

Santa Fe, D&RGW Ready To Fight Over Passageway Thru Royal Gorge

History Of Salida

as written by
Fred L. Bateman
June, 1934

About the first of February, 1880, the writer, then a boy of 13, left Pueblo with a freight outfit bound for Buena Vista. The standard freight outfit of those days was a six mule team hitched to two wagons; the front wagon large, the trail wagon smaller. The driver, mule skinner he was called, rode the off rear mule (wheeler) and drove the whole outfit with a single line, called a jerk line. But our outfit was different, there were only five animals, four mules and a horse. Three were hitched abreast, in the lead, the horse in the middle. The driver sat on a seat in the lead wagon and drove with regular lines. The wagons were loaded with the plate, sheet iron and some hardware, consigned to the writer's father, who had gone ahead to build a building in which to start his tin shop and hardware store.

We were eight days on the road, if such it could be called, for the load was heavy, the hills were steep, frequently only one wagon could be pulled up at a time. Often there was ice or snow and there was lots of traffic. At one place near Texas Creek we had to wait over two hours to get the road. The freighter camped in his tent at night, he had iron tent pins for the ground was frozen. We came by Canon City, then the end of the D&RG track, thence southwest up Grape Creek several miles, then across to Texas Creek, Oak Creek, and Cottonwood Creek into Pleasant Valley.

One night we camped on a small flat on the north side of the river about half way between Wellsville and Cleora. There was a cabin there, half dug out but we put up the tent. A murder and robbery had been committed in the cabin a short time before. The story of it was told to Dr. Cochems and myself a short time ago by Orvy Shewalter. His grandfather and a Mr. Bailey were driving two teams from Canon City to Cleora. On the way they picked up a hitch hiker who agreed to help with the chores for his ride.

with the chances for his ride.

Mr. Bailey had sold a team in Canon City and had the \$500 with him. They noticed the hitch hiker carried a gun and was frequently practicing with it and that he was a good shot. They camped in this cabin, Mr. Shewalter sleeping on the left side, facing the door, Mr. Bailey on the right side facing the door and the stranger on the left side with his head to the door. About twelve o'clock Mr. Shewalter, who had not gone to sleep but was lying with his hands clasped over his head, saw stranger rise up in his bed and fire two shots, then drop quickly back. In a few seconds he was crying out, "Someone is shooting at us." Mr. Shewalter was shot in the hand, Mr. Bailey through the head. They got outside and the stranger wanted to take the horses to look for the shooter, but Mr. Shewalter said he had been shot and must get to a doctor. He got on his horse and started, expecting every second to be shot in the back, but the stranger let him go and he got to Cleora where he told his story and a posse was organized to pursue the killer. After Mr. Shewalter left, the stranger took the roll of money from under the pillow of the dead man and put it in his boot. The first clue the pursuers had was a greenback in the road, and as they went on to Wellsville they found several more which had worked out of the killer's boot. At Wellsville they came up with the man who had told the people there of someone shooting at them. The posse searched him and found the balance of the \$500 on him. He was taken back to Cleora. The Justice of the Peace selected a jury, the man was tried, convicted, sentenced to be hanged and was hanged then and there. I saw his grave east of Cleora as we came through but wind and sand have covered it up.

Cleora at that time was a town of several hundred people, started, it is said, by friends and supporters of the Santa Fe railroad, in the expectation that it would be a division point when the railroad was built through to Leadville. During the summer of 1879 there was a contest between the Santa Fe and the Rio Grande railroads over the right to building through the Royal Gorge. The matter was in the hands of the Courts but meanwhile each railroad had armed bands posted at strategic points and a small war seemed imminent. There was some fighting and shooting at Pueblo where the Rio Grande men captured the Santa Fe round house, but there was no lives lost. In the latter part of that year the Court decision gave the right of way to the Rio Grande railroad and preparations were started immediately to extend that road from Canon City to Leadville.

February 23, 1965

Buena Vista Real Tough Town In 1880; Salida Started By Railroad

History Of Salida

as written by
Fred L. Bateman

June, 1934

Leaving Cleora we crossed the Arkansas river about a mile up on a bridge which was just opposite Sterling Jones' house. The abutment of this bridge may still be seen there. The Jones ranch was then known as the Bales ranch. Cleora the town was named for his daughter, Cleora.

Barlow & Sanderson ran a stage line from Canon City to Leadville, and this was one of their stops. Wm. Bale ran the hotel, a frame building that burned later and stood on the side of Sterling Jones' house. The stone stable for the stage horses may still be seen, jutting into the road just below the house.

