

BAILEY - A HISTORY BOOK WITHIN ITSELF

by Jodi Bisgaard



Jodi Ladawn Bisgaard, source: 1979 Platte Canyon High School yearbook.

William Louis Bailey moved into Kentucky through Cumberland Gap in the days of Daniel Boone. From Kentucky, he moved to Wisconsin where he married. William Bailey, his wife, Ann D. Bailey, and her sister, Mrs. Enriken, then came to Colorado by transportation of an Ox team. With the help of the two ladies' brother, Father Dyer, referred to the "Snowshoe Itinerant.", the Baileys and Mrs. Enriken settled at the foot of Crow Hill in 1864 and established the "Bailey Ranche". They built a log hotel to accommodate wayside travelers to and from South Park.

On August 6, 1870, George S. Parmelee signed papers for a Post Office at Deer Creek Valley Stage Stop, situated approximately five miles from Bailey's Ranche. Mr. Bailey then signed a document to move the Post Office to Bailey's on October 3, 1877. In this document, the name of the Settlement known as Bailey's Ranche was changed

to the town of Bailey's. The " 's " was later dropped from the end of town names by a government law, which gives the town name we know now as Bailey.

In 1878, something totally new to the West came to Bailey, the narrow gauge Denver and South Park Railroad.

During the summer of 1878, the railhead steadily advanced up the canyon, with the result that a portion of the line could be opened to the public in June. As the conditions improved, the railroad earned \$157,534 for the year ending May 31, 1878. Any financial difficulties were apparently becoming a thing of the past. By July 6, the track reached Pine Grove, and October found the rails laid as far as Bailey's Ranche. Not long after, the railroad was already at the foot of Kenosha Pass.

The Bailey Depot was built next door to where the fire house was located, the fire building is now a business.

Bailey has known its share of hard time, but always seems to be hardier than the bad times it has seen. A resident stated in 1879, that "the mail gets through alright now, The Flume arriving Friday afternoon. Too much work for a small railroad, almost caused a famine here. Supplies could not be brought, there being so much freight for Leadville and other points more important than this.

People felt that with their fine climate, abundance of water and wood, and their nearness to Denver, New York, and Boston, that Bailey would make a far better mining camp than Leadville, if they only had as many as good mines as that thriving town. Yet, Bailey survived,

striving to stay alive against all the changes and struggles of the early west, An article written from Crofutt's in 1880, describes Bailey in its early days. "Park County, Platte Canyon, is a small station on the South Park Division Union Pacific Railroad. Fare \$4.35, post office, news, depot, sawmills, and some snug cottages comprise the station. Wood and timber is the principal business. Two passenger trains run each way daily.

Timber, as was stated in the article, was the chief source of income for the people. Lumber, railroad ties, post, poles, and fuel wood took most of the trees.

In 1880, after finishing the ranch house, frustrated with the busy life of the railroad and the people, the well-liked William and Ann Bailey moved onto California.

William left the post as Master, County Commissioner and founder of this town.

Never returning to Colorado, W. L. Bailey died in California at the age of 78 years. A short while later, his wife returned to live with her sister, Mrs. Entriken and her brother, Father Dyer, who was also well known in this area as a Preacher, mail carrier, and express agent.

In the year of 1909, a damaging flood roared its way down Entriken and Crow Gulches. Into town it came, bringing with it debris that altered the landscape to the way we see it today. The short curb step in front of the Bailey Country Store was then a four foot high loading dock until the flood raised the street to the present day level. The flood also claimed thirteen miles of railroad track.

As the years rolled by and 1937 approached, Bailey was making another turn in history. The historical narrow gauge Denver and South Park Railroad, with a fare of 10 cents a mile and freight

rates of 29 cents per ton mile, No matter how the engineering worked tried, the times of progress were taking hold. Slowly but surely the railroad was going broke. The main support for the railroad was from freight, which was being taken over by trucks. The Denver and South Park Railroad was completely shut down in 1937 and its rails were pulled up in 1938, brings a final end to the Park County Railroad and an unforgettable era of life.

A town started on hopes and dreams, struggling and striving to survive. On US 285 and the North Fork of the South Platte River at the foot of Crow Hill, is historic old Bailey, an unincorporated town, still in existence and certainly still growing.

Note: This article is transcribed as written by Ms. Bisgaard in the mid-1970s.