

By FRED BATEMAN

*Fred Bateman*

These notes are the recollections of a man, who, when Salida was founded in the spring of 1880, was a boy of 13. No attempt has been made to verify these statements, which are purely from memory. The names mentioned are mainly those of the incorporaters of Salida, who were here in 1880. Many prominent citizens came a little later, the Craigs, M. P., Wiles, D. H. and Dan, Sam and Henry Sandusky, Geo. M. and John Hollenbeck, the father of Lewis; the Prestons, father and two sons, Horatio and Orlando, and three daughters; V. C. Davenport, Ben Disman, A. M. Alger, J. M. Collins, the Hodg-mans, Sam Westerfield, and others who moved down from Monarch, Garfield and Maysville, and who are mentioned later.

The town was, at first, called South Arkansas; when the post office was established it was called Arkansas. Later Salida was adopted as a permanent name. Captain John T. Blake was the first Postmaster.

When the railroad built up the river from Canon City on its way to Leadville, it found at Cleora, a town of several hundred people, just below the mouth of the South Arkansas, but in accordance with its policy, built on through Cleora, to build its own town at Salida. Most of the Cleora people moved up to the new town with their houses and businesses.

Previous to the coming of the railroad, Barlow and Sanderson ran a stage line from Canon City to Leadville. Fred Seelinger was a driver on this stage line. At the mouth of the South Arkansas, Wm. Bale had a ranch, and a large two story, frame hotel, which was the stage stop. The stage barn still stands, jutting into the road just below Sterling Jones's house, which was built on the site of the old hotel, which burned. Opposite the hotel was a bridge across the Arkansas River. The grade to this bridge may still be seen on the river bank across the road from Mr. Jones's house. There was another bridge at Cleora about where the bridge to the stock yards now is.

A. C. Frost owned the Elephant corral with a big sign across the entrance, which was diagonally across the corner of "F" St. and the alley where James Shay's drug store now is.

In those days of wagon transportation, every little place had a corral where freighter or traveler could drive in and camp. Usually there was a camp house (usually lousy, as the writer can attest), hay and grain and sometimes groceries were sold. Such a place was Frost's Elephant Corral. Frost was a typical pioneer and soon moved on the newest front.

G. R. Gray was a partner of Geo. L. Smith, who discovered the Madonna Mine, then known as the Smith & Gray mine. Mr. Gray built the first pretentious house in Salida, now owned by Guy Hall. Mr. Gray soon left, and the house was bought by Mr. D. H. Craig, who lived there until his death.

Geo. L. Smith, his partner, was one of the early settlers, first Supt. of Schools for Chaffee County, owned a ranch on Gas Creek near Nathrop. Smith was a confirmed prospector and later discovered the "Holy Moses" mine at Creede (reputed to Wm. Creede. "Holy Moses" was his exclamation on uncovering the first rich ore.)

A story is told by Senator Ehrhart of the discovery of the Madonna Mine. There was a rush to the Monarch district on account

of reported strikes, and Geo. L. Smith went up to prospect. He talked with the different prospectors and examined their samples. One man told Mr. Smith that there was nothing there, and that he was leaving. He showed him his samples and one of them interested Mr. Smith, and he asked the man if he remembered where he found it. The man pointed to spot on the Madonna hill where he found the specimen, and Smith went up next day and located the Madonna Mine.

J. P. Smith, pioneer dry goods man, was one of the few who moved here with his family, which was composed of two boys and five girls. They moved up from Cleora. Morgan Smith was the last survivor of this family. Mr. Smith and his family were all deeply religious and were the mainstay of Church in Salida in those early days. The first church was a frame structure at Third and "F" on the site of the Presbyterian Church, and was built about 1883. The first minister, name forgotten, was a very earnest and able man, and always had a good attendance at his meetings.

Dr. Hallock and his son, Rob. B. Hallock, were pioneer druggists in a two-story frame building on West First about where the Stancatos are. Dr. Hallock and Dr. Eggleston, the first dentist, had offices over the drug store. R. B. Hallock was the first city clerk. In 1884 J. A. Hallock, a brother of the Doctor, moved here with his family of five boys and two girls and built the house at about 630 "G" Street, where Ray Hallock, who is the last of this connection now living in Salida, now owns. J. A. Hallock was one of the early school principals.

