

**Irving Browning
Autograph Collection, ca. 1461-1911**

SC16653

QUANTITY: 2 boxes (0.50 cubic ft.)
ACCESS: Open to research
ACQUISITION: Purchase: Mrs. Hester V. Browning, December 1976
PROCESSED BY: Kay deGonzague, Student, State University of New York at Albany, April 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 Hoovervilles, 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 documents assembled by Irving Browning that is related to prominent public figures of New York State history. The collection is organized into six series: Correspondence,

New York State Court Documents, Military and Government, Legal Matters, Contracts and Business. The major part of the collection is correspondence, 82 items dating from 1733 through 1904, with the bulk of the letters dated from the late 1700s through the early 1800s.

The 15 items in the New York State Court Documents series includes papers related to cases heard in courts of common pleas and the New York City Mayor's Court and date between 1713 and 1857. The seven documents related to the military or government date from 1796 to 1911 and include an 1815 certificate of appointment of 14 men as coroners. The six documents related to legal matters, dated between 1778 and 1801, deal mainly with estates, and the five indentured contracts, dated 1799 to 1853, deal mainly with land transactions. The 13 items in the business series, dating between 1772 and 1851, includes a 1799 document certifying Nicholas Fish as supervisor of the Port of New York. The last several folders hold documents that didn't fit any of the other series.

This repository also holds two other collections assembled by Irving Browning: a collection of autographs of the mayors of New York City and the governors of New York State (SC16596), 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).

Correspondence, 1733-1904

Box	Folder	Description	Date
1	1	Auborn, Henry. New York, to Hugh Peebles, Halfmoon, [N.Y.]	May 30, 1797
1	2	Baldwin, T. B. Elmira, [N.Y.], to Secr[etary] of War James Barbour	Ap[ril] 13, 1826
1	3	Benson, Robert. N.p., to Sam[ue]l Jones, Esq.	June 11, 1798
1	4	Bloom, George. Poughkeepsie, [N.Y.], to Chief Justice Thompson, Albany [N.Y.]	Nov[ember] 29, 1816
1	5	Breese, A. Utica [N.Y.], to Chief Justice Smith Thompson, Albany, [N.Y.]	Nov[ember] 27, 1816
1	6	Broome, John. N.p. to Council of Appointments re: Capt. Thomas Hook for the position of harbor master	Feb[ruar]y 8, 1796
1	7	Cadwalader, Thomas. Philadelphia, to Smith Thompson, New York	June 1, 1824
1	7a	Thompson, Smith. Poughkeepsie [N.Y.], to T[homas] Cadwalader (on same letter as Item 7)	June, 7 1824
1	8	Carpenter, Tho[ma]s. New York, to John Fisher	April 3, 1790
1	9	Carpenter, Tho[ma]s. New York, to John Fisher, Savannah, [Ga.]	March 20, 1791
1	10	Cass, Joseph B. From the office of the Secretary of State, Albany, N.Y., to Mr. B[urt?]	n.d.
1	11	Chapin, Cyrenius. Washington, [D.C.], to Capt. Jasper Parrish, Canandaigua, N.Y.	Aug[us]t 15, 1816

