

**Irving Browning
Autograph Collection, 1678-1966****SC16596**

QUANTITY: 1 box (0.25 cubic ft.)
ACCESS: Open to research
ACQUISITION: Gift of Mrs. Hester V. Browning, November 1975
ADMINISTRATIVE NOTE: A number of documents in this collection are missing. The inventory list reflects those documents, marked with an asterisk (*), that were recovered in 2008 by the Office of the New York State Attorney General.
PROCESSED BY: Kay deGonzague, Student Assistant, State University of New York at Albany, March 2010

Biographical Note:

Irving Browning (1895-1961) was a photographer, actor and *avant-garde* filmmaker. He is known for his photographs of New York City during the Great Depression, the construction of the Chrysler and Empire State buildings, photomontages of Times Square, and a short city symphony (a form of silent film) called *City in Contrast*.

Browning and his brother Sam ran a photography business in New York City and received commissions from magazines, advertising agencies and architects. In his spare time, Browning would photograph New York City showing contrast between the fine life, rich shoppers and the vibrant building industry of the city and the weary Hooverilles, street merchants and the unemployed.

As an actor, Irving Browning starred in several silent films, *Wake Up in Society* (1918), *His Matrimonial Moans* (1918), *His Silent Fate* (1918) and *Chumps and Chances* (1917).

In addition to taking still photographs for films, Browning worked as a director, cinematographer and director of photography on films. He produced *City in Contrast* (1931), *U.S. Military Academy* (1940), the biopic *Women in Photography* (1941), and *Babies by Bannister* (1943), and was the cinematographer for *Unmasked* (1929) and the original version of *House of Secrets* (1929) with director Edmund Lawrence.

Browning donated over 1,889 gelatin silver photographic prints and ephemera to the New-York Historical Society. After his death, his childhood friend Ira Meistrich acquired thousands of his photographic negatives covering the years 1918-1938 that show the genesis of Radio City Hall and the Empire State Building. This collection was shown at the Gettysburg Festival of 2009.

Meistrich wrote a memorial piece for Browning for *American Heritage.*, in which he said Browning was “fascinated by history” and his office was “an eclectic museum” filled with old cameras and Native American artifacts and weapons.

Scope and Content Note:

A collection of original manuscript letters and other documents assembled by Browning that were signed by individuals who had served either as mayor of New York City or governor of New York State from the 1670s to the 1960s. The collection is organized into three series: I. Mayors of New York City; II. Governors of New York State; III. Miscellaneous. Within these series the documents are arranged chronologically.

This repository also holds two other collections assembled by Irving Browning: a collection of historical documents related to prominent public figures of New York State history (SC16653), and a collection of portraits and views of people, places or items dating from the seventeenth century through the early twentieth century, many of which are related to the history of New York State. The engravings were created in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries (PRI3595).

Series I: New York City Mayors

Folder	Item	Name	Contents	Date	Year
1	1	De Lavall, Thomas	Command re: John Cooley and John D. Meere as Overseers of Chimneys, etc., N.Y.C.	12/23	1678
1	2	Noell, Thomas	Recognizance issued to William White Jr., and Obadiah Smith re: William Adderly, N.Y.C.	12/13	1701
1	3	Wilson, Ebenezer	Testimony of William Swanston, N.Y.C.	8/23	1710
1	4	Heathcote, Caleb	Ezekiel Weekes's statement re: subpoena servings, N.Y.C.		1713
1	5	Johnston, John	Recognizance to James Borgeron re: appearance in court re: assize of bread, N.Y.C.	3/25	1719
1	6	Walter, Robert, <i>et al</i> as Justices for the Conservation of the Peace of the City and County of New York	Command to the sheriff to issue notice of court session, N.Y.C. Also signed by David Jamison, John Cruger, Hermanns Van Gelder, Phillip Cortlandt and Frederick Philipse	1/24	1720
1	7	Jansen, Johannes	Deposition of and signed by Everardus Bogardus in case of R. Fenn vs. J. Denn., N.Y.C.	--	1714
1	8	Jansen, Johannes	Statement re: James Harding v. Henry Spranger by Bickley and Quer, defendants counsel, N.Y.C.	12/30	1710
1	9	Jansen, Johannes, with Francis Harrison, Harmanus Van Gelder and	Command to the sheriff to issue notice of court session, N.Y.C.	1/18	1725

