

Looking Back: Sheridan Life in 1913

By Trail End State Historic Site Curator Sharie Mooney Prout; from *Trail End Notes*, July 2013

In July 1913, the Kendrick family was just getting ready to move into their brand new Sheridan home. We know a little about what they were doing that month, but what about the rest of Sheridan?



Sheridan Main Street, c1913 (Brock Collection, SCFPL)

First, let's take a glimpse into the Kendrick family's activities via Rosa-Maye's diary. In it, she said that she started her "summer vacation" at the OW Ranch with her family on July 2nd. That month was full of baseball games, dances at different ranches, and horseback riding for her, and the celebration of Manville's thirteenth birthday on July 20th. She also recorded that the family left the ranch on July 25th, to head for Sheridan and Trail End. We know that the family was moved into Trail End by July 28th, which also happened to be Rosa-Maye's sixteenth birthday. That night they had a party in the ballroom, which was described in the next day's Society section of *The Sheridan Post*:

Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Kendrick entertained at a delightful dancing party in honor of Miss Rosa Maye Kendrick's sixteenth birthday anniversary. The beautiful new home on the hill was ablaze with myriads of lights while sweet peas in profusion placed artistically around the room wafted a sweet perfume. The spacious ballroom was an enchanting scene with the soft hued lights and opalescent costumes of the ladies. Forty guests enjoyed the rhythmic music, furnished by Miss Johnson and Mr. Becker, until a late hour and departing wished Rosa Maye many happy returns of the natal day.

In her diary, Rosa-Maye herself recalled, "My party was beautiful. Met a great many interesting people."

The Sheridan newspapers also help fill us in on what was happening with other folks in town at the time. Earlier that year, a new cave near Story had been discovered by two boys. Since they didn't have any lights with them, they didn't go past the entrance, but told people of what they'd found. In July, five men and women decided that they would form a party and go explore the cave. They estimated that they made it back about 1,000 feet before having to turn around and come back out.

In April 1913, a new law regarding car license plates went into effect, but by July 1913, many people in Sheridan were not following it. County Attorney Diefenderfer told *The Sheridan Post* that one month's notice was being given to automobile owners to comply with the new law, which stated that all automobiles must have their own individual tags, and the tags must be placed on both the front and the back of the vehicle. There could be no sharing of auto tags: "each car must have a tag with a number of its own." This law also stated that the minimum age for driving was fifteen, and that no one under fifteen, or anyone who was intoxicated, would be allowed to operate a motor vehicle in the State of Wyoming.

The Big Horn forest reserve saw many developments and improvements during this time. In his July end-of-fiscal year report, Forest Superintendent E. N. Kavanagh stated that there were now 201 miles of wagon road, 357 miles of trails, 149 miles of telephone lines and thirteen bridges within the forest. Also, nearly all of the ranger stations had houses, barns, corrals and fences. Kavanagh went on to state,

A much more general use of the forest by the people living adjacent to it is being brought about each year. This will undoubtedly continue as a result of the betterment of transportation facilities and increased familiarity with vacation possibilities.

He also said that there had been an increase in the number of summer residences in the forest. We know the Kendrick family had one of those summer residences, as they owned property and a cabin at Dome Lake. They traversed many of those miles of mountain roadway to get there!

Although many, many things have changed over the last one hundred years, it is interesting to see some of the things that paved the way for what we have now. People still enjoy exploring area caves, and our Big Horn National Forest is still heavily used. Vehicles in Wyoming are still required to have plates on both the front and the back, and you still cannot learn to drive until you are fifteen years old. And of course Trail End is still here!



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