

# Brigid Browne

## 1916-1919



Brigid

*Brigid Browne (1861-1943), Bill Browne's mother, was born in Placentia, Newfoundland. She was the daughter of Garrett O'Reilly (c.1817-1886) and Mary Leonard (1827-1900). Brigid attended school in Placentia and, at the age of seventeen, went to Barren Island, Placentia Bay to teach school. She married Liberius Browne (c.1853-1929), a son of*

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*Phillip Browne of Sound Island, Placentia Bay. In 1886 Liberius and Brigid moved to St. John's. Bill was the couple's only child, born after many years of marriage.<sup>1</sup>*

*Brigid and Bill's relationship was a close one where Brigid freely discussed her thoughts about the family, the neighbours, politics, and religion with her son.*

*These are some of the letters Brigid wrote to Bill after he left home to study in Toronto.*

***N. B. In their original form Brigid's letters lack punctuation and are generally difficult to read. For this reason, her letters have been altered. Simple punctuation and missing words have been added and some spelling has been corrected.***

89 Casey Street  
St. John's, N. F. L.  
May 18, 1916

My dear Son,

I just received your very welcome letter and am glad you are well only for a slight cold in the head. Don't neglect that either.

You did not receive my last letter I wrote you. I wrote you the 9<sup>th</sup> of May as you left the 11<sup>th</sup>. I sent you a Post Office Order for \$10.00 (ten dollars). I addressed it to 40 Dundonald Street. When you will get it, if you don't need it, will you send it on to me? I was thinking you were out of a job and had no money. I hope you will get it all right. You are making very good pay now. If you hold on for the month I hope you are sure of the job before you give up that. Try and save your money and don't spend it foolish and mind it don't be robbed from you. Take care of your health.

The Lake would be healthier. I hope you are sure of it. Did Father Burke get that for you? So Father Burke wanted you to study for the Priesthood. What did you say? You had breakfast with him, he must be nice.

What kind of a fellow is Joe Kennedy? Is he a good chum?

Your Father says he wishes he was up there at something. I don't think Jim will be going until this summer. They are going in barracks now. The Prince's rink. There

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<sup>1</sup>See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 1-2 and Browne family records maintained by Brenda Leahey Young.

are over 600 strong Volunteers. Ott is fine.<sup>2</sup> Leo Murphy is back training. O'Grady is the favourite. Joe Evans and Tom Flynn are somewhere in France digging trenches. Tom wrote for his Mother to pray for him. Young Clouston that went to school is promoted<sup>3</sup> and another of them. They are in Scotland but one of them were in the Dardanelles and got the fever and is all right now.

Sir Edward got a loan of \$5,000,000 (five million dollars) for the patriotic. He is leaving for England to see about it.

Rene is soon coming out and Noel. I did not see Mrs. Kennedy this ages.<sup>4</sup> I must soon go up.

Take care of yourself like a good boy. I hope you will soon get the letter with order. Did you tell them to send it over?

I am busy housecleaning.

Your father is a good man since the Mission.

Try and get all the rest you can. Everything is gone up here. I was dreaming about you last night.

Money is your friend so take care of it.

It is now the Passionist fathers are leaving. They were around every place I think.<sup>5</sup> They did a lot of good. Florence and Mrs. T and Mrs. Mac and Jim and Ott. I am sending a snap shot of Jim and Ott taken by Ott's house. Good bye. God bless you.

I remain your loving Mother

Bride Browne

I told you all the news in the last letter. I hope you will get it all right. Don't let nobody know your business. Pop sends love.



Liberius

<sup>2</sup>See footnote to Bill Browne's first letter, October 1915.

<sup>3</sup>A. R. Clouston was promoted to Lance Corporal effective May 9, 1916. Along with Bill Browne, Andrew Clouston was one of the football players for St. Bonaventure's College in 1914. See "Volunteer Promotions," *Daily News* [St. John's, Nfld.] 10 May 1916: 3 and Browne, *Eighty-Four Years*, 16.

<sup>4</sup>Irene Kennedy had been in the General Hospital for surgery but the paper reported that she was "progressing favourably". See "City and Elsewhere," *Daily News* [St. John's, Nfld.] 13 May 1916: 3.

<sup>5</sup>Two priests, Father Vincent and Father Columban of the Passionist Order, had held missions in St. John's and around Placentia Bay from March until May of 1916. See "City and Elsewhere," *Daily News* [St. John's, Nfld.] 18 May 1916: 8.