Folder	Item	Name	Contents	Date	Year
		Phillip V. Cortlandt, as Justices for the Conservation of the Peace of the City and County of New York			
1	10	Richard, Paul	Warrant to John Walter of East Ward to hold an election for constable, N.Y.C. On verso is Walter's statement of the election of Jacobus Johnson, 10/4/1738	9/29	1738
1	11	Cruger, John	See Item 6		
1	12	Bayard, Stephen, John Pintard, John Marshall, Stephen Van Cortlandt, Gerardus Stuyvesant and Daniel Horsmanden, as Justices for the Conservation of the Peace of the City and County of New York	Command to the Sheriff to issue notice of court session, N.Y.C.	4/9	1745
1	13	Holland, Edward, Simon Johnson, Stephen Van Cortlandt, James Livingston, Pierre De Peyster as Justices for the Conservation of the Peace of the City and County of New York	Command to the sheriff to issue notice of court sessions, N.Y.C.	4/9	1754
1	14	Cruger, John	Deposition by Thomas Stevenson concerning the bad character of Augustus Bradley, N.Y.C.	11/6	1760
1	15	Hicks, Whitehead	Jacob Remsen's power of attorney to Thomas Arnold, N.Y.C.	12/14	1773
1	16	Matthews, David	Bail piece in case of Wm. Thorn v. Wm. McIntosh, N.Y.C.	2/27	1775
1	17	Duane, James	Replication of Duane as plaintiff's attorney in case of Powers and Onderkirk v. Charles Penny, N.Y.C.	6/2	1757
1	18	Duane, James	Bond to Hercules Windover to keep a tavern, N.Y.C.	5/8	1789
1	19	Duane, James	Bond to Stephen Stilwell to keep a	4/14	1789

Folder	Item	Name	Contents	Date	Year
			tavern, N.Y.C.		
1	20	Duane, James	Bond to Bernard Rapelyea to keep a tavern, N.Y.C.	4/6	1789
1	21	Duane, James	Letter to Philip Van Rensselaer, Manour [sic] Livingston	6/4	1782
1	22	Duane, James	Revocation of appointment of Titus Underdonck [sic] as a city marshal for malconduct in office, N.Y.C.	1/2	1785
1	23	Varick, Richard	Order to constables to publish notice ordering sailors from the French ship <i>Jupiter</i> to deliver up their arms and not to carry arms with them, N.Y.C.	8/30	1793
1	24	Varick, Richard	Bond to Christopher Fegenham to keep a tavern, N.Y.C.	3/2	1790
1	25	Varick, Richard	Bond to Adam Fink to keep a tavern, N.Y.C.	3/5	1790
2	26	Varick, Richard	Bond to Daniel Dunscomb to keep a tavern, N.Y.C.	3/8	1790
2	27	Varick, Richard	Bail piece in case of D. Williams v. D. Forbes, N.Y.C.	6/25	1799
2	28	Varick, Richard	Bail piece in case of Orange Webb v. Wm. Cowley, N.Y.C.	3/26	1799
2	29	Varick, Richard	Bail piece in case of Henry Shenlaw v. John Hillsborough, N.Y.C.	6/18	1799
2	30	Livingston, Edward	Deed to Christopher Ross, land in Colchester, Delaware County, N.Y., n.p.	2/22	1799
2	31	Livingston, Edward	Order to Nicholas Low to pay Brockholst Livingston such sum as is done to E.L. from Leonard Bleecker's estate, n.p.	1/21	1796
2	32	Clinton, DeWitt	License to George Wilson to practice law in the Mayor's Court, N.Y.C.	5/1	1805
2	33	Willett, Marinus	Bail piece in case of J. Parkenson and I. Burr vs. F. Atkinson and N. Soamar, N.Y.C.	11/14	1787
2	34	Radcliff, Jacob	Bond of Charles W. Connor as an auctioneer, N.Y.C.	4/6	1816
2	35	Ferguson, John	License to practice law in Mayor's Court, N.Y.C.	5/19	1815
	36	Hone, Philip	Ship manifest of goods imported by John and Philip Hone on the ship <i>Patowmac Chief</i> , N.Y.C. Also (36a) Hone's oath on entering the goods	4/27	1801
2	37	Hone, Philip	Hone as naval officer approves of	4/4	1850

