

# Letters from the “Old Man”

Edited by Trail End State Historic Site Superintendent Cynde Georgen; from *Trail End Notes*, March 2008

*Despite his frequent absences from home (or perhaps because of them) John Kendrick was a devoted father, a sentimental “old man” who missed his “babies” and his wife whenever he was away. It is easy to see through his writings that he deeply resented the time that his business took away from his home and family.*

*The first letter was written shortly after Rosa-Maye’s birth in 1897; the last during his unsuccessful campaign for the U.S. Senate in 1912. The original letters are in the Manville Kendrick Collection, housed at the Trail End State Historic Site.*



John B. Kendrick with Manville and Rosa-Maye, 1900 (Hoff Collection, TESHs)

**25 August 1897, No Location Noted** - I shall reach home as planned on Saturday with two sweethearts instead of one.

**1 January 1898, No Location Noted** - If I only had you and our sweet babe with me, I know that I should be down right happy. ... The consummation of our plans and the Heavenly gift of “Dad’s Daughter” marks the year 1897 as distinctly “our year.”

**4 July 1899, Kansas City MO** - I have thought of you and the baby a whole lot more than I have thought of buying cattle since I left and if I don’t find something soon am going back without buying. It is hard for me to leave home now, but when we have another Baby or two at our house you will have me at home for good.

**24 May 1900, Silver City NM** - I miss you and our little “chick” more and more every day and never see a sweet woman or babe without being reminded of my wife and daughter.

**27 July 1900, OW Ranch** - I hope you and the “baby boy” are both coming along nicely and that I shall see you soon.

**9 August 1900, OW Ranch** - Rosa-Maye gave me such a gracious welcome: She was so glad to see me, bless her; I love her better than my own soul.

**10 October 1901, Omaha NE** - I had your message yesterday telling me how well our Darling Boy is doing – tell him for me that his daddy don't love him a bit.

**17 October 1901, Sheridan WY** - Rosa-Maye ... was much more affectionate with her dad than ever before in her life. She has taken a great notion of calling me Daddy.

**22 May 1904, Amarillo TX** - As our train literally flew along at the foot of the Rockies last night there came into my mental vision a picture not of the vast stretches of green valley and mountain side but of a Little Mother and Two Sweet Babes in a far away home. The mother reading to the babes and when I thought of what a happy house it was and how much the father and husband of this house gained in renewed courage from this house and how much clearer his vision became during the restful times spent there and finally when it occurred to me how very much both the mother and father of this house owed to the Giver of all Good, my eyes grew strangely blurred and dim.

**17 February 1911, No Location Noted** - For the past week the conviction has kept coming back that my present way of living makes orphans of my two children in every way except the name and it makes me feel blue and discouraged.

**29 August 1912, Casper WY** - From the day I left home until now I have felt like a man who has deserted his family and became a fugitive from justice. ... With love to you and the two orphans.



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