
Summary Information

Call number: C1606
Repository: Princeton University Library. Special Collections. Manuscripts Division
One Washington Road Princeton, New Jersey 08544 USA
Size: 0.2 linear feet
1 box
Language(s) of Material: English
Abstract: Consists of letters from Robert Sewall Browne (1866-1904) to his wife Alice E. Gray Browne in Maine, detailing his overland travels and work as a prospector, miner, and rancher in Colorado, Wyoming, and the Yukon Territory from 1896 to 1901.
Location: This collection is stored onsite at Firestone Library.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary Information</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography/History</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrangement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access and Use</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition and Appraisal</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing and Other Information</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Headings</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents List</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contents List</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Robert Sewall Browne (1866-1904) traveled from Maine to Colorado, Wyoming, the Yukon Territory, and Alaska in the 1890s in order to make a living for his family who remained back in Maine. Browne was the son of Minerva Lydia Meader (b. 1840) and Reverend Sewall Browne, a Baptist clergyman living in East Corinth, Maine. Robert Sewall Browne's wife, Alice E. Gray Browne (b. 1869), was the daughter of C. H. Gray. They had one son named Carle Meader Browne. Robert S. Browne pursued a variety of money-making schemes in the American and Canadian West, including working as a prospector and miner in Colorado, Wyoming, and the Yukon Territory during the Klondike Gold Rush, a rancher in Colorado, and a wood contractor in Alaska. Browne drowned in 1904 in a boat accident on the Tanana River in Alaska after completing a contract with the Northern Commercial Company to supply wood for river streamers.

Consists of twenty-five manuscript letters from Robert S. Browne to his wife Alice Gray Browne in Old Town, Maine, documenting his gold and silver mining activities and other money-making schemes, including ranching and trading goods, and his associated travels in the American and Canadian West from 1896 to 1901. The first ten letters document Browne's overland prospecting trip from Cripple Creek, Colorado, to mining camps at Hahns Peak and nearby ranching colonies at Slater Park, a distance of over 250 miles; from Slater Park to Rawlings, Wyoming; and from Rawlings back to Slater Park and Hahns Peak, covering an eight-month period from May 1896 to January 1897. Following a significant gap, spanning a period when Browne likely returned to visit his family on the East Coast, the other fifteen letters date from December 1899 to November 1901, when Browne was engaged in mining activities at hilltop mining camps near Dawson City in the Yukon Territory during the Klondike Gold Rush.

Browne's letters express affection for his wife and son at home, as well as confidence in the projected future success of his endeavors, and he often urges his wife to come and join him. The letters provide lengthy and detailed descriptions of his partnerships and individual prospecting activities, the several small settlements and camps in which he stayed or passed through, his encounters with Native American traders, and the successes and failures of his ventures and those of his fellow travelers. Browne's last letters from the fall of 1901 describe finding a promising deposit in the Yukon Territory, which turned out to be a bust.

Some of the letters and envelopes have been annotated at a later date by a different hand. The collection also includes a newspaper clipping reporting on the circumstances of Browne's death in Alaska in 1904.

Arranged chronologically.
Access and Use

Access
Open for research.

Restrictions on Use and Copyright Information
Single photocopies may be made for research purposes. No further photoduplication of copies of material in the collection can be made when Princeton University Library does not own the original. Inquiries regarding publishing material from the collection should be directed to RBSC Public Services staff at rbsc@princeton.edu. The library has no information on the status of literary rights in the collection and researchers are responsible for determining any questions of copyright.

Acquisition and Appraisal

Provenance and Acquisition
Purchase, 2018 (AM 2019-1).

Appraisal
No materials were removed from the collection during 2018 processing.

Processing and Other Information

Encoding
This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit 2018-06-15T12:04-0400

Descriptive Rules Used
Finding aid content adheres to that prescribed by Describing Archives: A Content Standard.

Subject Headings
- Browne, Robert Sewall, 1866-1904
- Brown family
- Gold miners -- United States -- 19th century -- Correspondence.
- Gold miners -- Canada -- 20th century -- Correspondence.
- Gold mines and mining -- Colorado -- Cripple Creek -- 19th century -- Sources.
- Gold mines and mining -- Yukon -- Klondike River Valley -- 20th century -- Sources.
- Prospecting -- West (U.S.) -- 19th century -- Sources.
- Prospecting -- Yukon -- 20th century -- Sources.
· Ranching -- Colorado -- 19th century -- Sources.
· West (U.S.) -- Description and travel -- 19th century -- Sources.
· Yukon -- Description and travel -- 20th century -- Sources.
· Correspondence -- 19th century.
· Travel
· Western Americana
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Box:</th>
<th>Folder:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert S. Browne Letters to Alice Gray Browne, 1896 May-1897 January</td>
<td>B-001198</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert S. Browne Letters to Alice Gray Browne, 1899 December-1901 November</td>
<td>B-001198</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper Clipping on the Death of Robert S. Browne, 1904</td>
<td>B-001198</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>