

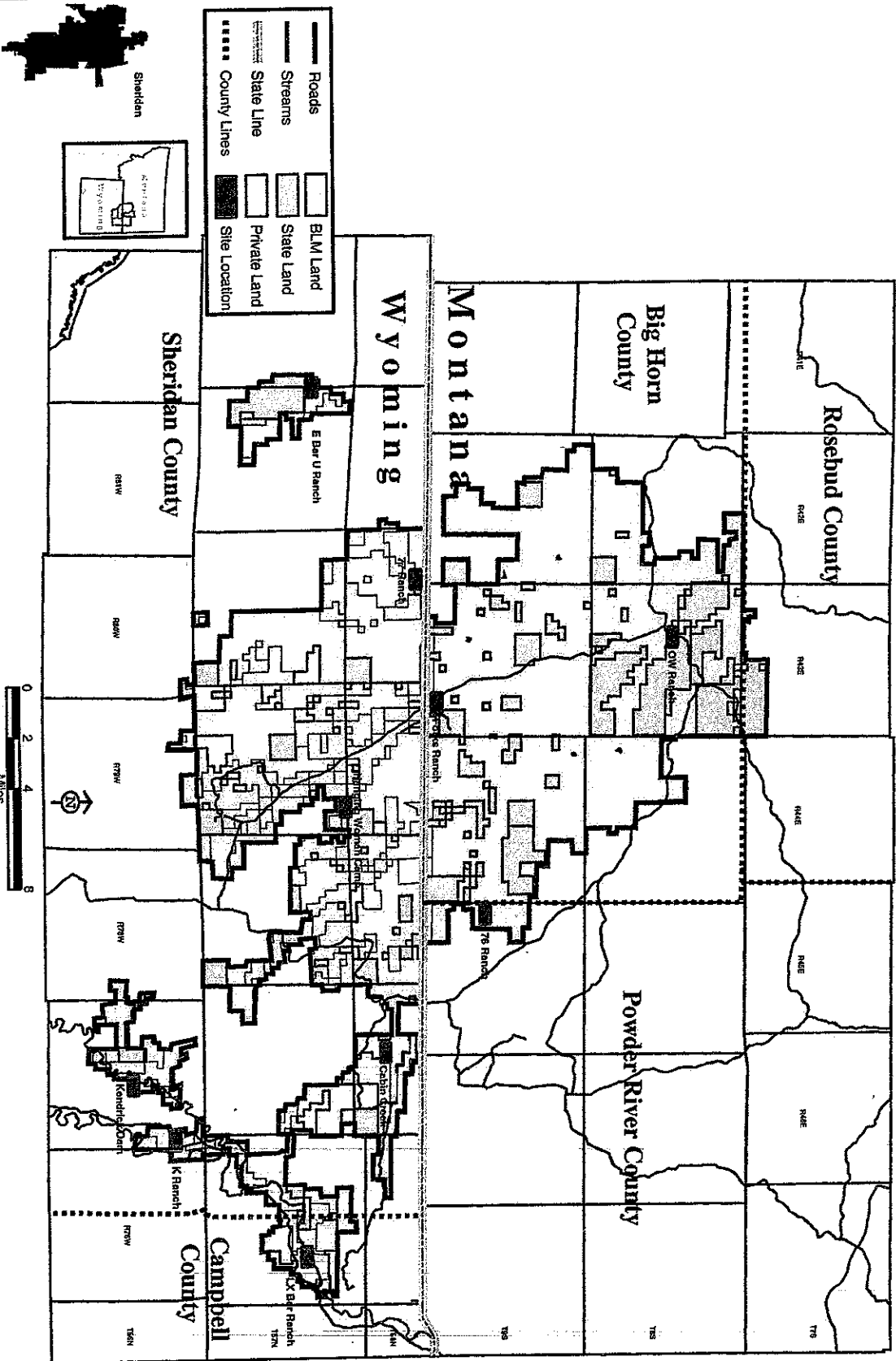
The Kendrick Ranch as Historic Context: Attention Coal Bed Methane Surveyors!

