

## Col. William A. Browning

(2 May 1835 – 4 Mar 1866)

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**Browning.** On the morning of the 30th inst., Col. W.A. Browning, the eldest son of P.W. and Margaret A. Browning, in the 31st year of his age. His friends and the friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend his funeral on next Sunday afternoon at three o'clock from the residence of his father, No. 56 Missouri avenue (Nashville and Memphis papers please copy).

*The Evening Star, March 5, 1866*

### **The Funeral of the Late Col. W.A. Browning**

The funeral of Colonel William A. Browning, late the Private Secretary to the President, took place from the residence of his father, P.W. Browning, Esq., on Missouri avenue, yesterday afternoon, and was largely attended. Among other distinguished persons present we noticed President Johnson, accompanied by Colonel O'Beirne, Deputy Marshal; Judge Patterson, Mrs. Patterson and Mrs. Stover (the President's daughters,) a number of members of Congress, several representatives of the Washington bar, and a very large concourse of citizens. Rev. Mr. Rolfe of the Episcopal Church, officiated in the solemn services of the church, and spoke in feeling terms of the life and character of the deceased. The body was then placed in the hearse. Colonel Wright Rives, Colonel William G. Moore, and Majors A.K. Long and R.A. Morrow, of the President's household; Dr. Thomas Young, E. Welles, Esq., Dr. W.J. Duhamel, and Jos. H. Bradley, jr., Esq., acting as pall-bearers, and the solemn cortege was formed and wended its way to Congressional Cemetery, where the remains were interred.

The President has known the deceased since his boyhood, and obtained for him a clerkship in one of the Departments, which he subsequently resigned to accept the position of private secretary to Mr. Johnson, then Senator. Colonel Browning continued in this position during Mr. Johnson's term in the Senate, accompanied him to Nashville, Tennessee, when appointed Military Governor, and remained with him until November last, when he was appointed Secretary of Legation to Mexico, with General Logan. His health has not been good for two months. He was taken seriously ill in New York, and within the last two weeks grew rapidly worse, until about two o'clock on Friday morning, when he died from a severe attack of inflammatory rheumatism, which produced paralysis.

Col. Browning was a graduate of Yale College, studied law and was admitted to the bar in the Supreme Court of the United States. He always enjoyed the implicit confidence of the President, and was much esteemed by him. By his manliness of character, geniality of disposition, and the noble qualities of his head and heart he won the regard of all who knew him.

The funeral arrangements were admirably carried out by Mr. Henry Lee, undertaker. The remains were placed in a magnificent coffin, covered with rich black cloth, and tastefully ornamented; and beautiful wreaths and bouquets of exquisite flowers were placed over the breast of the deceased.

*Forman, Stephen M., A Guide to Civil War Washington, Washington, DC: Elliott & Clark Publishing, 1995.*

Browning was a private secretary to Vice President Andrew Johnson. On the morning of April 14, Booth left Browning his calling card at the Kirkwood Hotel. Booth wrote on a card: "Don't wish to disturb you: are you at home? J. Wilkes Booth." A hotel clerk placed the card in Browning's mailbox in his absence.--