

OBITUARIES

IRA V. BROWN (1922–2012)

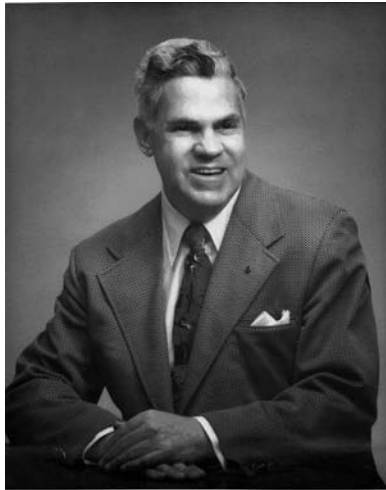
*I*ra Brown was a member of the Pennsylvania Historical Association for forty-nine years. He regularly attended the annual meetings, frequently presented papers, and served several terms on the council. His articles appeared frequently in the Association's Journal *Pennsylvania History*. His article "Anti-Slavery Journey: Garrison and Douglass in Pennsylvania, 1847" was one of the most frequently requested articles on a recent JSTOR list. He wrote two monographs that are included in the Association's Pennsylvania History Studies series: *Pennsylvania Reformers from Penn to Pinchot* (1966) and *The Negro in Pennsylvania* (1970). His loyalty to the Association was exemplary.

Ira's academic and scholarly career was extraordinary. He graduated from high school in Arlington, Virginia, at the age of fourteen, received a four-year scholarship to George Washington University where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in his junior year and edited the student newspaper in his senior year. He earned his undergraduate degree in 1941 at eighteen and immediately enrolled at the University of Virginia where he completed

the requirements for his master's degree in one year. After a summer of work at the National Archives, he began his doctoral studies at Harvard University where he studied under Professor Arthur Schlesinger Sr. He received his PhD in 1946 at the age of twenty-four. His dissertation, "Lyman Abbott: Christian Evolutionist," won the Brewer Prize awarded by the American Society of Church History and was published by Harvard University Press in 1953.

Subsequently, he edited *Joseph Priestley: Selections from His Writings* published by the Pennsylvania State University Press in 1962. He wrote a biography of Philadelphia abolitionist and feminist Mary Grew (1813–1896), which was published by Susquehanna University Press in 1991. Later, he compiled his essays on abolitionism and civil rights in Pennsylvania, which he entitled "Proclaim Liberty," and his reminiscences, "A Life in History." He circulated both of these works privately. They are available at Special Collections in Penn State's Paterno Library.

Ira's teaching career was equally outstanding. In the 1945–46 academic year, he taught at the Phillips-Exeter Academy, one of New England's premier private preparatory schools. The next year, he taught at Mary Baldwin College. In 1947 he joined the history faculty at Penn State where he remained for forty years. Although he taught the survey course in American history to large numbers of students, it was at the upper level that he excelled. He taught advanced courses on "The Formative Period, 1783–1828" and



Ira V. Brown, 1922–2012

OBITUARIES

American cultural history. He was a superb advisor to graduate students and supervised thirty-five master's theses and nineteen doctoral dissertations. Not only was he a mentor to students but also to new faculty members. He took us "under his wing" and informed us how Penn State's Department of History operated and helped us with our scholarly activities. He and his wife invited us to their home and even took us on family outings. They made us feel at home in our new surroundings. We could not have asked for a more helpful and thoughtful colleague.

Ira was predeceased by his wife, Helen, who died in 2011. He is survived by a son, Robert V. Brown, and his wife, April, of Perkasie, Pennsylvania, and two grandsons.

ROBERT V. BROWN AND JOHN B. FRANTZ