89 Casey Street  
St. John's, N. F. L.  
Undated Postcard c. March 1918

My dear Son,

I received your St. Patrick's Day letter. You never said you received my letter and a couple of papers. I told you to say if you needed money. I hope you won't travel without enough so send for whatever you want and don't borrow from no one.

What next will they want you president of? It wouldn't be anything else, Newman Hall is enough for you. I understand all about Y.M.C.A. You did right resigning. They must think you were easy. I had to laugh. What did Father Burke think of it? I hope Father Burke is better.

I wrote you a couple of days ago. Pop is well. The trains were blocked but they are alright now.

Leonard Edens<sup>6</sup> is missing in the airplane and Jack is killed. Ott is not in this drive, was wounded last week but not seriously. Tom is in this battle and Sid Evans. First great rush for the war. These mornings it keeps me going. Take good care of yourself and be steady. Will write for Sunday. Pop is well, sends love.

How is Mr. and Mrs. Middleton?

The sealers are all loaded coming in. They are allowed to make the second trip this year.

Don't travel without enough money. Send to us for it.

Your loving Mother

B. Browne

89 Casey Street  
St. John's, N. F. L.

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<sup>6</sup>27 year old Lieutenant Leonard A. Edens, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Newfoundland Regiment, died March 18, 1918. He was the son of Thomas and Margaret Edens, 39 Queen's Road, St. John's, Newfoundland. See Newfoundland Book of Remembrance (World War I) 39, 20 Nov. 2001, <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/books/newf/nf039.htm> and The Canadian Virtual War Memorial, Veterans Affairs Canada, 20 Nov, 2001, <http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general/sub.cfm?source=collections/virtualmem/Detail&casualty=485959>. For picture see <http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/cvwm/thumbs485959.html>

Nov. 9, 1918

My dear Son,

I received your welcome letter this evening. I am glad you are well. Pop posted a letter for me last Sunday at the Station.

I am in great hopes that we won't get the Flue. We mind we don't get cold or wet. I have the picture of the Sacred Heart over the door - I have great faith in that. I am glad your school is opened.

It is likely you will have your Thesis finished again. I hope I will have the pleasure of seeing it.

I met Mrs. Murphy into Knowlings Store and she told me Irene was very sick so I went the next day to see her. She had bronchitis (I don't think that is the right way to spell it). She got better and then got another neuralgia in the side. I must run up tomorrow to see. I am afraid you will have a delicate wife. Don't say to Mike that she was sick. Father St. John would not let her get up until he told her.

I am glad you got your clothes. For sure you must be a great swell and you look so stately. Keep warm and comfortable.

What kind of speech did the Lord make?

Who do you think I had into see me last night? Poor Ott, he looked fine only he will have a crooked arm all his lifetime, his left arm. He can move his fingers or shut his hand - the bone was taken out of the elbow. There was great rejoicing when he came. He only came in at two o'clock yesterday and came down to see me at seven o'clock. But no poor Jim came to see me, but I trust he is better off. Ott's father went as far as Brigus Junction.

To me the saddest thing of all was a soldier by the name of Peter Kelly - his Mother died a week ago before he came.<sup>7</sup> So Ott got some Newfoundland papers in Sydney and he saw in it about poor Kelly's Mother being dead and about their being so many days out of England. So Ott cut out the piece and showed it to the other boys and they would not tell him and he used to say coming down in the train, "My Mother won't know me when she will see me I am so thin." Ott said it went thro them all they felt so bad about it. Father Kell boarded the train at Manuels and told him about his Mother.

Some of the soldiers - the Protestants I suppose - about two months ago reported Father Nangle was married to the nurse who nursed him but it was all lies. I am sending

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<sup>7</sup>Mary Ann Kelly, married to sailmaker William F. Kelly, died October 31, 1918. The family resided at 23 Livingstone Street in St. John's. Peter, of the 1<sup>st</sup> Newfoundland Regiment, was one of Mary Ann's seven children. See "Died," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 31 Oct. 1918: 4.

the clipping that makes liars of them.<sup>8</sup>

Pop is well and sends love.  
I have not time to read this over.  
I remain your loving Mother,  
B. Browne

89 Casey Street  
St. John's, N.F.L.  
February 1, 1919

My dear Son,

I received your letter after eleven days written. Glad to hear you are well. I missed the mail the last Thursday but the Thursday before I sent you a hundred Dollars, a Post Office Order. I got the receipt of it here so you should get it today. The Kyle took the Mails and passengers to North Sydney so you should have it in a week and I sent in the same mail a copy of the *Miner*. I am sorry for worrying to death about it but I asked you so many times if she sent you a copy of it and you never answered me. Don't bother about writing for her any more. She made good sales on that paper for the Methodists all bought them up.<sup>9</sup>

I know that won't be enough. I will send you another hundred if you need it. Just say and say enough and say it in time.