Poster Paper
62nd Plains Anthropological Conference
Billings, Montana
October 14-16th, 2004

B.J. Earle, Archaeologist
Buffalo Field Office, Wyoming
Bureau of Land Management

Copies of this paper and a version of the accompanying map can be obtained by contacting B.J. Earle, Buffalo Field Office, 1425 Fort Street, Buffalo, Wyoming 82834
307-684-1100
BJ_Earle@blm.gov

THE KENDRICK RANCH AS HISTORIC CONTEXT: ATTENTION COAL BED METHANE SURVEYORS!



The Kendrick Ranch as Historic Context: Attention Coal Bed Methane Surveyors!

With coal bed methane exploration in the Powder River Basin proceeding apace, new areas are being explored and inventoried for historic and prehistoric resources. Many sites remain to be identified, recorded and evaluated. We would like to call to your attention the former John B. Kendrick Ranch, the Kendrick Cattle Company, located in Montana and Wyoming. The ranch comprised some 210,000 acres, included several headquarters facilities with distinctive architectural styles, and an integrated management plan. While several of the individual structural complexes have been recorded or partially recorded and given site numbers, other areas remain to be inventoried. The former ranch provides a context or landscape in which to consider its constituent parts.

Information for the map accompanying this paper was derived from the former BLM grazing file map, closed out when the ranch was sold in 1989, and from similar maps on file at Trail End Historic site, showing the various ranch headquarters. The Kendrick Cattle Company owned extensive private lands, and leased state and federal lands in both Montana and Wyoming.

History

John Benjamin Kendrick came to Wyoming in 1879 with a herd of Texas cattle. In 1883, he returned to Texas to purchase his own stock, going into partnership with Charles L. Wulfjen as the Converse Cattle Company, named for another partner. They acquired the OW brand, and in 1887 or 1889, moved their operation from Lance Creek to the Hanging Woman area in Montana. Due to a fortuitous sale, Kendrick disposed of many of his own animals before the deadly winter of 1886-87. As a result of the bad winter, the company went into receivership, with Kendrick as foreman or superintendent. In 1894, Kendrick restocked the range with his own cattle, and in 1897, he purchased the ranch on Hanging Woman Creek outright.

In 1902, he acquired land on Powder River which eventually became the LX (LX Bar) Ranch. Additional purchases along the river were made from 1909-1922, which became part of the K Ranch. Kendrick's goal was to have a better balanced operation, with reliable irrigated pastures to provide hay and forage, complementing his earlier prairie grazing lands. Both the Powder River bottoms and the "Ceded Strip" in Montana were intended to provide hay and range. Kendrick never filed his own homestead claim so far as is known, but pursued a policy of acquiring additional land parcels through purchase. His name appears on a surprising number of homestead entries and cash purchases as a partner in both Montana and Wyoming, with the Wyoming dates ranging from 1908-1916, and the Montana dates slightly later. The OW Ranch in Montana served as the "home ranch", or heart of the operation beginning in 1891, when Kendrick brought his

bride, Eula Wulfjen, to Montana. Construction was started on the mansion in Sheridan known as "Trail End" in 1908 and completed in 1913.

The Kendrick Ranch was organized into several smaller entities with individual names and facilities. Several of these have been recorded as historic sites and given site numbers, while some remain unrecorded. The OW Ranch (24 BH 2571) and Trail End (48 SH 122) are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The LX Bar, K, and E Bar U were considerable complexes, while the Forks, Cabin Creek, 76 and 77 sites were smaller facilities, and Hanging Woman was considered a line camp. Another large entity, called the "Ceded Strip", was located near Hardin, Montana.

The units include:

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| The OW Ranch | 24 BH 2571 | T8S,R43E, S. 16 | (Listed on NRHP) |
| Trail End State Historic Place | 48 SH 122 | Sheridan, Wyoming | (Listed on NRHP) |
| E-U (E Bar U) Ranch | 48 SH 508 | T57N,R81W, S. 7 | Eligibility unknown |
| Cabin Creek | 48 SH 225 | T58N,R77W, S. 28 | Eligibility unknown |
| Hanging Woman (line camp?) | No site number | T58N,R79W, S. 36 | Unevaluated |
| <u>LX</u> Ranch unknown | 48 CA 274 | T57N,R76W, S. 10, 11, 14, 15 | Eligibility unknown |
| K Ranch | 48 SH 525 | T56N,R77W, S. 1 | Eligibility unknown |
| Forks Ranch | No site number | T10S,R43E, S.2 | Unevaluated |
| 76 Ranch/camp | No site number | T9S,R45E, S. 30 | Unevaluated |
| 77 Ranch/camp | No site number | T58N,R80W, S. 20 & 21 | Unevaluated |
| "Ceded Strip" | No site number | Unknown | Eligibility unknown |

