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Captain George W. Bradley, A.Q.M., and the Bradley Base Ball Clubs

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SANTA FE CLUB.		BRADLEY CLUB.			
	Runs.	Outs.		Runs.	Outs.
McKenzie,	10	2	Foley,	5	2
Martin,	10	1	Simpson,	4	2
Stout,	9	2	Grover,	6	1
Byers,	8	4	Herrick,	6	1
Barbey, L. E.	9	2	Abbott,	4	2
Whitney	7	3	Wilcox,	5	3
Whedlock,	7	0	Seaman,	3	1
Mullin	6	4	Hawkins,	1	4
Thompson,	8	3	Brown,	2	3
	—	—		—	—
	74	21		36	21

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Captain George W. Bradley, A.Q.M., and the Bradley Base Ball Clubs

Mark E. Eberle

George Willett Bradley was born in Syracuse, New York on 8 April 1830. Syracuse fielded baseball clubs beginning in the 1850s, but Bradley was not listed in any box scores. Instead, his early adult years were employed “in railway service.” The knowledge he gained about transportation was “admirable preparation for his future career.”¹

That career began in 1862, when Bradley was appointed captain and quartermaster in the New York Volunteers, reportedly “at the [insistence] of the Hon. Erastus Corning, of New York, who knew Bradley’s capacity and character.”² Corning was a member of the US House of Representatives whose many business interests included railroads. Bradley’s first post was in New Bern on the North Carolina coast, which Federal forces had captured in 1862. In September 1864, he was transferred to Virginia. His abilities reportedly “earned such recognition, both from General Grant and General Ingalls, his chief quartermaster,” that Bradley was promoted to lieutenant colonel and assigned to duty as depot commander at City Point, Virginia, which supported the siege at Petersburg. At the time, the depot at City Point became the second largest city in Virginia.³ It was during this period that Bradley married Agnes Mickles of Syracuse in 1864. They had one daughter, Kate Mickles Bradley, born in Baltimore in October 1865.*

After the war, Bradley transferred to the regular army as an assistant quartermaster (A.Q.M.) with the rank of captain, though he was sometimes still referred to as a colonel. Initially stationed in Baltimore, Maryland, he became Quartermaster of the Department of Missouri under General Hancock in the spring of 1867 as Hancock prepared for his ill-fated campaign on the central plains. It was the first of Captain Bradley’s several assignments in the West. While stationed at Fort Riley, Kansas in June 1867, Bradley arranged for ambulances to meet a group of senators and other dignitaries at the railroad depot, so they could be given a tour of the area around the fort and Junction City. “Returning to the Fort all were entertained with a good dinner prepared by the prince of quartermasters, Col. Bradley.”⁴

August 1867 found Bradley west of Fort Riley down the railroad being built from Kansas City to Denver. He served at Fort Harker (present town of Kanopolis) while the construction of buildings was completed and the post dealt with the impacts of a cholera outbreak and floods.⁵ In September, during a break in their work routine, a baseball game was arranged at the fort. The post team was named for the quartermaster—the Bradley Base Ball Club (BBC). Their opponent was the Smoky Hill BBC from the nearby the town

* In 1889, Agnes donated 60 photographs to the New-York Historical Society. They were primarily of the depot at City Point and the hospital at Point of Rocks in 1864–1865. The “Colonel George W. Bradley Collection of Civil War Photographs, PR 218,” includes 49 of these photographs (<http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/nyhs/bradley/bradley.html>).

BRADLEY B. B. C.		SMOKY HILL B. B. C.	
	O. R.		O. R.
McClure c	1	9	5
Abbott p	5	6	2
Brown 1 b	2	9	4
Thompson 2 b	2	6	4
Davis 3 b	6	4	1
Chandler s	3	6	3
Sprigg c f	2	8	2
Forshee r f	3	5	4
Slack 1 f	3	7	2
	27		22

of Ellsworth. Limited intercity competition in Kansas had begun only a year earlier.⁶ A box score for the game was published in the *Leavenworth Conservative* (shown above) and the *New York Clipper*. The Bradley BBC won easily, 60–22. The result was “thought not too bad for that country, taking into consideration that neither club has ever played a match before, and both but recently organized, and the day too windy for a fair display.” The game lasted three hours and was witnessed by several high-ranking officers, including members of the Seventh US Cavalry, who would later play baseball on the Kansas plains.⁷