James T. O'Connor was another of the earliest druggists and had a store on 1st and "F" St., facing First St., where Doveton's store now is. He was a brother of Dr. J. W. O'Connor, who was a prominent surgeon here and had charge of the D. & R. G. Hospital until he was chosen chief surgeon of the Rio Grande System. Dr. O'Connor came down from Maysville and had an office in a small frame building where the Odd Fellows Hall now is.

Geo. T. Williams lived on a ranch along the Arkansas River south-east of the Smelter before Salida was started. He owned a sandpit and furnished most of the sand for the mortar in Salida's buildings. Williams in his youth had been a member of Quantril's gorilla gang of the Civil War. He was an odd character, strong in his friendships, better in his hates, but lovable withal.

John W. Hamm, a brother-in-law of Williams, owned the ranch south-east of Williams and built the brick house on the hill on the right of the highway just beyond the smelter bridge. He was a lawyer and a famous wit. Looked like a Kentucky Colonel, was lame from a war wound. Many of his expressions and stories are repeated yet. Some will not bear repeating.

The first bridge at the foot of "F" Street crossed the upper end of a sizable island in the river with trees and willows, but with the filling in of the banks on each side it gradually washed away.

The railroad offices at first were in a string of box cars on a siding opposite the present Monte Christo Hotel, which was built later (about 1882). One of these box cars housed the express office, and one afternoon word came up town that the express office had been robbed and the express agent shot. The first ones there found the agent unconscious and bleeding from a bad cut on his head, the safe open and the money gone. No trace was found of the robbers. The agent soon recovered, resumed his duties and

the matter was soon forgotten, but several months later the express agent was arrested, confessed that he had bumped his own head and robbed the safe and went to Canon City. Later another express agent who was quite prominent socially was convicted of robbing the express company, and he also served a term in Canon City.

The predominant element during the first few months in Salida were saloon men, gamblers and confidence men or "bunco steerers". These plied their trades without let or hindrance. Indeed the first election ever held in Salida upon the question of incorporating the town was defeated by this element. Doc Baggs was one of the notorious confidence men. Soapy Smith made frequent visits. He set up his game on First Street just off of "F" Street where Doveton's store now is. He had a big suit case which he opened and set on a box. He sold soap of which he had many small bars wrapped in colored paper. He would start his harangue upon the merits of soap for removing grease, spots and stains until a crowd gathered. He also had a liberal supply of green backs 5's, 10's and 20-dollar bills and as he talked he would wrap a bill around a bar of soap, then wrap them with the colored paper and toss it in with the rest in the suit case. When the money was all wrapped up with the soap he would stir the packages thoroughly and select at random (?) four bars which he would hold up between his fingers. These he would offer to sell for \$20.00, no takers, "who will give me \$10.00 for this wonderful soap". No takers. Then a capper (assistant) would step up and buy them. Soapy would first offer the capper \$10.00 for his bargain, then \$20.00, but the capper insisted upon having the soap, which would be given him. Then he would proceed to unwrap them, and every package would have a bill wrapped around the soap. Then business would pick up, but outsiders never were lucky enough to buy a package with money in it. Smith certainly knew his soap. He was a bad man and a killer, and was himself killed in Alaska during the Klondike rush. An undersized, weak-eyed man with a drooping blonde moustache, he did not look his part.

Most every saloon had open gambling; faro, roulette and stud poker were the usual games, and most of them crooked. With the gamblers were their women, and among these were women known all over the west, Cheyenne Em, Santa Fe Moll, Lizzie Landon (White Dog Liz) from her white Spitz dog, which was always immaculate. Jesse Brown had a house where Nevens and Koster's office now is. Lizzie Landon's house was on "G" St. where the Sherman Hotel is. One winter night (82) it burned down completely. A subscription paper was started, and the public-spirited citizens and merchants subscribed liberally and built her another house.

