



# Buffalo Tales



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Buffalo County Historical Society  
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## The Love Letters of Bertha Alice Haug and Ora Oscar Hayman

### Part V: Conclusion

Winter, 1904 is a busy time for Bertha and Ora as they prepare for a December wedding. Revival meetings, early winter snows, carpentry and husking corn compete with conversations about shopping for wedding apparel and a future home. We have had a delightful year accompanying this young couple on their journey to their special occasion. This selection concludes their correspondence. We are grateful to Fred and Deb Schroeder and Carolyn and Roy Brown for preserving and presenting this collection to the Historical Society, and reminding us that we all have something to contribute to the rich drama and dialogue of history.

**Letter #65 Mailed: Saturday,  
November 5, 1904**

**To: Mr. O. O. Hayman,  
Holdrege, Nebraska  
From: Grand Island, Nebr.**

My dear Boy:

We drove down yesterday arriving here a little after dark. Do you not think we are exceedingly smart to get here at that time of the night without getting lost. I am feeling a little stiff and tired this morning, otherwise my health is in rather a (prosperous) condition. We are intending to go home today.

Now can you guess why your little girl is in Grand Island. You know she is going down town today and look at dress goods. She has an especial desire to look at their creamy white goods. Do you wonder why? But then she wants something that will make her look very sweet just for her boy's sake.

Yesterday we looked at some silk goods at home. Mr. Hanson had a very pretty piece of brown checked silk. If I do not see something I like better today I shall buy it. Then by the time my boy comes again I hope to have it made. You haven't seen me with anything new for so long that you won't know me with two new dresses, will you dear? Or is it the girl and not the dress that you look at.

Well, good bye, sweetheart. With lots of love, I remain,

Your own little girl,  
Bertha

**Letter #67 Mailed: Tuesday, November 8, 1904**

**November 7, 1904**

My own dear Boy:

We came home from G.I. last night, rather we got home at about 6:30 after travelling most of the afternoon. We went to preaching last night also and so were rather stiff and tired this morning yet.

I bought me a brown silk dress and a white colienne, (a mixture of silk and wool) quite pretty, I think. Also got a pair of brown kid gloves and mamma bought quite a few things. We will have to go down to G.I. again. I will need trimmings



## WITH THE SOCIETY

### A Note from the President:

The Buffalo County Historical Society Board of Directors has selected a plan for the new building. Please feel free to contact any Board member to see it. Or, call the Trails and Rails Museum 234-3041 to see it. The roofs of the church, chicken house, farmhouse, and wagon barn have been repaired from the June hailstorm. Also, the windows have been repaired on all buildings. We have received \$7,200 from keno funds to repair the 1871 schoolhouse. This money will be used for replacing the roof, repairing the door, and repair and painting of the siding. The Christmas Walk will be December 5-8 and December 13-15. The theme is "Festival of Trees." Please mark your calendar to attend. We still have space for some decorated trees and we would appreciate food and craft items to sell during the walk. In addition, we will be raffling a quilt. Lastly, volunteers are always needed. Please call 234-3041 for more information.

– Dora Day, President

### A Note from the Editor:

I would like to take this space to briefly introduce myself to members of the Buffalo County Historical Society and to the readers of *Buffalo Tales*. First, you should know that I am not a native Nebraskan and I only recently moved to Kearney. You might be wondering then, why would Roger Davis irresponsibly hand over the editorship of *Buffalo Tales* to a transplanted Californian who knows more about the beach and surfing than corn and Nebraska football?

Well, here is my story. I can at least claim to have Nebraska roots that date back several generations. In 1869 my great-great-great grandfather migrated from Illinois to Johnson County, Nebraska. He farmed there for over forty years, while his son and then his grandson worked as blacksmiths in the village of Crab Orchard. When the Depression drove my grandfather out of the state he migrated westward, eventually settling in California. As a youngster he told me stories of his youth in Nebraska, which generated in me an interest for history, particularly the history of the American West. When it came time to choose a university to pursue a doctoral degree, therefore, I looked to the land of my grandfathers and attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

My research and writing focus on topics such as local/regional history, legal history, and the Plains Indians. I am in the process of finishing a book that examines the origins and evolution of the criminal justice system in Lincoln County, Nebraska between the years 1868 and 1910. I have published articles on Nebraska related topics such as pioneer lawyers in the Platte Valley, the Nebraska State Bar Association, and Indian police forces. I also worked as an assistant-editor for three years on the forthcoming, *Encyclopedia of the Great Plains*.