In November 1867, Captain Bradley was transferred to Fort Union, a major supply depot along the Santa Fe Trail on the plains of northeastern New Mexico.⁸ On the far side of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the west, the Santa Fe BBC had been organized in 1867, perhaps the first such club in the territory. In November 1868, a new Bradley BBC at Fort Union challenged the Santa Fe BBC to a game on Thanksgiving Day “for the championship of New Mexico,” to be played at a neutral site in Las Vegas. However, the late date presented a challenge. The game “was postponed two days on account of the fall of several inches of snow.” On game day, “The ground was covered with snow, but the Union boys went to work with a will, and cleared a surface sufficiently large to permit the game to take place.” This time the Bradley BBC was not as fortunate, losing 74–36. They played only seven innings, but the game lasted four hours and twenty minutes. The *Santa Fe New Mexican* published the box score (shown below). The names of two Fort Union players—Abbott and Brown—were also on the Fort Harker roster.⁹

SANTA FE CLUB.		BRADLEY CLUB.			
	Runs.	Outs.	Runs.	Outs.	
McKenzie,	10	2	Foley,	5	2
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Whitney	7	3	Wilcox,	5	3
Wheelock,	4	0	Scaman,	3	1
Mullin	6	4	Hawkins,	1	4
Thompson,	8	3	Brown,	2	3
	74	21		36	21

Despite the challenges of weather and distance, what was possibly the first baseball game in New Mexico between teams from different localities had been played. In December, the Santa Fe BBC delivered two resolutions to the *Santa Fe New Mexican* for publication. They thanked Mr. and Mrs. C.W. Kitchen for entertaining the teams that evening with a dance, hotel clerk Mr. C.T. Jennings, the citizens of Las Vegas, “impartial umpire” Colonel Daniel D. Wiley, and the Bradley BBC for its efforts to clear the field.¹⁰ They also expressed gratitude to the quartermaster.

Resolved that by his many and various acts of kindness and favors toward us, Col. G.W. Bradley has proven that in him, the Club which bears his honored name, has a true friend, and while we hereby, as a Club, express our gratitude for, and appreciation of his many favors we assure him that there remains in the hearts of each of us individually a gratitude which can no more be expressed than it can be forgotten.¹¹

Captain Bradley continued to serve at Fort Union until 1870, but there were no further reports of games for the Bradley BBC.* The final mention of the club came in April 1869, when the *Santa Fe New Mexican* asked about a rematch with the Santa Fe BBC.¹² Perhaps it was Abbott, Brown, or others who organized the clubs at Fort Harker and Fort Union, rather than Bradley, though he certainly offered his support for their games.

Captain Bradley served at several other posts around the country, including (in alphabetical order) Bismarck (North Dakota), Boise (Idaho), Charleston (South Carolina), St. Louis (Missouri), St. Paul (Minnesota), San Antonio (Texas), San Francisco (California), and Yuma (Arizona). Agnes and Kate often accompanied him to these posts.¹³ When Bradley left for Boise in 1877, after serving two years in Yuma, Tucson’s *Arizona Citizen* praised the departing quartermaster.

Bradley is one of those men whose character reflects credit on any profession he may belong to. He has been stationed here a long time and we all know him thoroughly, like him and respect him. It has never been necessary for him to affect prudish airs to prevent dishonest propositions being made to him; no judge of human nature would think of doing it.¹⁴

Captain Bradley arrived at his final post in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1880. On 20 February 1882, George W. Bradley died from heart failure at age 51. No picture of Captain Bradley was found, but in 1877, Yuma’s *Arizona Sentinel* described him as “a prince of good fellows, with a heart so big, that it has enlarged his person to the full limits of his spacious clothing.”¹⁵ The *Philadelphia Times* published a biographical sketch after his death.

Physically of a large, handsome type, with fine features, clear blue eyes and a noble presence; mentally possessed of an instinctive apprehension of the thing to be done and how to do it; morally of an unimpeachable integrity and uprightness that no temptation could assail, of broad sympathies and

* Others organized baseball teams at Fort Union, including a company of the Eighth US Cavalry in 1871, who took their bats and balls on scouting assignments (Oliva 1993, pages 441 and 462).

generous social instincts, George W. Bradley was a typical soldier—brave, unassuming, courteous and proud, the soul of honor, a very bulwark of friendship and truth.¹⁶

