

# Buffalo Tales



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## MY DEAR JAY - Part II

by Margaret Stines Nielsen

*Jay Brink remained in the "Commercial College" in Rutland, Vermont until May of 1900. Although his uncle, Charles Robinson, reported that he was "applying himself diligently" to his studies it was soon evident that at nineteen he was still trying to "find himself". His father's letters were alternately demanding and indulgent as he tried to prepare his son for a role in his business without alienating him.*

Kearney, Nebr., Jan. 21/1900

. . . How did (you) succeed with the telegraph line . . . did it work well and help you in sending and receiving? Can you go where telegraphing is being done and tell what is passing on the wire? . . .

You ask "why I don't sell my farms and come to Rutland" for the simple reason that owing to the bad crops in Nebr. the past four or five years there are no buyers . . . at prices I could accept. If we have a return to old times . . . then land will sell and . . . perhaps I will sell out. While times have been very bad here it can't last always . . .

*After receiving a letter from a Reverend Gibbs Braisind asking that Mr. Brink give permission to Jay to join the Baptist church, C. D. wrote*

. . . I suppose you have given the subject thought and that you should take your stand amongst the Christian people . . . My wish for you is whether you join the

(Continued on Page 3)



Jay Henry Brink and Harriett Mary Harlow,  
married October 28, 1902.

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Membership is open to anyone who has an interest in the history of Buffalo County and its people.

Annual dues, payable January 1, are:

Basic Membership .....	\$ 7.50
Institutional Membership .....	\$10.00
Supporting Membership .....	\$25.00

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## WITH THE SOCIETY

### Christmas Exhibit — December 6-14

Trails and Rails Museum will be open from 1-5 p.m. Saturday, December 6 through Sunday, December 14. We invite you to come and enjoy the Freighters Hotel decorated for Christmas, lots of greenery, red velvet bows and a big tree in the bay window. Meanwhile, in the depot a special display featuring the Jorgensen postcard collection, a recent donation to the museum. This extensive collection includes mainly pictures of Kearney, but also pictures of other towns in Buffalo County.

### DO YOUR CHRISTMAS SHOPPING AT TRAILS AND RAILS MUSEUM

When you come to see the Christmas exhibit, do some Christmas shopping. Items available at the museum's gift shop:

**Books:** *Tales of Buffalo County*, Vol. II (\$5.95) A collection of stories about people and events in Buffalo County.

**Kearney Centennial Book** (\$2.50) Pictures and descriptions of early Kearney. A good way for new residents to learn about their new home.

**Trail Dust To Star Dust** (\$8.00) and **Heros Without Medals** (\$4.00) Two books which tell about Gibbon over a period of 100 years.

**Static Steam** (\$7.50) Describes all the steam engines on display in Nebraska.

**Note cards** (\$4.00) with area buildings drawn by Carol Kimball and post cards (20¢ ea.) with Kearney buildings drawn by Barb Avery.

**Railroad Items:** Union Pacific glassware (prices vary)

Train whistles (\$6.50) Sounds like authentic steam engines.

Book ends (\$6.00) made of U.P. rails and spikes

**Buffalo "Chips"** (50¢ ea.) Every fireplace needs several.

**A 1987 Membership** in the Buffalo County Historical Society includes *Buffalo Tales*, participation in meetings, tours and special events.

### A Message from President Chandler Lynch:

In this, the last issue of 1986 *Buffalo Tales*, we think back over the year's accomplishments. Many individuals contributed to our work. Special thanks go to Martha Pierce for many hours of volunteer office work at the museum, to A. B. Kriz for locating county school pictures, to Lawrence Curd for repair of a railroad cart, to the local genealogical club for their continued cataloging of county archives, to the members of the committee in charge of Wagons West Celebration in May, and who already are planning next year's event. I cannot name all of you, but be assured that your volunteer work is greatly appreciated.

Your Buffalo County Historical Society wishes for everyone a Happy Holiday Season.

church or not that you ever lead a life that is blameless . . . You have a mother whose hand you have never felt, whose eyes you have never seen, but who today may be guiding you on that in the end you . . . may be joined together. When I think of the dear wife she was, and the loss it was to us, the tears come till I can't write . . . with such a mother you will go right. God bless you.