I began teaching at the University of Nebraska at Kearney in the Fall of 2000, one year after finishing my Ph.D. At UNK I teach Nebraska History, the American West, Plains Indians, and a variety of American History courses. In the future I plan to teach courses on the Hollywood Western and a History of Kearney and Buffalo County. I try to encourage my students to write papers on local history topics. Nebraska is blessed with state and local archives that house untapped resources for research. Be sure to look for student papers in forthcoming issues of *Buffalo Tales*.

I also would like to encourage members of the Buffalo County Historical Society and the general public to submit anything of interest for possible publication. You do not have to be a trained historian to write interesting history. Recent issues of *Buffalo Tales* indicate that history can be found in letters, photographs, reminiscences, and personal memoirs. Look in your attics, garages, and basements and you'll find things that may be of interest to readers of *Buffalo Tales*. Possibilities include reminiscences of student life at the university, local business histories, life in Buffalo County during the Depression

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for the dress, veil, gloves, slippers and all sorts of things yet. Don't you wish you could go along and select the veil etc. I did wish you were there to see what you liked best in dress goods but then you wasn't, so there.

I had several nice chats with your Aunt Sally. I'm quite in love with her. She has so many good sterling qualities that I admire very much. Your father came home Saturday evening and we had a nice visit Sunday morning. He told me that he would phone to you Sunday evening and tell you some of the things we talked about. He also told me to write frankly to you what I felt about it and so like a dutiful little girl here I go. Your father told me that the house you had planned was to cost about \$2300 or something of the sort and I realize that that is more than we ought to spend in a house.

You know, dearest, I feel that we ought to have a little home of our own where we can be masters of all we survey, where no landlord can brutally inform us that we can move or do so and so etc. But, you know, dearest, it doesn't take a mansion to make a home. I think it would be wiser for you to simply buy or build for us at the present a neat little cottage where we can be comfortable and happy together.

Then if we are successful in the school there we can dispose of it or rent it and later on when we can afford to build better and more what we would like we can do so.

Now, dearest, I don't want to be presumptuous or anything of the kind. I simply want to help you.

Just remember this one thing dear that I can be just as contented and happy in a little cottage as in a mansion. It's the love that makes the home, not the house.

Now, dearest, this is only my suggestion. You may do just as you please. You understand and know about it better than I do and you must do what you feel is the best.

I'd like to have you here tonight. It seems quite a long time since I took my boy to Hartwell. In fact I don't try to remember the trip at all because it brings back to me the hopeless feelings I had that night. When I got almost to Lowell, and the poor old horse merely moved along while I could see the sun sinking below the Western Horizon, I felt like the 'Babes in the Woods' and I just about cried. I was so afraid the old horse would give out on me. But she made the trip at last and when I was safe at home and lying in my cozy bed at night I felt glad I had been able to do that much for my boy. Your mother was pitying me yesterday because I had to drive to Lowell after you every three or four weeks. I told her at last that I wouldn't mind driving that far every week. Wasn't I awful. My light is actually going out so sweet dreams for tonight dearest.

Tuesday afternoon.

Like the author of "Reveries of a Bachelor" I have a wood fire before me now instead of a lamp that is dying out. If I wished to I would write down as he does a few dreams that I read as I gaze into the fire. But then my time is limited so I'll just tell you of what we are doing and close. I have been making some napkins (that is hemming them) and now am working on mamma's waist.

We will go to town tomorrow and see about having our dresses made. I shall not have my wedding dress made before the first of December. You see I don't want it lying around so long.

Do you know dearest that there is only a couple of weeks left before you will be with us again. May the time fly swiftly.

Papa is about ready so I fear I must close. I hope he brings home for me a letter from my darling. They can't come too often.

So good Bye, dearest. Write soon. With love

Your little sweetheart,  
Bertha

Letter #68 Mailed: Thursday, November 10, 1904  
Miss Bertha Haug, Shelton, Nebr.

Holdrege, Nebr.  
November 10, 1904

My dear little Sweetheart:-

I think you are right about the house question. \$2330 is to much for that house. I know it can be built for less money. I can buy two nice cottages here for a reasonable price. One is the cottage Craig's live in, and the other is where Rev. Hardaway lives. The latter is well improved and is a bargain so I think I shall buy it. Crops are to uncertain here to invest to much money in property yet. You know it is better to commence down at the bottom of the ladder and work up, rather than commence at the top and work down. It is true that there can be just as much love in a cottage as in a mansion, it all depends on the occupants any how.

