

# John Brown

Collection Ref: IE CCCA/U97

## Descriptive List

### Cork City and County Archives

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## Identity Statement

<b>Reference Code:</b>	IE CCCA/U97
<b>Title:</b>	John Brown
<b>Dates:</b>	1917 – 1921 (1950)
<b>Level of description:</b>	Fonds / Item
<b>Extent:</b>	17 items

## Context

### Creator

Brown, John (Head Constable, Royal Irish Constabulary)

### Archival History

Donated via Cork County Library from Mr. Alec Day, 1973.

### Administrative / Biographical History

Born 1866, County Armagh. Farming background. Presbyterian denomination. Joined the RIC (Royal Irish Constabulary) in December 1885, service number no. 51646.. Rose to status of non commissioned officer at rank of sergeant and later head constable. Stationed in Belfast 1885 – 1886, Cork July 1886 - April 1918 including time as head constable at Tuckey Street barracks. Lived at St.Patricks Terrace. Shot in leg during riot in Cork in 1917, but recovered. Also based at Kilrush County Clare in May 1918 – July 1919, and Cork again in August 1918 until disbandment of RIC in April 1922. Received a number of citations for distinguished service. His wife Bessie, who was from county Cork, died between 1901 and 1911.

## Content & Structure

### Scope & Content

Manuscript material kept or gathered by John Brown, RIC Head Constable.

MSS. relating to anti-conscription riots in Cork, 1917, details of injuries sustained by Brown, and his claim for award or compensation.

RIC documents relating to War of Independence period including orders for joint military/RIC piquets in Cork City, a report possibly by Brown about police movements

on the night of the Burning of Cork. Also, 2 captured Sinn Féin items including proclamation by O/C Cork No.1 Brigade IRA re. household occupants decree and warning declaration from L.T. Mac Cosgair, Dáil Éireann.  
Material generally related to Brown's service in the RIC, including a humorous poem about various RIC staff in Cork, physical drill instructions, a notice about RIC grave plots in Dublin, and an item relating to income tax.

File of material concerning a bigamy case in 1920.

The collection is of interest to the history of the RIC and its role during the 1917 – 1921 period in Ireland, particularly in Cork City, as documented through the experiences of a senior non-commissioned officer.

(See list of items below for more detailed descriptions).

### **Arrangement**

- A: 1917 Riots in Cork and Injury Sustained (1917-1919) (6 items)
- B: War of Independence 1919-1921 (5 items)
  - B.i R.I.C., Orders for Piquets in Cork City
  - B.ii R.I.C. Report by Brown on night of 'Burning of Cork', 1920 (1 item)
  - B.iii Newsclipping re. 'Irish Shame', 1921 (1 item)
  - B.iv Sinn Féin Material Captured by R.I.C. 1919-1921 (2 items)
- C: R.I.C Service c.1900-1921 (5 items)
- D: Bigamy Case, 1920 (8 items)

### **Conditions of Access & Use**

**Access:** Open by appointment to those holding a current readers ticket

**Language:** English

**Finding Aids:** Descriptive List

### **Allied Materials:**

#### **Related Material**

CCCA:

U104 Sinn Féin Meeting Macroom, Royal Irish Constabulary File

PR4 Terence MacSwiney Lord Mayor Files

*Elsewhere:*

The National Archives, London- Records of the RIC

## **Archivists Note:**

Brian McGee  
Archivist CCCA  
January 2012

### **References:**

Royal Irish Constabulary records, general registers of service (Microfilm copy, Dublin City Library and Archive)

Census of Ireland, 1901 and 1911 [www.census.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie)

### **Subject Index Terms**

Policing, Ireland (pre 1922)

War of Independence, Ireland (1919-1921)

Republicans

Irish Republican Army

Recruitment, British Army, Ireland (1916-1918)

