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Article Summary: John Brady volunteered in 1898 to join the First Nebraska Infantry Regiment, United States Volunteers. His journal and letters sent home to Nebraska during sixteen months in the Philippines reveal misgivings about the conduct of the war, however, and in later life he spoke out against militarism.

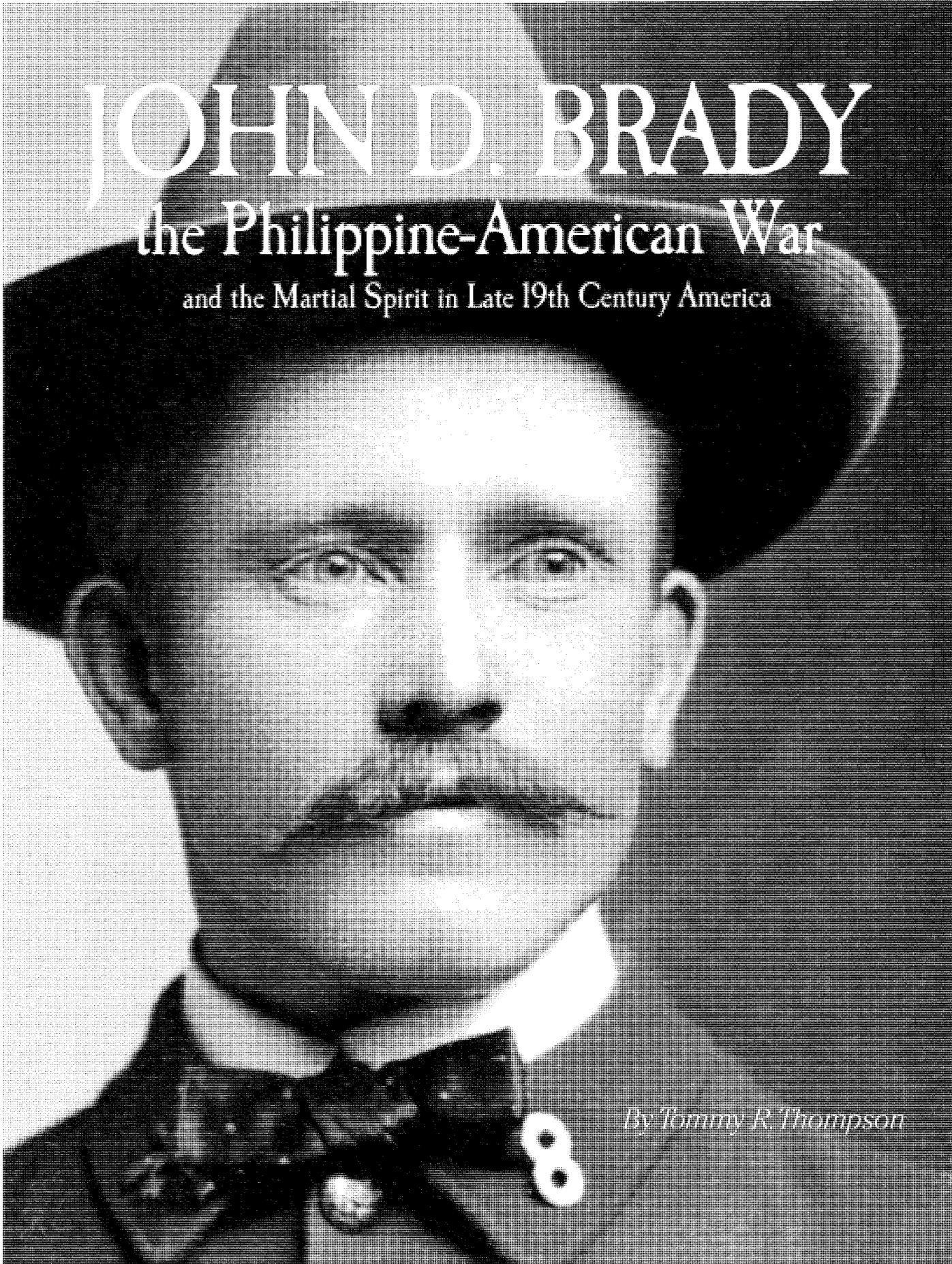
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Photographs / Images: John D Brady (3 images); Daisy Hawley; the *Senator*, First Nebraska volunteers participating in the capture of Manila, August 13, 1898 (2 images); Colonel John M Stotsenburg; bodies of Philippine insurgents on the battlefield



JOHN D. BRADY

the Philippine-American War

and the Martial Spirit in Late 19th Century America

By Tommy R. Thompson

John D. Brady and the Philippine-American War

Writing to a friend in 1919, John D. Brady, born in 1874 in Otoe County, Nebraska, recalled an idyllic late-nineteenth-century childhood: He lived in a log farmhouse, swam in the local stream, watched circus parades in Nebraska City, and celebrated the Fourth of July on the courthouse square. In the early 1890s he left Otoe County to enroll at the Lincoln Normal University in Lincoln.¹

A few years later, however, his idyllic childhood and youth were forever left behind when, for about sixteen months in 1898 and 1899, he became part of an American crusade to defeat the Spanish in the Philippine Islands and replace that regime with United States control. During that time he recorded his experiences and feelings in a journal and in letters to his mother and to his “sweet-heart,” Daisy Hawley.

