

Ella Scranton Bradford Brown

Ella Scranton was born to Abel Wright Scranton and Sarah Blackmon in August of 1857. She was their first child and was born in Lorain, Ohio. Ella's brother, Emmett, was born in 1859. By 1860, their small family was living in Iowa. Sarah Blackman had abandoned the family and ran off with medicine show performer, William Fence. Two years later, Marcie Cole gave birth to Walter Wright Scranton on August 2, 1862.

Abel and Sarah divorced April 10, 1866 and shortly after that date, Abel's cousin, Mary and her husband William Bradford officially adopted Ella. Ella was 8 years old.



According to Ron Carden, who did extensive research on the Episcopal Church and William Montgomery Brown, Ella Bradford was a delicate child who attended an upper class girls' school in Cleveland. He also noted that Ella was 21 years old when she first met William, was often terse, and painfully shy. Mr. Carden also indicated, "contemporaries in the 1930s described her as having a speech impediment and was regarded as mentally slow by some." In the 1880 Census, Ella is listed as living with her adoptive mother on Lake Street in Cleveland and marked as being disabled with a spinal disease.



Just when Brown met the daughter of his benefactress, Mary Scranton Bradford, is unknown. Mrs. Bradford may have had her eye on Brown all along as a suitable husband for her adopted relative (genealogically speaking, first cousin, once removed), Ella. Brown and Ella may have met as early as 1879. Brown soon fell in love with Ella and proposed marriage, possibly on Christmas Day 1882. William was ordained a deacon at Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland in 1883. He was assigned to Grace Parish in Galion, Ohio.

Mrs. Bradford had decided to build a home for the young couple as a wedding gift. She bought the quarter block on which Galion's Grace Episcopal Church stood and began work on Brownella Cottage –

a name created from both their names. A brick building that had been used as Galion's Catholic Church (built c. 1866) was preserved on the site to serve as William's study. Brownella Cottage was completed in 1887. Around 1900, Mrs. Bradford purchased the

corner lot across the street to the east of Brownella and had Grace Church moved to its current location.



Derived from extensive research, Carden wrote, "...she never socialized with the people of Galion, Ohio, and reacted with hostility to anyone who visited without an invitation...she was described in the 1930s as short, 4' 10" tall, walking with a waddle and always talking of her ailments, she was severe with Brown but Brown never showed anger toward her, and in the 1930s they appeared devoted to one another."

Ella and William received a hefty allowance (more than a year's salary to some) from her mother. When her mother died in 1918, Ella acquired a substantial inheritance. She had a tight hold on this money. When Ella died July 25, 1935, William engaged in lavish spending, including his purchase of a large Packard sedan and a WACO airplane. He was able to enjoy this windfall until his death October 31, 1937.