Folder	Item	Name	Contents	Date	Year
			facts stated in letter of W.J. Averell and Co. to W.M. Meredith, Secretary of Treasury, N.Y.C.		
2	38	Hone, Philip	Letter to G[ulian] C. Verplanck, N.Y.C.	10/25	1841
2	39	Paulding, William Jr.	Letter to Van ?, Washington	1/13	1812
2	40	Lee, Gideon	Letter to Andrew M. Shriver, N.Y.C.	10/1	1832
2	41	Lawrence, Cornelius W.	Lease of lot in 6 th Ward, N.Y.C. to Timothy R. Green, N.Y.C.	4/2	1835
2	42	Morris, Robert H.	Letter to John Campbell, N.Y.C.	11/16	1841
2	43	Woodhull, Caleb S.	Appointment of Bryan King as policeman, N.Y.C.	10/15	1849
2	44	Westervelt, Jacob A.	Request by Westervelt and 7 others to Greene C. Bronson to appoint Richard Norris to a post with Port of New York, n.p.	--	--
2	45	Wood, Fernando	Letter to M. Montterlon (?), New York	8/6	1861
2	46	Wood, Fernando	Letter to Silas Wright, New York	--	1860
2	47	Wood, Fernando, <i>et al</i>	Letter to Wm. M. Tweed, Washington, D.C.	4/18	1871
2	48	Tiemann, Daniel F.	Letter to F. Wood, New York	10/26	1858
2	49	Tiemann, Daniel F., <i>et al</i>	Letter to Greene C. Bronson, N.Y.	--	--
2	50	Tiemann, Daniel F.	Letter to Greene C. Bronson, N.Y.	4/19	1853
3	51	Stevens, Simon	Letter to D.D. Field, St. Germean Hall (?). Mentions Mayor George Opdyke	5/9	1863
3	52	Opdyke, George	Letter to George W. Childs, N.Y.	2/13	1863
3	53	Opdyke, George	Letter to Fredk. S. Winston, N.Y.	1/14	1862
3	54	Opdyke, George	Letter to S. Stevens, N.Y.	10/9	1861
3	55	Hoffman, John T.	Note accepting invitation to Capt. George M. Smith, N.Y.	1/31	1866
3	56	Hoffman, John T.	Letter to H.A. Smyth, N.Y.	7/9	1866
3	57	Hall, A. Oakley	Letter to E.A. Buckley ?, N.Y., Friday night	--	--
3	58	Hall, A. Oakley	Letter to unidentified person, N.Y., Thursday	10/8	1868?
3	59	Hall, A. Oakley	Note to Recorder, N.Y.	9/30	1868
3	60	Hall, A. Oakley	Document appointing members of Examining Board of Druggists, N.Y.	6/21	1871
3	61	Havemeyer, William F.	Letter to Barclay Gallagher, N.Y.	7/20	1872
3	62	Ely, Smith	Letter to Joseph F. Chattelier, N.Y.	11/4	1878
3	63	Ely, Smith	Note to superintendent re: agricultural	10/7	1876