I met Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Skinner. Mrs. Kennedy said they had a letter from Mike - she said Mike was going out with you. Give my regards to Mike.

The Corsican is late with our boys and our young V. C. Ricketts is from Pools Island north and is only twenty-one, the youngest in the Army.<sup>10</sup> I must get down to see

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<sup>8</sup>Because the rumours of Father Nangle's marriage were so widespread, Archbishop Roche requested an official investigation which was conducted both in St. John's and in London where Father Nangle was serving as Chaplain with the British Forces. As a result of these inquiries, the Archbishop issued an "unequivocal and categorical contradiction of the report" of the marriage. See "Deputation of Catholic Citizens," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 4 Nov. 1918: 4 and Chapter 2, footnote for diary entry 25 May 1920.

<sup>9</sup>This probably refers to Ethel English whose father ran the *Bell Island Miner* prior to his death in 1917. See Chapter I, letter 3 Sept. 1918.

<sup>10</sup>Thomas Ricketts (1901-1967), as a seventeen year old soldier of the Newfoundland Regiment, was awarded the Victoria Cross (and the Distinguished Conduct Medal and Croix de Guerre with Gold Star) for his bravery in Belgium and was given a hero's welcome upon his

him if it is in the day.

Don't worry about nothing while I am alive. I know you had a good heart for to finish your Thesis after coming from the dance - your hand could not be very steady.

Pop sends love.

I remain your loving Mother,

B. Browne

89 Casey Street  
St. John's, N. F. L.  
February 5, 1919

My dear son,

I received your letter yesterday. I was glad you received it so quickly, nothing like money before you really need it. Whenever you want more just say and don't depend on others and send for it in time.

I hope you will have success in your exams. Get one of those pictures. I suppose it is dearer than your debating picture that is here. I was showing that picture to Ott and he said that is worth keeping.

As soon as you get into work join the Columbus Society.

Was Mike out with you in his vacation? His mother was telling me he was going out.

You say Mrs. Kentleton is fussy. Don't mind for the time you will be there. She is only vexed with herself, seeing she could have gotten a nicer partner in life. So overlook all now.<sup>11</sup>

We have it cold here though not very frosty and it is snowing now but I think we will have an early spring.

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return to Newfoundland. Later he did continue his studies in St. John's at Bishop Feild College and Memorial College, then he left Newfoundland to study pharmacy. Mr. Ricketts operated a pharmacy on Water Street in St. John's for many years. By all accounts "Tommy" Ricketts was very humble about his bravery and shunned most publicity in this regard. See Joy Cave, *Two Newfoundland V.C.s* (St. John's, Nfld.: Creative Printers and Publishers Ltd., 1984) Part 11 and "V. C. Winner Dies at 65," and "State Funeral Today For Ricketts," and "Tributes Paid War Hero," and "Sergeant Thomas Ricketts, V.C.," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 13 Feb. 1967: 1,3,6.

<sup>11</sup>Mrs. Kentleton was Bill's landlady at 28 St. Joseph Street in Toronto. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 28.

Pop is working on a scaffold on the side of a very big vessel these days. They are in a hurry with her. Only for that I would not let him work these days - it is so cold.

I suppose we will have a great time when the boys come on Saturday or Sunday. Ricketts is among them - our Victoria Cross. (I saw on the list Lieutenant C. J. Crawford.) If she comes in the day time we are keeping a half holy day. They are making up money to educate him. He belongs to a little place where there are no schools. He went back for the ammunition twice in the face of the German gun fire.

Angus McDonald is superintendent in place of McDougall for the Dominion Iron and Steel Company, Bell Island. He came from New Glasgow.

The Archbishop will be leaving on the Corsican when she comes. He will go as far as Halifax and then by train to New York. He is going no further than the States.

Pop sends love. God bless and protect you.