In many respects his letters (those written to his mother summarized in the *Nebraska City News*,) show him as similar to other young men from Nebraska and the nation who fought in the Spanish-American War. Like most he was patriotic and religious; unlike many, Brady seldom verbalized the feelings of racial superiority expressed so frequently by other American soldiers of the era. His diaries and letters also reveal misgivings about the war and its conduct that were not broached by other Nebraska soldiers, and thus the writing of this youthful soldier helps to broaden our view of America’s campaign in the Philippines.²

As a child in Otoe County, Brady attended a country school where, he said, a little “readin’, writin’, Rithmetic” etc.,” was “thomped” into him. In the 1890s he joined the First Baptist Church in Nebraska City. Brady later would spend part of his adult years as a Baptist minister, and religion probably played a greater role in his life than in the lives of many of his contemporaries.³

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His father’s death in 1893 took Brady, at age nineteen, home from Lincoln Normal University for a few years, but in 1897 he resumed his studies in Lincoln. His financial resources were limited, but he was determined to earn a degree, and washed dishes at the dormitory to pay for his meals. He also was actively involved in debate and the Y.M.C.A.⁴



After an idyllic childhood John D. Brady of rural Otoe County, Nebraska, volunteered for service in the Spanish American War filled with high ideals and patriotic zeal. Service in the Philippines gave him a new perspective on war as a foreign policy tool. NSHS-RG2512-1-1

The outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898 ended Brady’s stay at Lincoln Normal. Like many other young men he was soon caught up in the sweeping tide of patriotism and was eager to venture off to distant lands to fight for freedom. At least that is what he expected his mission to be.⁵

During the 1890s Americans were determined to expand the influence of

the United States around the globe. In February 1898 the sinking of the battleship USS *Maine* in Havana harbor convinced them that it was time to act. On April 23, 1898, Spain declared war on the United States, and shortly thereafter the U.S. responded, asserting retroactively that a state of war had existed since April 21.

President William McKinley called for 125,000 volunteers and, in late May, would ask for even more. Like other states, Nebraska volunteered its National Guard to fill the ranks, federalizing three regiments of infantry and one troop of cavalry. In late April the First and Second Infantry regiments reported to Camp Alvin Saunders at Lincoln to become part of the United States Volunteers.

When many of those reporting were rejected for medical reasons, additional recruits were needed. John Brady volunteered for duty on May 9, becoming part of Company I, First Regiment of Infantry. The next day he and his colleagues became the First Nebraska Infantry Regiment, United States Volunteers. They were the only Nebraskans to see combat in the Spanish-American War.⁶

Though not clearly eager to engage in military action, Brady was definitely caught up in the war fervor of the time. Twenty years later he wrote to a friend that he had disliked leaving school, but could not “turn a deaf ear to the cry for help from the helpless and oppressed peoples on distant islands.”⁷

On May 16 the young soldiers from Lincoln boarded trains for San Francisco. Brady reported that the men were “raring to go,” an enthusiasm ever-present in the early days of the war. A large crowd, including Daisy, his sweet-heart from Lincoln Normal, gathered to wish the soldiers well on their journey. As the train sped across Wyoming and Utah, Brady and his comrades were in “high spirits,” marveling at the scenery. Three days later the Nebraska troops arrived in San Francisco where they were welcomed with sandwiches from the Red Cross. As they marched through



Daisy Hawley, John Brady's "sweetheart," was also a student at Lincoln Normal University. Many of the letters relating his war experiences were sent to her. They were married in 1904. Courtesy Dwight Hawley, Brock, NE.

A student at Lincoln Normal University in 1898, twenty-four-year-old John Brady was caught up in the war fervor of the time and readily volunteered to "fight for freedom" when the USS *Maine* went down in Havana Harbor. NSHS-RG3512-1-3

the city to Camp Merritt, located on an old race track near the Golden Gate Bridge, the Nebraskans were amazed at the tall masts of merchant ships and the huge funnels of the passenger liners in the harbor.

Once in camp the men settled into an unremarkable routine. "We were eating a lot of beans," Brady noted, "and drill, drill, drill went right on." The camp itself, as several of the soldiers noted, was not particularly pleasant. Sergeant Andrew Wadsworth of Beatrice declared that "of all the bum camp-grounds this takes the pie," and Private

Luther Abbott of Fremont described it as "a perfect pest hole." Underfoot lay several inches of sand, and Pacific breezes kept the camp cold and damp. Brady went sightseeing whenever he could, including a tour of the U.S. Mint, but in all his time there, though, he never missed church services.⁸

In mid-June a thousand Nebraska troops, including Brady, boarded the *Senator*, a passenger steamer converted to military purposes, and after a "noisy send off" by the "San Francisco folks," sailed for the Far East in a convoy of four ships (*Senator*, *China*, *Zealandia*,

Colon). Late the first afternoon out to sea the Nebraska boys, accustomed to prairies, were amazed by the ocean, and marveled at flying fish and "several whales." But by the end of the week-long voyage to Honolulu, Brady was complaining of crowded quarters, and fellow soldier Private Hugh Clapp declared the men were "Packed in like hogs in [a] pen."

Possibly the enlisted men were resentful of the officers' comfortable staterooms. First Lieutenant Warren McLaughlin, for example, wrote to his parents only that the ship was "some-

John D. Brady and the Philippine-American War

what crowded," while Brady sometimes slept on the top deck to avoid the crowded conditions below.⁹

Hawaii, on the other hand, greatly impressed the men. Greeted by a band, the four thousand American soldiers were treated by the islanders to a "fine dinner" on the palace grounds of former Queen Liliuokalani. The soldiers remained on the islands for two days, one of which Brady spent in "wonderful sightseeing in beautiful Honolulu." In a letter to his mother published in the *Nebraska City News* he reported that the island city contained "fine dwellings, school houses and churches."

Like many other Americans, Brady had been exposed to the common imperialist arguments of the 1890s used to justify taking control of "inferior" peoples around the world, and he was surprised to find that the "natives are educated....They are not lazy, as many have been led to believe."¹⁰

Aboard ship, both before arriving in Hawaii and during the remainder of the voyage to Manila, Brady referred to religious services more frequently than many of the other Nebraska soldiers on the ship. He reported frequent song services featuring the "old hymns" that Brady considered "a great boon to the men on this long journey." He also was meticulous about washing—his body and his clothes—to rid himself of "graybacks" (lice).

