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Park County History - the Hammonds settle in - Part four By Flip Boettcher Correspondent

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Henry H. "Hank" Hammond and his wife Fannie Hahnenkratt. (Photo courtesy of Doug Stiverson)

Unfortunately, for history researchers, family historians and genealogy buffs, most of the 1890 United States census records were destroyed by a fire, January 1921, in the Commerce Department building. There were no conclusions drawn as to the cause of the fire.

Actually, a fire destroyed many 1890 special census schedules in 1896, but no general population schedules.

The 1890 census started June 11 and finished July 1. There were many complaints about the accuracy and under-counting, and some politicians demanded a recount.

The 1890 census was the first to use punch cards and electric tabulation systems. It was also the first census to use a separate schedule for each family, rather than having all households in a continuous list separated by household numbers in each area. The census contained a lot of information. It was a bad year for the census records to be lost.

The Gay Nineties refers to the 1890s, a decade of supposedly decadent art, frivolity, sexual inhibitions, the witty plays and trial of Oscar Wilde, society scandals and the beginning of the suffragette movement. It was known as the Naughty Nineties in England.

The decade was marked by an economic crisis as well, which was worsened by the Panic of 1893 that set off a widespread economic depression in the United States that lasted until 1896.

It doesn't seem as though the Gay Nineties had much of an impact on the Currant Creek residents, though. The activity there was bustling as usual.

All four men, John Bender, his son Martin, his brothers-in-law Hank and Bill Hammond, became prominent and well-known members of their communities, and in Park, Fremont and Teller counties, as well.

Annie Bender's brother, Bill Hammond, did run cattle under the half circle "A" brand around Howbert on Pruden's ranch, but his business interest centered more on slaughterhouses and butcher shops. Bill is mostly associated with the towns of Howbert and Balfour, as well.

In 1892 and 1893, Bill Hammond was the county assessor from Howbert. In 1893 he rented the South Park Hotel from the Eppersons and a Flume article said the hotel was ready for the public. Bill also had a butcher shop in Howbert.

By 1894 Bill was mostly in Cripple Creek and had a wholesale butcher business there for several years. Bill later tried some mining. In fact, the 1910 census does show Bill leasing a homestead gold mine on Wilson Creek, southwest of Cripple Creek.

In 1894 Bill bought two lots in Balfour, 10 and 11 in block 18 with L.W. Robbins, for \$30 from the Balfour Town and Improvements Company.

That same year Bill was an election judge from Balfour and a delegate to the republican convention with wife Mary, from Balfour.

Balfour was a short-lived, latter-day gold camp 10 miles south of Hartsel and southwest of the Currant Creek Wagon Road on the north bank of Buffalo Slough.

Balfour was founded in November 1893, and by the spring of 1894, there were 800 people there with two daily stages, three hotels, the Balfour, the Clarendon,

and the Crawford Hotel and Restaurant, stores, the Nugget Saloon, and 110 log or frame buildings. At its peak there were 200 houses in Balfour. Around 1900, Balfour slipped away and not much remains today.

Bill was unemployed in 1896 after the two devastating fires that wiped out most of Cripple Creek. In 1899, The Flume reported that "William 'Bill' Hammond, a stock buyer from Cripple Creek, was in Howbert looking at cattle and he also still has the butcher shop in Cripple Creek."

The 1900 census lists Bill, a butcher, wife Mary and daughters Della and Bertha living in Cripple Creek.

Dec. 29, 1902, Bill's wife Mary Dell died and was buried in the Mount Pisgah Cemetery. Bill still had the butcher shop in 1905. He leased the gold mine in 1910 and was living in Cripple Creek, with his daughter Bertha.

By 1920, having lost his eyesight, Bill was living in Florence with his daughter Babe. Bill died at 68 years old, Nov. 29, 1925, at the Holmes Hospital in Canon City. Bill is buried by the side of Mary, and according to Doug Stiverson, in an unmarked grave. Bill's mother, Hannah Hammond, is Stiverson's great-great-great-grandmother.

William Hammond's obituary stated that he was well known in Park, Teller and Fremont counties.

Bill's older brother Hank was an active rancher in the Currant Creek area and served on the South Park and Fremont County cattlemen's associations.

In 1892, Hank and family moved to Howbert to be more centrally located in the road district where he was the supervisor, as reported in the Howbert Happenings section of The Flume.

Records show that the couple's fourth daughter, Blanche Ruby, was born in 1892 in Howbert. Hank was a juror that year and an election judge from Kester in 1893 and 1894.

Hank was a delegate from Kester with his wife Fannie to the Republican convention in 1894, the same year that his brother Bill was a delegate from Balfour.

A September 1894 article in The Flume reported that, "A bouncing baby boy was born to Mr. And Mrs. Hammond of Currant Creek a few days ago." Frederick Henry "Fred," was the couple's first son and fifth, and last, child. Hank was a juror in 1894, as well.

In 1897 Hank, of Hammond Town, ran for Park County Sheriff on the Silver Republican and Democratic tickets. That year there were 12 parties listed on the ballot; People's Party, Republican Party, Silver Democratic Party, Silver Republican Party, Socialist Labor Party, Silver Populist Party, National Silver Party, Civic Federation Party, Democratic Party, National People's Party, Taxpayers Party and the Citizens Party.

In October 1897 The Flume reported that county sheriff candidate Henry H. Hammond visited Alma.

In 1899 Hank was viewer and assessor for a new road to be built from the west side of Black Mountain City, southwest to the Fremont County line, near the southwest corner of T 15 S, R 74 W, section 33.

Black Mountain City, sometimes called Devine, was on the east side of Black Mountain on Park County Road 88 southwest of Guffey. The road was never built.

The 1900 census lists Hank in Freshwater on his 44 Ranch. Hank was a

farmer and he was living with Fannie, Grace, Maud, Blanch R. and Fredrick. Lone Cartel, 18 years old, a teacher, is listed as a boarder with them.

Hank was still in Freshwater in 1910, a farmer, living with Fannie, Blanch and Fred. In 1920 Hank was in Guffey, a ranchman, living with just Fannie. In 1904 Hank was a Park County commissioner.

The year 1917 saw the death of his only son Fred. Fred died either from wounds suffered in World War I or the influenza epidemic. Fred was buried in the Greenwood Cemetery in Canon City.

Hank gave up ranching and moved to Canon City about 1925, where his brother Bill also died in 1925. Hank passed away in 1935, leaving his widow Fannie living at 515 Harrison Avenue, in Canon City. Fannie died in 1953. Hank and Fannie are buried in the Greenwood Cemetery with their son, Fred.

Meanwhile, back at the Bender Ranch on Currant Creek: To be continued ...