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## William Albert "WA" Bauswell

Fraud Uncovered! - 100+ year old alias with a fake family

My Great Grandparents, Albert William Bauswell (1841-1911) and Ellen Jenkins-Bauswell (1847-1937) lived in Kansas City, Kansas and had four sons and one daughter. One of their sons, John Henry Bauswell (1871-1921) and his wife, Mary Lindsey-Bauswell (1877-1935) moved their family from Kansas City to San Francisco about 1906. This story is about one of John Henry and Mary's sons - William Henry "Buck" Bauswell.

A few years ago, a new Bauswell associated document became available for research on Ancestry.com and reported to me as a **hint**:

*U.S., Northern Pacific Railway Company Personnel Files, 1890-1963.*

This document immediately caught my attention in that it seemed to indicate a new member of the Kansas City Bauswell family - William Albert Bauswell. However, this William Albert Bauswell was reported to have been born in 1890, in Kansas City, Missouri.

The document was a multi-page Northern Pacific Railroad Company employment record that included the name of a wife, Addeline, and two daughters, Betty (age 3) and Ester (age 18 months).

Here are some relevant snippets from the Northern Pacific employment record:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS INSIDE.

- Station Parco 1923
1. Full name of applicant William Albert Bauswell  
(Write given names in full)
  2. Employment desired Brakeman
  3. Nationality American
  4. Where born Kansas City Mo
  5. When Feb 24 1890  
(Show Month and Year)
  6. Married Yes
  7. If married give name and residence of wife Addeline Bauswell 409 East Pine  
(Give post-office address, street and number)
  8. Names of parents, if living Not living
  9. P. O. Address of parents \_\_\_\_\_  
(Give street and number)
  10. If parents are dead, give name and degree of nearest relative Addeline Bauswell wife  
(Give street and number)
  11. Do you use alcoholic drinks? No
  12. Have you ever been employed on any part of this system in the past? No

Questions 12 and 13 to be answered only by applicants for employment as enginemen, trainmen, switchmen, agents, operators or mechanics.

12. Have you any physical ailment or defect which might render you unfit for railroad service? No
13. Have you ever suffered any physical injury? No If so, state **WHEN, WHERE and NATURE OF INJURY** \_\_\_\_\_
14. Do you understand that you are required to become a member of the Northern Pacific Beneficial Association upon entering the service of the Northern Pacific Railway, and do you assent to that association's rules and monthly deductions from your salary for this purpose? Yes
15. Do you agree to give 10 days notice of your intention to leave the service of the N. P. Ry? Yes

Usual signature of applicant

W A Bauswell

The above was compiled and signed by the applicant:

J M Hopkins

**DESCRIPTION OF PERSON APPLYING FOR EMPLOYMENT.**  
(TO BE FILLED OUT BY OFFICER ENGAGING APPLICANT)

1. Height 5' 8"
2. Weight 185
3. Color of hair Brown
4. Color of eyes Blue
5. State fully and particularly marks or peculiarities easily recognizable None
6. Predecessor \_\_\_\_\_ Rate \_\_\_\_\_ Disposition made of him \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I consider the above described applicant a suitable person to enter the Company's service. I desire to employ him as Brakeman at \_\_\_\_\_ Station

Parco Division. Effective August 17 1923 Date of pay \_\_\_\_\_

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Name and Title  
Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved J M Meran Superintendent



148591

Form 1830 10-8 3M P

UNITED STATES RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION  
W. G. MCMANUS, Director General of Railroads  
NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD

No. 22190 NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY.

Pasco, Washington, December 3d 1923

This is to Certify That WILLIAM ALBERT BAUSWELL  
has been employed in the capacity of BRAKEMAN  
on the PASCO DIVISION  
from August 17-1923 to December 3-1923

Marks or peculiarities None

Age in 1923 33 yrs Weight 185 lbs. Height 5 ft. 8 in.  
Nationality American Color of hair Brown Color of eyes Blue

Superintendent.  
P A S C O Division.

