



Mary Jane Scranton Bradford

Mary Jane Scranton, born October 10, 1832, was the second child of Joel Scranton and Irene Hickox Scranton. The Scranton's had six children, one of whom was adopted, but all died at an early age, with the exception of Mary Jane. Her parents were well known old settlers of Cleveland.

Mary Jane's mother attended a female academy in New York, returned to teach school in Ohio for three years, 1817-1820. She then entered the Litchfield, Connecticut Female Academy. Mary Jane was probably trained by the educational methods her mother learned at Litchfield.

Mary's parents died within 3 weeks of each other in 1858. At the time, as an unmarried 25 year old woman, Mary could not negotiate contracts or sign notes. In 1845, the Married Women's Property Act gave married women the right to control their own property. Within three weeks of her father's death, Mary was married to William Bradford May 3, 1858. She set out to pay off her father's outstanding debts and settle all of his affairs. There was not much cash left and Mary had to wait for the value of her land holdings to rise to increase her own assets.

Within three months of her marriage, due to the depletion of cash from the Scranton estate, Mary and William had to move in with his parents in Elyria, Lorain County, Ohio. In 1861, with the beginning of the Civil War, the war slowly stimulated the local economy and the value of Mary's properties began to rise. At that time, Mary and William moved back to Cleveland and settled at 57 Lake Street.

The Bradford's petitioned to adopt Ella Scranton, daughter of her father's brother, Abel. The adoption was successful and Ella, 8 years old in August 1866, became Ella Scranton Bradford. Mary and William did have their own son, William, but he was still born in October 1867.

At the age of 40, William Bradford died August 12, 1871, probably of tuberculosis. Ella was 13 years old at the time and was raised by Mary, who never remarried.

On January 2, 1878, Mary was one of the baptismal sponsors of 23 year old William Montgomery Brown. The baptism took place at the prestigious Trinity Cathedral in Cleveland. Mary was known as a prominent Cleveland philanthropist who helped young men enter the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal Church and so it was with William

Brown. Brown traveled to Cleveland to meet with Mrs. Bradford who agreed to pay for his education provided he would enter the Episcopal Seminary, Bexley Hall at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. Mary hired tutors for William and, in 1879-1880, sent William to Seabury Divinity School in Minnesota to prepare him for the seminary.

Mary was a well-known philanthropist, evidenced by her generosity for William Brown, and was one of the main benefactors of the Cleveland School of Art. She became the second president (1885-1904) and was later named a trustee of the Cleveland Institute of Art. Mary was a very active member of the prestigious Episcopal Trinity Cathedral and donated to the establishment of a Cleveland children's home. The Industrialization of the nation certainly was of great benefit to many, including Mary Scranton Bradford and in 1874, as mentioned above, she headed a group that established a children's home on Scovill Avenue in Cleveland, under the auspices of Trinity Church. She worked among the poor and was active in the Cleveland Humane Society. In her book, "Women of Cleveland and their Work," Mrs. W.A. Ingram depicted Mary as helping children who needed a friend, nurturing and educating them.



Mrs. Bradford had moved to Euclid Avenue, the Avenue of Millionaires or Millionaires' Row, in the 1893 and lived with her girlhood friends and their husbands, Doris Rucker Meade and Lois Rucker Smith. Mary spent 25 years at the Euclid Avenue residence until her death in 1918. In 1910, Mary became infirmed and became blind. Her childhood friends, Dora and Lois, stayed with her until her death, July 11, 1918.