Folder	Item	Name	Contents	Date	Year
			reports on verso of A.L.S. to Ely by A.W. Cutler, N.Y.		
3	64	Edson, Franklin	Letter to John J. Garrett, N.Y.	2/7	1898
3	65	Cooper, Edward	Letter to the <i>New York Herald</i> , N.Y.	4/17	1893
3	66	Grace, William R.	Auctioneer's license to George H. Clayton	6/29	1885
3	67	Grace, William R.	Political hand card asking for support of Grace and the Citizens Party	--	1884
3	68	Grace, William R.	Letter to Henry Schiff, N.Y.	1/9	1884
3	69	Hewitt, Abram S.	Letter to H. Metzner, Washington, D.C.	6/12	1886
3	70	Hewitt, Abram S.	Letter to Mrs. John D. Townsend	10/11	1895
3	71	Hewitt, Abram S.	Letter to E.P. Wheeler, N.Y.	4/21	1885
3	72	Hewitt, Abram S.	Letter to George A. Townsend, N.Y.	1/24	1888
3	73	Hewitt, Abram S.	Letter to Julius Harburger, N.Y.	9/21	1887
3	74	Hewitt, Abram S.	Letter to Charles M. Wallace, N.Y.	7/19	1888
3	75	Hewitt, Abram S.	Letter to Levi P. Morton, Washington, D.C.	6/23	1882
4	76	Grant, Hugh J.	Letter to Al Aronson, N.Y.	11/6	1890
4	77	Grant, Hugh J.	Letter to <i>New York Mercury</i> , N.Y.	12/11	1894
4	78	Grant, Hugh J.	Letter to Julius Harburger, N.Y.	3/13	1891
4	79	Strong, William L.	Letter to Chas. L. Ford, N.Y.	--	--
4	80	Strong, William L.	Letter to Genl. George M. Smith, N.Y.	11/5	1898
4	81	Strong, William L.	Appointment of George M. Smith as commissioner of police, N.Y.	8/2	1897
4	82	Strong, William L.	Letter to Everett P. Wheeler, N.Y.	11/14	1895
4	83	Strong, William L.	Letter re: appointment to Col. George M. Smith re: Tennessee Centennial, N.Y.	2/20	1897
4	84	Strong, William L.	Letter to G.M. Smith, N.Y.	7/28	1898
4	85	Strong, William L.	Letter to Margaret Townsend, N.Y.	7/7	1898
4	86	Van Wyck, Robert A.	Removal notice of George M. Smith from office as police commissioner	1/1	1898
4	87	Van Wyck, Robert A.	Letter re: appointment of Richard A. McCurdy, N.Y.	2/14	1898
4	88	Van Wyck, Robert A.	Letter re: insurance renewal notice to Home Insurance Co., N.Y.	11/20	1903
4	89	Van Wyck, Robert A.	List of members of Celebration Committee, for the New York City consolidation, N.Y.	--	--
	90	Low, Seth	Letter to Nathaniel H. Levi, N.Y.	12/19	1903
4	91	Low, Seth	Letter to Rev. E.M. Bliss, N.Y.	3/6	1900
4	92	Low, Seth	Letter to Dr. John G. Wight	12/16	1899
4	93	McClellan, George B.	Letter to G.P. Farley, N.Y.	11/10	1905

Folder	Item	Name	Contents	Date	Year
4	94	McClellan, George B.	Letter to Brig. Gen. George M. Smith, N.Y.	6/30	1909
4	95	McClellan, George B.	Letter to Crofton Eser, Brooklyn	8/21	1890
4	96	McClellan, George B.	Letter to Everett P. Wheeler, N.Y.	6/21	1907
4	97	Gaynor, William J.	Letter to Lyman O. Dana, N.Y.	4/21	1910
4	98	Gaynor, William J.	Letter to Everett P. Wheeler, Brooklyn	12/6	1909
4	99	Gaynor, William J.	Letter to David Robinson, N.Y.	2/27	1912
4	100	Gaynor, William J.	Letter to Sydney Reid, N.Y.	4/27	1910
5	101	Gaynor, William J.	Letter to E.P. Wheeler, N.Y.	9/27	1910
5	102	Gaynor, William J.	Letter to E.P. Wheeler, N.Y.	7/30	1913
5	103	Gaynor, William J.	Letter to Margaret T. Tagliapietra, N.Y.	12/4	1911
5	104	Gaynor, William J.	Letter to Cuyler Reynolds, N.Y.	9/3	1909
5	105	Gaynor, William J.	Letter to E.P. Wheeler, N.Y.	3/17	1910
5	106	Kline, Adolph L.	Letter to Jerome Milkman, Washington, D.C.	8/8	1921
5	107	Mitchel, John P.	Letter to James E. West, N.Y.	6/18	1917
5	108	Hylan, John F.	Letter to Hevlyn D. Benson, N.Y.	1/10	1930
5	109	McKee, Joseph V.	Letter to Louis Wiley, N.Y.	10/24	1932
5	110	O'Brien, John P.	Letter to Theresa McGinty, N.Y.	10/14	1932
5	111	LaGuardia, Fiorello H.	Letter to I.S. Seidman, N.Y.	10/10	1935
5	112	O'Dwyer, William	3 autographs	--	1947
5	113	Wagner, Robert	Letter to David Robinson, N.Y.	11/23	1926
5	114	Wagner, Robert	Letter to Irving Browning, N.Y.	9/17	1957
5	115	Lindsay, Mrs. John V.	Letter to Hester V. Browning, N.Y., with the Browning letter	2/16	1966
5	116	Lindsay, John V.	Letter to Hester V. Browning, N.Y.	8/25	1966
5	117	Clinton, DeWitt	Certification	7/13	1814