Box	Folder	Description	Date
1	12	Church, J[ohn] B. New York, to Stephen Van Rensselaer	March 22, 1815
1	13	Cullen, Geo[rge] W. Charleston S.C., to James T. Main, Esq., Troy, N.Y.	June 13, 1855
1	14	Doughty, E. L. New York, to Smith Thompson, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.	July 8, 1831
1	15	Foote, Catherine. Newplaim [?],to Margaret Foote, Delhi, N.Y.	August 12 [1810?]
1	16	Foote, Ch[arles] A. Delhi, [N.Y.], to Ebenezer Foote, Esq., New York	July 3, 1818
1	17	Foote, Eli. Guilford, to E. . Foote	March 22, 1784
1	18	Foote, Eli. New York, to Justin Foote, Farry Lowry	Ap[ri]l 27, 1785
1	19	Foote, Erastus. Wiscasset, [Me.], to Joseph Williamson, Esq., County Atty., Belfast	April 11, 1826
1	20	Foote, Harriet. Newburgh, to Ebenezer Foote, Esq., Delhi, Delaware County	Feb[ruar]y 11, 1811
1	21	Foote, Justin. New York, to 'My Dear E'	Feb. 23, [17]95
1	22	Foote, Justin. New York, to 'Dear Brother' [Ebenezer Foote]	Thursday Morning 17[84]
1	23	Foote, Justin. New York, to Ebyor [Ebenezer] Foote, Crompond [N.Y.]	April 23, 1784
1	24	Foote, Justin, New York, to Ebby [Ebenezer Foote], Crompond [N.Y.]	May 31, 1784
1	25	Foote, M[aria]. N.p., to 'My dear Father'	Saturday morning, ten o'clock [Sept. 1814]
1	26	Foote, Margaret. Delhi, [N.Y.], to [Ebenezer Foote, Esq.], New York	November 29 [1810]
1	27	Foote, Richard. N.p., to Doct[e]r. David Stuart, Ossian Hall	Sep[tember] 20, 1801
1	28	Hess, John. Camp Sullivan, to Geo[rge] W. Hess, Barbourville, Delaware Ave., N.Y. (with envelope)	March 11, 1864
1	29	Hess, Joseph A. Morris Island, S.C., to George W. Hess, Barbourville, [N.Y.] (with envelope)	August 31, 1865
1	30	Hillyer, W[illia]m S. Office of Revenue Agent, no 83, Cedar Street [IRS], to 'the President'	Jan[uar]y 28, 1868
1	31	Hoffman, Josiah O. N.p., to 'My good friends'	Saturday, April 1795
1	32	Hunt, W. Albany, [N.Y.], to Robinson	Nov. 2, 1850
1	33	Hunt, W. Albany, [N.Y.], to W[illia]m E. Robinson, Esq.	Feb. 1, 1852
1	34	Jessup, Thomas J. Q[uar]ter Master Gen[era]l Office, to Major J. Dalliba Comm[an]d[er]., Watervliet, [N.Y.]	Jan[uar]y 16, 1824
1	35	Jessup, Thomas. Washington, [D.C.], to S.L. Southard, Secretary of the Navy, Washington City	Nov. 26, 1828
1	36	Jones, Samuel. New York, to Egbert Benson, Esq.,	December 31, 1790

Box	Folder	Description	Date
		Philadelphia	
1	37	Lansing, John Jr. Albany, [N.Y.], to Governor Clinton	February 10, 1804
1	38	Little, Jonathan. Estate of James Cooper to Smith Thompson, Poughkeepsie, [N.Y.]	June 8, 1795
1	39	Livingston, William. New York, to Peter Van Schaack, Kinderhook, [N.Y.]	May 26, 1787
1	40	Lloyd, J. H. Headquarters, Third Brigade, N.G.N.Y., to Major James H Manning, Albany, [N.Y.] (with envelope with stamp)	Troy postmark May 26, 1904
1	41	Macomb, Ali [Alexander]. Washington, [D.C.], to John St., Eaton	Jan. 4, 1829
1	42	Mather, George. Plattsburgh, [N.Y.], to Isiah Townsend, Albany, N.Y.	Feb[uar]y 24, 1815
1	43	Melvill, Allan. New York, to Thomas J. Rogers, Esq., Washington, [D.C.] (with transcript)	Feb[uar]y 22, 1823
1	44	Mitchell, William. Walton, West Branch of the Delaware, to Sam[ue]l Leatham, Londonderry, Ireland	August 8, 1805
1	45	Morris, Thomas. New York, to William P. Van Ness Esq., Albany, [N.Y.]	April 2, 1811
1	46	Morris, Thomas. New York, to Judge William P. Van Ness, City of Hudson Post Office, Columbia County	June 8, 1811
1	47	Morris, Thomas. New York, to William P Van Ness Kinderhook, Columbia County, [N.Y.]	July 17, 1811
1	48	Morris, Thomas. New York – no addressee	Jan[uar]y 14, 1812
1	49	Morris, Thomas. N[ew] York – no addressee	Nov. 29 1812
1	50	Morris, Thomas. New York, to Judge W[illiam] P. Van Ness, Kinderhook, [N.Y.]	Dec[embe]r 16, 1817
1	51	Morris, Thomas. New York, to W[illiam] P. Van Ness, Kinderhook, [N.Y.]	Dec[embe]r 27 1817
1	52	Morris, Thomas. New York, to Charles E. Dudley, Senate of the U. S., Washington, [D.C.]	March 4, 1829
1	53	Morris, Thomas. New York – no addressee [William Morris?]	March 6, 1829
1	54	Murray, Jos[eph]. N.p., to James Delancey	March 25, 1733
1	55	North, Gen. New York, to Elkanah Watson, Albany, [N.Y.]	June 3, 1819
1	56	Oothout, Magdalen. New York, to Smith Thompson, Washington, [D.C.]	June 7, 1823
1	57	Page, Maria. N.p., to Major North	n.d. [1786?]
1	58	Porter, P[eter] A. Niagara Falls, to Doctor Shelton	May 29, 1861
1	59	Potter, P. Poughkeepsie, [N.Y.], to Smith Thompson, Albany, [N.Y.]	Nov. 13, 1816
1	60	Randall, Henry I. Cortland Village, N.Y., to Nicholas P. Trist, Esq.	Ap[ri]l 6, 1864