It was to bad my Sweetheart had to be at G.I. while I was not there. I would have enjoyed going along with her and helping her select her things. Her judgement is as good as mine though and I will be satisfied with what she has selected, but you see my plan was to be with her. I simply had to have some excuse. I knew you would like Aunt Sally when you became acquainted with her. Aunt Ellen is just as good but in a different way. I think a great deal of them.

I will be so glad when the 23 of November comes around so I can once more go to see the dearest girl in the land. My new pair of boots did'nt used to have any more charm, than the time when I can board the train bound for Shelton to be at the side of my darling. I can see that look of love now as I think of her. In fact that vision never fades.

What are your folks doing this kind of weather with the whole side of the house torn away? This storm was a surprise to every one. It begins to look like we are going to have a cold winter. This is the second snow we have had.

The revival meetings are still in progress, and we are having splendid times. Rev. Mahood is a fine talker. He gives a person some thing to think about.

With best wishes for your folks and lots of love for yourself, I am,

Your lover,  
Ora Hayman

Letter #70 Mailed: Monday, November 14, 1904  
Miss Bertha Haug, Shelton, Nebr.

Holdrege, Nebr.  
November 14, 1904

My dear little Sweetheart:-

We had a splendid time yesterday at Church, Mr. Mahood spoke at 7.30 (sic) in the morning and at 3.00 P.M. and in the evening to men only. My but he is against the Theatre, card parties, dancing, etc. HE told a story of a drunken Father going into his Son's room at night and stripping his clothes off and pawning them for more drink. You could hear the whole Church sob when he told this story. He is very pleasing to listen to. He does'nt (sic) tire anyone, and large crowds come every night to hear him. Some have to stand every night. The Business houses are going to close early each eve this week in order to give the clerks a chance to attend.

I will make out the names of the people for you to send invitations to, and bring them with me. Will that be soon enough? We will have to draw a limit on the near relatives, if we have a house wedding.

This letter will be a little late, all because your last letter was sent to Hastings and I did'nt get it until late last night. I could'nt (sic) think what could be the matter with you. I was so very glad when it did come my mind was at ease then. It was such a good letter, that, it deserves a much better answer than this, but never mind I will answer in person in a little while.

My little token of love came with your letter. I always look forward to it. It tells me so much.

With best wishes for your folks and heaps of love for yourself, I am,

Your lover, Ora Hayman

**Letter #76 Mailed: Monday, December 5, 1904**  
**To: Mr. Ora O. Hayman, Holdrege, Nebraska**

**Shelton, Nebr.**

My own dear naughty Boy Lover:

I received a letter from your mother Thursday. She sent the buttons. My dress was all made but them a week or so ago. I tried-it on yesterday. It looked just swell, I think. I couldn't help but stand in front of the glass and admire the dress. The goods has made up beautifully. Then being placed upon such a pretty girl the effect was of course charming.

I took my cream colored dress in to the dress-maker yesterday. We have not selected the way to make it yet. We looked over the books but did not see anything we greatly fancied so I concluded to go in again next week and take my time to look them over. She will make it week after next. I expect I will go to G.I. next week or the first of the next to get the remainder of the trousseau. Won't I have some fun buying. You see there will be a veil and slippers and gloves and everything imaginable.

Is there a florist in G.I.? I want to get some holly, quite a lot of it for decoration, besides theme flowers for the tables etc.

James ordered a new suit Thursday. He is going to have a brown one. Papa has not got his new suit yet. He intended to see about it yesterday but it got so late that he didn't bother.

I have been assisting in the lathing to a very small extent. I lathed the south side of the bedroom and started on the west Saturday. I told them I thought I would take lathing as my calling. Can't you come up and help me a day or two so we can get the plastering done. You see the plastering has to dry 10 days or so before the finishing can be put on. So we want the plastering done as soon as possible so we can get the cleaning up done.

I've done a little sewing the latter part of the week and will do some more next week when I get thro (lathing?)

Well, dearest, I must stop as 'tis about time for church. Give my best regards to your father and you'll find a world of love in this letter for yourself.

Now write real soon, my dear for I do so love to get your letters.

Lovingly your sweetheart,  
 Bertha Haug

P.S. Send those names when you can and don't forget to let me know how your name put on the invitations.

Sunday afternoon, at home.

Bertha

**Letter #79 Mailed: Friday, December 9, 1904**  
**To: Mr. Ora O. Hayman, Holdrege, Nebr.**

**Shelton, Nebr.**

My dear Boy:

I shall go to G.I. tomorrow or Saturday to get the rest of my things. Just think of me coming home carrying white slippers, veil, etc. I'll have them wrapped up however so people won't know that I have sufficient decorations along to make me as attractive as the elephant at the circus.