Following is the signature of party in whose favor  
this card is issued

STAMP  
HERE  
1923

|    | FROM  |     |      | TO    |     |      | OCCUPATION    | LOCATION            | UNDER WHOM EMPLOYED |       |                  | WHAT ROAD OR FIRM | REASON FOR LEAVING IF DISCHARGED STATE WHY |
|----|-------|-----|------|-------|-----|------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------|------------------|-------------------|--|
|    | Month | Day | Year | Month | Day | Year |               |                     | NAME                | TITLE | LOCATION         |                   |  |
| 1  | July  | 20  | 1918 | July  | 20  | 1922 | Driver, truck | Walla Walla Wash    | Art Bryant          | owner | Walla Walla Wash | Resigned          |  |
| 2  | July  | 30  | 1922 | July  | 25  | 1923 | Brakeman      | Line of 2 pps Calif | Frank Martin        | NM    | Calif            | Resigned          |  |
| 3  |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |
| 4  |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |
| 5  |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |
| 6  |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |
| 7  |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |
| 8  |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |
| 9  |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |
| 10 |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |
| 11 |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |
| 12 |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |
| 13 |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |
| 14 |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |
| 15 |       |     |      |       |     |      |               |                     |                     |       |                  |                   |  |

Chet Sterling Gray Walla Walla  
Art Bryant Transfer Co

In order that the N. P. Ry. Co. may be fully informed as to my personal character and my qualifications for the position for which I have made application, I refer to each of my former employers, and request and authorize each of the said Companies for whom I have formerly worked, to give to the above named Company all information they may be in possession of, whether shown by my personal record or otherwise, as to my personal character and also my qualifications for the position I have herein applied for, and the reason why I was discharged or quit service, upon any inquiry that may be made of them, or either of them by said Northern Pacific Railway Company.

W A Bauswell

The document was confusing in that there already was a William Albert Bauswell (1877-1934). He was another son of Albert and Ellen Bauswell and brother of John Henry Bauswell. William Albert Bauswell lived out his life in Kansas City as a police officer.

I set about researching this, previously unknown William Albert Bauswell, his wife, Addeline, and children, Betty and Ester, to see where he and they fit into the Bauswell family. I spent many hours going down research trails that lead nowhere. I left the research and returned to it periodically, thinking that perhaps Ancestry.com or other sources would reveal a new key document. That never happened.

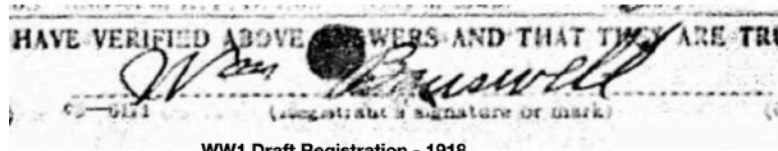
Ultimately, I was unable to find any documentation that supported that these people ever existed. It then became clear that this was likely a fraud. Someone invented and used an alias (and alias family) on that railroad personnel document. The next question was; who was the perpetrator?

My attention turned to John Henry Bauswell (1871-1921). As previously stated, he moved his family from Kansas City to San Francisco in about 1906. He had a son, William Henry "Buck" Bauswell (1898-1958). Knowing that Buck had a penchant to stretch the truth (e.g., date of birth, location of birth, physical traits), I focused on him. Buck left two telltale clues:

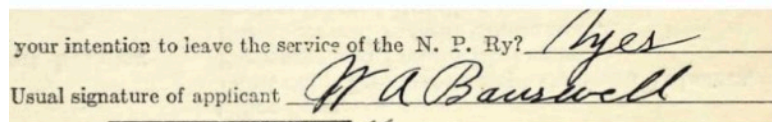
**Clue 1)** The date of birth of the fake William Albert Bauswell was Feb 24, 1890. Checking, I found the date of birth for Buck's Grandfather, Albert William Bauswell, was Feb 24, 1841.  
[Note: It's interesting that Buck twisted his grandfather's name for his alias and that he knew the month and day he was born.]

**Clue 2)** I checked three official document signatures for similarities; WW1 Draft Registration, Northern Pacific Railroad

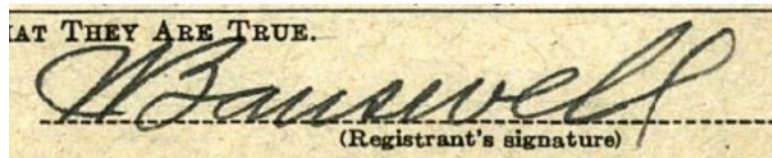
Personnel Document, WW2 Draft Registration. These signatures were obviously from the same hand.



**WW1 Draft Registration - 1918**



**Northern Pacific Employment - 1923**



**WW2 Draft Registration - 1942**

Clearly, 'Buck' Bauswell invented William Albert Bauswell (b. 1890) and the associated family, and used that alias in Aug, 1923 to apply for a job with the Northern Pacific Railroad. Why he did this we may never know. He worked as a Brakeman for the Northern Pacific from Aug, 1923 to Dec, 1923, then resigned. He seems to have gotten married in early 1923 to a Martha Weales. Perhaps he was running away from that marriage? He returned to San Francisco, marrying again in 1932, and lived the rest of his life there, fathering two sons.

I'm sure he never considered that we would be able to solve this mystery and unravel a fraud perpetrated 100 years later.

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