

Letter from John F. Criswell (son of Leroy Vannoy Criswell) to Bettie Criswell Jones (daughter of William Vannoy Criswell)

BAYARD NEW MEXICO (Grant County)

Dec 12th 1917

Dear Cousin Bettie and Calvin: I just read a letter from my sister B.J. Boykin. I had not heard from her in years and have been trying to locate her for a long time. I was so glad to hear from her and to know she was still living and in good health. This (finds) us all well, hope the same to you and Calvin and family.

I have one widowed daughter and little boy Lane. All the rest is married and gone. My wife, Rhilie, died the first day of August 1915 over 2 years ago. I will give you names of my children.

James Harvey living 10 miles from me. Ranching. He has 500 head of Cattle. William Henry, living on the Frisco River 125 miles from me. John Yancy and George Leroy *lives* 50 miles west of Albuquerque, NM. They have between them 600 head of Cattle. Clarence Martin the youngest, 22 years old. Just married. Lives at Fierro 8 miles from me. He works in a Copper Mill, he gets \$5.00 a day.

Now my girls, Anna Lee lives up at Fierro, her husband's name is Byron Paton. Eva Feeney lives in Moranel, Arizona. All the girls *has* one child. Anna Lee's is a girl. Eva Feeney's is a girl 9 years old. Etta who lives at home, one a boy 8 years old and is going to school.

I live 140 miles *north west* of El Paso, west of the Rio *Grand* in 9 miles of the *Grate Continental divid* in the Rocky Mountains in Grant County N.Mex.. I tell you it is some dry out here. Had no rain Since August and not much then. This has been the driest year in 13 years. I raised about 100 bushel corn this year but my fruit was killed by a freeze in May. I have 100 trees in my orchard, Apples, Peaches, plum, pears, Apricots and cherries. I have gathered 1200 pounds of apples off one tree.

I bought a *Patented homested* when I come out here. I have plenty running water. I irrigated a patch of Spuds and raised 1500 pounds of fine *irish* potatoes. They will keep well out here. You never see a rotten *irish* potato out here. I *taken* up 640 acres adjoining me in the additional Stock raising *homested* law passed by Congress about a year ago.

I have about 50 head of Cattle now. Beef Cows *is* from \$55.00 to \$65.00 a head to the local Butcher. This hears sucking Claves sells to the local Butcher for \$35.00 and up. Flour is \$7.00 per 100. Bacon, salt, 40¢. Swifts premium 50¢ a pound. Onions 5¢. 50 pound Lard \$11.50 and beef and pork out of the Butcher Shop 40¢ pound, and every thing else in proportion. Whiskey Sealed quart \$3.00 but New Mexico went State wide prohibition by 16,500 majority. The Whiskey Men have until the first of next Oct. to get *Shut* of all *Spiritous licors*.

Bettie, I will be 72 years old this coming *Xmas* day, born in 1845. I can do a lot of riding if I am 72, and (do) work of all kinds. Now Bettie write me when you receive this western News Sheet. Etta and Little boy is going to Morenel, Ariz. To See Eva and family. She will Start the 22 of December. Go from here to Lordeburg by Auto and then take the Train on the Southern *Pacific*, same road that runs to Flatonia, Tex. And *travail* west toward California. I will be alone until She Comes back. I can pick up some old *Siff* to Stay with me for his *bord* & lodging.

Well Bettie I just don't know for Certain how long it has been Since I was at your house but think it was in 1882. You lived then near the place I first went to School near Mrs. Robinsons. I *Shur* would love to Visit my Old child-hood Scenes of long, long ago.

Bettie, Santa Rita and Hurley *is* working 1200 men at each place. I live right on the RR line that hauls the ore from Santa Rita to Hurley where they have machinery to extract *evry* particle of Copper from the rock.

Grant County is the richest County in N. Mex. By 3 Million dollars. 50 miles to Deming where 40 thousand American Soldiers *is* Camped. About 100 mile to the line of Old Mexico. South Grant County *Joines* Old Mexico. Silver City is the County Seat.

It gets pretty cold Out here at times. I *Seen* the *thermometer* 15 below Zero 4 years ago in Jan.. So I will close for this time as I don't know if a man has to have (a) license to publish a paper or not.

J.F. Criswell (printed in very large letters)

(Note by SHD: John F. did not mention his oldest child, Oliver (Ollie) b. 1870 who (*end of note*))

Retyped by P Hunka on 12/22/15. I tried to type it just as it was typed by SHD (not sure who that is) so that it would be more legible. I kept the capitalization and spelling as best I could. The grammar and spelling error I caught are in italics.