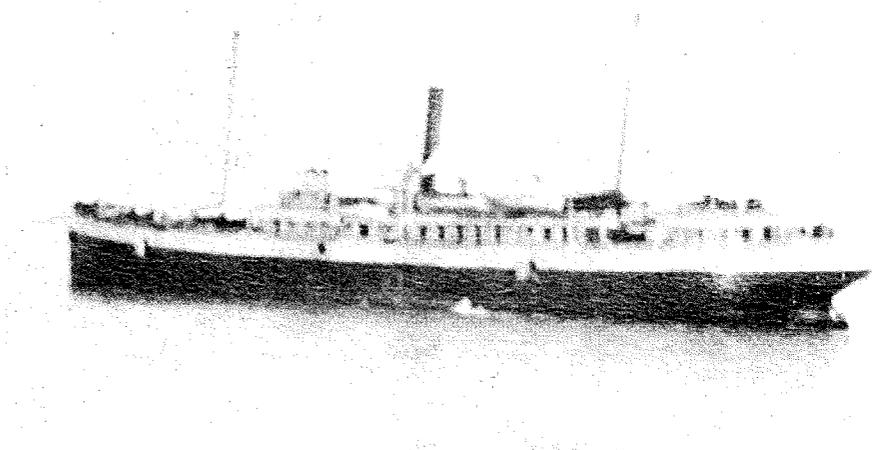
On July 4 one of the ships fired a forty-five-gun salute for the forty-five states of the Union, and there was a program of fifteen musical numbers on the *Senator*. That day, Brady noted, the men had a "good supper," including pie. "Everything was jolly on board ship," he wrote. Nevertheless, the men were tired of the ocean: There was just "too much" water and "we were longing to get our feet on land again."

On July 17, after a month of travel, the convoy arrived at Manila. Remaining on the ship the next three days Brady started another letter to his mother. He finished it after the troops went ashore, and in late August it was

summarized in the *Nebraska City News*. Brady was impressed by the wrecks of the Spanish fleet destroyed by Admiral Dewey (May 1, 1898) sitting on the bottom of the harbor with their tops showing above the waterline. The reality of the situation also began to affect Brady now that he was at the scene of the action. He remarked to his mother that he was nine thousand miles from home and the old muddy creek where he played as a child and where "good apples" grew in the orchard. He denied

that their battles were generally harmless. He felt the insurgents were impressed by American military power and desired to be "very friendly with us." Brady avoided contact with the native population, though, because there were lepers roaming the streets, as well as people with various tropical skin conditions. Brady also busied himself, as did many of the other men, gathering bamboo to construct a floor for his tent.

Within a few days after landing he wrote in his journal of the frequent rain



The *Senator*, a converted passenger ship, transported Brady and his regiment, the First Nebraska Infantry, from San Francisco to Manila with a stopover in Hawaii. The trip took a month, and the enlisted men were "packed in like hogs in (a) pen," according to a fellow soldier. NSHS-RG3512-8-1

that he was homesick and reassured his mother that "I knew what I was going into when I enlisted and am trying to do my duty as a man and a soldier and God has promised to take care of the rest," but, he told her, "I think of those things when I am eating my rice and hard tack and drinking my strong coffee sweetened with brown sugar and not such a tremendous big lot of that." He added that he attended church services on Sunday and song service every evening.¹¹

As far as the local situation was concerned Brady wrote that their camp, Camp Dewey, was a few miles south of Manila. The Americans could hear the firing of the Spanish and the Philippine Revolutionary Army, but he concluded

showers and complained of "Mud and water everywhere." In the next few weeks he often commented, "Rain pouring down and our trenches were knee deep in water and mud;" "Came in from outpost wading thru mud ankle deep (we were a terrible looking sight)."
Whatever the cause, Brady developed an abscess of the ear at this time, which resulted in total deafness in that ear. Still, his spirits remained high and he found time to enjoy himself by making several trips to the seashore to gather seashells, at times with some of the other young men who had left Normal University with him to join the First Nebraska.

On August 13 the American army began to move on Manila. In a



The First Nebraska participated in the capture of Manila on August 13, 1898, advancing along the beach and through the tidewater. They were not engaged and fired no shots—nor did they know that the Spanish would raise a white flag and turn the city over to the Americans by a prearranged agreement. NSHS-RG3512-2-19

prearranged agreement with the Spanish, the city was to hoist a white flag after an initial American bombardment, and the Americans would assure the Spanish that no insurgents would be allowed into the city to make reprisals. Brady and his fellow soldiers were not aware of the agreement as they advanced on the city, marching along the beach and through the tidewater

Following an easy “capture” of Manila (the First Nebraska was never engaged and fired no shots), Brady and the others settled into a routine of drills, guard duty, and policing of the city. He noted in his journal that within a week rumors began to circulate about being sent back to the States. To the soldiers

the war had been won, and “we were restless, many homesick.” The situation was not eased by the presence once again of a serious infestation of lice, the “drills and drills under the tropical sun,” rain, and “More rain.” In early September Brady wrote, “life in Manila becoming monotonous.” He tried to ease the boredom by visiting cathedrals and the old parts of the city, “a great sightseeing trip.” He also collected “bullets and other relics” from battlefields around Manila where the Spanish and the insurgents had fought, and went to the seashore to collect shells. Nor did he neglect attending church services on Sunday morning and Y.M.C.A. meetings in the evening. His interest in debate as

a student led him to attend a meeting of a debating club founded by the soldiers.¹²

In mid-October, while the “rumor factory” continued to speculate that the men would soon go home, Brady decided to occupy his idle time by starting a laundry business, an unusual undertaking among the soldiers. Many men noted in their diaries that gambling was common among the Nebraska soldiers, but Brady declared that he did not know how to play cards, and it is unlikely the young Baptist even had the desire to learn. Several years later he wrote that this extra work kept him from the “demoralizing influences of army life.”

