

## IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF OUR “COUSINS” ...

# CO-FOUNDER OF ABERCROMBIE & FITCH

## Ezra Hasbrouck Fitch (1865 – 1930)

— *Bradley Rymph*

**Ezra Hasbrouck Fitch** was born September 27, 1865, in Coxsackie, Greene County, New York — the only child of Roswell Reed Fitch and Margaretta Wyanna (Hasbrouck) Fitch. His mother was the daughter of Benjamin Louis Hasbrouck and Margaret (Rymph) Hasbrouck. As such, Margaretta (Hasbrouck) Fitch was the grand-daughter of my great-great-great grandparents, John Rymph (1771 – 1841) and Weyntje (Hasbrouck) Rymph (1787 – 1858). Margaretta (Hasbrouck) Fitch died less than a month after the birth of her son.

After his mother’s death, Ezra Hasbrouck Fitch spent many of his childhood years at his wealthy paternal grandparents’ estate on the banks of the Hudson River in Coxsackie, while his father was in Brooklyn working as an agent for an asphalt company.

In 1894, Ezra earned a law degree from New York University, and in 1897, Ezra married Sarah Huntington Sturges. He began working as a real estate developer in Kingston, Ulster County, New York. Eventually (according to the history told by Abercrombie & Fitch), Ezra grew “restless and bored with his profession.” His passion was for the outdoors, and he spent much of his leisure time yachting, fishing in the Catskills, and climbing the Adirondacks.

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Ezra Hasbrouck Fitch



Abercrombie's business partner. By 1904, the store had been renamed "Abercrombie & Fitch."

Very quickly, David Abercrombie and Ezra Fitch developed very different ideas of where the store's future should lie. Abercrombie wanted the store to retain its focus on the economically elite. Fitch wanted to expand the company to market to the general public. Within a few years, Fitch had won the dispute, and Abercrombie sold his share of the company to Fitch.

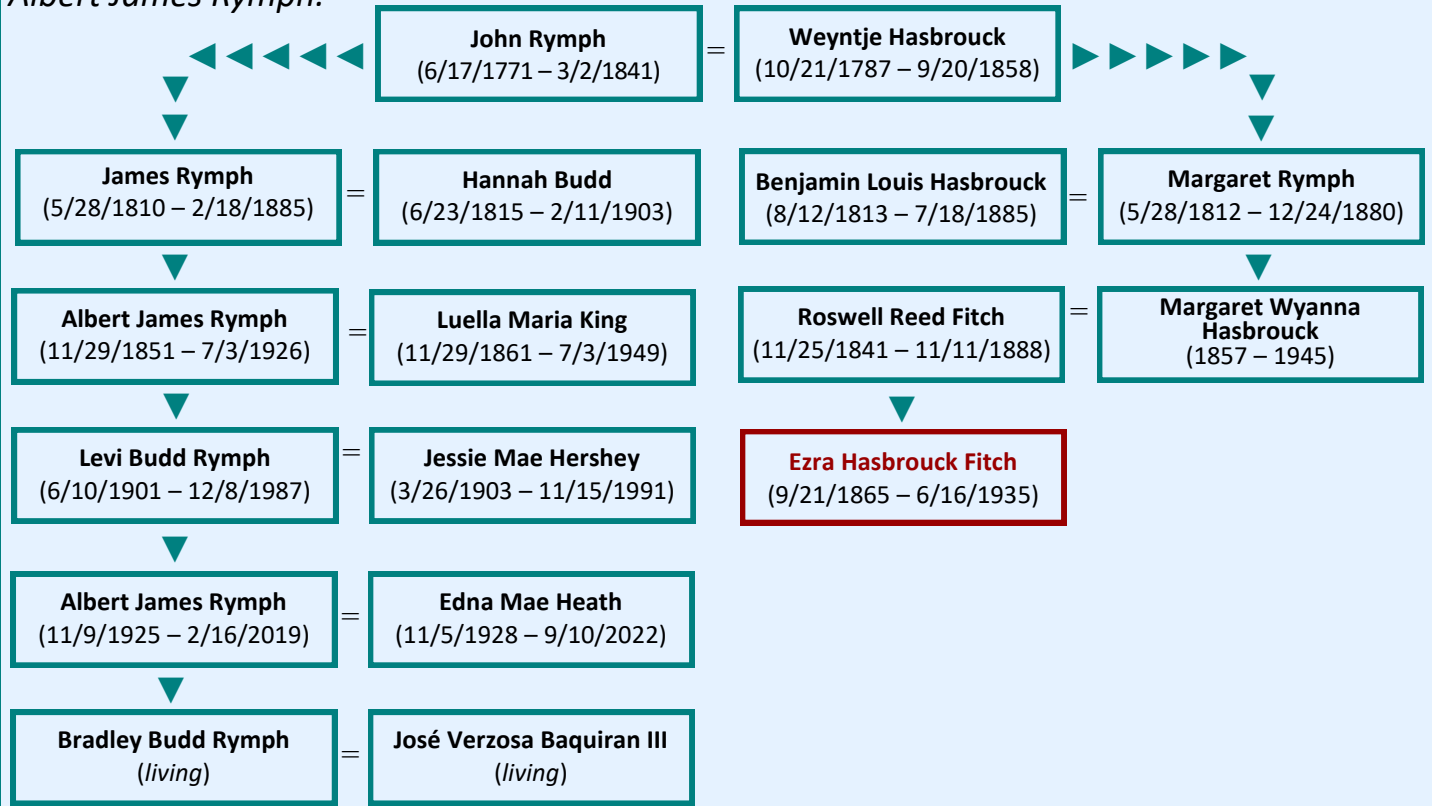
When a man named David Abercrombie opened a new excursions store, Abercrombie Co., in 1892, Fitch became the store's "most devoted customer." By 1900, Abercrombie's store had become very successful, and Fitch bought a major share in it, becoming



Men's and women's apparel advertised in Abercrombie & Fitch's initial (1909) catalog.

# HOW WE'RE RELATED

Ezra Hasbrouck Fitch was my second cousin, twice removed, through my father, Albert James Rymph.



In 1909, Fitch moved his store into the mail-order business, launching its first catalog in 1909.

Under Ezra's leadership, Abercrombie & Fitch was credited with the historical introduction of Mahjong to the United States from China in 1920, when the game was first sold in A&F's store.

Fitch retired from his store in 1928. He died two years later, on June 16, 1930, while on his yacht *Content* off the coast of Santa Barbara, California.



## TO LEARN MORE

Bass, Demitria, comp. "Famous People: Ezra Hasbrouck Fitch." Hudson River Valley Institute. ([www.hudsonrivervalley.org/famous-people/ezra-hasbrouck-fitch](http://www.hudsonrivervalley.org/famous-people/ezra-hasbrouck-fitch))

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Wikipedia. "Ezra Fitch." ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezra\\_Fitch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ezra_Fitch))