

Encyclopedia of Biography

OF

NEW YORK

A Life Record of Men and Women Whose Sterling Character and Energy and
Industry Have Made Them Preëminent in Their Own
and Many Other States



BY

CHARLES ELLIOTT FITCH, L. H. D.

Lawyer, Journalist, Educator; Editor and "Contributor to Many Newspapers
and Magazines; ex-Regent New York University; Supervisor
Federal Census (N. Y.) 1880; Secretary New
York Constitutional Convention, 1894

ILLUSTRATED

THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

BOSTON

NEW YORK

CHICAGO

1923

BROWNING, Noah H.,

Lawyer, Enterprising Citizen.

The name Browning is an Anglo-Saxon word and comes to the Brownings of New England from old England. The earlier name was Brüning and came from Germany to England in the early centuries, perhaps the earliest form being DeBrune, the name of the ancient Germanic tribes of northern Germany. With its coming to England, the Anglo-Saxons changed the name to Browning. The weight of testimony indicates that Brüning referred to the color brown.

Nathaniel Browning, the founder of that

branch of the Browning family embracing Noah H. Browning, of Hudson, New York, was born in London, England, about 1618, and there spent the first twenty-two years of his life. He landed in Boston, Massachusetts, about 1640, and the same year settled in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. In 1645, he bought land in Warwick, Rhode Island, married about 1650, Sarah Freeborn, daughter of William and Mary Freeborn, who sailed from Ipswich, England, in 1634, in the ship "Francis," landed in Boston and settled in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. The line of descent is traced from Nathaniel and Sarah (Freeborn) Browning to Noah H. Browning through their son, William Browning (of whom further), and his first wife, Rebecca Wilbur, daughter of Samuel and Hannah (Porter) Wilbur, and granddaughter of Samuel Wilbur and John Porter.

William Browning and his first wife were original settlers of Portsmouth, Rhode Island. William Browning was a farmer of North Kingston, Rhode Island and by his first wife had five children including a son John, the youngest of his family.

John Browning was born in South Kingston, Rhode Island, March 4, 1699, and his will was probated April 14, 1777. He was a member of the Society of Friends, and was buried in the little burying ground of that section in South Kingston. He was a land owning farmer, and his wife, Ann Hazard, daughter of Jeremiah and Sarah (Smith) Hazard was of the wealthy Hazard family, textile manufacturers. She was a great-granddaughter of Thomas Hazard, one of the organizers of Newport Colony in 1639. John and Ann (Hazard) Browning were the parents of ten children, their son, Jeremiah, named for his grandfather, Jeremiah Hazard.

Jeremiah Browning was born at South Kingston, Rhode Island, in 1726, died at North Stonington, Connecticut, of sun-

stroke, July 4, 1811, aged eighty-one, and was buried in Hopkinton, Rhode Island. He was a farmer of North Stonington, and a member of the Society of Friends. He married his first cousin, Ruth, daughter of William and Mary (Wilkinson) Browning. They were the parents of eight children, the eldest a son Jeremiah (2), through whom descent is traced in this branch.

Jeremiah (2) Browning was born on Block Island, Rhode Island, September 7, 1758, died at Livingston, Columbia county, New York, January 12, 1827. Like his father he was a farmer and a member of the Society of Friends. Most of his life was passed in Stonington, Connecticut, his later years in Livingston. Both he and his wife are buried in Friends Cemetery at Hudson, New York. Jeremiah Browning married, May 9, 1782, Sally Morey, who died September 5, 1844, daughter of Robert and Ruth (Browning) Morey, and granddaughter of Robert and Catherine (Guindean) Morey. There were four Morey sisters, three of whom married Brownings. The Morey ancestor was Joseph Morey who came from England to Rhode Island in 1664. His son, Robert, married Sarah Hazard and they were the parents of Robert Morey, grandfather of Sally (Morey) Browning. Jeremiah and Sally (Morey) Browning were the parents of twelve children, descent in this branch being again traced through the eldest son, Jeremiah.

Jeremiah (3) Browning was born at Stonington, Connecticut, October 23, 1783, died at Chatham, Columbia county, New York, August 18, 1866, and was buried there. He too was a farmer and a member of the Society of Friends. Jeremiah (3) Browning married at Hopkinton, Rhode Island, November 7, 1805, Martha Foster, and they were the parents of eight children, Charles, their youngest, being head of the seventh generation in this line.

Charles Browning was born at Living-

ston, New York, March 8, 1825, died at Chatham, New York, March 18, 1895, and there both he and his wife are buried. He was the owner of a large farm at Chatham, Columbia county, New York, and there conducted a prosperous business. Charles Browning married at Lebanon Springs, New York, Mary Lucretia Harrison, daughter of Noah and Susan Harrison, she a descendant of Richard Harrison who came from England to New Haven, Connecticut, and was the ancestor of Benjamin Harrison, a governor of Virginia, 1782-1784, father of William Henry Harrison, president of the United States, and great-grandfather of Benjamin Harrison, president of the United States. He was also the ancestor of Carter Harrison, senior and junior, both of whom were mayors of Chicago. Charles and Mary L. (Harrison) Browning were the parents of five children: 1. Noah Harrison, of further mention. 2. Charles (2), born March 22, 1865, a graduate of Cornell, who settled in California. He married Annie Belle Todd. 3. Oren Francis, born April 7, 1868, a journalist of New York City. 4. May, born March 10, 1871, at Chatham Village, now residing at the old farm at Chatham with her brother Frederick. 5. Frederick, born August 13, 1874, a graduate of Cornell University, cultivates the home farm at Chatham.

Noah Harrison Browning, eldest of the children of Charles and Mary Lucretia (Harrison) Browning, was born at Chatham, Columbia county, New York, June 30, 1863, grew to youthful manhood at the home farm, attended the district schools and there prepared for college. In 1881 he entered Swarthmore College, remaining two years in that famed institution conducted under the patronage of the Society of Friends. He then decided upon the profession of law, and entered the law department of the University of Michigan, receiving his LL.B. with

the class of '86. He was employed in the office of C. P. & F. J. Collier at Hudson, New York, until February, 1888, when he was admitted to the New York bar, and continued in the same office until January 1, 1893, when he became a partner, the firm reorganizing as Collier, Collier & Browning; upon the death of C. P. Collier the firm became Collier, Browning & Moy, general practitioners, that being the present style and title of the firm, one of the most eminent of Columbia's law firms.

In addition to a very large law practice, Mr. Browning is a trustee of The Hudson City Savings Institution, treasurer-secretary and trustee of Hudson Orphan Relief Association, and during the war period was active in the patriotic work of that period. He is a member of Hudson Lodge No. 7, Free and Accepted Masons, and is a Republican in politics. He is a member of Columbia County Bar Association.

Noah H. Browning married July 27, 1893, Sarah M. Rivenburg, daughter of Jacob M. and Elizabeth (Macy) Rivenburg of ancient Columbia county family. Mr. and Mrs. Browning are the parents of a son, Philip Macy Browning, born in Hudson, New York, March 15, 1899. He was educated in Hudson grade and high schools and Newtown Preparatory School, now with New York State Conservation Department, located at Warrensburg, New York. He married Frederica M. Bratt.

This record of nine generations shows that the Brownings are an agricultural family; in this branch Noah H. Browning, of the eighth generation, is the first to depart from family tradition and embrace a profession. His success at the bar leads to the query as to whether, what the country has gained in honorable, substantial farmers is compensation sufficient for the loss to the professions.