## List of Items and Descriptions:

### *A: 1917 Riots in Cork and Injury Sustained (1917-1919) (6 items)*

1. 3 July 1917

MS. statement by [Sergeant John Brown], concerning an a riot in Cork at the Patrick's Street recruitment office of the British Army, 24 June 1917. Recounts that there was a huge and hostile crowd of about 5,000 people outside the recruitment office. Stones were thrown and revolver shots fired and the police forces charged in response. DI Swansey arrived with support 'in the nick of time'. Notes that '...the ferocity of the onslaught surpasses anything I have ever witnessed, and I had some experience in Belfast during the 1886 riots there'. Also, note, in pencil, with 2 verse song or poem about the riot, found on Jeremiah Mullane on 21 July 1917, 'We hauled down the old rag and flew the Sinn Fein flag  
Pro German Sinn Feiners and all the backlaners  
Who fought for old Ireland in Patrick's Street...'. (2pp)

2. 27 Sep 1917

Copy of MS. 'Statement re Occurance on 27th Sept 1917'. Contemporary copy of legal statement on behalf of Sergeant Brown, RIC, concerning injuries sustained when marching back to Union Quay barrack from operations at the County Gaol. A hostile crowd had assembled near the courthouse, and Brown was shot in the leg when the police charged, the bullet narrowly missing an artery. He returned to duty on 3 March 1918. (2pp)

3. 11 Dec 1917

MS. memorandum concerning file on Sergeant John Brown. EM Clayton, County Inspector, Cork, to County Inspectors Howe and Walsh, 'As Sergt Brown wishes, I send this for your opinion'. Note from Inspector Howe, Navan, Co. Meath, 13 Dec 1917, that he has seen this file and Brown '...acted with judgement and determination and is I think deserving of award'. Note from inspector CA Walsh, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, 15 Dec 1917, that Brown was in plain clothes, showing 'great zeal, resource and intelligence as well as pluck on the occasion and is in my opinion deserving of favourable recognition...'. Final note from Clayton 'The sergeant is granted a local record'. (1p)

4. 24 Feb 1918

MS. letter from C.A. Walsh, [Chief Inspector] ,RIC, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway, to Sergeant John Brown. Walsh was glad to hear Brown had completely recovered from the 'grievous wound' he received on duty, also that he had received a commendation in this case. Walsh recommended Brown to the Inspector General for a special promotion, 'I sincerely trust you may soon obtain the high rank which you so well deserve...'. (2pp)

5. 3 June 1919

MS. application to District Inspector by Head Constable John Brown, Kilrush County Clare, for permission to take legal proceedings under Criminal Injuries (Ireland) Act, 1919 concerning injury sustained on 27 Sep 1917 in Cork City. (See also: U97/3) (1p)

6. 1919

MS. note 'Popliteal Artery', noting award or claim of £145.12s to John Brown due to injury sustained and description of the number of days spent recovering. (1p)

## ***B: War of Independence 1919-1921 (5 items)***

### **B.i R.I.C., Orders for Piquets in Cork City**

7. [1920-1921]

MS. RIC, Orders for Officers in command of Picquets in Cork City, including strength and composition, command and organisation, duties, instructions concerning joint military and police picquet patrols the city between 10pm and 6am. (1p)

### **B.ii R.I.C. Report by Brown on night of 'Burning of Cork', 1920 (1 item)**

8. 13 Dec 1920

MS. Report to superior by [Head Constable John Brown], Tuckey Street, Cork City regarding his group's operations from about 9pm on 11th December 1920. Describes meeting Crossley tenders containing auxiliaries, hearing

shots being fired near Parnell Bridge and Patrick's Street, making a search for missing constables who later returned to "The Home", on return journey to Tuckey Street barrack, he hears 5 large explosions from Patrick's Street direction, and attends a 'huge fire' at Grant & Co., and attempts to get the military to send their fire engine without success. He and Captain Moran prevented looting of Roches jewellery shop by an auxiliary cadet, who threatened to 'plug' him. Notes that, '...only for the actions of the police at Tuckey Street the destruction in their vicinity would have been much more extensive.' (4pp)

