

## THE BAILEY FAMILY AND ITS PLACE IN THE BOTANICAL HISTORY OF AUSTRALIA

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Botany perhaps more than any other science has been a tradition in some families. The de Candolles in France, the Hookers in Britain, and the Baileys in Australia are names that at once come to the mind. The Baileys first came to Australia in 1839. John Bailey with his family—wife, two sons, and, I think, a daughter—left England on the 12th December, 1838, in the frigate "Buckinghamshire" which cast anchor in Holdfast Bay, South Australia, just 100 days later, on 22nd March, 1839. She was the largest vessel to visit Australia up to that time, her gross burthen being 1,500 tons, and she had made an exceptionally fast passage.

John Bailey had been in with Conrad Loddiges and Sons at Hackney, near London. This firm had a large botanical nursery and specialised in Cape bulbs and shrubs and the beautiful flowering plants of "New Holland." The plants of both these countries had a vogue in England at that time and the firm at Loddiges catered for the demand. In addition to being expert nurserymen they were very good botanists, and published a notable work, "The Botanical Cabinet," in twenty volumes, the first appearing in 1817 the last in 1833. Each volume consisted of 100 plates partly in colour, thus 2,000 exotic plants were figured, many for the first time. It was natural, therefore, that a member of such a firm should be chosen by the Governor of South Australia (Colonel Gawler) as Government Botanist and Curator of a Botanic Garden it was proposed to establish in the young colony. For this, John Bailey was to receive the magnificent salary of £80 per annum. A botanic gardens was laid out on the banks of the Torrens River. It was divided into two sections, one devoted to flower beds and ornamental plants, the other an economic section. One important function of this latter was the growing of fresh vegetables to combat scurvy. I do not know when this

Botanic Gardens was abandoned, but it was probably somewhere towards the end of 1841, when drastic cuts in administration costs were made by Governor Grey in an endeavour to pull the colony out of bankruptcy. No money being available to carry on the Botanic Gardens, John Bailey turned his hand to farming; and later to nursery work, establishing the Hackney Nursery after which the present suburb of Adelaide is named. In this venture his two sons were associated with him under the name of John Bailey and Sons.

The early Botanic Gardens had no connection with the present one at Adelaide, which was not established until 1855.

Life in the colony was certainly hard in the early forties. Wheaten flour was very expensive and Mrs. Bailey used the grain of one of the Sorghums for the making of johnny cakes and dampers. The grain was ground in the family coffee grinder. The skinless barley according to the younger son, F. Manson Bailey, in one of his reminiscences, was experimented with but had to be given up for fear not only of damaging the mill but because the noise startled the natives in their wurlies. Lighting oil was also scarce and frequently the younger members were sent out to collect large heaps of small bark strips with which they constantly fed the open fire so that the older ones could read by the light given out by the blaze.

The firm of John Bailey and Sons had been established for some years when one of the sons, Frederick Manson, partly influenced by family reasons and partly by the lure of the goldfields being opened up in Victoria in the fifties, decided to engage in mining. He had hardly time to try his luck, however, before he was recalled to Adelaide by the illness of his father. He resumed his position in the business but in 1858 resolved to go forth on a fresh quest and went to New Zealand where he took up land in the Hutt Valley. The outbreak of the Maori war decided him to leave New Zealand and return to Australia. After a brief stay in Sydney he came to Brisbane in 1861 and was destined to play a most important part in the scientific life of the colony (now State), and which except for brief visits to the other States, to New Zealand and to New Guinea he was not to leave again during his long life. Frederick Manson Bailey was born in London on the 8th March, 1827, and died at Brisbane on the 25th

June, 1915. He was actively engaged in scientific work almost until the day of his death at the age of 88 years. His last paper, a very short one and illustrated by the present writer, appeared in the Queensland Agricultural Journal posthumously in the month following his death.

Soon after landing in Brisbane he opened a seed store in Edward Street and in addition collected botanical specimens for sale to British and foreign Botanical Museums or Herbaria. Partly due to times of financial stress in the colony and probably due in part to a lack of business acumen, the business was eventually closed, and he had to look elsewhere for a means of support for himself and his family—by this time six children (three sets of twins).

