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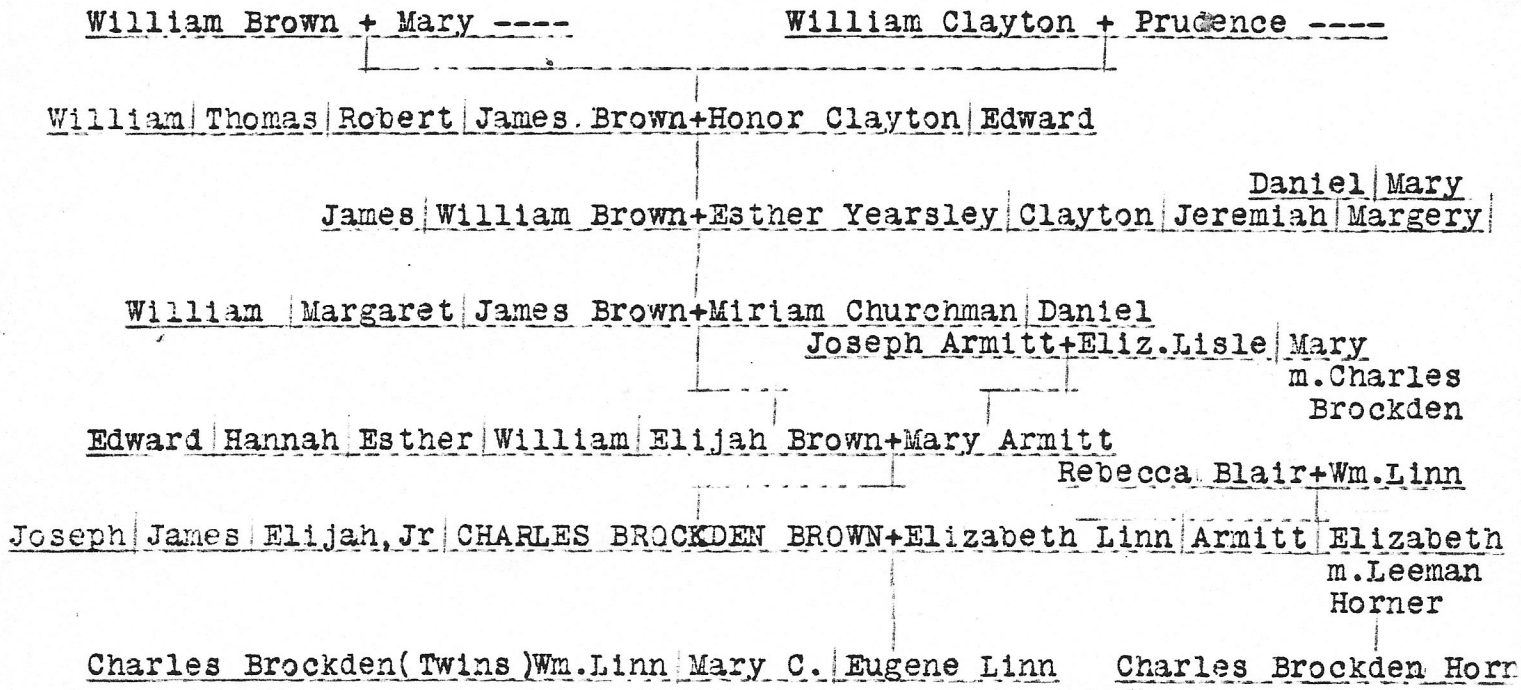
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CHART OF THE ANCESTRY OF CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN



CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY

Brown himself, when reading his own biography, would not pass unread the ~~The reason why few read a~~ geneological chapter/~~should be easily~~ though he knew very well that ~~understood.~~ Commonly the disjointed skeleton of an ~~formidable~~ array of names and dates is ~~to a reader~~ almost as barren and ~~repulsive~~ as unattractive if it were ~~composed the body of~~ the first book of Chronicles. Facetious Tom Brown's Welch herald who derived a merchant's pedigree from Adam's great-grandfather certainly had literary judgment far superior to Ezra or the unknown chronicler. He did not ~~allow~~ intend the human side of geneological study to drop out of view. On the other hand, Ezra and common laborers like him, having ceremoniously conducted ~~the~~ a funeral, rush the corpse to the tomb, record in a geneological society the birth, marriage and death of the defunct and with little loss of time rejoin ~~the [illegible]~~ the world to resume their activities. Some day they take to the same repository another set of dates which are duly recorded as the next generation. So they heap up the records. It never seems to occur to these vampires that the dead may be much more alive and much more human than the unburied ghosts who flit about the stacks and haunt the desks in the fetid tombs of records. They add no flesh to the bones they rattle.