Based on Kendrick family photographs maintained at Trail End, and published in recent books (Georgen 1995, 2004; King 1992), construction at the OW had taken on a unique "Kendrick style", as soon as the first Kendrick-owned buildings were put up. This included linear log house structures, as well as related styles of barns and sheds. The initial round log construction at the OW was soon supplemented by sawn log construction with cement chinking. Roof angles were relatively low and symmetrical. At the OW, a stone masonry spring house cut into the bluff behind the site was a major feature. According to King (page 17), the stone-lined outhouse at the ranch was 100 feet deep. At most Kendrick sites, the barns have been given particular attention.

Construction at the LX started in 1910 or 1911, while work was still being carried forward on Trail End. The masonry was contracted to Oscar Husman, of Sheridan, and his family. In addition to a rambling main house, a smaller house or office was built, plus a dairy, the first solar-powered chicken house in Wyoming, and a two story stock barn with attached sheds and shelters. The main focus of this ranch was stock tending, and the site still has a cement dipping vat. The barns were intended to house stock in a carved stone setting; the inside wall of the first box stall has finely curved walls instead of squared corners. Kendrick apparently understood that the county road along Powder River would follow the west bank where the LX was located. When the county chose to construct the road on the east bank; along which the rural electric and telephone lines were routed, Kendrick appears to have lost interest in the LX Ranch, as it was never converted to electricity.

The Powder River bottoms further south of the LX were acquired to provide better irrigated pasture for wintering the stock. These lands on the west side of the river, but adjacent to the county road, became the K Ranch. The Husmans constructed the main ranch house and barns in 1923 and 24. The architecture differs from the LX, in that it consists more of random sandstone veneer, while the LX is distinguished by coursed cut sandstone. The stone on the barns and sheds at the LX is a coursed veneer of sandstone with rubble interior. The general appearance of the K buildings corresponds with the other main Kendrick residences in having a rambling main house with several auxiliary structures, and well-built barns. The hallmarks of the K are the stone columns at the entrance from the county road, and the pivot irrigation system in the meadows beyond the ranch house.

Photographs of the Forks, the E-U and the 77 show log or wood construction of the same general vernacular character as the other ranches, though the Forks may preserve some of the pre-Kendrick structures. Notes from family diaries indicate that the Kendrick operation wasted nothing, and buildings were frequently moved and recycled as needed.

Social role of the Kendrick Cattle Company

The Kendrick Cattle Company was successful, because, in addition to planning for its own best interests, the company encouraged surrounding neighbors and settlers. In addition to providing jobs for Kendrick employees, the ranch employed people who were homesteading in the area, rather than being in competition with them. The spirit of cooperation is evident in several auxiliary facilities beneficial to ranchers and settlers, the Clear Creek dam, located just above the confluence of the Clear Fork with main-stem Powder River, and Kendrick Siding, located on the Burlington railroad between Arvada and Leiter.

Kendrick Dam is a private facility, has no site number, and is located in T56N,R77W, Sec. 15. Its purpose is to divert water into a ditch system intended for irrigation. In addition to the associated canal, there is occasional mention of a Kendrick flume dating to 1914. South of the LX, several earthworks can be seen in the bottoms; these may have been intended as water spreaders or a type of irrigation system.

The Kendrick Siding is located in T55N,R77W, Sec. 24, constructed after 1892 on the Burlington line. It once comprised a system of corrals, watering facility, and station house. The facility was sited here to reduce congestion in Arvada, and to eliminate a dangerous river crossing (WOT:49-50). The pens were torn down in 1976, and the building was removed some time after. The area contains extensive trash dumps and foundations at the present time. The siding is no longer named or signed.

