

Fred L. Bateman

My father, George F. Bateman, when a young man, came west from Mass., where his ancestor, Thomas Bateman, had landed from England in 1630. I was born at Mattoon, Illinois, March, 2, 1866. My mother's name was Horn; but I know little of her family.

My father was a semi-invalid, suffering from asthma; so, hearing of the beneficial effects of Colorado's climate on this disease, he came to this state early in 1873. He was immediately freed from the ill effects of the disease, and it never returned again as long as he lived in Colorado. After a short stay he returned to Mattoon, sold everything he possessed, excepting his tinner's tools, and moved with his family to Pueblo. Our family was then comprised of, my mother; my sister, Mable, now Mrs J.W. Hardy of Gardena Calif--who is two years younger than I; and my brother, Walter, who is six years younger.

The journey to Pueblo was made by rail, thru St Louis--where we crossed the Mississippi on a ferry--then thru Kansas City and west via the Kansas Pacific R.R.--now part of the Rock Island System--to Denver. It required four days to make the trip to Denver. There were no dining cars, and, as far as I know, no sleeping cars, so we rode in the day coaches all the way; and mother prepared a large basket of food which lasted the entire trip.

The journey was very interesting to a small boy, and my recollections are still vivid. Missouri was a beautiful land with many trees. I remember the engines burned wood then. From Kansas City west the country was wild and new. I don't remember seeing many farms but broad expanses of treeless plains. Antelope were in sight almost constantly; and one night the train was delayed working its way through an immense herd of buffalo.

At nearly all of the small stations were large stacks of buffalo bones, gathered for use as fertilizer; and at one place, I remember seeing a great corral of Texas long-horned cattle. Wild flowers were beautiful and profuse.

From Denver south the D&RG extended to Pueblo then on west only to Canon City. There was nothing south of Pueblo, which was quite a busy town, where freight teams of mules and oxen came and went to New Mexico and Southwestern Colorado.

My father went to work, at his trade for Alva Adams--afterwards Govenor-- who had a hardware store in So. Pueblo. I remember how nice Mr. Adams was to me, giving me fish lines and hooks, etc. I attended a small school in So. Pueblo, and later, to a small school in East Pueblo.

My mother, whose health was not good, made several trips back to Mattoon with her three children. On one of these trips, in 1875, I think, my father hired a team and drove east to Los Animas with us. This was the end of the track of the Santa Fe Railroad which was building west, and reached Pueblo in 1876.

In 1878 I began attending the new Cenntennial school studying there until 1883; going back for two winters after we moved to Salida. Prof. J.S. McClung was principal, a fine gentlemen and splendid teacher; and to him I owe all the education I have.

June, 4th, 1879, my mother died. My sister and brother returned to Mattoon to live with my mother's sister; and father and I moved into a little place where we "bached". Upon me fell the cooking and household work, and a 13 year old boy is not very proficient. But I remember of roasting a turkey that year for Thanks-giving.

My father had wanted to go into business for himself, so in Dec. 1879 he set out to find a location. Leadville was booming, and the D&RG building west from Canon City; so he secured a saddle horse and rode to Leadville. He decided, however, that Buena Vista, which was the end of track of the Denver & South Park R.R., was the best location; and there we moved in January 1880.

I went from Pueblo with the freighter who hauled my father's tools and small stock of goods. It took eight days to make the trip for the load was heavy, and we found it necessary to double--having a trail wagon--on many hills. There were many freight teams on the road, causing many delays at narrow places. We came thru

Canon City, Grape Creek to Vallie, and Cleora. The railroad had not reached Vallie yet. We crossed the site of Salida at a point on present F Street, about sixty feet Northeast of second Street; but not a house was in sight from there, and Salida was unheard of.

Business was very good in Buena Vista and we were very busy. It was the forwarding point then, and 15 or twenty stages, loaded to capacity, departed from there every morning for Leadville. The road was also lined with freight teams, mostly six mule outfits with a trail wagon, driven by a single (jerk) line--the driver being called the mule-skinner.

At that time Buena Vista was the most lawless town in the west. Dozens of saloons and gambling houses,--I remember one saloon displayed the sign, "Mule Skinner's Retreat"--and several dances halls infested the young town. The government of the town was in the hands of the gamblers and saloon men; shooting affairs were very common and killers unpunished.

We heard that a new town was to start near Cleora which was to be a division point for the D&RG R.R., so my father went down to investigate it. In May 1880, we moved to Salida, then called South Arkansas. Again I traveled with a freighter; this time driving one of his "sixes" with a jerk line. This newly-born town was then the end of the rails of the D&RG. The town was just building and houses were being moved up from Cleora; but tents and canvas-roofed shacks were in the majority. Father rented a plot of ground, on west first street near G, from Peter Mulvaney, and there built a shack about 20'X30'; then starting a tinshop and store. I worked with him, excepting the two winters I spent in school at Pueblo. We were rather poor, so I had to work for my board and room while going to school. I earned some money, though, during the summer months selling papers on the streets; and trout, which I caught in the South Arkansas River (Little River), so I managed to get along.

Salida was incorporated in October, 1880, my father being one of the incorporators and first councilmen. In 1883, he was married to Miss Sue Smith, and then sent for my sister and brother who lived with them until they each married.

When the railroad started building over Marshall Pass many people left Salida,

and the town didn't grow much for several years, but we got along and gradually made a business. In 1887 I became of age and my father gave me a third interest in the business; and the name was changed to G.F. Bateman & Son. I was married in June of that year to Anna Hallock, who died a year later with our daughter Ina.

November 2nd, 1892, I was married to Alice F. Ward in Zanesville, Ohio. In March 1894, a daughter was born, Kathryn--now Mrs Lloyd P. Hamilton of Inglewood, California; and in March 1896, a son was born, Frederic Ward Bateman--now living in Ventura Calif.

In 1893, my brother, Walter, became of age, so father gave him a third interest in the business, which became known as the Bateman Hardware Company. We carried on a general hardware business with heating, plumbing, and sheet metal work. Walter was the outside man, having charge of that work, while I was manager and office man. My father, through illness, had practically retired in 1896. He died in 1918. My life has been devoted to business which has been successful.

I did serve one term on the city council; but I learned that I did not have the tact to remain honest and keep my friends. I never sought another public office. My brother, who had been experiencing bad health, went west, leaving me alone.

I hoped to have my son, Ward, with me but the war came along. He enlisted, served 15 months overseas; and came home, almost a wreck. He concluded to go to California, and later, when I felt I must have rest, and wanted him to come back; he decided against it. We then sold the business to J.C. Patterson and associates, who are still operating under the name of Bateman Hardware Co.

Fred Lincoln Bateman