At a time when women were typically referred to by their husband's name—for example, Mrs. Bradley—it is often difficult to trace them through history. That is not true of Agnes and Kate, who continued to live together. After George passed away, his wife and daughter could choose where they lived, rather than following him from post to post. They spent several years “in the West,” mostly in Omaha, Nebraska during the early 1890s and perhaps earlier. Kate, in particular, was occasionally mentioned in the social notes of the Omaha newspapers. During at least one year (1893–1894), she taught in the public schools as the “director of physical culture” at a salary of \$100 per month. They also lived briefly in Ottawa, Kansas before returning to Washington, DC in late 1896.¹⁷

It was in Washington that Kate was the subject of a story carried by newspapers across the country. “Miss Kate Mickles Bradley, daughter of the late Col. George W. Bradley, United States army, has become a professional model at the national capital.”¹⁸ Most of the reports were that brief, but a few provided more detail. According to the account in the *New Orleans Picayune*, the story was newsworthy because Kate was the “only society girl who has posed professionally as an artist's model.”¹⁹ The first newspaper article about Kate's career as a model was published in the *Washington Evening Times* in November 1896, accompanied by a sketch of Kate.



Pantomime songs are about to be introduced into Washington society by Miss Kate M. Bradley, the daughter of the late Col. George W. Bradley, U.S.A., who has returned with her mother to their home on Fifteenth street, after an absence of eight years in the West. At the time of her departure Miss Bradley was an almost a helpless invalid. During her sojourn she seems to have been touched by a fairy's wand and transformed into a perfection of physical vigor and grace. ... Her course included lessons from the first ballet master in Chicago, supplemented by a daily drill in physical gymnastics.... While giving her pantomime songs and poems she wears an aesthetic gown with Greek effects. The bodice is low and the arms entirely bare, so that the rhythm and melody of her art may find easy expression of movement.²⁰

Her pantomimes were ascribed to the Delsarte method of expression, named for François Delsarte. Upon returning to Washington, Kate was discovered by painters attending her performances. In addition to earning money by posing for professional artists and art students, Kate opened a school of “physical culture” to teach performance, as she had done in Omaha. While in Nebraska, Kate performed at both social affairs and charity events. She continued to do so in Washington, at events such as a program

sponsored by the Army and Navy Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution “for the relief of destitute sailors and soldiers.” Kate was a member of the D.A.R.²¹

Kate and Agnes lived in Washington into the new century, entertaining friends. “The Bradley home is exquisitely artistic in its appointments, and numbers among its attractions a small but complete conservatory, Mrs. Bradley being as devoted to her flowers as her gifted young daughter is to her art.” In October 1906, Agnes M. Bradley sold their home at 1722 Fifteenth Street NW in Washington for \$5,500. Agnes and Kate moved to New York, where they both passed away in 1920—Agnes on February 27 at age 85 and Kate on August 10 at age 54.²² George, Agnes, and Kate were all interred in Arlington National Cemetery (Section 1, Site 4-A-ES).

Acknowledgements

I accessed most newspapers through Newspapers.com and GenealogyBank.com. The *New York Clipper* was accessed through the Illinois University Library (<https://idnc.library.illinois.edu/>). I accessed the 1993 reference on the history of Fort Union by Leo Oliva online through the HathiTrust Digital Library (<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005914517>). Cemetery information was taken from findagrave.com.

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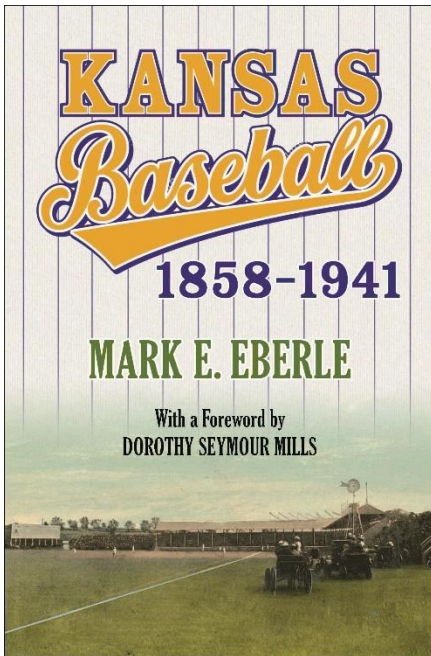
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You can learn more about the early history of baseball played by teams throughout Kansas in the book *Kansas Baseball, 1858–1941*, published in 2017 by the University Press of Kansas and available in paperback or e-book through bookstores and online retailers.

The book explores the early game played by hundreds of town teams composed of white males, as well as teams of women, African Americans, American Indians, and Mexican Americans. Also described are the regional minor leagues and major league tours, along with the histories of towns still playing baseball in the state's oldest ballparks constructed between 1924 and 1940.