



Myrtle T. Bradford & Nancy R. Bradford, National Bank Presidents

By Karl Sanford Kabelac

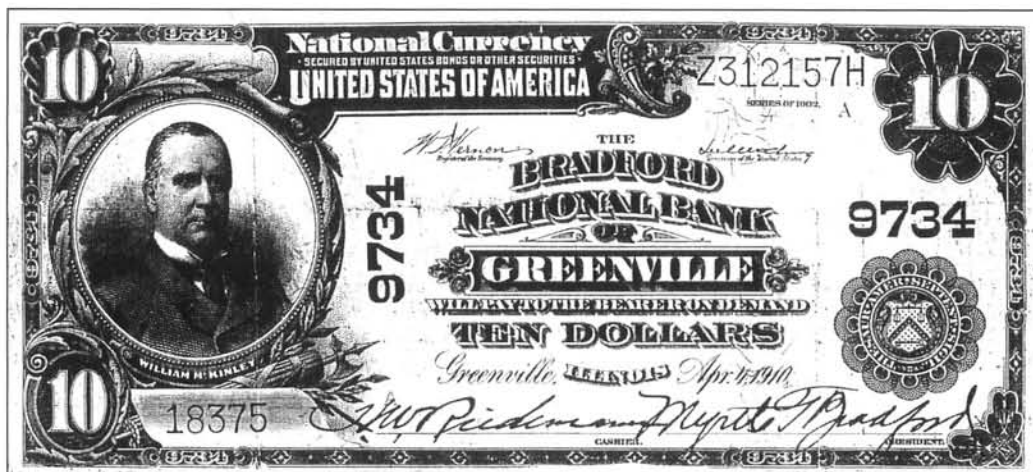
Above: The inside of Bradford National Bank in front of the teller windows in 1917. Note the spittoon. Pictured from left to right: Milton Kersey, assistant cashier; John Bradford, president; Johnathan Sharp, assistant cashier; Maude Delaney, secretary. (Courtesy Bradford National Bank)

ALTHOUGH FEW WOMEN BECAME PRESIDENTS OF National Banks, the Bradford National Bank of Greenville, Illinois, has the distinction of having not one but two women presidents during the National Bank Note issuing period.

Greenville is a community of some 5,000 people located in southern Illinois, about 50 miles east of St. Louis, Missouri. It is the county seat of Bond County and the home of Greenville College, a liberal arts college, founded in 1892.

The Bradford National Bank traces its roots back to the Banking House of Bradford and Son, founded by James Bradford and his son Samuel in 1867. In the spring of 1910 it became a National Bank (Charter #9734) with Samuel's son, John S. Bradford, as the president and Herman W. Riedemann as cashier.

The photo above shows the interior of the Bradford National Bank in 1917. John S. Bradford, then president, is second from left. Built and first occupied in 1911, the bank remained in the building until 1967.



When John S. Bradford died on July 7, 1925, his widow, Myrtle Taylor Bradford, was unanimously elected president to finish his term, which ended on January 13, 1926. *The Greenville Advocate* noted:

(Photo courtesy
Bradford National Bank)

"Mrs Bradford is probably the only lady in the state who has been elevated to the presidency of a bank. In any event the case is a rare one and this distinction comes to but few women the country over.

"Mrs. Bradford is a gifted woman in many lines. She is versatile and has good business judgment."

After her bank presidency, she moved to Miami, Florida, where she was prominently active in various arts and art-education endeavors for 30 years. She died there on December 10, 1958, at the age of 88.

Illustrated above is a Series 1902 \$10 National Bank Note signed by Myrtle T. Bradford during her six-month presidency of the Bradford National Bank, July, 1925, to January, 1926. The treasury serial number in the upper right corner indicates it was printed before the change to bank serial numbers in that location on National Bank Notes which occurred on August 22, 1925.

At the bank's annual meeting on January 13, 1926, Nancy Rogers Bradford was elected president and reelected on January 12, 1927. She was the mother-in-law of Myrtle, the mother of the late John S. Bradford, and the widow of bank co-founder Samuel Bradford, who had died in 1891. Born in Virginia in 1836, she had married Samuel in 1867, the year the bank was founded.

A Series 1902 \$10 National (shown following) still bears the faded signature of N. R. [Nancy Rogers] Bradford, despite its extensive circulation.

Already in her late 80s, she served as president for a little over a year, until her death at the age of 90 on April 23, 1927. She died of pneumonia while wintering in Long Beach, California, where her grandson, John M. Bradford, resided.

Another illustration (shown following) shows how the bank looked about the time both women served as its president and signed its National Currency.

After Nancy Rogers Bradford's death, the presidency of the bank passed to Walter A. Joy. To this day, the Joy and Riedemann families remain active in the bank, with Frank Joy, Jr. currently serving as president and Roger

BRADFORD BANK DIRECTORS NAME MRS.M.BRADFORD NEW PRESIDENT

Widow of Late John S.
Bradford Succeeds Him
In Office

OTHER OFFICERS SAME

Mrs. Bradford Is Only Lady
To Head Bank In This
Section

Mrs. Myrtle L. Bradford was last night elected president of the Bradford National Bank to fill out the unexpired term of her husband, the late John S. Bradford. Mrs. Bradford's election was by unanimous vote.

No other changes were made in bank officers.

Headlines from *The Greenville Advocate*, July 16, 1925, on the appointment of Myrtle T. Bradford as bank president.



Bradford National Bank interior as it appeared on April 25, 1917. Pictured left to right: Milton Kersey, H.W. Riedemann, Maude Delaney and George Hughey. (Courtesy Bradford National Bank)

Riedemann as Chairman of the Board. The bank now operates four offices, two in Greenville, and others in nearby Marine and Highland. Its assets grew from about half a million in 1910, to slightly over a million by the mid-1920s, to more than \$100 million today. It continues to provide banking services to Greenville and the surrounding area as it has for more than 135 years now.

Sources and Acknowledgments

Issues of the local newspaper, *The Greenville Advocate*, have been most helpful. Obituaries of John S. Bradford, Myrtle T. Bradford, and Nancy R. Bradford appeared in the issues for July 9, 1925, December 15, 1958, and April 25, 1927, respectively. A long article on the election of Myrtle T. Bradford to the bank presidency appeared in the paper on July 16, 1925, and a short note about the election of Nancy R. Bradford as president appeared in the January 16, 1926, issue.

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Series 1902 \$10 with faded signature of N.R. (Nancy Rogers) Bradford as president.

