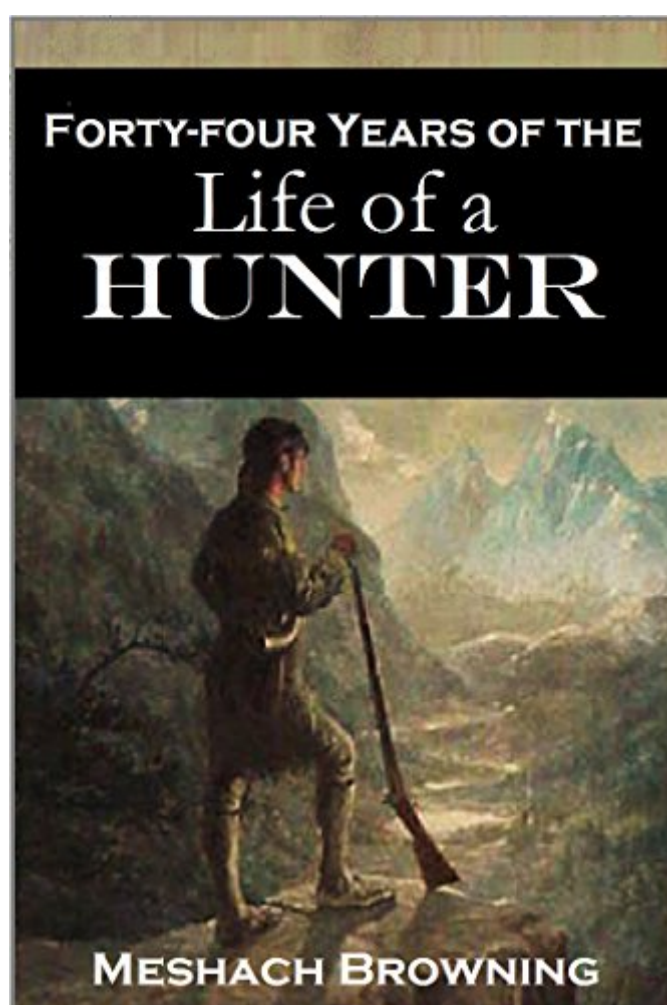


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Forty-four Years Of The Life Of A Hunter Being Reminiscences Of Meshach Browning, A Maryland Hunter (1859)



Synopsis

Meshach Browning (1781 - 1859) was an early backwoodsman, hunter and explorer of the watersheds of the North Branch Potomac and Youghiogheny Rivers in Maryland. His memoir is *Forty-Four Years of the Life of a Hunter* (1859). He has been celebrated as Maryland's most famous frontier hunter. Meshach Browning was one of the pioneer hunters in Preston county. In 1859, the year of his death also, he published an "Autobiography," setting forth thrilling accounts of his life as a hunter. The reliability of Mr. Browning's work is vouched for by such authorities as Judge Thomas Perry of the Fourth Judicial District of Pennsylvania and others who knew the correctness of many things that appear strange, almost miraculous. His work is entitled, "Forty-Four Years in the Life of a Hunter." During that time Mr. Browning killed nearly 2,000 deer, 500 bears, about 50 panthers, more than 1,000 rattlesnakes, and scores of wolves and other beasts. Many of them were in Preston county. He was not a very large man, but a powerful man physically and an athlete of great note. On two occasions he entered the bears' cave and fought with the bruins in their den. Browning's memoir of his "hunting-fever" years (1795-1839) and other activities was originally penned with a turkey quill. Half backwoods history, half heroic adventure story, it recounts his hunting expeditions and life-threatening encounters while stalking game and records details of life in early frontier America, western Maryland folkways and early settlement life. "Forty-four Years of the Life of a Maryland Hunter," related with all the good sense, sincerity, modesty, unconscious force and rustic humor of an unlettered man, who struggled with his grammar as he had struggled with bears, and steered his pen with as many and as honest misgivings as he would have handled the latest pattern of Winchester fowlingpiece in all its elaborate up-to-dateness; for this was the sort of hunter who aforetime confronted the catamount or the bear with a crippled flintlock, bandaged with a shoestring. By the older denizens of all this region the memory of this man is kept reverently green, for he was the patriarch of the Glades. Browning was in his eightieth year in 1859, when his book was published, and was the nestor of the community of woodmen, hunters and anglers which had been growing up around him for half a century - a conspicuous personality among the stalwart mountaineers and the honored forbear of a progeny of brave men and handsome women, who revered him for his integrity, his strong, crude intellect, his dauntless courage, his generosity, his tenderness, his ingenuous modesty. His book is no compilation of fish stories and hunters' yarns; almost every page is marked by his shrinking sensitiveness, lest his reader may regard him as a braggart or a liar. The lad Meshach grew to be the hero of every other man's talk in his little mountain republic, to be saluted for a preeminence of which he was unconscious. I have said that in his story he reminds me of the fine chivalry the generous pride of Jules Gerard - that brave

and intrepid chevalier who went out to meet the Algerian lion alone in the moonlight. Meshach Browning says of the bear: "A bold, undaunted beast; not apt to quarrel with others, but if any trespass on his rights, then furious and vindictive. I admire and love the bear, because he would insult neither man nor beast, nor will he suffer either to insult him." But the panther "is a great sneak," and to be scorned "cowardly, treacherous and cruel." Stories of "flood and field" are always interesting, alike to old and to young; but this Volume is even more fascinating than works of its class usually are. The author makes no attempt at display, but tells his experience with a native simplicity that is not the least alluring part of the book. Numerous engravings illustrate the text. Originally published in 1859; reformatted for the Kindle; may contain an occasion

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Customer Reviews

Excellent, especially in that it is written so clearly by "a minimally educated" man. Only problem w/ the Book Description is that it understates the man and his associate's skill and character as much

as the author does of himself. He almost puts the reader inside his own head of each happening. And guys/nimrods, don't be put off by this, but within is a love story that has never been equaled by Hollywood.

Meshach Browning was an ancestor of mine so I'm most supportive of his writing. His formal education was measured in weeks. He scratched out this book with pen and paper while scrabbling out a subsistence living farming and hunting. There is nothing soaring about his writing, but he does tell a tale of life the backwoods in the 1800s. His name come up sometimes in connection with other names like Davey Crockett and Daniel Boone. Reading about his days makes our modern coddled lives something to be appreciated.

This is an excellent description of life in early America and what it took to survive in wilderness areas. It makes you imagine the views that they had on the mountainsides and in the valleys. Two thumbs up.

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