter to "The Record Herald", June 6, 1901 that State and Madison Streets be the dividing lines on which to base the numbering system. (See Volume 1).

1908 City Council passed on this suggestion.

- 1904 Suggested that street cars should not have tracks from Madison to Washington on Michigan Avenue, but rather should run on Garland Court; the "turn" is still being made that way.
- 1913 Through the City Club and the Chicago Historical Society suggested to the City Council the system of retaining one street name on all broken link streets; due to growth of city new names were needed, and 130 of his suggestions were adopted at this time.
- 1935-
1936 300 more changes in street names were needed--many only a matter of continuity on the one hand, with the elimination of less meaningful names, and others newly assigned.
- 1937 By unanimous vote of the City Council of Chicago, Mr. Brennan was given A Testimonial, signed by the Mayor, for his forty years of civic endeavor and work freely given.
- 1941 Awarded a Certificate for Meritorious Service by the Chicago Historical Society, for his endeavors as a private citizen, not in any way connected with local government, but extended his suggestions to those in authority in public offices.
- 1942 Death of Mr. Brennan, January 10. During the same year it was proposed that a street be named for him.
- 1947 A street in Merrionette Manor running north and south from 95th to 99th Street has been named "Brennan Avenue" by the City Council.
- Chicago now has 1,370 street names and 3,629 miles of streets as compared with New York, which has 4,003; Baltimore, 3929, and Cleveland, 2,199 street names.
- 1958 The seven scrapbooks, indices and correspondence are now being given to the Chicago Historical Society, in accordance with the wishes of Mr. Brennan, as indicated by him on the inscription pages of the books.
- It might not be amiss to mention that Mr. Brennan never asked nor accepted any monetary reward nor any political favor of any kind for himself, the members of his family, relatives or friends.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary B. Brennan