### **B.iii Newsclipping 'The Irish Shame', 1921 (1 item)**

#### 9. December 1921

Newspaper clipping (possibly from the London Times) 'The Irish Shame, Treason to the British Dead', 'From an Irish Correspondent'. The writer is a loyalist, opposing the truce of 1921 '...to be loyal to Britain does not pay...Governments only reward the traitor and only respect the pistol....the Irish...are rejoicing openly to-day...'. (1 item)

### **B.iv Sinn Féin Material Captured by R.I.C. 1920-1921 (2 items)**

#### 10. [1920-1921]

TS. copy of warning declaration by L.T. Mac Cosgair (Liam Cosgrave) Minister for Local Government, Dáil Éireann, "To all Holders of Decrees of Enemy Courts for Criminal and Malicious Injuries: To all who have secured or are about to secure 'Garnishee Orders': To Solicitors acting on behalf of such persons....THIS SOLEMN WARNING:" Refers to Red Cross, inviolability of military hospitals, and the 'similarly sacred' vital health services of the civil community. Accuses British Government of attempting to withhold rates from essential services, which he says is 'an attempt on the life of the community – to make war upon the sick and the helpless poor, upon the mother, the infant, and the aged...'. Those acting as agents of the enemy in this attempt '...are guilty of the highest crimes against the State...and will be dealt with accordingly...'. (See also U97/16) (2pp)

#### 11. c. December 1920

Printed republican handbill, from O/C Cork No.1 Brigade, 'PROCLAMATION', concerns order from "The Self-styled 'Bulldog Governor' of Cork" to householders to display of a list of the inmates of each house. Every

householder loyal to the Republic is to ignore the order, as if the majority do so '...what will happen ? Some will be jailed perhaps, but jail is becoming a joke for Irishmen....People of Cork – DO NOT ASSIST THE ENEMY to lay hands upon YOUR OWN. STAND TOGETHER AND HE WILL NOT SUCCEED'. (See also U97/16)

(1p)

***C: R.I.C Service c.1900-1921 (5 items)***

12. [c.1900 - 1918]

Poem or song lyric, 'John Peel – Up To Date', 9 verses. Amusing verse concerning various Cork RIC men including Brown, John Cooke, Reddin and Keaney.

Verse 2 :

'Do you know John Brown from Tuckey Street  
Who annoys Denis Roche and the whole damn Beat  
Don't you think he could do with a kick in the seat  
Or a blanket court-martial in the morning'.

(1p)

13. n.d. [1917-1921]

RIC instructions on physical drill, marked 'confidential'. Covers wrist lock, hammer lock, arm and wrist lever, arm and collar lever, arm and neck lever, arm and chin throw down, back arm throw down, wrist throw down, back and chin throw down, cap throw down, leg lock and lever, disengaging opponents hands when clasped. (4pp)

14. 19 Sep 1921

Copy of DD-4 Income tax form 1919 – 1920, for John Brown, Head Constable. (2pp)

15. [1920s-1940s]

Printed 'Notice to Ex-Members of the Royal Irish Constabulary Force', concerning RIC plots at Glasnevin and Mount Jermome cemeteries, Dublin. The plots were purchased out of private funds of RIC and ex-members have

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right of burial. Gives fees to open graves, names of committee members.  
Family members may not be buried in the plots.  
(1p)

16. 1 April 1944, 5 April 1950

Empty envelope with note 'April 1944 Correspondence re Fire in Cork , also re. Injury to myself and Secret Sinn Fein Papers...John Brown Esq.' and note re. accounts 1947-1950 (see also U97/10 and U97/11).  
(2 items)

***D: O'Sullivan Bigamy Case, 1920 (8 items)***

17. Feb – Apr 1920

File, police documents concerning a bigamy charge against J. O'Sullivan.  
(8 items)