Box	Folder	Description	Date
1	61	Rudd, T[heron]. N.p., to Smith Thompson, Albany, [N.Y.]	Jan[uar]y 1818
1	62	Scott, Winfield. N.p., to Gen. Andrew Jackson – copies of several letters	Aug. 14, 1817-Jan. 2, 1818
1	63	Shipboy, Thomas. Albany, [N.Y.], to Evert Banker, Jr., Esq., New York	April 19, 1791
1	64	Shmik, Francis J. N.p., to Gen. J. Watts de Peyster, Watervliet Arsenal, [N.Y.]	February 5, 1855
1	65	Simpson, John. Newark, to Ebenezer Foote, Crompond, N.Y.	June 2, 1784
1	66	Stryker, J[ames]. Albany, [N.Y.], to Alfred B. Street, Esq.	April 11, [18]50
1	67	Stryker, Peter. New York, to Peter Low; Esopus, [N.Y.]	Dec[embe]r 4, 1784
1	68	Ten Eyck, Abraham R. N.p., to Stephen Van Rensselaer, Albany, [N.Y.]	Sept[embe]r 19, 1804
1	69	Tillotson, Thomas. New York, to William Cockburn, Clermont, [N.Y.]	Oct[obe]r 8, 1784
1	70	Trimble, George. Poughkeepsie, [N.Y.], to Ebenezer Foote Crompond, [N.Y.]	June 2, 1785
1	71	Vanderkemp, Francis A. N.p., to Benj[amin] Walker, Utica, [N.Y.]	Oct. 16, 1800
1	72	Vanderlyn, J. New York, to Alderman Schieffelin, 193 Pearl St.	March 25, 1826
1	73	Vanderzee, Teunnis. New Baltimore, to David McCarty, Coeymans, [N.Y.]	July 21, 1794
1	74	Van Gaasbeck, Peter. Kingston, [Mass.], to [Ebenezer] Foote	Nov[embe]r 8, 1796
1	75	Van Rensselaer, K.K. Albany, [N.Y.], to General Ira Allen, Colchester, Vt.	Feb[ruar]y 20, 1795
1	76	Van Rensselaer, S. New York, to Abraham Van Vechten Esq., Albany, [N.Y.]	Jan. 26, 1795
1	77	Van Rensselaer, S. to Major General S. Van Rensselaer	Albany postmark April 6 [no year]
1	78	Verplanck, Gulian. New York, to Alexander Hamilton, Esq., Philadelphia	February 8, 1792
1	79	Ward, John. St. John, to Ebenezer Foote, A. New York	July 20, 1788
1	80	Washburn, Israel, Portland, to J.S. Monill	Jan[uar]y 28, 1865
1	81	Wool, John E. Troy, New York, to W[illia]m P. Fessenden (letter mounted with picture)	July 21, 1842
1	82	Wool, John E. Troy, [N.Y.], to Major Davis, Doylestown, Penn.	Dec[embe]r 17, 1851