In opening a Brown biography with some account of his distinguished ancestors

it is not merely book-making custom that is followed for there are some characteristics of his not due to the erratic circumstances of life and the ~~another~~ boasted free will of our author. Aside from ~~any~~ the interest it ~~may have~~ has in itself, Brown's geneology displays ~~some~~ many traits which may be traced to one branch or the other or to one individual or another and therefore cause us to believe them ~~important~~ hereditary in ~~the moulding of~~ the analysis of his character.

If it were only for this identification of ~~family~~ possible family traits ~~most~~ some of the pages of Brown's family history would be dull reading, even to those most concerned. But his ancestry covers a field so varied by details both entertaining and ~~exciting~~ lively as to appeal to the reader's humanity at the same time as it lightens the labor of ~~his~~ the search. This is due to the fortunate circumstance that it ~~rouses the imagination to~~ awakens run riot in some of the most romantic ~~periods of~~ history, ~~carrying us~~ back to the times when the Kings' Standard Bearers ~~and~~ was accoladed into a Knights of the Bath ~~and~~ or of the Garter ~~received the accolade~~ fictitiously; when Edward the Sixth was "excessively" banquetted by the first Viscount Montague; when Henry the Eighth ~~was married~~ contracted his ~~fourth~~ fourth marriage ~~to~~ with the fat "Flanders mare" Anne of Cleves by the proxy of the rich merchant Sir Anthony Brown who dressed in his parti-colored suit of blue and white silk, performed the ceremony by thrusting his white leg into Anne's bed; when Queen Elizabeth ~~was~~, was ordered to sit as one of the Commissioners to try Queen Mary; when Viscount Montague, ~~not~~ empty

not necessary and his religion was tolerated so that he managed to prosper. On his death bed he was said to have been favored with a sense of the Divine presence and prophesied truly that his wife would live to bring up all of their children. According to George Churchman, William was said to have had relatives who were in 1752 settled in Suton, probably Sutton, Derbyshire,[1] England. The Browns of Derbyshire were probably descendants of Anthony Brown (alias John Hudson) and Bridget Maskew.

The records of the children of William and Mary Brown are not at all complete. We shall, however, give accounts of five sons who were early settlers of Chester Pennsylvania and evidently are related.

The eldest son William, probably born 1655, came to this country in 1682.[2] He is the one who, as related[3] by George Churchman had a terrifying struggle with Satan the tempter. His contest was of just the character to have suited our author had he known of it. Needless to say William conquered and from his experience he came to believe that he should follow Dewsbury's advice to

1 There are seven Suttons in England but the one in Derbyshire is probably the one referred to here. Cope: Browns of Nottingham pp. 5-6. It was not far from Chesterfield.
2 Ashmead: History of Delaware County, p.448 says erroneously 1696. Cope in Browns of Nottingham p.6 corrected this.
3 Cope: Browns of Nottingham, p.3.

respected

leave the land where the Quakers were ~~suffering~~ continually and help to establish ~~the~~ a state of prosperity in the wilderness of America. His first wife Dorothy, ~~who~~ had taken passage against her wishes and by whom he had one son, died at sea, probably ~~she~~ being ~~was~~ one of ~~the~~ that thirty ~~who died~~ victims that of small pox. Two years later ~~he~~ William married Ann Mercer ~~by~~ whom ~~he had~~ established him with five sons and one daughter. In 1699 he married Catharine Williams of Philadelphia ~~by whom~~ and added to his establishment. ~~he had~~ one son and two daughters. And fourthly in 1711 he married Mary Matthews. So far as ~~a numerous progeny~~ ten children established prosperity in a state, William was eminently successful. Meanwhile in 1705 he showed the traits of the true pioneer by deciding to move again into what was called the wilderness where he died in probably 1746.[1] ~~From Myers we learn that~~ The company who[2] went with him ~~had gone~~ to Nottingham ~~with William Brown~~ comprised such notables as John Churchman, Andrew Job, James Brown and Henry Reynolds. John Churchman we shall find later marrying into the Brown family. Henry Reynolds we shall find mentioned in the Chester Court records as suing Justa Anderson for libel. He in a way connected himself with the Brown family by

1 ~~From~~ The 1756 Quarterly Concord Meeting records and other sources give it as 1715. Proud to be quoted presently gives it as 1746.
2 Immigration of the Irish Quakers, Phila., 1910, p.158.

who were bivouacked at Valley Forge.

On the last day of November Elijah Brown was designated as being in the country, probably preferring to spend his time at the farm instead of in the town. He signed the unsent[1] memorial to the Council of Pennsylvania dated from Winchester 2 December. The address to Congress and the Executive Council of Pennsylvania of 19 December bore his signature and about the same time he was removed to Staunton. He was among those ordered to be taken to Shippensburg and released on 8 April 1778, on 26 April he signed the application for his full liberty, and on the following day was among those to be taken to Pottsgrove on his way home. Thus ended

1 This may be found only in an unappreciated work of considerable literary value the American Notes and Queries of W.Brotherhead Philadelphia No.I, January 1857, pp.18-19.

