

## BROWN, AMOS WILLIAM (1860 - 1956), collier and sportsman

**Name:** Amos William Brown  
**Date of birth:** 1860  
**Date of death:** 1956  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** collier and sportsman  
**Area of activity:** Business and Industry; Sports and Leisure Pursuits  
**Author:** Rebecca Eversley-Dawes

Amos Brown was born about 1860 in Apalachicola, Florida to Henrietta and Rasmus Bull. His parents were enslaved on the Snede Station Plantation in Georgia, where he spent his early years. The year of his birth is uncertain, but he is said to have been five years old when his father was killed in the American Civil War (1861-65). His mother died shortly after the end of the war, and Amos then changed his original name, Pessi Bull, to that of one of his uncles. Desiring to find his remaining family, Amos set out in search of his grandmother Rachel, sailing on logs down the river from Georgia to Florida where he was successful in tracing her. While looking for work, he was later shanghaied onto a Russian vessel where he was forced to cook. He seized the opportunity to escape when his ship docked in Cardiff, where he was able to get help and was taken to West Church Street, the home of Mary Reynolds.

Amos began his life in Wales advertising himself as a herbalist called Professor Brown, and throughout his life worked at a number of collieries including Parc Slip, Penallta, Pentre, Mardy, Ogmore, Ammanford and Blaengarw. He was one of many colliers who came to the Garw Valley to sink the new pits, and became well known for his boxing and other sporting achievements.

Whilst at Parc Slip, he narrowly avoided the explosion of when he swapped shifts to visit Jack Scarrot's boxing booth. Scarrot provided an opportunity for him to earn extra income as a regular fighter under the name 'Knockout Brown' along with other Black colliers who were a popular attraction.

Amos married Jennet E. Wilcox in 1902, and they had one son, Amos William Brown (b. 1902) who was killed in Mardy Colliery in 1916). Amos also had children with Letaress E. Thomas whom he married in 1927 following the death of Jennet E. in 1926. Together they raised Harry Thomas Brown (1910-1960), Doris H. E. Brown (1914-2003), Beatrice M. Brown (1915-1946), George M. S. Brown (1918-2006) and tDavid William John Saunders (1926-2016) whom they adopted.

Amos Brown was particularly fond of cycling and sprinting and was well known for running races in Abercynon, where he lived with his second wife and children. In his later years he was the subject of a short silent film made in by local film maker Evan Owen Jones (1905-1988), showing him looking after his pigs, and is also seen sprinting in another of Jones's films.

Amos Brown died on 17 April 1956.

### Author

Rebecca Eversley-Dawes

### Sources

Family information

Rebecca Eversley and Paul Eversley, *Calypso & Coal*(Newport 2023)

'[Mr Amos Brown, Pig Keeper](#)', 1943, BFI Player

'[War Time Events at Abercynon](#)', 1943, BFI Player

### Sound and Film

'[Mr Amos Brown, Pig Keeper](#)', 1943, BFI Player

'[War Time Events at Abercynon](#)', 1943, BFI Player

### Additional Links

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