From your loving Mother,

B. Browne

89 Casey Street  
St. John's, N. F. L.  
February 19, 1919

My dear Son,

I'll just write you a few lines altho I received no letter this week. Yet I may get one today, that is if the long looked for train gets in. It takes a whole week from Basque's since the big lot of snow fell.

This is a cruel stormy day. Pop is home today - their work is outside work. Last winter they had a big steamer to build out of the new, so wet and dry they could work. What is a day or two out of the week? In winter is the only rest for a man of his age.

I had a letter from Uncle Tom. He told me he was not feeling well altho he was working. Georgie is well and going to school.

The morning *News* is just come. The mail won't be in before tomorrow. The Kyle is bringing the Mail from Louisburg to Placentia. It will be here sometime tomorrow. This letter will go to Placentia and the Kyle will take it to Louisburg if she can't get into North Sydney.

Uncle Tom said you never put your address on the card you sent them Xmas. He told me to give him your address when I write him.

Mr. Kennedy and Pop came down from Holy Cross Hall after the meeting of the Holy Name. He was telling us he had a letter from Mike. He says Mike is very fond of you.



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We had a terrible shooting accident last Sunday night at half past nine. Mrs. Parsons' little girl - aged 14 - Gladys - you know her she is the eldest girl, a nice little girl - she went next door to mind Mrs. Hackett's five children. When Mrs. Hackett went out and young Hackett aged 8 years old took a big gun from the corner of the room. Gladys told him to put up the gun but he let it fall and shot poor Gladys accidentally. Mr. Hackett thought he unloaded the gun the last day he was shooting. She lived eight hours. Her Mother is broken hearted over it.<sup>12</sup>

I remain you loving Mother,  
B. Browne

89 Casey Street  
St. John's, N. F. L.  
February 24, 1919

My dear Son,

I received your letter on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> after twelve days coming - the line is blocked. The Kyle comes to Placentia.

I read the little item about football hockey. I would not worry or get in a heat if I were you. Is it now you are thinking of settling down and studying in earnest? You should do that before this, where it won't be so hard on you bye and bye.

Time is flying. What about those pictures you are talking about?

I am sending you a little item about the Rhodes, probably you have read it in the papers up there. If you did go to Oxford what would you take up? Would it be law? Surely it would not be civil engineering.

I think if you could get out on good work and get to know those contractors it is likely you would strike something good later.

Crawford is here now and Knight, if I am not mistaken. As soon as they are discharged you'll see them settling down here to law.

Honourable C. Emerson went to Boston to have an operation performed on his nose to have a growth removed. It was, I believe, successful but he went out too soon and took flue and died so you see carelessness is the cause of half the deaths. His funeral took place here today. He is the Protestant Emerson - the Scotts is burying him. He was

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<sup>12</sup>For a newspaper report of this accident at 83 Casey Street see "Serious Shooting Accident," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 17 Feb. 1919: 9.

a lawyer.<sup>13</sup>

I read all about poor Laurier - a great man gone.

I read about Bishop Hallern's letter to Tucker. He is a great man.

Will Higgins is about the best lawyer here - he got all the criminal cases clear.<sup>14</sup>

Pop sends love.

God bless and protect you.

I remain your loving Mother

B. Browne

89 Casey Street  
St. John's, N. F. L.  
March 1, 1919

My dear Son,

I received your letter of February 19<sup>th</sup>. I am glad to know you are well.

You must not give much heed to the mail now the railroad is blocked and the Kyle brings the mail to Placentia. Yesterday was a frosty day and cold and today it is mild but we have plenty of snow.

I read a tribute in our papers about the great Statesman. I am expecting the papers and *Varsity*. I suppose Father Burke's sermon will be in it.

You know the little girl Kent that Gustave used to go with. She is going to be married to John McCarthy - the lawyer who acts as judge sometimes - on Easter Monday.

Ott was not in this long time but I may guess the reason - he swore he would never

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<sup>13</sup>Charles Henry Emerson (1863-1919) was a lawyer, admitted to the Newfoundland Bar in 1891, and politician. He was a long time member of the House of Assembly and for a number of years was a minister without portfolio. At the time of his death he was Registrar of the Supreme Court. See "Obituary," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 20 Feb. 1919: 6.