New York State Court Documents, 1713-1857

Box	Folder	Description	Date
2	83	Return of Commissioners of Albany Court of Common Pleas re: Catskill patent for division of lots 3 & 4; Leonard Bronck, Josiah Winnie, and John Brandon; Assistant Judges Elbert Willet & Philip L. Van Rensselaer	October 5, 1799
2	84	Resolution relative to the <i>Heirs of Anneke Jans Bogardus vs. Trinity Church</i> . Printed form, New York Council of Revisions	February 16, 1857
2	85	<i>The King [George the Second] v. Joseph Forman</i> . Narration on the debt of bond. D.S. John Tabor Kempe, Atty. Gen.	April 1, 1758
2	86	Indictment of William Tribe for assault and battery on Mary Nicholson. D.S. Jacob Brewerton	February 2, 1773
2	87	Order of investigation for <i>Green v. Prendergast</i> . D.S. John Wilkes, Notary Public, New York City	April 21, 1804
2	88	<i>John Hephens v. James and Margaret Elms</i> . D.S. John Dyer	November 10, [1713]
2	89	New York City Mayor's Court. Assignment relative to <i>Peter Colwell v. Daniel Loorht</i> . D.S. David Jamison	October 4, 1717
2	90	New York City Mayor's Court. Narration relative to the case of <i>Godfrey Lydeback v. William Betts</i> . D.S. Thomas Smith	August 13, 1761
2	91	New York City Mayor's Court. Narration relative to the case of <i>Thomas Smith v. Edward Patten</i> . D.S. William Tapp and Edward Patten	September 3, 1789
2	92	New York City Mayor's Court. Affidavit relative to the case of <i>Yellis Bartholf v. Garret Bartholf</i> . D.S. Robert Morris, Attorney	January 12, 1790
2	93	New York City Mayor's Court. Narration relative to the case of <i>John Barnes & Robert Gilbert Livingston v. Andrew Billings & Peter Stuyvesant</i> . D.S. Thomas Smith, Attorney	April 12, 1790
2	94	New York City Mayor's Court. Narration relative to the case of <i>James Barry v. David Hennessy</i> . D.S. Charles Richardson, Attorney	June 16, 1794
2	95	New York City Mayor's Court. Transcript of record relative to the case of <i>James Duff v. Francis Roach</i> . D.S. Richard Harrison	Aug. 6, 1799
2	96	Orange County Court of Common Pleas. Narration relative to the case of <i>Joseph Wadsworth v. James Wadsworth, Hezekiah Taylor and Paul Lee</i> . D.S. John Duer	1808
2	97	Schoharie Court of Common Pleas. Panel of Jurors. D.S. Jacob Livingston	n.d.

Military and Government, 1796-1911

Box	Folder	Description	Date
2	98	Ulster County supervisor's certificate of elections	May 31, 1796
2	99	Certificate of appointment of Andrew McCord, James Burt and James Graham for a road inspection in Orange County; counter-signed by B. DeWitt. D.S. George Clinton	April 4, 1800
2	100	Certificate of appointment of Richard H. Vary and 13 others as coroners, Rensselaer County, N.Y. D.S. Daniel D. Tompkins, Governor; Peter B. Porter, secretary	March 15, 1815
2	101	Military exemption for Lewis W. Leamy signed by Brig. Gen. William Hall and Col. Thomas F. De Voe	June 27, 1853
2	102	One mounted engraving of a photograph of Daniel Manning with attached personal check from National Commercial Bank made out to George W. Bender for \$42.	Check's date: March 15, 1882, n.d. on picture
2	103	Three notices of death of Brig. Gen. James H. Lloyd, general orders 3, 14 and 25 of Albany; printed forms	May 22, 1911
2	104	Photographs of Major General John E. Wool (10 items)	No dates