A belt of public lands along the west side of Powder River stretches from Arvada, Wyoming, north to the Custer National Forest in Montana. While the lands are not a well-known designated stock driveway, and are in fact, too rough to trail animals along a linear route, the withdrawal of this belt preserved public access in the face of accelerated homesteading and foreclosure.

With the exception of the northern end of the west bank Powder River road in Wyoming, most of the roads and trails have developed as the current road system. However, the route along Hanging Woman Creek above the OW never became a public thoroughfare because it was enclosed completely by the Kendrick Ranch.

As a large landowner, Kendrick was a member of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, and probably sympathized with the problems of rustlers and administration. Nevertheless, he is remembered for his policies of encouraging settlement in the surrounding lands, and for buying up even small parcels of land at fair prices if they suited his operation. Kendrick was elected president of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association in 1912, serving until 1913. In 1910, he had been elected to the Wyoming senate, and ran for the US senate in 1913, but lost. He was elected Governor of Wyoming in 1914, and in 1916 was elected to the US senate by popular vote. He served until 1933, and had decided not to seek re-election for another term when he died in Sheridan of a cerebral hemorrhage.

Conclusion

Trail End was acquired by the Sheridan Historical Society after the death of Mrs. Kendrick in 1961. In 1982, the Society turned the mansion over to Wyoming State Archives, Museums and Historical Department, who now operate it as a State Historic Site. The Kendrick Cattle Company was dispersed through sale of all parts of the ranch in December of 1988 and January of 1989. The OW, E-U and K Ranches were acquired by owners who have maintained and restored the historic structures; the LX has not fared so well and is in need of stabilization if it is to be preserved.

With coal bed methane exploration and development planned for both the Wyoming and Montana sides of the Powder River Basin, wells, pipelines, power lines and new roads can be expected, in addition to new dams and condenser stations. No previous summary looked at the landscape as it was before development, and development is changing the area at the present time. The Kendrick management was progressive and environmental for its time, and also conservative in the values expressed: buildings were moved and re-

used, and the Kendrick operation seems to have used the same round-up wagon from 1903 until 1950, changing the iron wheels for rubber tires.

While the individual Kendrick ranches serve as focal points, it is reasonable to expect that the "Kendrick style" extended to smaller constructs, possibly spring developments or windmills, corrals, or gates and fences. Surveyors at work in this area should be alert to the potential for unique features attributable to the Kendrick operation.

The extensive lands once part of the Kendrick Cattle Company suggest the potential for a historic landscape, and we concur with this impression. However, we do not feel that it is appropriate to approach the former ranch boundary as a National Register entity or a candidate for a National Historic Landscape. National Register candidacy has been accepted for the OW and Trail End; the other ranch complexes remain to be evaluated. The Kendrick Ranch served its time, and current and future events are now making themselves felt. We think history will be best served if researchers and surveyors working in this area are aware of the extent of the former ranch, and work to identify the features which made it up. The Kendrick Ranch should be taken as a historic context, an addition to other contexts which are present in the region.

The opinions in this paper are the personal expression of the writer, and do not reflect any policy or direction of a federal agency. I would like to thank the staff at Trail End Historic Site for permission to photograph modern materials, and for invigorating discussion. Particular thanks go to Paul Christian, BLM GIS Specialist, for extensive help with the poster.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arvada Historical Group
1984 Wheel of Time: 1800's – 1984. State Publishing Company, Pierre, South Dakota. Copyright Arvada Historical Group, Arvada, Wyoming.

Burroughs, John Rolfe
1971 Guardian of the Grasslands: The First Hundred Years of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. Pioneer Printing & Stationery Co., Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Georgen, Cynde A.
1995, 2004 One Cowboy's Dream: John B. Kendrick, His Family, Home & Ranching Empire. Walsworth Publishing Company, copyright, Trail End Guilds, Inc., Sheridan, Wyoming.

King, Bucky
1992 The Empire Builders: The Development of Kendrick Cattle Company. King Brothers Ranch, 3102 Highway 87, Sheridan, Wyoming.

n.d. Map, Kendrick Cattle Company grazing file (closed 1989). Records sent to National Archives repository, map on file, Buffalo Field Office, Bureau of Land