Webb and Corbin were the big business men, wholesale and retail groceries. They built the first brick house in Salida, which still stands diagonally across the street and alley from the present post office. Mr. Webb was a fine man, big and portly, mayor of the town and prominent in civic affairs. He built also a brick residence which was quite a fine house for those days. This also still stands at Second and "A" St. and is Bauer's Grocery Store. Mr. Webb when the business was sold to Gillette and Whitehurst, who came here from Silver Cliff, moved to Denver where he was prominent in politics and Sheriff of Arapahoe County. His daughter, Elizabeth Quereau, lives in Denver, was a member of the State Civil Service Commission, and her name has been in the papers frequently.

Mr. Corbin was a keen business man, but died early in life. Mrs. Corbin lives in Denver, but still owns the Central Block in Salida.

Geo. F. Bateman was one of the incorporators and first councilmen. He came here from Buena Vista with his son Fred and started a tin shop on West First near "G" in a little shack where they ate, slept and worked. Mr. Bateman was a hard worker, and little by little branched out, and soon had a fair hardware store. Two fires wiped him out, but he started again. He two sons, Fred and Walter, were taken in, and the Bateman Hardware Co. grew into a good business. He died in 1918, a Christian gentleman, beloved by all who knew him.

The Salida Mail started June 6th, 1880. M. R. Moore, a civil war veteran with a crippled arm, was editor. A brother, who now lives in Murovia, Calif, was the printer. Mr. Moore built a residence that stood out alone away out on East Second Street. It is now occupied by Mrs. Renwick. The Mail has passed through many hands since then, but has always been a representative paper.

The Salida Sentinel came a little later, and that too passed through several hands, finally to become the Record.

The first bank was owned by Hartsell Bros. & DeWalt. It failed about 1883. There was another bank on Sackett Ave., but it did not stay long. Then came the Chaffee County Bank, owned by W. E. Robertson, and this was the leading bank for a long time. It failed in the panic of 1893, and Mr. Robertson served a term in Canon City. He was a good man at that, the victim of his friends. Mr. Robertson bought Mr. Twitchell's house on the south corner of "F" at 5th, remodelled and enlarged it, and lived there until his disaster.

The Continental Divide Bank started about 1890, and later became the First National. The Prestons, Craigs and J. B. Bowne were principal owners.

W. H. Hawkins came up from Cleora and moved a large frame hotel which he located on Sackett Ave. This was known as the Hawkins House. He was one of the first Justices of the Peace. He was a gruff, grizzled old gentleman, and it is related of him that at a certain trial it came to his ears that an attorney had said that his client could not get justice in Hawkins' Court. The Judge called the attorney up and lectured him, finally saying "Bring the scoundrel in, and we will see that he gets justice". Judge Hawkins built the dwelling on "E" Street next to the library and lived there until his death.

Baxter Stxingley was one of the incorporators and later city marshal. He was one of the principals in the Neim Meyer shooting which was the most serious affair of that kind that ever occurred in Salida. This happened about 1884.

Neim Meyer and a companion (Edwards seems to be the name), charcoal burners from Brown's Canon, came to town and proceeded to get drunk. About noon they started a disturbance in Joe Bender's saloon and boarding house, which was just west of where the Opera House now is. The police were sent for, and Stxingley and "Buster" Bathurst, deputy marshal, responded. As soon as they attempted to arrest the disturbers the shooting started. Bathurst, Neim Meyer's companion Edwards and two men who were eating dinner in the dining room back of the saloon were killed outright, and Marshal Stringley was shot through the lungs. Neim Meyer fled across the railroad tracks, pursued by citizens who hastily gathered. Out on West Third St. he was overtaken by a man on horseback, known as Grand Army Brown, who was about to arrest him, Neim Meyer's gun being empty, but one of the

pursuers, thinking the man on horseback was the man wanted and that he would get away, aimed his rifle at Brown and killed him. The shooter was gambler, who quietly left town as soon as he found his error.

Neinmeyer was arrested and spirited out of town to Buena Vista at once to avoid lynching. Later he escaped jail and never was heard of again. Stingley recovered, although in addition to the wound he had another bullet had smashed his watch. Men knew how to shoot in those days. Two years later Stingley, who was also a deputy sheriff, had a warrant for Frank Reed for cattle stealing. Reed was a partner of Ed Watkins, and they ran cattle in the region around the head of Ute trail. Watkins had previously been arrested for cattle-stealing and taken to Canon City for trial. There he was taken out of jail and lynched, presumably by cattlemen.