Series II: New York State Governors

Folder	Item	Name	Contents	Date	Year
6	1	Hyde, Edmond, Viscount Cornbury	Note about Thomas Stillwell estate inventory, N.Y.	10/3	1704
6	2	Hyde, Edmond, Viscount Cornbury	Letter of administration to Sarah Latham, N.Y.	2/26	1707/ 1708
6	3	Hyde, Edmond, Viscount Cornbury	Letter of administration to Anne Pritchard, N.Y.	2/18	1705/ 1796
6	4	Hyde, Edmond, Viscount Cornbury	Letter of administration to Alice Jones, N.Y.	4/13	1704
6	5	Hyde, Edmond, Viscount Cornbury	Letter of administration to Cretice Van Cortlandt, N.Y.	1/28	1705/ 1706
6	6	Delancey, James (by his	Citation to Jacob Van Schaick to	2/18	1760

Folder	Item	Name	Contents	Date	Year
		secretary, G. Bunyar)	cause James Cassedy to appear in Prerogative Court, N.Y.		
6	7*	Hardy, Sir Charles	Muster orders to Sir William Johnson, N.Y.	3/9	1757
6	8	Tryon, William, <i>et al</i>	Ship register of the ship <i>Elizabeth</i> , Cornelius Conkling, master, N.Y.	9/13	1773
6	9	Clinton, George	Letter to G.C. by Pierre Van Cortlandt and Evert Bancker, Kingston	5/26	1770
6	10	Clinton, George	Appointment of David Wolfe, as a militia major, Albany	6/6	1789
6	11	Clinton, George	Resolution of Council of Revision re: certain bills, [Albany]	3/19	1803
6	12*	Clinton, George	Appointment of Henry Platt as ensign, N.Y.	9/13	1789
6	13	Clinton, George	Letter to Col. Van Cortlandt, N.Y.	3/17	1811
6	14	Clinton, George	Resolution of Council of Revision, [Albany]	1/30	1794
6	15	Lewis, Morgan	Letter to unidentified person, refusing pardons, Albany	4/19	1805
6	16	Lewis, Morgan	Appointment of Isaac Milliman as cornet, Albany	4/6	1807
6	17	Clinton, DeWitt	Appointment of Joseph G. Foard and Jacob Cooper, Albany	3/18	1819
6	18	Marcy, William L.	Letter transmitting report, Albany	12/1	1833
6	19	Wright, Silas	Appointment of Elijah Shaw as "inspector of sole leather," Albany	5/19	1845
6	20	Fish, Hamilton	Receipt, N.Y.	4/25	1851
6	21	Fish, Hamilton	Letter (incomplete)	--	--
6	22	Fish, Hamilton	Letter to G.C. Verplanck, [Washington]	3/22	1853
6	23	Hunt, Washington	Letter to C.A. Olmsted, N.Y.	12/6	1804
6	24	Seymour, Horatio	Letter to Darran C. Parry?, Utica	8/28	1873
6	25	Seymour, Horatio	Letter to J.F. Millar declining invitation, Utica	4/24	--
7	26	Seymour, Horatio	Letter to Hon. Judge Durnet, Washington	3/5	1833
7	27	Seymour, Horatio	Letter to D.A. Ogden, appointing him a delegate to a convention in Chicago to discuss "suitable measures to secure adequate and	5/22	1863