We came up the hill and out into the park where Salida now stands. There was not a tree or house between the Bales ranch and the Harrington, now the Kaess ranch. The road crossed E Street just where the Chevrolet Garage now stands. It could be seen for several years after Salida became a town. Continuing west it crossed the lower mesa through the Frantz fish farm (now Colorado State Rearing Ponds) and there joined the old Government road which extended from Colorado Springs up Ute Pass, over Trout Creek Pass and the Arkansas river and down the valley to a point east of the Harrington, now Kaess, ranch. There it turned west and ran up the gulch that is crossed in going into the Fairview Cemetery. There was no water in the gulch then. The present stream there is seepage water from irrigation on the mesas above. The road continued on over Poncha Pass to Saguache, over Cochetopa Pass to the Indian agency at Los Pinos and on to the San Juan country. This was the only road into that part of the state in the earliest days. It is said that there were more men in Chaffee County in 1880 than at any time since. This might be true as the hills were full of prospectors and miners and very few had their wives or families with them.

Poncha Springs, Maysville, Garfield and St. Elmo were sizeable towns but Buena Vista was the largest town. It was the end of Denver, South Park & Pacific Railroad, afterwards the Colorado Southern. Most all of the merchandise, supplies and passengers for Leadville, which was booming, came over this little narrow gauge railroad. Eighteen to twenty large stage coaches fully loaded left Buena Vista every morning and returned at night. Hundreds of freight teams were on the road. One outfit, Dicksy Bros., were said to have over one hundred six mule teams. Buena Vista was a booming town with all sorts of edifices from a simple tent to a respectable business building. As we went in we passed a saloon in a big tent with a board front and a huge sign proclaiming "The Mule Skinners Retreat." There were four dance halls and a score of saloons, most of them with open gambling, roulette, farobank and stud poker. Craps had not yet been invented. It was said that the city government was in the hands of the gamblers and saloon men and that it was the custom to arrest anyone who got drunk and fine him whatever he had on his person. A feud grew up between the mule skimmers and the town-people and many killings resulted. It is the writer's opinion that in all the west there was not a tougher town than Buena Vista in February, March and April of 1880. At one time there were two picturesque police officers there. They were long-haired Texans handy with their guns. Very few court trials resulted from these killings for some reason.

Learning that the Rio Grande Railroad was starting a new town that would be a junction and a division point we moved to Salida in April 1880. True to its policy the Rio Grande passed by Cleora to build a new town at Salida. 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. John T. Blake was the first postmaster. He was the postmaster at Cleora and had the mail for those known to be in Salida, sent up here previous to the establishing of a post office here. Most of the Cleora people moved up, bringing their houses and businesses. There was some uncertainty at first as to just where the town would be. The only bridge across the river was at the foot of K Street on the lower mesa. There were some stores, saloons and hotels around K and Front Streets. There were also stores, saloons and restaurants on First Street between F and G. Later the difficulty was straightened out, a bridge was built at the foot of F Street and that street began to be built up.

Mountain Mail - Feb. 24, 1965

George Smith, 'Holy Smoke' Mine Discoverer, Was Supt. of Schools

History Of Salida

as written by
Fred L. Bateman
June, 1934

The first bridge at the foot of F Street crossed the upper end of a sizeable 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 Cristo Hotel, (now depot) 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 money gone. No trace was found of the robbers—the agent soon recovered and 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 he 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," and 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 and F Street where Doveton's store now is, (now Men's Shop). 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 greenbacks, 5s, 10s, 20s 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 his 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 them 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.

was always immaculate.

Jessie Brown had a house where Nevens and Koster's office now is. Lizzie Landon's house was on G Street 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 build the first brick house in Salida which still stands diagonally across the street and alley from the old post office on Lower F. Mr. Webb was a fine man, big and portly, mayor of the town and prominent in civic affairs. He built a brick residence which was quite fine for those days. This also still stands at 2nd and G Streets, and is Bauer's Grocery Store, (now City Market Hardware). Mr. Webb, when the business was sold to Gillite 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 lived 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. Miss Luella Corbin, a daughter, 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 Street 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. His two sons Fred and Walter were taken in and the Bateman Hardware Company grew into good business. He died in 1918, a Christian gentleman, beloved by all who knew him.

The Salida Mail started June 6, 1880. M. R. Moore, a civil war veteran with a crippled arm, was editor. A brother who now lives in Monrovia, Calif., was the printer. Mr. Moore built a residence which stood out alone away out on East 2nd 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 Brothers and De Walt. It failed about 1883. There was another bank on Sackett Avenue, but it didn't 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, now the Curfman house (now Temple Baptist Sunday School), remodeled 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. Brown were principal owners.

W. W. Hawkins came up from Cleora and moved a large frame hotel which he located on Sackett Avenue. 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 there lived until his death.