John D. Brady and the Philippine-American War



In charging enemy lines near Malolos, the insurgent capital, in March 1899, the First Nebraska lost twenty-five men in a few minutes. This battle and earlier combat experience fed Brady's growing skepticism of the war's conduct and justifications. He wrote to Daisy, "I will be home again some day...where the roar of cannon and clash of muskets will not disturb me." NSHS-RG3512-1-18

Brady purchased two wooden tubs and an iron, and constructed a washboard out of a sheet of tin, which he "crimped" and fastened to boards from a soapbox. In his first three days of business he had ten customers and netted \$2.69, compared to the \$1.56 military pay he received for the same period. Occasionally he sent home money to help his family and to be saved for finishing his university education and a future trip to Europe and the Middle East. Brady continued his military responsibilities, drills and guard duty, which he called "a ding dong life" by late October.¹³

Overall, Brady looked at the American occupation of Manila positively. The

Spanish reign did not impress him. The city was dirty, and lepers roamed the streets. He noted that in only a few months the U.S. Army had taken care of both problems and had established a "wholesome government." Uncle Sam, said Brady, "did a good job." Brady also proudly pointed out that the Americans were starting public schools in the islands, unlike the Spanish who had been there three hundred years and had never shown any interest in educating the common people.

Brady's negative view of the Spanish undoubtedly was shaped to some degree by religion. He held a strong aversion for Roman Catholicism, saying the Spanish were "great on building

churches but they did not save or edify the people." Brady probably acquired his religious attitudes from his Irish father who "threw off" both "his Irish (culture) and Catholicism."¹⁴

Brady's main concern for the other party involved, the Filipino soldiers, was their hostility. As early as September, in a letter to his mother, he noted the American soldiers were suspicious of the insurgents and that "we may have trouble with them yet." This feeling grew throughout the fall. By the end of December he wrote in his journal, "the hostile attitude of the Philippine insurgents was giving us some real concern."

Obviously, the Filipinos were not pleased with the Treaty of Paris between

the United States and Spain, signed December 10, by which Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States. The people of the islands were not going to receive their freedom as they had hoped. Even though tensions continued to grow between the American soldiers and the Filipino people, much to his credit in his journal and letters home Brady never referred to the insurgents by the epithet “nigger,” used by many soldiers. Also, there may not have been many American soldiers besides Brady who took the time at one point to visit the Manila lepers in the hospital.¹⁵

In early December, just days before the signing of the Treaty of Paris, the First Nebraska troops moved from Manila to Camp Santa Mesa four miles east of the city near the San Juan River, a strategic location close to the city’s waterworks. The move, to higher, drier land than the original camp, also was intended to help alleviate the disease problem. The military also provided bamboo floors for the tents and bamboo platforms for sleeping, and the camp was described as very neat and clean.

Brady did not note a disease problem in his journal but in a letter to his mother in late November Brady wrote that there was a great deal of illness, apparently not being reported in American newspapers. In a surprisingly hostile tone he accused the officers with “big salaries,” who are also “stealing as they can,” of censoring the news. The officers, he said, loved the Philippines—they were “eating great.”

Brady and the other enlisted men must have known to some extent of the officers’ lifestyle. First Lieutenant Warren McLaughlin wrote to his family in October, “We have very nice quarters with mahogany floors, verandas, roof gardens, large marble bath.” McLaughlin added, “We live like kings.” Ironically, he also told his parents in late November, exactly when Brady was complaining, that his dinner table was set with white linen, china, and glassware, and that the enlisted men have “a

good canvas cot, I provided for them.”

Brady went on to tell his mother that the officers would have to change their leadership style. They must “give us the full width of the road or take the consequences.” Only a few days later, after receiving a news article from home referring to the disease problem among the soldiers, Brady wrote to his mother that there were “lots of deaths.” He was surprised to learn that “our shoulder strapped rascals” [the officers] had allowed the American people to learn of the true situation.

It is hard to explain Brady’s attitude regarding the officers since similar comments are generally lacking from other Nebraska soldiers’ diaries. Possibly he was simply more offended by the life he saw the officers lead in the Philippines while he admired hard work and the “self-made man.” Also, perhaps the disease and the tense situation with the insurgents were beginning to have an effect on Brady after almost six months in the islands.¹⁶

Life at Camp Santa Mesa continued to be much the same in 1899, revolving primarily around guard duty and “plenty of rain and mud.” Otherwise he worked at his laundry business and attended religious services. In mid-January he sent home another \$75 and \$2 to be presented as a contribution to the Baptist Church in Nebraska City.

Many soldiers’ diaries mention baseball and football games organized by the men during these breaks in military action, but Brady was not particularly interested in sports and ignored these activities. He did note that the situation with the insurgents was “steadily growing worse,” and that the men were “under constant strain.”¹⁷

Finally, on the evening of February 4, fighting erupted between the Americans and Philippine soldiers. Brady was on guard duty and near the outpost where Pvt. William Grayson, also of the first Nebraska, fired the first shot and killed an insurgent who failed to halt at his command. Within minutes, Brady wrote, general firing broke out and the

new Philippine war was raging.¹⁸

The First Nebraska was very successful as the men attacked the Filipinos. On Sunday, February 5, they crossed the San Juan River bridge to the east of their camp and captured the city’s water reservoir. The next day the waterworks pumping station farther to the east fell to their attack. For the next six weeks Brady’s unit guarded these positions.