Folder	Item	Name	Contents	Date	Year
			uninterrupted navigation between the Great lakes and the Mississippi river.”		
7	28	Morgan, Edwin	Note to F.A. Wood, Albany	10/28	1859
7	29	Morgan, Edwin	Document ordering Willard Herrington “to cease ... executing” the duties of “commissioner for loaning certain moneys of the United States in and for the County of Rensselaer” because a complaint had been filed against him., Albany	9/30	1861
7	30	Fenton, Reuben E.	Speech on the joint resolution authorizing the Secretary of the Treasury to sell any surplus gold in the Treasury. Printed	3/3	1864
7	31	Fenton, Reuben E.	Pardon to William Elmore, who had been convicted of petit larceny in a Saratoga County court, Albany	11/1	1867
7	32	Hill, David B.	Note to David B. Sickels, Albany	10/15	1896
7	33	Morton, Levi P.	Letter to R.H. McCurdy, Albany	5/14	1896
7	34	Odell, B.B., Jr.	Thanksgiving Proclamation, Albany [not autograph signature]	11/14	1904
7	35	Hughes, Charles E.	Signature on Register of Patrons of Smithsonian Scientific Series	--	--
7	36	Hughes, Charles E.	Letter to W.F. Wakeman, Albany	12/29	1908
7	37	White, Horace	Thanksgiving Proclamation, Albany	11/12	1910
7	38	Sulzer, William	Letter to Milt Goodkind, Albany	5/12	1913
7	39	Sulzer, William	Letter to Milt Goodkind, thanking Goodkind for “the good work you are doing for direct nominations,” Albany	6/16	1913
7	40	Glynn, Martin H.	Thanksgiving Proclamation, Albany	11/12	1914
7	41	Smith, Alfred E.	Letter to Everett P. Wheeler, Albany	4/1	1913
7	42	Smith, Alfred E.	Letter to Joseph Laurie, Jr., wishing him luck in his role in the musical comedy <i>Plain Jane</i> Albany	10/1	1924
7	43	Miller, Nathan L.	Letter to Joseph Penny, Albany	3/23	1922
7	44	Roosevelt, Franklin D.	Letter to Joe Wilson, Warm	5/12	1932

Folder	Item	Name	Contents	Date	Year
			Springs, Georgia (Item missing March 2010)		
7	45	Lehman, Herbert H.	Letter to W. Forbes Morgan, Albany	11/18	1932
7	46	Harriman, Averell	Letter to George McCullough, "a staunch Democrat," Albany	8/9	1956
7	47	Harriman, Averell	Letter to George McCullough, saying "[t]here is a great deal of work to be done in New York, and I for one will continue to work vigorously for the principles of the Democratic Party," Albany	11/25	1958
7	48	Rockefeller, Nelson A.	Letter to Irving Browning, providing him with an autograph for Browning's collection	8/26	1960

Series III: Miscellaneous

Folder	Item	Name	Contents	Date	Year
8	1	New York (City) Mayor's Court	Complaint between Henry Lane and Mary Derby	--	1714
8	2	Van Cortlandt, Pierre	Indenture with John Van Cortlandt, executor of the estate of Gertruyd Beekman	5/14	1784
8	3	Hathorn, John	Voucher to Ebenezer Russell	5/22	1784
8	4	Bayard, Nicholas	Indenture with John Frazar	4/10	1786
8	5	New York (City) Mayor's Court	Conviction of Nicholas Pitt for selling brandy without a permit	1/11	1799
8	6	New York (City) Mayor's Court	Bail	5/25	1799
8	7	Harrison, Richard	Bail	8/6	1799
8	8	Fish, Nicholas	Letter to John V. Henry, New York	9/13	1800
8	9	Laurence, John	Letter to James Greenbat, New York	1/5	1810
8	10	Troup, Robert	Letter to John V. Henry, Geneva	6/21	1822
8	11	Ulliman, D.	Letter	9/2	1840
8	12	Ulliman, D.	Letter, Saratoga	8/5	1859
8	13	Robinson, C.D.	Letter, Elmira	7/25	1879
8	14	Graves, George B.	Letter to Mary Whalen, Albany	6/4	1928
8	15	Benson, Egbert	Letter, New York	11/17	--
9		Various	Autographs on signature cards or clipped from documents; includes Mayors of New York City and		

Folder	Item	Name	Contents	Date	Year
			Governors of New York State		
10			Miscellaneous Material – consists chiefly of newspaper clippings		

*Item recovered by the New York State Office of Attorney General, 2008

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