

TRI-STATE EXCURSION



MONTANA - SOUTH DAKOTA - WYOMING



The final destination today is the fabulous Sheridan Inn. The hotel opened in 1893 with 64 guest rooms, split between second and third floors with a single bathroom per floor, to accommodate passengers on the Burlington & Missouri Railroad. The nearby train station also served the W. F. Cody Transportation Company, offering stagecoach connection with Deadwood, South Dakota. During its prime, the Inn was viewed by many travelers as the finest lodging available between Chicago and San Francisco.

Soon after the Sheridan Inn opened, legendary William “Buffalo Bill” Cody leased the building’s interior and took up residence for the next several years. He would routinely hold auditions on the sizable front grounds for his “Wild West” variety show, assessing talent as he reclined on the big front porch in one of the green rocking chairs currently displayed in the lobby.

For three decades starting in 1883, “Buffalo Bill’s Wild West” charmed countless audiences, overseas as well as in the United States, with romanticized productions of the epic American West. Spectators were treated to a rollicking cavalcade of acts including buffalo stampedes, stagecoach holdups, sharpshooting displays, bronco riding, roping exhibitions, and horse races. The shows typically finished with a historical melodrama such as Custer’s “Last Stand,” with Cody himself portraying the ill-fated commander of the Seventh Cavalry.

The Sheridan Inn’s original bar is still in use today. Supposedly, the third stool from the left was Cody’s favorite perch. Many notables, including President Herbert Hoover, have stayed at the hotel over the years. In 1964, the Inn was classified as a National Historic Landmark. Several rooms have recently been renovated to provide throwback overnight accommodations.

While touring the Inn, students are advised to keep eyes wide open and ears perked for a glimpse of the ghost who haunts the premises. In 1901, 22-year-old Catherine Arnold arrived by train at Sheridan from Virginia. For the next 64 years, the Sheridan Inn was both residence and workplace for “Miss Kate” who was the hotel’s desk clerk, hostess, housekeeper, seamstress, and babysitter. When she passed away in 1968, her remains were cremated with ashes, according to story, sealed in the wall of the room she had occupied on the Inn’s third floor for so many years. Numerous eye-witness accounts seem to verify that Miss Kate’s presence still watches over the day-to-day operation of the Sheridan Inn!

Following the Sheridan Inn, delicious food awaits at Sanford’s Grub & Pub located in the former Helvey Hotel and Cady Opera House on Main Street. Then it’s back to the Holiday Inn where a healthy chunk of study time is available for those who desire it. Before retiring for the night, students should organize all personal gear and tidy their rooms in order to expedite the check-out process tomorrow morning.

