

F.W. BRADLEY

By Rick Patterson

This is a story about the life of F.W. Bradley , a beloved son, a Civil war soldier, a entrepreneur, and a family man who loved his beloved state of California . He had many accomplishments throughout his storied life but he will be forever etched in the annals of history as a purveyor of wine, liquors, bottled soda and mineral water. His name is literally embossed on glass bottles for people to admire, collect and inquire about the history of his life . Francis William Bradley was born in Audrain County, Missouri on May 1848. Francis grew up being raised only by his father as his Mother passed away when he was young. Francis grew up as any normal young man at that time helping his father with needed chores around the home. As soon as Francis was able, he joined the Union Army in his mid-teens .In August 1864, Bradley enlisted as a private in Company A of the 44th Regiment of Missouri Infantry according to government records. Only after one month after his training he saw combat. Francis was involved in many fierce battles and was hospitalized for a period of time in 1864. He was later discharged for a described disability. The disability he had did not however affect his ability to earn a living. After the war he married and moved to St. Joseph Missouri. Around 1887 the Bradley's moved to San Diego. There Francis initially opened a saloon with a partner called the Eintracht Saloon at 963 Fifth Street in San Diego. A subsequent owner would call it a "resort." The saloon featured a hot lunch available before noon, cold steam and lager beer, and mixed drinks — not just shots of rotgut whiskey at the bar. After he sold the saloon he ran the Albemarle Hotel. After leaving the hotel job Francis founded two businesses, the Bradley Spring Water and Bottling Company, located at 1225 C Street, and F.W. Bradley Wholesale Wines and Liquors, located at 1058-1062 Fourth Avenue

Throughout his career as a San Diego whiskey merchant, Bradley advertised his goods vigorously. Showing a cartoonish figure straddling a rail, one ad asserted: *““ On the Fence as to where to ensure the best wines and liquors of all kinds? Don't poison yourself by drinking inferior liquors when you can buy the pure goods at a very little more cost. We have all the favorite brands. Buy here and you are sure of the quality as well as quantity .Try our Eastern Peach or Apple Brandy.”* F. W. Bradley –Wholesale Wines and Liquors. Bradley's flagship brand was "Good Roads," a blended whiskey. He was issued a trademark for the name in February 1910.

At the same time, the proprietor's spring water and bottling plant were flourishing. Francis claimed to be sole owner of what he called "the Celebrated Bradley Spring" near San Diego. His ads touted his bottled spring water as "a pure natural mineral water, efficacious in all kind of kidney and stomach problems." His company also sold a full line of carbonated soft drinks, including root beer, ginger ale and flavored soda waters. Bradley bottled his non-alcoholic beverages in Hutchinson type bottles. Those hutch bottles also carried his embossed name. These hutch bottles bearing his name are prized processions of bottle collectors not only in California, but across the nation.

Francis Bradley lived a full and rich life with it however ending abruptly. Only two years after receiving a trademark patent on his famous "Good Roads" blended whiskey he loved, he succumbed to a heart attack in San Diego on May 3, 1912. He was 66 years old. His funeral was held at the chapel of a local funeral home. Francis Bradley was buried San Diego's Mount Hope Cemetery.