MONDAY, MARCH 1, 1965

Two Express Agents Rob Railroad Express Safes; End Up In Prison

History Of Salida

as written by
Fred L. Bateman
June, 1934

The names mentioned here are mainly those of the incorporators of Salida who were here in 1880. Many prominent citizens came soon after: The Craigs, M. P., L. W., D. H. and Dan; Sam and Henry Sandusky; the Hollenbecks, L. A., Geo. M. and John, the father of Lewis; the Prestons, father and two sons, Horatio and Orlando, and three daughters; Ben Disman, A. M. Alger, J. M. Collins, the Hudgmans and Sam Westerfield. Dr. Cochems came about 1890 and at first at the D & RG Hospital. He left there to start a hospital of his own in the building, now the Sherman Hotel and a little later building the Red Cross Hospital (now the Masonic Temple). Among the earliest railroad people were Geo. Mosely, Al Philliber, J. W. Hardy, Geo. Montgomery, G. S. Nelson was agent, Star and Cora Nelson, Chas. Rush and Wilbur Steward were boys of 13 or so in 1880 and went into railroad service later. The Guerins, Tom, Pat and Steve Ryan. Jno Sweeney, R. M. Ridgeway, Supt. Harry and Arthur, Hattie and Lottie came a little later. R. M. Ridgeway (old Tige, the men called him) was a fine railroad manager and had the respect of the men under him. He was always fair, although sometimes a little crusty. About 1890 the dispatcher's offices were moved here from Gunnison, bringing Wm. Rech, Tom Killeen, Fred Hothan and others.

Guy Hall and Ton Donlevy were two younger boys of those earliest years. I remember running across them digging a shaft on a claim they had located up Cottonwood Gulch. There was a mining excitement up there at that time, about 1885. Jesse Mc Laurin (Jesse Bexter) was a small boy, his step father, a blind man, had a shooting gallery.

A. C. Frost owned the Elephant Corral with a big sign across the entrance which was where James Shay's drug store now is (now Patterson's Hardware).

In those days of wagon transportation, every little place had a lot 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 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, (now Frank Chelf residence). Mr. Gray soon left and the house was bought by Mr. D. H. Craig who lived there until his death.

death.

Geo. L. Smith, was one of the early settlers—first Superintendent 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, "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 a spot on the Madonna hill where he found the specimen and Smith went up the 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 life in Salida in those early days.

The first church was a frame structure at 3rd and F, on the site of the Presbyterian Church, (now Sinclair Station), 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, Robt. E. 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 First and F Streets facing First Street where Deveton'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 & RG 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.

George T. Williams lived on a ranch along the Arkansas river southeast of the Smelter before Salida was started. He owned a sand pit and furnished most of the sand for the mortar in Salida's building. Williams in his youth had been a member of the Quantrels Gorilla Gang of the Civil War. He was an odd character, strong in his friendships, bitter in his hate, but loveable withal.

John W. Hamm, a brother-in-law of Williams owned the ranch southeast of the 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.

City Marshal Involved In Shooting Scrapes; Gets Most Elaborate Funeral

History Of Salida

as written by
Fred L. Bateman

June, 1934

Baxter Stringley was one of the incorporators and later city marshall. 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, cafe to town and proceeded to get drunk. After noon they started a disturbance in Joe Bender's saloon. The police were sent for and Stringley and "Buster" Bathurst, deputy marshall, 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 solaan were killed outright, and Marshall Stringley was shot through the lungs. Neim Meyer fled across the railroad tracks, pursued by citizens who hastily gathered out on West 3rd Street. 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 he would get away, aimed his rifle at Brown and killed him. The shooter was a gambler who quietly left town as soon as he found his error. Neim Meyer was arrested and spirited out of town to Buena Vista to avoid lynching. Later he escaped jail, and never was heard of again. Stringley recovered, although in addition to the wound, he had another bullet smash his watch. Men knew how to shoot in those days. For years later, Stringley, 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 cattle men. Reed swore he would not be arrested to meet the same fate. One Sunday a. m. Stringley heard that Reed was in town and hastened to First and G streets 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 horses's back and his eye on Stringley. Neither spoke or 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 Arbors dance hall which was a big log building moved down from Arborville, and located on First Street across from the City barns.

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

Roller and Twitchell were the first real estate men, and their names appear on nearly every Abstract or 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 was the Doctor Curfman house. Douglas Roller, a Denver attorney, is his son. Roller and Twitchell were prominent for many years in all civic activities.

Mountain Mail - March 2, 1935

Big Percent of Chaffee County

Residents In 1880 Were Men

History Of Salida

as written by
Fred L. Bateman

June, 1934

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, etc. 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 Streets (in the house now owned by Doctor 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, and J. A. Rogers came from Monarch. From Garfield came Dr. Finla 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 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.

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 pinion, hauling it to the kilns and burning it. The remains of the old kilns may be seen at Howard, above Poncha, at Browns 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 everyone. 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 Company 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. Often double headers out of Salida in addition to the trains to Leadville, 2 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 employes has diminished, yet the population of Salida has gradually increased.

By Fred L. Bateman *Mountain*

Salida, Colorado

June, 1934

Mail - Mar 4, 1935