Brady wrote to Daisy and his mother expressing sadness “to think that we are now at war with a people that we fought to liberate.” He blamed the “treachery of the natives” for the fighting; they wanted trouble. However, by this time he had become suspicious about American motives for the incursion into the Philippines. Once again, expressing opinions not commonly found in the diaries of Nebraska soldiers, he wrote to his mother that the U.S. government wanted to negotiate a treaty that would let “the American money power... make a few million dollars out of the Philippine islands.” Brady concluded that he and others had enlisted “to revenge the destruction of the *Maine* and to liberate a down trodden humanity.... We did not enlist to add some territory to the United States and aid capitalists in getting a money making grasp on the eastern hemisphere.” With a note of hope he told Daisy that he did not doubt “I will be home again some day; to enjoy some more pleasant days where the roar of cannon and clash of muskets will not disturb me.”¹⁹

In mid-March the men of the First Nebraska were shifted from their defense of the water system to a front-line position three miles northeast of Manila. A little over a week later, on March 25, they started moving along the railroad running northwest from Manila (the only railroad in the Philippines) with the objective of capturing Malolos, the insurgent capital.

Brady was one of about fifty men assigned to move a supply train of ox carts driven by Chinese. The train, a mile long, was under fire the entire day as the fighting raged. The next day, as

John D. Brady and the Philippine-American War

the men moved farther north, a bullet struck the ground near Brady's foot and tore up the dust. He described the terrible heat and dust, and how many of the wounded cried "pitiously." He was also disturbed to watch the civilian population flee in fear from the Americans as they marched into the town of Marilao. Brady declared it was a sight to "make your heart ache.... Oh war! In what devilish mind was such a hellish thing ever conceived."

Farther and farther north the men moved. On March 30, wading through flooded rice fields, swamps, and rivers under a "scorching sun," they charged insurgent lines not far from Malolos and lost about twenty-five men in a matter of minutes, a "terrific storm" according to Brady. By the end of the next day the insurgent capital had fallen to the Americans.

Brady wrote that he and his fellow soldiers had traveled sixty-five miles in a zigzag course over the past seven days. The men were so exhausted there was now another lull in the action. They busied themselves catching chickens to eat ("These chickens were wild but so were we."). On April 11, he wrote a note to his mother on a copy of *Freedom*, a newspaper published in Manila, in which he told her briefly "We are still at Malolos.... I am still well as ever." In his journal he noted, "We had been in one place now for 11 days so life was getting dull." The next day he wrote that there had been "several skirmishes" with the insurgents; they are "hunting trouble again."²⁰

Eleven days later the First Nebraska was ordered to prepare to move once again. Brady presumed there would be an attack on Calumpit, farther north along the railroad. Meanwhile, unexpected trouble arose. A detachment of cavalry set out on a scouting expedition in the direction of Quingua, about five miles northeast of Malolos. The insurgents trapped the unit and the First Battalion of Brady's brigade was sent to rescue them, but their force proved insufficient so the rest of the



Sent to aid units trapped by insurgents northeast of Malolos, the First again came under withering fire. The regimental commander, Col. John M. Stotsenburg, charged onto the battlefield accompanied by a "great cheer" from the soldiers, only to be mortally wounded. Brady and three others carried him from the field and he soon died. NSHS-RG3512-1-16

Nebraska men marched to the scene at a "furious pace." Brady noted that men fell by the wayside in the extreme heat.

They joined the First Battalion in a rice field that was "as hot as a furnace." The firing was "withering," and the man on Brady's left dropped with a bullet wound to his thigh. Brady reported that there were "dead, wounded and sun stroke men in all directions." As the fighting raged, the commander of the First Nebraska, Col. John M. Stotsenburg, arrived to take charge and dashed onto the battlefield accompa-

nied by "a great cheer" from the soldiers. However, as the Americans charged the insurgents' trenches, he fell, gravely wounded. Brady and three others carried Stotsenburg from the field to a shady area. The colonel had only a faint pulse and soon died. Brady continued to care for the wounded for two or three hours and then rejoined his company in Quingua. The insurgents had fled from the American attack and relocated on the opposite bank of the Quingua River.²¹

Following a heavy bombardment

of insurgent positions along the river, the Americans crossed and drove the insurgents westward toward Pulian, where Brady's brigade inflicted a "terrible slaughter" on them. The streets, he said, were littered with the bodies of dead insurgents. Driving farther west the Americans shelled Calumpit heavily, the heaviest shelling Brady had experienced. By the time the soldiers entered the town, Brady said, it was "shot to pieces."

After a few days' rest in Calumpit, the First Nebraska moved northward along the railroad. At Apalit the First Nebraska had to advance on the town through a swamp. The men struggled through a mile of "mud, slime and stagnant water" in tremendous heat. Brady declared in his journal that he did not realize "the world contained so hideous a place." On May 6 the First Nebraska entered San Fernando, and the next day Brady attended formal church services, the first since the fighting had started.²²

The First Nebraska regiment remained at San Fernando resting. Brady noted that the men were "worn out" from the three-month campaign. From the start of the campaign on February 4 the regiment had been reduced from 923 men to approximately 300. He wrote to his mother that the men saw American newspapers at San Fernando carrying stories reporting that the soldiers were "having a good time" and did not care "whether we got to go home or not," "a very wrong understanding of affairs," Brady wrote. "We are," he wrote, "longing for the orders to come for us to start home."