Yours affectionately, C. D. Brink

*C. D. had arranged that the rent from a farm in Springfield, Vermont be sent to Jay. He wrote two detailed letters, asking him to keep full account of his expenditures.*

April 26, 1900

My Dear Jay,

I wrote you quite hurriedly and after letter had gone felt that you might think me exacting by requiring you to keep itemized account of expenses. It is not so much for what the money goes for that I ask it, as to learn you to be methodical. When one has funds in pocket, using from it whatever is wanted, without memorandum, soon its gone and one wonders where. It is not my wish to keep harping on the money question, and I shall not do so, for if a young person has property left to them, and they see fit to sow it to the wind, in their old age they can blame no one but themselves if they reap the whirlwind. When I began life at 16 years, it was my lot to go out and rustle for myself, and as soon as I could get a start, . . . bought a home for father and mother and while it was a struggle . . . I pulled through, and it was a good school . . . in that I learned the value of money . . . I think I have written enough, . . . and more than I would did I know you better. Father and son, yet how little we know each other.

Lovingly yours, C. D. Brink

Aug. 1/1900

. . . I am glad you have found so good a job, and think you will like machine work. Try and please your employers doing all work well, be prompt, for the time may come when you will see the benefit of knowing how to earn a living at some occupation other than day labor . . . I do not want to inject into every letter too much advice, so that the sight of my letters will make cold chills run up your spine, but it is necessary that you learn one thing . . . always pay as you go . . . One has no right to use money for his own pleasure when that money is due for something he has already had . . . **Never sign any mans note . . . Never ask man to sign yours.** Keep out of debt, be honest, tell the truth and you may be happy . . .

Sept. 2, 1900

. . . Your nice letter offering to come and help me if you could be of service is appreciated. However at present it is best that you remain where you are. You can help me better by paying your way in part . . . and further, I think it not best to change ones employment too often . . .

I have just made the last payment on land that I owed so now all my debts in Nebraska are paid . . . The only other debt is one owned jointly by myself and Daniel O. Gill, money we borrowed to run our ranch . . . I am trying to get a division of our ranch so that should anything happen to me you will not have any partnership matters to look after . . . while my partnership in a business way has been pleasant I believe it the best way to do what you can alone, then if mistakes are made, the one making them is the loser . . .

Oct. 27 / 1900

. . . You write that you have left the scale works and found employment with the Tuttle Co. I hope the change will prove for the best . . . so long as the move is made will only say I hope . . . you will be satisfied to continue . . . you will find that the stayer is the winner . . .

Nov. 8 / 1900

. . . You write you would like a dress suit, but you do not write how much money it will require . . . I am, as you must well know not flooded with the "McKinley prosperity" (bah!). In my boyhood day I had not one tenth that . . . to spend. I am aware that one cannot live as cheaply in these **very prosperous** times as in ye olden days, I presume after 4 years more you will do well if you can earn enough to pay your board . . .

*After Jay lost his job with the Tuttle Co. he again wrote about coming to Kearney but C. D. continued to put him off. In a letter of January 16, 1901 he stressed the importance of knowing where Jay was at all times.*

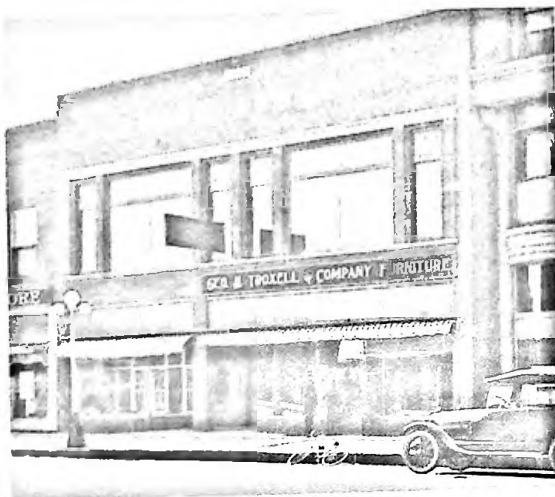
. . . Life is uncertain and we old people are reminded every day, as some comrade passes away that we too may be called without much notice . . . Should I die here, my remains will be shipped to Springfield . . . by the side of Mary<sup>1</sup> . . . I do not think it necessary that any funeral service be held . . .

You may wonder if there is anything wrong physically with me . . . I am in usual health . . . still tis well to be prepared . . .

July 31 / 01

. . . I do not . . . have any objections to you trying your luck in California . . . When you get the fruit business learned it might be you would find that other kinds of fruit than oranges would work . . . Fruit lands, some of it, is very high, some lands with trees in bearing cost \$1,000.00 an acre . . .

1. His wife.



Brink Building at 2026 Central Avenue, built by Jay Brink in mid-1920's for Debus Baking Company in the south half and Troxell Furniture Company in the north half.

Sept. 1/01

. . . The last few days have been quite busy . . . On the 20th a fire burned up a horse barn, shed and grainery on the farm owned by the D. O. Gill estate and myself . . . The loss is some \$1,100.00. No insurance. Following the fire a wind storm destroyed \$175—buildings on one of my own farms. While the loss is a little hard to bear this dry year, when I think it is the first loss by fire in all these years . . . tis not so bad.