<sup>14</sup>William John Higgins (1880-1943) was a St. John's lawyer who was admitted to the bar in 1910. He was considered an outstanding defence counsel. As a politician, he represented St. John's East in the Newfoundland House of Assembly for many years and held various cabinet positions. In 1928 was appointed as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland where he served until his death. In addition to his legal and political activities, he was considered an excellent sportsman and referee. At the time of Justice Higgins' death, Bill Browne spoke of Justice Higgins' outstanding quality of kindness. See "Higgins, William John," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography* and "Mr. Justice Higgins is Called By Death," and "Tributes to Memory of Hon. Justice Higgins From the Bench and Bar," and "Magistrate's Court Pays Tribute," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 8 Oct. 1943: 3.

go to Kanes again and said a lot more. I heard he was up there on Sunday night. She has an influence over him. She is three or four years older than him but he thinks she is one year older. There were a breach of promise tried here when we came first to St. John's, a Miss Hollet sued Jack Madden and that was a point that went in his favour but still the girl won. He had to pay a lot of money. I remember reading in the papers at that time.

That ship building company in Harbour Grace went up the spout. Families that went over there are here looking for houses.

It is only now that the Nickel is finished. It will open on Monday night. It is called The Majestic, a grand name.

Regards to Mike.

I hope you didn't speak too fast in proposing the toast. You will tell me about it when you write. Pop sends love.

God bless and protect you

Your loving Mother

B. Browne

Hoping you're doing well with studies.

89 Casey Street  
St. John's, N. F. L.  
April 2, 1919

My dear Son,

I just received your letter. I am glad you are well. You must be busy in earnest preparing for the exams. I hope you send me *Torontonensis* in which your picture appears. Don't worry you will get on a job some where, please God.

The next letter I will get from you will say you have the money order.

You must look fine on the stage with such a fine speaker as Phil Gibbs. I received all the papers about Gibbs and the war. It is interesting. Bond won't come out for the Liberals. They have a mass meeting tonight to know who they are going to call out. I expect there will be some fun.

Lord Morris is a busy man in London. He has an office taken and guess who is his private secretary? Reginald Organ - the fellow that you love - he is Bachelor of Arts of Dublin University. I thought, too, that he would not be a priest.<sup>15</sup> Leo Sharpe showed

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<sup>15</sup>Reginald J. Organ (c.1898 -1969) was secretary to Lord Morris in England. Later Reg served as chief stenographer and accountant at the Central District Court while Bill Browne was on the Bench. See "Deaths," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 21 July 1969: 2 and Browne,

them bad example.<sup>16</sup> I just read it in the *Herald* tonight. Lord Morris has about five or six jobs in something about the allied countries and about resources of Newfoundland - her fisheries and minerals. What do the Brothers think of their little fellow Reg now?

I hope poor Mike will succeed. Give my regards to him.

They are going to build 600 houses for the working class I believe of concrete - the N. I. W. - Industrial Workman's Union. The Archbishop is a shareholder and Mayor Gosling. Not to make money - they want to get them for the people. The tenants will be able to buy them \$5.00 a month. There are no houses to be got with concrete. Some say they will build up in poor house lane. Honourable John Anderson and Honourable Mike Gibbs have a meeting tonight about the houses.

I sent you a couple of papers on Sunday. I will send a couple of more as soon as I see who they are calling out in opposition.

Margaret O'Reilly is a school teacher, of course, she that used to go with a lawyer. God bless you. Pop sends love.

Your loving Mother

B. Browne

89 Casey Street  
St. John's, N. F. L.  
April 24, 1919

My dear son,

I received your letter on Monday. I am glad you are well. You must feel tired after the exams - it will be a change for you to get away for a while.

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*Eighty-Four Years 229.*

<sup>16</sup>Edward Leo Sharpe (1891-1962) was the son of William Sharpe and Margaret (Jones) Sharpe of Harbour Grace, Newfoundland. Following studies at St. Bonaventure's College in St. John's, Leo studied for the priesthood at All Hallows College in Dublin from 1911 until 1918 but was not ordained. He then studied medicine, graduating in 1924 from the National University of Ireland. Dr. Sharpe returned to St. John's where he served as a general practitioner for many years, and for fifteen years as the superintendent of the General Hospital. Dr. Sharpe married Ellen Bishop of Waterford, Ireland in 1924 and the couple had a large family including Edward, Duncan, Patricia, Noreen, Geraldine, Irene, Eleanor and Zita. See "Dr. E. L. Sharpe Dies Suddenly" and "Extend Sympathy," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 27 June 1962: 4 and Geraldine McKenna, Secretary to the President, All Hallows College, email, 17, 22 Apr. 2002.