Reed swore he would not be arrested to meet the same fate. One Sunday morning Stingley heard that Reed was in town and hastened to First and "G" Sts. to intercept him. Reed was just riding his horse out of the alley next to the Sherman Hotel. There were no buildings across from the Sherman, and Reed rode his horse leisurely across lots, with his leg over the horseback, and his eye on Stingley. Neither spoke nor made a false move, so no shooting started, and Reed got away. Later Reed and Ernest Christenson, a cowboy, came to town to attend a "grand masquerade ball" at "Pap" Arbor's dance hall, which was a big log building moved down from Arborville and located on First St. across from the city barns.

Stingley went there to arrest Reed, but Reed was young and active, and beat Stingley to the draw, killing him instantly. Reed was really a fine fellow, the victim of circumstances. Stingley had a most elaborate funeral. The Civil officers, the town band, fire department (volunteer) and several secret societies marched all the way to Cleora cemetery, where he was buried.

Roller and Twitchell were the first real estate men, and their names appear on nearly every abstract of title for Salida property. Mr. Roller built the house on the west corner of "F" at 5th, and Mr. Twitchell the one on the south corner of the same street. N. R. Twitchell was an uncle of Al C. Twitchell, and later moved to Denver, where he was an officer in the U. S. Mint. Mr. Robertson bought his house, enlarged and improved it. Later W. W. Roller bought it and lived there until his death. This is the Dr. Curfman house. Douglas Roller, a Denver attorney, is his son. Roller and Twitchell were prominent for many years in all civic activities.

#### Fires

In March, 1885, occurred the first of a series of fires that practically wiped out the original business district. This fire started in the New York House, a hotel that stood where Mr. Brush's real estate office is, and burned both sides of First Street from "F" St. to "G" St., except the Webb and Corbin building diagonally across from the Post Office, and the brick building on the alley and "F" St., where the Salida Harness Co. had their store.

On Jan. 1, 1888, a fire started in a building being erected by Peter Mulvaney for a hotel at the corner of "F" and 2nd Sts., where the First National Bank has been for so long. This fire burned both sides of "F" St. between 2nd St. and the alley between 1st and 2nd St.

There was little insurance carried, because of the high rates, but brick buildings were quickly erected to take the place of the

cheap frames. Later, other fires cleared out the remaining frame buildings. Salida had a volunteer fire department those days, and the water mains small and the pressure poor.

The first school house built in Salida about 1883 still stands at Third and "D" Streets. It has been enlarged and changed until the old part is unrecognizable, but the south-west wall of the building is the original wall, that is, the lower story. This building was built of lava rock quarried about a mile up Cottonwood Gulch, the gulch just east of the old round house. This lava was presumably a flow from the crater north-east of town.

The water works were built in 1882. The water was taken directly from the South Arkansas from a dam a short distance below Ira King's farm house, which stood where Mr. Shonyo built the big brick house on the Poncha Road. John Jay afterwards bought this house. The original water plant was very cheap and the pipe very small. It has all been replaced by cast iron pipe of adequate size. Previous to the building of the water works, domestic water was taken from wells. The first fire house was located where Travers store is. This had a bell tower with a very fine bell. Later it was moved to 2nd St., where Tucker's plumbing shop is, and then again to the present city hall.

J. S. Ryan was an early day livery man with a big barn on the site of the present city barn on West First Street. One cold winter night with the thermometer well below zero the barn caught fire. The fire hose froze up, and it was a complete loss. A dozen horses perished in the fire. Later he lost another barn and more horses.

E. B. Jones was a prominent early-day citizen. He was County Treasurer several terms, built the building on "F" at Second now occupied by the Safeway Co. M. M. French was another of the first comers with a store on West First, where Greenburg's store is. He built the house on "G" St. now occupied by Chas. Lunnon.