In mid-May the First Nebraska received the news they wanted to hear. A copy of the *Freedom* reached them from Manila with the story that all volunteers were going back to the States. Political pressure brought to bear in Washington had forced the military to bring the state volunteers home and replace them with a new force of volunteers controlled strictly by the federal government. State volunteers already in the Philippines could agree to stay and



The bodies of Philippine insurgents lie on the battlefield. "Oh war!" wrote Brady, "In what devilish mind was such a hellish thing ever conceived." NSHS-RG3512-3-6

receive a five hundred dollar bonus, but apparently few chose to do so.

On May 17 the men were told to prepare to go to Manila. When they failed to move the next day, Brady said the general feeling was that "somebody ought to be hung." Finally, on May 19 the men started for Manila. They began arriving there within two to three days, but some of the Nebraska companies, including Brady's, went to San Pedro Macati for guard duty. Brady, however, went to Manila on the sick list, returning to his company on June 10. Anxious to return to Nebraska, he wrote to his mother on June 6 that the volunteers really should be sent home.²³

Brady and all the others got their wish on June 9 when an order was posted notifying the First Nebraska men

that they would return to the States on the USS *Hancock*. Brady noted "much rejoicing" among the men. Returning to Manila from guard duty June 18, the men of the First Nebraska packed their possessions and, on June 21, boarded the *Hancock*. They expected to sail immediately, and when the ship did not leave the harbor, they were quite irritated. For ten days the rumors flew about the ship, but they finally learned that they were waiting for Utah artillery units to board the ship and return to the States with them. On June 29 the Utah units arrived and boarded, but the ship remained in the harbor. As Brady noted, "an ugly mood was developing."

The men were informed that they were waiting for two Utah officers. On the morning of July 1, Brady wrote,

John D. Brady and the Philippine-American War

when the *Senator*, loaded with Pennsylvania volunteers, hoisted anchor and sailed out of the harbor, the Nebraska men were charging up and down the deck: "It would have taken but little to have started a riot" on the *Hancock*. Finally, at one p.m., the two Utah officers boarded and the *Hancock* sailed for America. The men were simply wild with glee, according to Brady.²⁴

The *Hancock* returned to the States by way of Japan, where the men visited Nagasaki and Yokohama. The ever-curious Brady found Nagasaki "very interesting," and he even took a train to a smaller town Michinoo. On Sunday, July 9, he attended church at the Seamen's Home and the Church of England. From Yokohama he traveled to Tokyo where "we had a wonderful day of sightseeing."

On July 15 the ship left Japan for San Francisco. After a rather cold trip across the Pacific, the men spotted the American shore July 29 and began celebrating. When they landed and marched through the city once again on July 31, Brady was overwhelmed by the reception—bands played, horns tooted, guns boomed. For the next three weeks the men remained encamped at the Presidio. While they were there, Nebraska Governor William A. Poynter welcomed the men and the "Red Cross ladies of San Francisco" arranged an excursion for them to Palo Alto, where the citizens "entertained us royally." He also noted that it was from the window of the train to Palo Alto that he saw his first "horseless carriage." Brady did more sightseeing in San Francisco, including another trip through the mint with a group of Nebraska schoolteachers who came to the Presidio to visit the men. He also faithfully attended the Baptist Church on Sundays. On August 13 he noted the first anniversary of the fall of Manila, an event he celebrated the rest of his life.²⁵

On August 23 the men were discharged from service, and Brady spent the next day sightseeing one last

time in San Francisco. On August 25 the men boarded trains for Nebraska, their passage paid by Nebraskans at home. At Sacramento they purchased flags and bunting to decorate their coaches. Large crowds greeted them in Colorado Springs and Denver. In the eastern Colorado town of Wray, Brady just missed seeing his stepsisters.

At McCook, Nebraska, the men were fed breakfast at long tables on Main Street and were serenaded by a local band. From there they "shot thru towns at sixty miles per hour," passing crowds of cheering, flag-waving citizens and school children. They arrived in Lincoln late the evening of August 29. A "great surging mass of people" greeted them there, and a similar crowd was present in Omaha when they arrived there the next day. Omaha offered the men free entry to the Trans-Mississippi Exposition, which was underway at the time.

Brady, however, did not stay for all the festivities. Instead he returned to Nebraska City with his mother and one of his brothers, who had come to Omaha to meet him. That evening he ate supper with his mother at the farmhouse in which he was born.

A few days later he traveled to Lincoln, where he and other First Nebraska men were "feasted and entertained" for three days at the state fairgrounds, the spot from which he had departed sixteen months earlier. Happily, Daisy was also present. When all the activities came to a close, Brady noted at the end of his journal, "The world seemed oppressively quiet." He concluded that he only hoped that the sacrifices made by the First Nebraska had somehow "added something worthwhile to the progress of the world."²⁶

In going off to war in 1898 John Brady fulfilled late nineteenth century society's expectations that young men show their manliness by becoming warriors. After the Civil War ended in 1865 some feared that the young men of the next generation might not have the opportunity to fully develop as proper men if they could not acquire the martial

aspect of character, by fighting in a war. This belief, at least to some degree, was responsible for the overwhelming number of young American men eager to fight in the Spanish-American War. John Brady, although not one to admire militarism, nevertheless went off to the Philippines as a soldier and, assured his mother upon his arrival in the islands that he accepted his "duty as a man and a soldier" to serve his country in the noble cause of helping the Filipino people.

Following the Spanish-American War a similar fear grew for the sons of these warriors. There was, at least, the solace that even if another war did not occur, some young men, at least, could experience domination over other peoples in foreign lands by taking part in the administration of American colonies such as the Philippines. And if that opportunity was not available to all, other young men could, perhaps, engage in the increasingly popular competitive athletic events of the day as a means of developing a "combative spirit."²⁷

However, a counter movement, composed primarily of anti-imperialists, argued after the Spanish-American War that the martial spirit endangered American republicanism. These Americans believed that the concept of force was undermining the "manly freedom of opinion" that was vital to democracy. The result, they feared, would be the rise of tyrants. To protect republicanism, they argued, intelligence and virtue, rather than militarism, should be encouraged as desirable characteristics in a man.