Oct. 17/1901

. . . Your letter of 14th at hand. You wanted a reply . . . but why you do not state as you state you are coming west which settles that part . . . There is no opening here. However you want to make a change and perhaps its best to talk the matter over and you can see Nebraska . . .

I went up to farms on K&BH line this morning to fix up some business but was taken with severe pains in my stomach and was forced to take train back . . .

*Jay and his father made a trip to California, leaving November 26, 1901. The next letter was dated April 7, 1902 from Los Angeles to Jay at Charlestown, N.H.*

My Dear Jay,

Some days ago I told you that I wished to make some provision for my sisters as they were getting old and not well fixed with this worlds goods.<sup>2</sup> It will I trust be of help to them, and the balance of my property will be sufficient to make you a good income thro life, and leave a snug sum for your children should you be blessed with them.

Kearney, Nebr. 4/15/02

. . . I am back to the old home . . . room and board both quite acceptable after sleeping in the cars and eating by the wayside—I find everything looking well here, and the people seem quite glad to see me back . . .

Aug. 11/02

. . . I do not know whether I wrote you . . . that I have bought 2½ section farms . . . I bought a half section east of Kearney . . . I paid \$10,000 for it . . . would not sell it today for \$12,000. Land is advancing slowly and I thought so long as I had to stay here to look after what I had I might as well take on more . . .

*Mr. Brink doesn't mention Jay's forthcoming marriage to Harriet Mary Harlow until October 19, 1902. It's likely that he expressed opposition to the marriage until Jay could support a wife. If so the letter was not preserved. On August 6, 1902 "Aunt" Harriet Parks<sup>3</sup> had written "Saturday will soon be here and you can see what your just and kind father says. (I can say just and kind and not curmudgeon as I did last week)—I would send to Guy for that money and order the ring—be sure it is going to look to suit you . . . get what you pay for.*

Oct. 19/02

My Dear Jay,

Your letter announcing the day of your wedding as well as one of similar import from Mrs. Harlow came today—It would be a pleasure to be with you on this, the momentous occasion of your life, but it is necessary that I keep in touch with my work . . . I am repairing buildings on three of my farms, and have corn cribs to build on two more, and they must be got ready soon for the corn . . .

That the marriage ceremony may be a pleasant beginning to a long life of happiness is the wish  
Of your father, C. D. Brink

2. The three sisters were to receive \$1,000 each and \$1,000 was to be paid Jay's cousin, Willis Brink.

3. The woman who raised Jay.

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—: Address Correction Requested :—

*Jay was married on October 28, 1902. The following is the last letter he received from his father*

Kearney, Nov. 24/02

My Dear Children,

How are you this bright Sabbath morning? . . .

I would like to take tea with you this evening to see how dignified you would look. I have been there, and I thought it mighty nice. and so it is, and so it should be . . .

By the way Jay, I was calling on Mrs. Collins<sup>4</sup> and she wished to be remembered to you, and sent too many kind messages for me to remember even half of them . . . We have a supper on Thanksgiving day for the benefit of our Hospital<sup>5</sup> and I have invited Mrs. Collins to go with me we'll make a gay old couple . . .

I have not taken any remedies since my return, and I feel as good as new. Jay, do you know that if people . . . thought **much less** of their ills it would be **very much better** for them. The mind controls matter more than we are aware.

Hoping you will write me often so I may know you are getting on I will wish you much happiness.

Lovingly yours, C. D. Brink

*Mr. Brink died on November 30, 1902 His lawyer, Frank E. Beeman, accompanied his remains to Springfield, VT where he was buried according to his wishes. Early in 1903 Jay and his wife moved to Kearney where he took over C. D.'s affairs. Harriet Parks assumed the role of adviser in her affectionate, often playful letters, written from 1897 to 1904.*

*Jay and his wife went to Brattleboro, NY in 1904, where their first daughter, Mary was born. Later he worked in a box factory in Charlestown, NH and also operated a machine shop.*

*The family returned to Kearney in 1915. They lived for many years at 308 E. 25th. Mrs. Brink died in the flu epidemic of 1918. Jay later married Adelaide Crozier of Bellows Falls, VT. He continued to manage his property until the time of his death on October 28, 1940. Surviving him are his son, Charles P. Brink of Kearney, a daughter Ruth Valentine of Auburn, Washington His daughter, Mary, died in 1963.*

4. Louisa (Mrs. Asbury) Collins.

5. The W.C.T.U. Hospital

### SOURCES

My thanks to Donna Brink Reid of Adelaide, Australia who organized these letters from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Brink. Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Charles P. Brink, August 28, 1986. Pictures are from the Brink collection.