I hope you will graduate, if not it will be your own fault, and I hope with honours. I am glad you got the papers. The weather is terrible - rain and fog.

The Bird Men won't fly for some time yet. Hawker thinks he will get across - it will be wonderful. One is flying from Pleasantville and the other from Mount Pearl.<sup>17</sup> I read in the morning news about the big machine of Handley and Page. They fell down and five men burned to death and two injured. These here must feel a little nervous to fly such a distance.

Pady is here and his poor Mother died. Her only wish was to live long enough to see him ordained but God willed otherwise.<sup>18</sup>

Tom Lamb will be working at engineering.<sup>19</sup> With the help of God you will strike a job.

Dr. Vincent Burke is in New York in some university. He had a great letter in the papers here that what they should erect for a memorial to our boys is a university such as Antigonish and Mount Allison.<sup>20</sup> It would be fine for boys would not have to go away.

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<sup>17</sup>These pilots were competing for the £10,000 prize offered by England's Lord Northcliffe's *Daily Mail* newspaper to the first aviator to cross the Atlantic. The contest originated in 1913 but was banned during World War I. St. John's, Newfoundland was chosen as the starting place for most of the contestants because of its proximity to England. In the spring of 1919 the Sopwith company team of Hawker and Grieve, the Martinsyde Ltd. team of Raynham and Morgan, the Vickers company team of Alcock and Brown, and the Handley Page team of Kerr, Brackley, Gran and Wyatt were in Newfoundland preparing and awaiting good flying weather. The prize was eventually won in June of 1919 by John Alcock and Arthur Whitten Brown flying the "Vimy." See, for example, Terry Gwynn-Jones, *The Air Racers* (Sydney: Lansdowne Press, 1983) 107-122 and Sir John Alcock and Sir Arthur Whitten Brown, *Our Atlantic Flight* (London: William Kimber and Co. Ltd., 1969) 14.

<sup>18</sup>Catherine Channing Kennedy, mother of Patrick Kennedy who was studying for the priesthood in Toronto, died Apr. 14, 1919. Patrick travelled to St. John's but arrived several days after his Mother's funeral. Mrs. Channing lived at 115 Freshwater Road in St. John's. See "Obituary" and "Deaths," *Daily News* [St. John's, Nfld.] 15 Apr. 1919: 3 and "Personals," *Daily News* [St. John's, Nfld.] 21 Apr. 1919: 4.

<sup>19</sup>Tom Lamb was a distant cousin of the Browne's. Like Bill, he had been a student at St. Bonaventure's College, won the Jubilee Scholarship (1908) and studied engineering at the University of Toronto. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 22.

<sup>20</sup>For Vincent Burke's letter see "Voice of the People," *Daily News* [St. John's, Nfld.] 15 Apr. 1919: 2. Vincent P. Burke (1879 -1953) was a distinguished Newfoundland educator who was at that time studying at Columbia University. Throughout his career Dr. Burke held many positions in Newfoundland education - he was a teacher, principal, inspector, superintendent, and deputy minister of education. He is considered one of the founders of Memorial College, now Memorial University. Dr. Burke received numerous awards for his service to Newfoundland,

He says this country could keep up one. None of the papers referred to it after. It would be fine - you might get Teacher of Science.

The House has opened. The elections won't be until the fall - the people don't want it until the fall. You might be home to enjoy the fun. They have some fun down in the House.

Hon. McNamara was telling yesterday that Confederation will soon be. The Country is 44 million in debt. Percy Hearn just told me that if there was Confederation we would see what we are paying but they have it that we don't know what we are paying. The people are selling all their houses. They must be afraid of Confederation.

I addressed my last to 28 St. Joseph Street. I am sending this to Newman House. Pop sends love. God bless and protect you.

Your loving Mother

B. Browne

89 Casey Street  
St. John's, N. F. L.  
May 17, 1919

My dear Son,

I received your letter and slip yesterday. I am glad you did so well. I will treasure the letter and slip. I suppose the only trouble now is getting a job. Whatever if all fails you can come home. If you need your passage money, you can send to me for it. You have a home to come to any time. With that profession you will be all the time away from us. That was my idea for you to study law.