That is the route John Brady followed after his war experience. He returned from the Philippines to finish his interrupted education at Nebraska State Normal School at Peru, Nebraska, and the University of Nebraska. Subsequently he followed successive careers in the ministry and farming. During those years, Brady rejected the militarist path in various ways. A somewhat humorous example is his opinion



After the war Brady followed successive careers in the ministry and farming, and became a Chautauqua lecturer. Rejecting the path of militarism, he joined those arguing that the unnecessary use of force undermined the “manly freedom of opinion” vital to democracy, and encouraged the rise of tyrants. NSHSRG2512-1-9

of the relatively new “militarist” sport of football. While attending the University of Nebraska at the beginning of the century, Brady wrote that at the campus “the air fairly wreaked [reeked] with football.” He considered the sport “barbarous” because of the many injuries sustained annually in the game, and he even kept in his personal papers a copy of an article written in 1897 on football that referred to the game as a

“battle,” certainly a symbolic use of terminology.²⁵

A more serious example of his refusal to accept militarism as the preferred norm in society is Brady’s decision to become a minister. Later, while farming in South Dakota in the early 1900s, Brady served as Justice of the Peace and school board member because, as he said, “I believe that every citizen owes a debt to his community and to society in

general that he does not pay when he pays his taxes.” Serving the community helped fulfill the role of virtuous citizen, and protector of republican values, and was a clear alternative to militarism as the chief characteristic of manhood.

Finally, upon leaving South Dakota in 1920 and returning to Lincoln to live out the remainder of his years, he became a Chautauqua lecturer for two years in the early twenties. He believed the Chautauqua to be a “great American institution” and delivered orations such as “Citizens of Uncle Sam.” His goal was to “inspire good citizenship, love of home and successful living.” To him, service to the community and hard work were much more significant character traits than was militarism.

While John Brady had upheld his manly duty serving his country as a soldier in a patriotic war fought supposedly for “freedom” and other high ideals, his post-war career and values reflected the belief of those who argued that militarism was not the best and most necessary characteristic of American manhood. In effect, he was part of a changing attitude in American society that meant American foreign policy would no longer be determined by the necessity of young men going off to war to develop their martial character.²⁹

Notes

¹ John D. Brady to Rev. E. J. Powell, Dec. 26, 1919. This is an autobiographical letter of more than thirty pages in the John D. Brady papers collected by Raymond R. Brady.

² “War Journal,” John D. Brady Scrapbook, Vol. II, 123–63 (hereafter cited as Scrapbook), Nebraska State Historical Society. During the war Brady kept only a brief journal in a small notebook. Thirty years later he expanded the journal into a lengthy manuscript. While the passing of years makes the journal somewhat suspect, Brady, throughout his life, demonstrated a keen interest in historical detail. Examples include the many articles on historical personalities and events he collected and placed in his scrapbooks, and a trip to Europe and the Middle East in 1902–03 during which he recorded extensive details concerning historic churches, buildings and other facets of the countries he visited. There seems little reason

John D. Brady and the Philippine-American War

to doubt his memory of the Philippine campaign, many aspects of which seemed deeply imprinted on his mind, as is often true of war memories.

³ Brady to Powell, Dec. 26, 1919.

⁴ There is confusion as about the dates Brady attended Lincoln Normal. In 1919 he implied to E. J. Powell that he first entered in 1896, although he is vague about the date. In his scrapbook he wrote that he was a student for the first time in the fall of 1892. At Lincoln Normal students attended chapel every morning. While Brady was later serving in the Philippines his future wife, Daisy Blanche Hawley, also a student at Lincoln Normal, wrote to him, "We pray that in a few months more you will be here again enjoying the religious meetings. Brady to Powell, Dec. 26, 1919.

⁵ John D. Brady to Sarah F. Brady, July 1898, summarized in "The Trip to Manila," *Nebraska City News*, Aug. 26, 1898. Daisy B. Hawley, et. al., "To Our Soldier Boys," Nov. 7, 1898, and *Nebraska State Journal*, June 25, 1933, Scrapbook I, 64, 108-9, 233-4, 237, 239.

⁶ Thomas D. Thiessen, "The Fighting First Nebraska: Nebraska's Imperial Adventure in the Philippines, 1898-1899," *Nebraska History* 70:3 (fall 1989), 211-213. Frank D. Eager, "History of the Operations of the First Nebraska Infantry, U.S.V." appended to Karl I. Faust, *Campaigning in the Philippines*, Nebraska edition (San Francisco: Hicks-Judd, 1899), 1-5.

⁷ "War Journal," 127-8; John D. Brady to Sarah F. Brady, July 1898, *Nebraska City News*, July 26, 1898.

⁸ Some other men also made frequent references to attending religious services. See, for example, the Diary of Clyde Vosburgh, Clyde Vosburgh papers, MS 588, State Archives, Nebraska State Historical Society. "War Journal," 128-9; John D. Brady to Sarah F. Brady, July 1898, *Nebraska City News*, Aug. 26, 1898.

⁹ Diary of Hugh E. Clapp, entry for June 14, 1898, in the Hugh Elton Clapp papers, MS 170, box 1, folder I, and letter of Warren McLaughlin to his parents, June 20, 1898, in the Warren McLaughlin papers, MS 3545, box 1, both at the Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹⁰ Many soldiers responded differently to various non-Caucasian peoples. Their response to the Hawaiians was positive, probably because they enjoyed themselves in the Hawaiian Islands. However they reacted differently to the Filipinos. Brady commented little about living conditions among the people, but Private Frank H. Johnson, for example, in a letter to his parents in November 1898 declared that the people disgusted him—they eat like "hogs." Luther Abbott felt there was little morality among the people of the islands because the children wore few if any clothes. "War Journal," 129-32; John D. Brady to Sarah F. Brady, July 1898; Luther J. Abbott Diary, entry for Dec. 13, 1898; Frank H. Johnson to parents, Nov. 17, 1898,

Frank Henton Johnson papers, MS 2612, box 1, Nebraska State Historical Society.

