

Trail End Historic Site

In this unit, students will read about the basic history of Trail End, its connection to early Twentieth Century Sheridan, its preservation, and its current usage. Specifically:

- How Trail End got its name
- Who lived in Trail End and when
- What Sheridan was like in 1913
- Who owned Trail End after the family moved out
- The definition of a historic house
- The difference between a museum and a historic house museum
- The concept of historic preservation
- The concept of historical context

Standards & Benchmarks

NOTE: These are the primary standards and benchmarks addressed in the readings, activities and exercises. Additional areas may be addressed in the related stories and quizzes. Visit the Standards Link for more information.

SS4.1.1	LA3.1.1	LA4.1.1
SS4.5.4	LA3.1.3	LA4.1.3

Focus Words [Vocabulary]

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|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| • Architect | • Historic House | • Museum |
| • Context | • Mansion | • Preservation |

Related Components

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| • Reading: Trail End Historic Site | • Activity: Trail End Search-A-Word |
| • Class Project: Museum Stories | • Quiz: Unit One |
| • Exercise: Historic House Exhibits | |

Related Photographs

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|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| • OW Ranch (1916) | • John Benjamin Kendrick (1916) |
| • Trail End (1913) | • Eula Wulfjen Kendrick (1916) |
| • Sheridan (1913) | |

Discussion Questions

- What can buildings like Trail End teach us? What can the things inside these buildings teach us?
- Why is it important to see items in **context** (where they were used) rather than in a display case?
- What makes a house historic? Can the house of a normal, everyday family become a **historic house** museum? Could *your* house be a historic house **museum**? What would its story be?
- Do you think it is important to save buildings like Trail End? Why or why not?
- What are some other buildings in Sheridan County that you would like to see saved as museums? Do you know of any buildings that should have been **preserved** but weren't?
- Giving a **mansion** a name is a very old custom. Do you know of any other homes that have names? What would you name your house? Why?

TRAIL END HISTORIC SITE

Trail End is a *historic house* museum. This means that it is a house that uses furniture and other items – including the house itself – to tell the story of a specific time, place or family. At Trail End, we try to show what life was like in Sheridan between 1913 and 1933, especially for members of the Kendrick family.

For eighteen years, from 1891 to 1909, John and Eula Kendrick lived on a ranch in Montana. In 1908, they decided to move to Sheridan. But first they needed to build a house. Not just any house, but one that fit their idea of what a cattle baron would have. The result was Trail End.

Trail End was designed by Glenn Charles McAlister, an *architect* from Billings, Montana (he also designed the Sheridan County Courthouse). McAlister worked with John and Eula Kendrick to give them the type of house they wanted: large, solid and imposing. D. Everett Waid, another architect from New York, helped Mrs. Kendrick decorate the inside of the house. Together, they made it a formal yet comfortable place to live.

At the time the Kendricks moved to Sheridan, the town was undergoing great changes. Many people were moving to the area to work in the underground coal mines in Monarch, Acme and Dietz. Downtown Sheridan was growing at a rapid pace. Old wooden buildings were being replaced by brick structures. By 1913, a trolley system was rolling down the street and the sight of automobiles was no longer unusual. It was the perfect place for a successful man to build a home.

From the beginning, the home was known as "Trail End." John had worked hard for many years and he thought this new home would be a good place to retire – the end of his trail. This was not what happened. Instead, he became even busier! In 1914, John was elected Governor of Wyoming. Two years later he was elected to serve in the United States Senate.

While John was serving as Governor in Cheyenne and later as a Senator in Washington, D.C., he and his family had to leave Trail End. The *mansion* they'd worked so hard to build became their "summer home," a place to spend vacations and holidays. A live-in caretaker made sure the house was kept clean and repaired while they were gone.

After Senator Kendrick died in 1933, Eula moved back to Trail End along with her son and his family. After she died in 1961, the last of the family moved out of the house. It stood empty for the next seven years. The family tried to sell it, but even though some people were interested, no one could afford to buy the house and live in it. It was just too expensive.

In 1968, the Kendrick children, Manville and Rosa-Maye, decided to tear the house down and sell the land. An auction was held and much of the furniture was sold. It looked like the end of the trail for Trail End!

At the last minute, the Sheridan County Historical Society bought the house and turned it into a *museum*. They brought in display cabinets and filled them with items from Sheridan's past. The volunteer members of the Historical Society worked very hard to save Trail End and keep it open to the public, but it was very difficult and very expensive. By the end of the 1970s, it was clear that if Trail End was going to be saved for the future, the Historical Society needed to have someone else take over the house.

In 1982, they gave Trail End to the State of Wyoming. Since then, it has been open to the public as a historic house museum. It is operated by Wyoming State Parks & Historic Sites. This agency is dedicated to the *preservation* of historic properties all over Wyoming, saving them for future generations.

Much of the original furniture and personal items have been returned and are now on display throughout the house. This means that the items inside the house now were actually used by the Kendrick family or the people who worked for them – from the checkers in the Drawing Room to the drapes in the Ballroom. This is important because it allows visitors to see the items in *context* – in the places where they were used. This helps give the objects meaning.

A historic house museum like Trail End is different from other types of museums because the building itself is part of the exhibit. The less a building has changed over the years, the more we can understand both it and the time during which it was built and lived in. Visitors to Trail End are lucky because this house has undergone very few changes.

Visitors to Trail End can study the materials used to build the house and the technology inside. They can learn about the family. They can also learn about events that happened while the Kendricks owned Trail End, such as World War One and the Jazz Age.