O. V. Wilson was the first mayor. Wilson Bros. were wholesale grocers with a store on Sackett Ave.,

Hugh Crymble was one of the incorporators and partner in the firm of Evans & Crymble, hardware dealers with a store on West First, also where Greenburg's store is. This firm failed and G. F. Bateman bought the stock. Mr. Crymble was a fine man and served as Sheriff several terms.

F. M. Tallman, wider than he was tall, was one of the first butchers.

J. W. Fisher was in the transfer business, afterwards City Marshal. He was the father of Mrs. Wilse Brewster, who lives in Los Angeles.

Mike Devereaux was an Irish saloon-keeper on West First St., and built the residence next door to Mr. Travers. He was regarded as an honest man and was a character. He boasted that he "could talk intelligently on any subject ye may name".

J. T. Johnson was a contractor and owned and built the St. Clair (Rainbow) hotel about 1890.

D. D. Ayers was agent for Barlow & Sanderson's stage line, which ran stages to Gunnison. He was an uncle of the Dukes of Pueblo.

Wilbur Stewart was a boy of the writer's own age. His father was a contractor and builder. In 1880 there were 8,000 people in Chaffee County, probably 75% of them grown men. The hills were full of prospectors looking for the carbonates that made Leadville. There were thriving towns at Monarch, Arborville, Maysville, Alpine, St. Elmo, Winfield and at one time both Poncha and Maysville had two thousand people or more. When the mining excitement subsided many of these people moved to Salida. Houses were also moved from Maysville and Poncha.

From Maysville came Col. J. H. Stead, his wife, two sons, Frank and Charles, and daughter, Ninneiska. They were fine people. Col Stead lived at "F" and 7th Sts., in the house now owned by Dr. Bender, which he built or moved down from Maysville. Also from Maysville came the Paines, Dr. J. W. O'Connor, Geo. Sullivan with his hardware store, M. V. Shonyo and others. C. H. Abbot, Frank Churcher, J. A. Rogers came from Monarch. From Garfield came Dr. Finlay McClure, Theodore Martin, who was mayor of Garfield, and others. From Arborville came "Pap" Arbor with his notorious dance hall. Danny Sullivan also came from Monarch. He was an ambitious young Irishman with a bent for politics and he later moved to Denver where he was elected Sheriff. He was at Cripple Creek with President Teddy Roosevelt, when he was attacked, and protected the President. He still lives in Denver.

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The burning of charcoal was an important industry in the early 80's. The smelters at Leadville used charcoal for fuel instead of coke as was used later. Many men were employed chopping pinon, hauling it to the kilns and burning it. The remains of the old kilns may be seen at Howard, above Poncha, at Brown's Canon and around Buena Vista.

Cy. Warman was one of the early day characters. One time railroad man with literary attainments, he published a weekly paper nicely bound in magazine form, which he called "The Frog". It was a spicy interesting paper, popular with every one. Warman moved to Creede when the boom was on there. He wrote the song "Sweet Marie", which is still sung, and a poem in which the phrase "It is day all day in the daytime, for there is no night in Creede" occurs.

After the Rio Grande Railroad Co. completed its tracks to Leadville, it turned its energies to the building of a line to Salt Lake City, starting from Salida over Marshall Pass through Grand Junction. This was soon accomplished and regular train service started. At that time the entire Rio Grande system was narrow gauge. There were two through passenger trains each way daily between Denver and Salt Lake City. Its equipment was new and fine for those days with narrow gauge Pullmans and chair cars. These trains left Salida going west in two sections with two engines to the section. There were daily passenger trains each way between Salida and Alamosa, and often double-headers out of Salida in addition to the trains to Leadville, two each way daily. A train ran every day to Monarch, the Orient mine and to Calumet on which line a special engine was used to negotiate the heavy grades.

The freight service was in proportion. There were from 25 to 30 train crews on the 3rd division alone. The shops were running to capacity and work trains were constantly out. At that time Salida had a population of about 3,000. In 1890 the system was changed to standard gauge. The through line to Salt Lake City was over Tennessee Pass. Gradually since then the number of railroad employees has diminished, yet the population of Salida has gradually increased.

*Went to  
from Creede  
came to  
1916 band  
died in 1917*