Legal Matters, 1778-1801

Box	Folder	Description	Date
2	105	Certification of the authenticity of the last will and testament of John Marschalk (copy enclosed). D.S. Samuel Bayard	August 4, 1778
2	106	Citation to David Matthews to produce an inventory and account as sole executor of the estate of David Provoost. D.S. Samuel Bayard	October 23, 1783
2	107	Power of Attorney: George Ormsby of Tobervaddy, Roscommon County, Ireland, to James Morris to care for inheritance from Captain John Ormsby, Queens County, N.Y.	April 26, 1790
2	108	Deposition I before the Court Dutchess County, N.Y., relative to the receipt of produce from the estate of John Holloway. D.S. Jeronimus Rapalje,	October 23, 1801
2	109	Opinion relative to the settlement of the estate of John Van Benthuisen. D.S. Peter W. Yates	n.d.
2	110	Draft of an opinion relative to the deed of conveyance between Stephen Van Rensselaer and L. Rysdorp. D.S. Peter W. Yates	May 6, 1792

Indentured Contracts, 1799-1853

Box	Folder	Description	Date
2	111	J. [name crossed out] indentured to Atkinson P. Ferguson, Esopus, Ulster County, N.Y.	February 26, ----
2	112	Deed: Livingston Billings, Randall S. Street, for lot number 20 in the division of Great Lot 2 in the Hardenburgh Patent, N.Y.	September 21, 1818

2	113	Lease: William Briggs to John Frost, dwelling house in Croton, Westchester County, N.Y.	1841
2	114	Warranty deed: Luther and Ann Hannum to Charles and Amelia Smith, land in Oswego County	August 18, 1853
2	115	Conveyance: John and Rebekah Vreelandt to Frederick Devoe for lot of ground being situated in the 7 th Ward of New York City	May 10, 1799

Business, 1772-1851

Box	Folder	Description	Date
2	116	Alsop, John. Account of received funds from Elias Desbrosses, W. Jauncey, Philip Livingston, J. Roorbach, and others	Aug. 10-Nov. 12, 1772
2	117	Brett, Robert. Promissory note to Peter Monfoort	May 29, 1783
2	118	Fish, Nicholas. Certification as supervisor of Port of New York; countersigned by John Lasher, inspector	Nov. 5, 1799
2	119	New York – Port of New York, Owner of Consignee's Oath on Entering Merchandise [8 items]	March 5, 1802-May 20, 1804
2	120	New York – Port of New York, Owner of Consignee's Oath on Entering Merchandise [20 items]	April 12, 1810-May 1, 1810
2	121	New York – Port of New York, Owner of Consignee's Oath on Entering Merchandise [21 items]	Sept. 8, 1810-Sept. 11, 1810
2	122	New York – Port of New York, Owner of Consignee's Oath on Entering Merchandise [20 items]	Sept. 12, 1810-Sept. 28, 1810
2	123	Account of Johannis E. Lott and Cornelius V.D. Veers against executors of Cornelius Van Duyn's estate	June 10, 1785 - Feb. 3, 1787
2	124	Shepherd, William. Receipt of payment from Timothy Church	Oct. 27, 1786
2	125	Smith, Melancton. Account of notes, hand delivered, belonging to partnership of Melancton and Samuel Smith	August 23, 1788
2	126	Smith & Wyckoff receipt and bill to Captain James Cooper	June 28, 1787
2	127	Spinner, F.E. Three receipts and bills to R.H. Pomeroy	18 April 1848, 12 June 1848, 19 May 1851
2	128	Waldron, James. Receipt against estate of David Verplanck paid by Daniel Van Antwerp	August 29, 1776

Miscellaneous Documents, 1461(?) -1864

Box	Folder	Description	Date
2	129	Vroman family account of payments (in Dutch)	June 17, 1752
2	130	Unknown document (in French)	1532
2	131	Unknown document with seal (possibly Latin)	1461 (?)

2	132	Envelope addressed to R.P. King, postmarked Georgetown	June 3, 1861
2	132	Letter addressed to Major Manning, unsigned, on Utica, New York's Surgeon General Office stationery	1840 (?)
2	132	Recollections of W[illia]m Gorham Esq., Canandaigua, N.Y.	November 1864
2	132	Envelope addressed to Aubrey H. Smith from Sylvester Wolle and others, marked 'contract for engraving'	July 28, 1862
2	132	Cut letter to Charles Manning from J[oh]n F. Hogeboom re: Cha[rle]s Foote	Oct 26, 1838
		Items on original inventory list not found in April 2010	
		Frost, William to D. G. Calb (with receipt)	May 20, 1804
		Wadsworth, Joseph to Frances D. Wadsworth	May 1808

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