

Suffolk University Archives  
Early Student Research Project

**Roland Edward Brown  
Suffolk Law School 1909**

**Roland Edward Brown was born August 26, 1880.<sup>1</sup> His mother, Margaret (b. 1857), was born in Canada, and his father, whose name is unknown, was born in Massachusetts.<sup>2</sup> The 1900 census indicates that at that time, 19-year-old Roland was living at 178 Columbia Street, Cambridge, Mass., with his 15-year-old brother, Chester (b. 1884), his mother, and his stepfather, William Hamilton (b. 1869 in Canada), who was a carpenter.<sup>3</sup> Margaret and William had been married for one year at that point.<sup>4</sup> The census also indicates that Margaret had given birth to two other children in addition to Roland and Chester, only one of whom was still living.<sup>5</sup> Also residing with the family were two boarders.<sup>6</sup>**

**In 1900, Roland E. Brown was serving as an apprentice in the chemical industry.<sup>7</sup> In 1901, he married a woman named Ethel Blanche.<sup>8</sup> His son, Alphonso, and daughter, Margaret, were born less than two years apart around 1902 to 1904.<sup>9</sup> In December of 1906, he began the winter term at Suffolk Law School, enrolling in Torts and Criminal Law classes.<sup>10</sup> In June of 1908, Gleason Archer gave him “the certificate of two years’ study” that enabled him to take the bar examination, even though he was only in his junior year.<sup>11</sup> Archer indicates that Brown was “a machinist by trade,” but nonetheless in June, 1908, became Suffolk Law School’s first student to pass the bar exam.<sup>12</sup> He graduated in 1909 as one of five students in the first Suffolk Law School class.<sup>13</sup>**

**Roland E. Brown’s employment history is somewhat ambiguous. He was an apprentice in the chemical industry, and Gleason Archer writes that he was a machinist, but the 1913 Cambridge Directory lists him as a lawyer.<sup>14</sup> Archer also writes in 1919 that while he did become a lawyer, Brown chose not to enter into active law practice in favor of working for the Barbour Stockwell Company of**

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<sup>1</sup> World War I Draft Registration Card 2672/3151, September 12, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> United States Census 1900, Massachusetts, Middlesex, Cambridge, Enumeration District 691, Sheet 18.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census 1900, Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census 1900, Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census 1900, Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census 1900, Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census 1900, Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Roland Edward Brown Marriage Record, 1901, from Massachusetts Vital Records 1841-1910 Database, accessed via the New England Historical Genealogical Society, <http://www.newenglandancestors.org>; United States Census 1920, Massachusetts, Middlesex, Cambridge, Enumeration District 55, Sheet 11B; United States Census 1930, Massachusetts, Middlesex, Cambridge, Enumeration District 9-34, Sheet 1B. Note: Brown’s wife is listed in the 1920 census as Ethel B. Brown and in the 1930 census as E. Blanche Brown.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census 1920, Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Archer, Gleason L. *Building a School*, Boston: Gleason L. Archer, 1919, p.51.

<sup>11</sup> Archer, Gleason L., Ibid., p.86. Note: For students entering prior to 1913, the Suffolk Law School program consisted of three years of study, so a student’s junior year was his second or middle year.

<sup>12</sup> Archer, Gleason L., Ibid., p.86.

<sup>13</sup> Suffolk Law School Alumni Directory, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 1936, p.15.

<sup>14</sup> Cambridge Directory, 1913, p. 354.

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**Cambridge.<sup>15</sup> Brown's profession in the 1920 census is unclear, but the place of employment appears to be Stockwell Co.<sup>16</sup> Both the 1923 Cambridge Directory and the 1923 Boston Register and Business Directory list him as a lawyer, and the 1930 census lists his place of employment as a court.<sup>17</sup> While the time frames are unclear, it is evident that Brown was in fact a lawyer and did in fact work for the Stockwell Company at some point in his life. Beginning in at least 1913 until at least 1930, Brown lived at 10 Centre Street in Cambridge, and in 1923 his law office was located at 40 Court Street in Boston.<sup>18</sup>**

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<sup>15</sup> Archer, Gleason L., "Sketches from Life" in Suffolk University Historical Pamphlet Series #1, 1919, reprinted 1978 by Suffolk University Law School, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup>U.S Census 1920, Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Cambridge Directory, 1923, p. 345; *The Boston Register and Business Directory: 1923*, Vol. 87. Boston: Sampson and Murdock Company, 1923, p. 682; U.S Census 1930, Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Cambridge Directory, 1913, p.354; U.S. Census 1920, Ibid.; U.S. Census 1930, Ibid.; *The Boston Register and Business Directory: 1923*, Ibid, p.682.