The said Richard Armitt transported himself to America in 1700, and by letter asked for a certificate. He "has lived for some years from amongst us & hath followed his trade in London and has been some Voyages in Spain,& c." His father is living but his mother is dead. John Armitt,the father;John Armitt,a brother; Sarah Armitt and Mary Armitt signed the certificate. In a postscript to the certificate the father mentions "my brother Robt.Heath". At Phila.,5mo 25,1701."1

"John Armitt,returning;dated 3mo 17,1736,from Two Weeks Mtg. at Devonshire House,London England. Not recorded."2

In 1755 possibly this same Philadelphian John Armitt joined Thomas Brown,William Brown,John Evans,John Churchman,James Bartram,John Woolman,Anthony Benezet,John Pemberton and other Friends in an "Epistle of Caution" in relation to an act levying taxes which as they said were to be used in a war against the Indians.[3] He was the son of Richard and Sophia Armitt,born 8 December 1702 and died 5mo 21,1762. His home was in Front street. Apparently he was the same John Armitt

1 There was a Richard Armitt clerk of the High Street Market 1723. H.M.Lippincott:Early Philadelphia Philadelphia 1917,p.90. According to John Smith's journal (A.C.Myers:Hannah Logan's Courtship Philadelphia (1904),p.221.) a Richard Armitt died suddenly 6d 6m 1748 of a "fit of the Asthma",but whether he is the same Richard is not known.

2 Myers:Quaker Arrivals at Philadelphia Philadelphia 1902,p.104. If this is the same Quaker gentleman who married Mary Emlen and if the marriage was his first,we probably have no further interest in him because he had no children by her. Cf.Diary of Caleb Cresson Philadelphia 1877,passim.

3 Journal of John Woolman edited by Amelia Mott Gummere N.Y.,1922, pp.208-10.

These references are autobiographical.

A note-book dated 1783 contains two pages of accounts of the sale of hay from a farm in Passyunk. The presence of Elijah Brown's name several times and because the accounts appear to be in the flamboyant handwriting of Joseph Brown indicate that this farm is to be identified as the Schuylkill meadow lands which were rented by Brown's brothers Joseph and James in 1783.

The Passyunk meadow lands are well shown on the G.M.Raspe Nurnberg 1778 map.[1] So far as can be surmised the farm probably comprised all or part of the salient of land where the Schuylkill empties into the Delaware;at least within that two miles of swampy meadow.[2] Later we shall find our author imagining himself at the point which gives a view of the Jersey shore from Red Bank as far as Billingsport.

1 List of Maps of America Washington 1901,p.701 gives this as the Scull and Heap map (1777). Though inspired by it the Raspe map differs considerably in important details and should be compared whenever any location is made.

2 In the Julius and Julietta story described in his 19 May 1792 letter.

swamps should be properly drained to be of any profit or value to them;otherwise the whole farm would be given up.

Passyunk appears to have been a beautiful part of the country with rich and fruitful soil,though one authority says it was not particularly valuable for pasturage. The latter statement seems borne out by the complaint in regard to the sour grass that grew on the swampy meadows.

Smith's History of Delaware County gives many of the details concerning the place. It appears that the farm took its name from the town settlement on the east shore of the Schuylkill. Possibly it is the hundred acre farm mentioned in a note of Smith's as granted to Dunkin Williams and nine others in 1667. The town was mentioned by Campanius[1] as one of the principal places of the Indians on the river. This section of Passyunk had been originally settled by Swedes being given by the Crown to Commandant Swen Schute of the fort Korsholm. Then it was abandoned and presently burned by the Indians. The Dutch followed in its settlement and

1 Thomas Campanius Holm;Province of New Sweden,Phila.,1834,pp.46 and 80.

eventually it was bought by the English. ~~When Israel Helm had traded there it was known as Passayjonck and Passyung, at another time the name was spelled Perslajong.~~

Other than the references ~~cited~~ given, Brown wrote and said little about his parents. Save for an occasional autobiographical touch all we know of his attitude toward them is inferential. When he approached the subject he did not ~~give expression to~~ boast of great affection for them or admiration of their characters; Probably ~~he merely neglected~~ because he thought it ~~as a thing~~ unnecessary, ~~to be spoken of.~~ In spite of ~~one very~~ the single unfavorable mention of his father, the fact that he lived in the old home, long after the time when ~~children~~ sons and daughters naturally leave it, would indicate that he found the company there tolerable, if nothing more. A family full of active business men rarely if ever understand the literary member of it; but,

Which was merely natural boyish petulance

we shall see them in time learn by experience

When ~~locating~~ his own home he selected ~~it~~ next door to his father's he expressed himself superlatively.