The Brothers only wanted to boast about their college having a civil engineer out of it I believe. You will be the only one now. For instance there is Cyril Cahill and he is never in the court and all he is is a money lender and something about insurance and he keeps two servants and lives in a nice home and takes a trip himself and his wife. Judge Riddell you told me - or was it Latchford - was a civil engineer and then went in for law.<sup>21</sup>

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among which were his appointments as a Canadian Senator, as Knight Commander of St. Gregory by the Catholic Church, and as Commander of the Order of the British Empire. See "Career in Furthering Education Ends as Dr. Vincent Burke Passes," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 21 Dec. 1953: 3.

<sup>21</sup>William Renwick Riddell (1852-1945) and Francis Robert Latchford (1854-1938) were at that time well known Ontario judges both of whom became judges of the Supreme Court of

Now I don't want to dishearten you so long as you are so sure. There is nothing like pluck.

How many men does O'Brien keep employed in the summer? He may not want so many men. Is there any chance of getting into a railway company like Reid's? That will be the only way for you to push but there are so many of those returned soldiers. Father Burke would like to do his best, I know. Don't worry, you can come unless you will be sure of a job.

Now I must tell you about our big Airship. He came in 27 hours from Long Island in America. He would have done it in 24 hours only he went astray in the fog in Placentia Bay and he took the railway track and had to go down low to enquire where he was. He came along until he came to Topsail and then he took the coast. She looked lovely coming in the sky like a blue cloud.

The American man of war Chicago's captain took them aboard the ship to entertain them and while they were gone away the airship goes and flies away and broke the moorings and nearly killed a man. I was not down at the landing - I couldn't get off, it was dinner - but there were great excitement on Ross' field. They moved there - the commander Coil and the other five men that made up the crew.

I got that item in the *Daily News*.<sup>22</sup> I am sending the other papers. Will copy.

Margaret English is married to McDonald from America on the Island.

Pop is well and sends love

God bless and protect you

Your loving Mother

B. Browne

Ontario, appeal division, Judge Latchford serving as chief justice. It was Judge Riddell who had the science degree. Having already received a Bachelor of Arts from Victoria University (now Victoria College, University of Toronto), he received its first Bachelor of Science and the program at that time was planned for "surveyors and other technical scientists". See C. B. Sissons, *A History of Victoria University* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952) 150 and W. Stewart Wallace, ed., revised by W. A. McKay, *The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978) 441 and 704.

<sup>22</sup>Brigid's account of the big airship described the spectacular arrival of the American dirigible C.5 which had flown from New York and, although not in competition for the *Daily Mail* prize, was expected to attempt a crossing of the Atlantic via the Azores. The dirigible was a 200 foot sausage-shaped balloon with a 35 foot car and operated by a crew of 6. The ship *Chicago* accompanied the dirigible to transport the hydrogen gas and to assist with takeoff and landing. The departure of the dirigible was equally spectacular when high winds caused the dirigible to break its moorings and blow towards the sea after more than 100 of the *Chicago's* sailors and local people tried unsuccessfully to hold the ropes. See "Dirigible C-5 Arrived," *Daily News* [St. John's, Nfld.] 16 May 1919: 3.

89 Casey Street  
St. John's, N. F. L.  
May 29, 1919

My dear Son,

I received on Monday a letter from you that came in on Saturday but Saturday being Empire Day the letters weren't delivered until Monday. I am expecting a message for your passage money to come home but I expect you are waiting for the boys if you did not succeed in getting on with O'Brien. I wrote you a long letter the last time, the day after Brother Ryan wrote you I think. I told you all then. Brother Ryan wrote you when you were down in Ottawa and addressed the letter to the university so you must have two letters from him.

Your money must be getting small again. I addressed the last letter to 28 St. Joseph Street. I hope you received it.

There are one thousand boys coming and Captain Nangle is with them. I think they are coming in now. There are going to be a great reception for them.

The government broke up in the House the other day and the governor called on Sir Michael Cashin to form a Ministry and he got enough. Stone left Coaker and Hickman and Morine. Coaker threw a bottle of ink at Morine and gave him a terrible doing up.<sup>23</sup> Cashin is premier now until the fall when there will be a general election. I hope you will be home for it.

I didn't see any of the Kennedys this long time. I have no time to spare to go visit them.

Pop is well and sends love.

You will want to be down three weeks before July, that is if you want a chance to be selected to go in October. Use your mind.

I must go to Mass. This is the feast of the Ascension.

Your loving Mother

B. Browne

God bless and protect you.

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<sup>23</sup>For reports of these days in the House of Assembly see "Stormy Session at the House," *Daily News* [St. John's, Nfld.] 28 May 1919: 4