

## **Bradley Estate Photograph Album, c. 1880 - 1920**

**Repository:** Hingham Public Library  
**Manuscript Number:** MSC # 29  
**Quantity:** 1 Box (1 Photograph Album)  
**Processed By:** Stephanie McBain and Jennifer Williams. Finding aid completed in April of 2015.  
**Access:** Open for research. Some materials have been placed in protective enclosures and should not be removed from them.

### **Provenance**

This album was created by an unidentified individual in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was gifted to the Hingham Public Library by an anonymous donor.

### **Biographical Note**

William Lambert Bradley was born in Cheshire, CT on May 25, 1826 to Levi and Abigail Ann (Atwater) Bradley. He grew up near New Haven, CT with his two younger siblings, Nathaniel and Abby, as well as his parents. He attended the local public schools before being accepted into private schools in Southington and Cheshire. He then completed his education at the Lancasterian School of New Haven.

William began his long and varied career at the age of thirteen as a clerk in a dry goods store and later as a traveling salesman. After several years he decided to change professions and open a clock and metalware manufacturing business with his brother as well as a close friend. This business, eventually known as the Bradley & Hubbard Manufacturing Company, became extremely successful and was the largest of its kind in the world during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. On November 9, 1848 William married Frances Martina Coe, with whom he would have three surviving children.

Just before the Civil War began, William opened a new business in Boston's South Bay. The company focused on creating commercial grade fertilizers for farmers, and by 1861 it had become so successful a larger manufacturing plant was needed. William therefore moved production to Weymouth Neck in Weymouth, Mass., where he established a very large factory. In 1872 the business was incorporated as the Bradley Fertilizer Co., with branches located in New York, Ohio, Maryland, and Georgia. It also opened large phosphate mines in South Carolina and Florida as well as several new factories. William served as both the president and manager.

With the wealth he accumulated through his businesses William purchased 100 acres of land in Hingham, Mass. This land, which was part of what would become known as the Bradley Estate, contained the family house, private homes for the head farm workers and servants, a large greenhouse containing exotic plants, fields for growing crops, extensive gardens, riding and walking trails, large barns, and grazing pastures for farm animals. William lived on the estate with his wife as well as their daughter, Abby Anna Bradley. By the late 1880s William's health

had greatly deteriorated, so he decided to retire and let his sons manage the fertilizer business. He remained at his estate in Hingham until his death on December 15, 1894.

Peter Butler Bradley, the son of William L. and Abigail (Atwater) Bradley, was born on July 10, 1850 in Meriden, CT. He grew up near New Haven with his parents and two siblings, Robert Stowe Bradley and Abby Anna Bradley. Peter moved to Massachusetts with his entire family during the 1860s when his father opened his first fertilizer manufacturing plant in Boston. After finishing school in the early 1870s Peter joined his father's business, where he would eventually become Vice-President.

On October 28, 1874 Peter married Elizabeth Woodward Guild of Roxbury, with whom he would have two sons. The couple lived primarily in Brookline, Mass. and Peter worked at the main company office in Boston. However, he did buy multiple plots of land in Hingham next to his father's property. As William's health declined Peter and his brother Robert took on more responsibility for the business, eventually managing it without his assistance.

In 1893 Peter attended the Chicago World Fair, where he viewed an exhibition of Arabian horses. He became very interested in the animals and bought at least twelve of them at auction, bringing them back to Hingham at what would eventually become known as the Hingham Stock Farm. He built a race track, polo field, and barn for his horses and dedicated himself to breeding thoroughbreds, standardbreds, and hackney horses. This became one of the first collections of Arabian horses in the United States. Peter remained fascinated with these horses his entire life, working with Homer Davenport to establish the breed in the United States and serving as the President of the Arabian Horse Club in the 1910s.

After the death of his father in 1894 Peter became the president of the Bradley Fertilizer Company, with his brother Robert serving as the Vice President. In 1899 the Weymouth plant burned down and the company merged with the American Agricultural Chemical Company, with Peter remaining at the helm as its president. He was actively involved in the business until his retirement in the 1920s. Peter and his family lived in Hingham on the family estate, where he remained until his death in 1933.

### **Scope and Content Note**

This collection consists of one album, dating between approximately 1880 and 1920, which contains photographs of the Bradley Estate. These images depict the estate's buildings, greenhouses, gardens, farm animals, and landscapes.

### **Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into the following series:

- Series I. The Bradley Estate, c. 1880-1920

### **Series I. The Bradley Estate Photograph Album, c. 1880 - 1920**

The series consists of one photograph album containing images of the Bradley Estate in Hingham, Mass. The images are undated, but appear to have been created between approximately 1880 and 1920. These black and white photographs focus mostly on the landscape in and around the estate, including gardens, walking and horse riding trails, ponds, fields, swamps, and forests. Other photographs depict the structures on the property as well as the family's farming endeavors. The former photographs include images of the family home, a large greenhouse and the tropical plants inside, as well as a large barn. Photographs focusing on farming include images of livestock and crops in the fields. Some photographs have come loose from the pages and have been placed within protective enclosures in a separate folder.