



Dr. J.R. Brinkley

John R. Brinkley, depending on whom you ask, was either a charlatan or a media-savvy businessman. Brinkley earned a great deal of money by running a health clinic in Milford, Kansas, that offered a strange and controversial operation for men. He supplemented his income by selling “patent medicines.” He was a pioneer of radio broadcasting in Kansas, founding and running the state’s first radio station, KFKB. He used the airwaves to advertise his medical procedures and remedies. This led to the suspension of his medical license, and ultimately his broadcasting license. Brinkley and his radio broadcasts were extremely popular, and he ran for Governor of Kansas three times. His involvement in these elections changed the course of Kansas history. Eventually, Brinkley’s operations were shut down and he declared bankruptcy. His rags-to-riches-to-rags story is one of the oddest footnotes in state history, but is also one of the most compelling.



William S. Worley portrays Dr. J.R. Brinkley in the 2007 *Famous Kansans Chautauqua*. Worley is an Adjunct Professor of History at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and a Historical Consultant for Midwestern non-profits. In addition to Brinkley, Worley has portrayed Fred Harvey, Harry Truman, and Kansas public health pioneer Dr. Samuel Crumbine, among others. Worley looks forward to this summer’s Chautauqua saying, “I’m always delighted to portray one of Kansas’ most colorful characters, Dr. John R. Brinkley, for the 2007 Kansas Chautauqua. As a Kansas-educated Chautauquan, it’s always great fun to ‘come home to Kansas.’”