So Besse has found out that she will soon need her dress. How strange considering that she has known the time for the last 6 months. Well, I hope she won't get a nicer one than I have. I would hate it terribly if you should get frightened and looking at the dresses marry Besse instead of \_\_\_\_\_ the right one. However it does no good to cross the bridge before you come to it so I won't worry over that possible calamity.

So you have been out skating. Do be awful careful. You see I wouldn't have anything happen to my boy for the whole of Nebraska. You've got to live and take care of yourself now for somebody else. How do you like it?

We are going to shell some corn tomorrow. Papa has sold 1,000 bushels.

We will have the plasterer out in a day or two now to plaster for us. Then it will take it about 10 days to dry before the carpenter can put on the finish. Do you see where we are. But we will have him finish up the bedrooms first and then



if any is left undone 'twill just be the kitchen. The carpenter has been working on the little porch today.

Well, it is past bedtime now so I must say good night and sweet dreams.  
With lots of love, I am

Your sweetheart,  
Bertha A. Haug

Thurs. eve. at home.

**Letter #81 Mailed: Saturday, December 17, 1904**  
**Miss Bertha A. Haug, Shelton, Nebr.**

**Holdrege, Nebr.**  
**December 17, 1904**

My dear little Sweetheart:-

I have a terrible time here every one is so inquisitive they keep asking me so many questions. They find out so many things about when we are to be married, when it is to happen. I, received the invitation Thursday eve and Mr. Thompson knew of it that same day at noon. All such things. Mr. Galloway wanted to know yesterday if it could not be postponed until he arrived at Gibbon as he expected to be there a day or so later. Now what do you think of such?

Your boy is in such a hurry to get things arranged before going home this eve that he has very little time for writing. So if you will excuse a short letter this time I will make up for lost time in person. I will be home to-morrow then I will write you and let you know when it will be possible for me to come up there. The next time you write me after receiving this letter write to Grand Island.

The invitations were very fine. Have you selected the ushers? Do not be afraid to call upon any of us for help at any time from now on.

You are the sweetest little girl in the land and I will soon be with you. Is my last will and testament.

With best wishes for the folks and heaps of love for yourself, I am,

Your lover,  
Ora Oscar Hayman

*Mr. and Mrs. Fred Haug*

*request the honor of your presence*

*at the marriage of their daughter*

*Bertha Alice*

*to*

*Mr. Ora Oscar Hayman*

*Wednesday evening, December twenty-eighth*

*nineteen hundred and four*

*at four o'clock*

*M. E. Church, Shelton, Nebraska*

RECEPTION AT THEIR HOME  
AT FIVE O'CLOCK

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(or any other decade), transportation through the county before Interstate 80, local sports history, and old photographs.

I look forward to meeting the readers of *Buffalo Tales* and encourage you to contact me with suggestions, advice, and criticism.

**Please send materials or communications to:**

Dr. Mark R. Ellis, History Department, UNK, Copeland Hall, Kearney, Nebraska 68849. Phone: (308) 865-8767. E-mail: ellismr@unk.edu



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Nebraska Library Association later this month to discuss this project. I will also be a participant of a preservation workshop conducted by the Nebraska State Historical Society on October 9, 10 at the Ford Conservation Center, Omaha. This workshop will be a "hands on" session on preserving paper, film, and photographs. The Buffalo County Historical Society will be participating at the Prime Senior Festival in Kearney at the Buffalo County fairgrounds on October 17th, and finally, we need volunteers to help with T & R Clean Up Day, October 19. If you can help, please call and let us know. Enjoy a wonderful autumn!

Sherrie Dux-Ideus,

Buffalo County Historical Society Director

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Dr. Mark R. Ellis, Editor

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- Institutional Membership . . . . . \$20.00
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*Trails & Rails Museum*

**A Note from the Director**

Greetings:

September and October have proved to be busy months for the Buffalo County Historical Society. The Trails & Rails Museum continues to host tours and approximately 250 people have visited the grounds since our formal closing in early September. Since tour guides are no longer available, please call 234-3041 to arrange a visit. Work is continuing on the Western Trails grant. This project will digitize some of our materials on overland trails and county expansion. I will be part of a discussion panel at the fall convention of the

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**Trails & Rails Museum 706 West 11th Street (308) 234-3041**

**Buffalo County Historical Society  
Box 523 • Kearney, NE 68848-0523**

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