### Appointed Botanist

In 1875 the Government set up a board to enquire into the causes of the disease of livestock and plants in Queensland and F. M. Bailey was appointed botanist. In pursuance of his duties he travelled extensively in the State especially in connection with plants reputed to be poisonous to livestock on the one hand and to grasses and native pasture herbage on the other. An important publication (now extremely rare) published under the auspices of this board was "An Illustrated Monograph of the Grasses of Queensland," by F. M. Bailey and K. T. Staiger, the Government Analytical Chemist. F. M. Bailey supplied the letterpress and specimens, the latter of which were electrotyped by Staiger. This work which appeared in 1878 was labelled Vol. I but no subsequent volumes were issued. This was not the first book on Queensland plants published by Bailey for in 1874 there had appeared a small work "Handbook of Queensland Ferns," illustrated by H. G. Eaton.

In 1881 F. M. Bailey was appointed Colonial Botanist, a position he filled to the day of his death. The previous year he had been appointed Acting Curator of the Queensland Museum and held that position until March 1882, when a permanent Director (Mr. C. W. de Vis) was appointed.

The report of the Trustees of the Queensland Museum for the year 1881-82 contains the following reference: "From December, 1880, until March, 1882, Mr. F. M. Bailey performed the duties of Curator,

carrying out the general management of the Museum together with his own botanical work, in a manner highly satisfactory to the Trustees; and, by his efforts, the phytological specimens in the upper story have been put in order. During the last year the extensive botanical library, previously kept in the Curator's cottage at the Botanic Gardens, has been transferred to the large room in the basement floor of the Museum building, where Mr. Bailey now works as Government Botanist. In this room are also contained the few works of reference belonging to the Museum and the varied library of the Philosophical Society."

F. M. Bailey retained quarters at the Queensland Museum until 1889, when the Department of Agriculture, under whose auspices he worked, was transferred to a building of its own in William Street. He stayed there until 1912, the Museum of Economic Botany and the Herbarium occupying three large rooms one of which is the present Ministerial Office. In 1912 the Museum and Herbarium was transferred to a special building in the Botanic Gardens, then under the control of the Department of Agriculture and Stock, and later by a most unfortunate circumstance transferred to the Brisbane City Council, a body in no way equipped for the management of a scientific institution such as a Botanic Gardens should be.

### Queensland Flora

F. M. Bailey was a prolific writer and published a great deal on the flora of Queensland. He did not spread himself to cover the plants of other Australian States except in one group, the ferns, which preponderates in Queensland, and a group of plants for which he had a special love. His little work on Queensland Ferns (1874) was followed in 1881 by his "Fern World of Australia," published by Gordon and Gotch just before his appointment as Colonial Botanist. He wrote many articles on the flora of the Territory of Papua (then British New Guinea), most of which were small and published in the Queensland Agricultural Journal. His magnum opus was the "Queensland Flora" in six volumes, the first appearing in 1899 the last in 1902. This work was published under the authority of the Queensland Government, though the Government would not provide funds for the printing of a general index, an essential to a work of this type. It was left

to the generosity of a visitor to Australia, Mr. F. E. Clotten, of Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany, to offer money for its publication, and the General Index was published three years later (1905) with funds supplied by him.

F. M. Bailey's last big work was the "Comprehensive Catalogue of Queensland Plants" which appeared in 1912. This is really an illustrated companion to his larger work before referred to. Its publication was made possible through the instrumentality of Sir Wm. McGregor, the Governor at the time, a keen scientist himself and a very great friend of F. M. Bailey's. He was indefatigable in publishing notes on the economic plants of Queensland—timbers, grasses, weeds, etc. In his early days as Colonial Botanist he took a keen interest in mycology especially in its relationship to plant diseases. He never lost interest in the lower forms of plant life and collected seaweeds, fresh-water algae, fungi, mosses and lichens which he forwarded to various specialists abroad for critical examination. His interest in horticulture was maintained throughout, and one of his earliest publications as Government Botanist was a bulletin issued by the Department of Agriculture, "A Half-century of Notes for the Guidance of the Amateur Fruit Grower."