¹¹ John D. Brady to Sarah F. Brady, July 1898.

¹² "War Journal," 131-33; Thiessen, "Fighting First Nebraska," 225, 227; David F. Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898* (New York: Macmillan, 1981), 414-15; G. J. A. O'Toole, *The Spanish War* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), 368-71.

¹³ "War Journal," 134. Brady to Powell, Dec. 26, 1919.

¹⁴ Brady wrote some of these comments on a page of his scrapbook that contains a copy of *The American Soldier* (Manila). Scrapbook, I, 66. His remark about the Spanish and churches was next to a photo of one of the Manila cathedrals. Scrapbook, II, 104. His public schools comment was next to an article from *Freedom* (Manila) that reported on schools started by Americans in the Philippines. Scrapbook, I, 49. Brady to Powell, Dec. 26, 1919, includes comments about his father's rejection of his Irish background and Roman Catholic religion.

¹⁵ John D. Brady to Sarah F. Brady, Sept. 12, 1898, *Nebraska City News*, Oct. 28, 1898; "War Journal," 134-35, 140; Thiessen, "Fighting First Nebraska," 228. Clyde Vosburgh and Andrew Wadsworth, for example, were using the term "nigger" by early 1899. In January 1899 Frank Johnson was upset about a handbill that had appeared on the streets of Manila because he said it contained "horrible" language. As he said, if the Americans could have their way they would not leave a "nigger" in Manila. Clyde Vosburgh Diary, entry for Jan. 21, 1899; Reilly, "Andrew Wadsworth," 193; Frank Johnson to his parents, Jan. 17, 1899, Frank Johnson Letters.

¹⁶ "War Journal," 134-35; John D. Brady to Sarah F. Brady, Nov. 28, 1898, Dec. 1, 1898, *Nebraska City News*, Jan. 17, 20, 1899; Unidentified newspaper article (Manila), Jan. 7, 1899, Scrapbook, I, 99; Thiessen, "Fighting First Nebraska," 232; Warren McLaughlin to parents, Oct. 6, Nov. 30, 1898, Warren McLaughlin papers. Other diaries and correspondence examined did not reflect the same strong antipathy towards officers expressed in Brady's journal. Before leaving Nebraska, however, the soldiers had expressed a desire to select their own officers, and some had complained about the leadership of the First Nebraska in the Philippines by Colonel John M. Stotsenburg who had been placed in command in October 1898. Thiessen, "Fighting First Nebraska," 213, 216, 241, 246-47. Brady's personal papers are replete with references to hard work. He admired individuals such as John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford, and he wrote to his friend E. J. Powell that "Life is dull and dreary, to the slothful and the shirk—but life is one long vacation—to the man that loves his work." Scrapbook, I, 5, 166. Brady to Powell, Dec. 26, 1919.

¹⁷ "War Journal," 135, 140-2. Clyde Vosburgh noted often in his diary that the men were

engaged in sporting activities. See, for example, his entries for Dec. 19, 25, 1898, and Jan. 2, 1899. See also Frank D. Eager, "History of the Operations of the First Nebraska," 13-14, and Thiessen, "The Fighting First Nebraska," 231.

¹⁸ "War Journal," 146-49; Eager, "History of the Operations," 24-29; Thiessen, "The Fighting First Nebraska," 247-52. Frank Johnson of Company M described the attack in more typical soldiers' language: "In twenty minutes after the niggers opened up 23 of the 1st Nebr were done." Frank H. Johnson Diary, quoted in Thiessen, 251.

¹⁹ "War Journal," 149-50; John D. Brady to Sarah F. Brady, April 11, 1899, Scrapbook, I, 36; Eager, "History of the Operations," 29.

²⁰ "War Journal," 152-5; Thiessen, "The Fighting First Nebraska," 255; Eager, "History of the Operations," 32-6.

²¹ "War Journal," 150-1. The wounded man was probably James F. Keenan of Company I. See Eager, "History of the Operations," Company Roster. Luther J. Abbott noted in his diary that he saw four men carrying Stotsenburg's body, but he did not identify the men. See Thiessen, "The Fighting First Nebraska," 254.

²² "War Journal," 152-5; Thiessen, "The Fighting First Nebraska," 255; Eager, "History of the Operations," 32-6.

²³ "War Journal," 155-6; John D. Brady to Sarah F. Brady, May 18 and June 6, 1899, *Nebraska City News*, July 25, 1899. According to Private Frank Johnson, the troops were "all knocked out." Quoted in Thiessen, "The Fighting First Nebraska," 255. Thiessen says the men started for Manila May 20, not May 9 as noted by Brady.

²⁴ "War Journal," 156-58; Thiessen, "The Fighting First Nebraska," 256; Eager, "History of the Operations," 36-7.

²⁵ "War Journal," 158-61; Thiessen, "The Fighting First Nebraska," 256-7; Eager, "History of the Operations," 37-9, points out that the men suffered from the cold weather crossing the Pacific.

²⁶ "War Journal," 161-4.

²⁷ Two good studies of manhood in American society and its relationship to U.S. foreign policy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 109-110, 134-140, 180-199, and E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 232-241. These works are the basis of the discussion in the following paragraphs.

²⁸ Scrapbook, I, 112.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 190, 195-200, 212; Brady to Powell, Dec. 26, 1919.