

WHAT IS THE OLD KENTUCKY HOME?

Can you imagine what it would be like to grow up in a house full of strangers? That's exactly how Thomas Wolfe spent most of his childhood. In 1906, when Tom was almost six years old, his mother bought a boardinghouse called the "Old Kentucky Home." A boardinghouse was like a hotel. For about \$1.00 a day Mrs. Wolfe gave the boarders two meals and a place to sleep. There are twenty-nine rooms in the Old Kentucky Home. In the summertime, Mrs. Wolfe could rent to as many as forty people.

Many people came to Asheville in the early 1900s to enjoy the cool mountain air. It was less expensive to stay in a boardinghouse than a big hotel. Because so many people were visiting Asheville, there were over one hundred boardinghouses in the city. Other people came to Asheville for their health. The mountain air was thought to be good for your lungs.

Thomas Wolfe was the only one of the eight Wolfe children to live in the boardinghouse with his mother. He said he never had his own bedroom in the house and he never knew where he would sleep each night. His siblings lived two blocks away with their father in the house where Tom was born. Tom felt that the boarders received more of his mother's attention than he did. He did not like to help with chores around the house.

When he grew up Thomas Wolfe's wrote about his childhood in Asheville in his first book *Look Homeward, Angel*. The book made him a famous author and the house soon became a popular place to visit to learn about the book. His mother lived in the Old Kentucky Home until her death in 1945. Four years after Mrs. Wolfe died, the boardinghouse was opened to the public as a museum named the Thomas Wolfe Memorial. Today it displays the same family furniture in the house when Tom was growing up.

MULTIPLE CHOICE – WHAT IS THE OLD KENTUCKY HOME?

Circle the best answer to the following questions.

1. Thomas Wolfe was almost _____ years old when his mother bought a boardinghouse.
A. 10
B. 6
C. 16
D. 29
2. Mrs. Wolfe's boardinghouse was called the _____.
A. Altamont
B. Land of the Sky
C. Old Kentucky Home
D. Grove Park Inn
3. Mrs. Wolfe charged about _____ per day for three meals and a place to sleep.
A. \$1.00
B. \$10.00
C. \$3.50
D. \$0.25
4. Many visitors were coming to Asheville in the early 1900s for the _____.
A. cheap land
B. mountain air
C. Biltmore Estate
D. gold
5. Mrs. Wolfe was _____ years old when she died in 1945.
A. 85
B. 50
C. 100
D. 70
6. Thomas Wolfe described many of the rooms in the boardinghouse in his novel _____.
A. *The Old Kentucky Home*
B. *The Land of the Sky*
C. *Look Homeward, Angel*
D. *Of Time and the River*
7. Today the boardinghouse is preserved as a State Historic Site called the _____.
A. Thomas Wolfe Memorial
B. Vance Birthplace
C. Old Kentucky Home
D. Wolfe Monument