He kept closely in touch with the scientific life of Australia and was an honorary member of the Philosophical Society of Queensland (later the Royal Society), of which he was at one time president. He was an honorary corresponding member of the Royal Societies of Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. In 1892 the Royal Society of New South Wales awarded him the Clarke Memorial Medal for outstanding researches in Natural Science. He joined the Linnean Society of London in 1878. He was a fairly regular attendant at meetings of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science. He was created a C.M.G. in 1911.

In appearance he was a distinguished looking man and for the past forty years of his life at least wore a long beard but no moustache. He was of rather sparse build, and had drooping eyelids which towards the end he had to keep constantly propping up. He always wore soft shirts and a narrow black bow-tie. It is doubtful if he ever possessed a dinner or evening suit in his life, and I remember on one occasion an invita-

tion from a scientific society for a *conversazione* being received with "Evening Dress" in small type at the bottom. He tore the invitation into fragments in a rage and threw them into the waste-paper basket.

He was a great reader of poetry and for years never went to bed without a book of poems under his pillow, though it was the biting wit of Pope or the more subtle one of Goldsmith that appealed most to him. Both of these he could literally quote by the yard, as he also could the poems of Pope's contemporary and friend, John Gay. Poets such as Wordsworth and Tennyson made little appeal to him. He was, however, a great reader of Keats, though he did not quote him extensively. He was a man of extraordinary strong personality and a most lovable and kindly character, which was sometimes imposed upon. Indicating his character it may be mentioned that he was a great friend of a German medical man and scientist here—Dr. Jos. Lauterer. The latter was a great character in his day and once took a trip round the world. He carried a photograph of F. M. Bailey with him, hung it up in his cabin or room, bowed to it every day and said "Good Morning, Mr. Bailey." Another great friend was Mr. J. H. Simmonds, one time Hon. Secretary of the Field Naturalists Section of the Royal Society and a keen local botanist and conchologist. For many years Mr. Simmonds visited the Bailey grave on the anniversary of F. M. Bailey's death and laid a wreath upon it. These instances indicate the likeability of a great man.

### John Frederick Bailey

His son John Frederick Bailey, who attained considerable prominence in Australian botany and horticulture, was born in 1866, and in 1889 was appointed assistant to his father. He was appointed Director of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens in 1905 and on the death of his father in 1915 was made Government Botanist in addition. During the years of association with his father he travelled extensively in the colony, important journeys being to the Atherton Tableland, the Gulf of Carpentaria and the far South-West. The specimens from these expeditions are now preserved in the Queensland Herbarium. The results of the work on the Atherton Tableland are embodied in an important paper "Report on the Timber Trees of the Herberton District, North Queensland," published in the Queens-

land Agricultural Journal for October 1899. As a result of this expedition the botanical identity of many North Queensland timbers was revealed for the first time. The results of the journey to the South-West were embodied in a paper "Plants of the Rabbit Infested Country, Bulloo River, S.Q.," read before the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science in 1898, and published in Vol. VII of its Proceedings. The trip to the Gulf Country yielded many novelties and descriptions of these were incorporated in various papers by his father.

In 1905 he took over the Directorship of the Brisbane Botanic Gardens and immediately set about their improvement. Though he had a good botanical knowledge, his main love was horticulture, and the Botanic Gardens rapidly took on a changed aspect under his capable management. While Director he wrote many articles mainly in the Queensland Agricultural Journal on ornamental trees, palms, shrubs, climbers, etc. He was ever ready to impart the benefit of his knowledge to the professional and amateur gardener alike. He took a very active part in the management of the Horticultural Society of Queensland, which honours him by holding a J. F. Bailey Memorial Show each year.

In 1917 he was appointed Director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. One thing that swayed him to go back to the city of his fathers was the greater amount of money the South Australian Government was prepared to spend on the Adelaide Gardens compared with that Queensland was spending on those of Brisbane. He returned to Brisbane on his retirement in 1932. He died in May 1938.

One son, Frederick Manson, had a brilliant career at the Australian Forestry School and later at Oxford. He at present holds the position of Chief Sylvicultural Officer of the New South Wales Forestry Commission. A younger son, John Rayer Bailey (at present in the Army) is Curator of the Botanic Gardens, Toowoomba.

The present writer is a grandson of F. M. Bailey and was appointed Pupil Assistant to him in 1905, Acting Government Botanist in 1917 and Government Botanist in 1917 and Government Botanist in 1918, a position he still holds.