

Kendrick Farm Journals (1922, 1925-1930) of Andrew Kendrick

Analyzed by Tim Earle with contributions from Scott Ridley (June-December, 2020)

On gracious loan from Sue Bartick, whose father Ralph Allen was nephew of Victoria Allen Kendrick, I analyzed daily activities recorded by Andrew Kendrick for seven years (1922, 1925-1930). Most every day, Kendrick recorded in pencil the weather and major activities, typically in two sentences. These small daybooks contained four days per-page, written in pencil, easy to read and without erasures. The pocket-sized diaries were printed with standard information in several pages at the beginning, including an annual calendar of sunrise and sunset and the phases of the moon. At the book's back were forms for organized accounts, notes and addresses. Activities recorded were apparently tasks undertaken done by him, and no mentions were made of help or cooperation with others. I assume that some routine activities (those conducted on most days) were taken for granted and so not recorded; rather these records represent the dominant and distinctive actions for each day. The daybooks paint a picture of farm life in the 1920s on Cape Cod, as the region entered into the world of today.

It would be easy for someone to glance at the daybooks and see only quaint, arcane, or meaningless details, but the aggregated information and notes capture well everyday life during a time of rapid social and economic change. The significance of the brief entries still needs to be considered alongside the farm's records of spending and income. Additional poignant details that punctuate the routines of everyday life include the construction of electric power lines, putting down the farm's horse, purchasing a car, selling the 'Democrat carriage' and wagon, visiting neighbors (including Elmer Crowell, a famous East Harwich wood decoy carver), and planning to sell house lots.

The son of Edward Kendrick (1825-1897) and Elizabeth Doane (1829-1903), Andrew Kendrick (1859-1931) lived his whole life on the Kendrick farm in East Harwich. He was the last full-time farmer on the Kendrick lands, and his daily accounts are vivid descriptions of his diverse work activities, local travels, and civic engagement. Most regrettably, no similar diaries are available for his wife or other family members. Following his death in 1931, the farm was inherited by his wife, Victoria Allen Kendrick (1876-1944), and at her death it passed to their son Edward Kendrick (1910-1953). Edward also lived his entire life on the farm, except for a period of service in the Army during World War II. As a youth, he was a caddy (along with his cousin, Ralph Allen) at the nearby Eastward Ho golf course. Edward also worked with his father while growing up, as shown in occasional records of his hours and wages. He did shell-fishing and probably other jobs as well. Returning after the war and his mother's death, Edward, who lived alone, except for summers when relatives came to stay, had a primary income apparently from investments (stocks that Andrew had inherited—AT&T and Providence Gas with total dividends of approximately \$200/year) and income from cranberry bogs. After Edward's death, the land and house passed to his cousin, Ralph Allen, who was Sue Bartick's father. The Allen family used the farm regularly for summer vacations.

From the short descriptions in the daybooks, I recorded Andrew's daily tasks specific to six categories: farming, hens, cranberries, wood-cutting, trips, and miscellaneous. The analysis depended on an initial classification of tasks by first reading two of the daybooks through

completely, then listing tasks and creating the categories. For miscellaneous activities, a brief notation was made of specifics, such as whist game, town meeting, rubbish hauling, or visits to the blacksmith. The classification is recorded as to the number of times tasks in each category were noted for each month. Multiple tasks on a single day might fall into different categories; multiple tasks in a single category are recorded only once per day; for example, hoeing and weeding on one day were classified as a single farming event.

Analysis of the activity categories suggests each activity's relative importance in terms of everyday life. To guide future farm work, Andrew used the notebooks to track the dates that crops were sown, the date of first weeding, and the date of harvest. Chickens were part of an taken-for-granted daily routine and not tracked closely, except for dates of sales preparation and delivery—when he wrote—“went to Dennis,” he knows who he delivered to—and the corresponding income from the sale was noted for that date in the back of the book. he paid close attention to details, as shown by his careful accounting. Every item was tracked, from purchase of a car to spending ten cents a month on candy. As a sample year, 1926 showed family expenses of \$1,761.

Farming was evidently the Andrew's dominant activities, mentioned a total of 903 times in seven years (average annually, 129; range, 104-156). He prepared fields, planted, weeded, trimmed tree, harvested, and sorted and stored crops. Second in frequency were tasks related to the hens, mentioned 601 times (average annually, 85.9; range, 64-107). As eggs were important commodities for sale, he spent a lot of time maintaining the hen houses. Third in frequency was work related to cranberries, mentioned 540 times (average annually, 77.1; range, 60-105). Cranberries were highly seasonal and commercially important. Fourth was wood-cutting, mentioned 513 times (average annually, 73.3; range, 28-97). I think that much of the wood was used for heating and perhaps cooking, although some firewood and cedar posts were sold. For this largely self-sufficient farm, its produce was for its family and animals.

The sales of farm products were essential for cash that could be used to pay taxes, purchase tools, fuel, supplies, some food, and services including blacksmithing and entertainment, such as occasional visits to the “moving pictures” in Chatham. His printed receipt slips (to record sales) advertised chickens and eggs as the farm's specialty. The daily expense-revenue records in the back of each daybook (totaling \$1,689 in 1926, 96% of that year's family expenses) show that sales of chickens and eggs brought in the most income. Following hen-related income were cranberries, then wood, as well as more minor income from sales of fruits and vegetables. Overall, daily life on the farm was busy, producing for family self-reliance as well as cash income.

Farming. The primary tasks performed by Andrew involved cultivating a wide range of crops, many apparently for household consumption and at least some for sale. In 1926, sales amounted to less than \$50. The back of each daybook specifies what was sold, on what date and at what price. In his daily records, he mentioned cultivating vegetables (asparagus, beans, cabbage, cucumber, lettuce, peas, tomatoes), starches and root crops (beets, carrots, corn, potatoes, turnips), fruits (apples, grapes, pears, strawberries), grains (barley, millet, oats), hay/rowen, and marigolds. The range of crops is impressive; it would have offered dietary variety, market participation, winter storage, and averaging of seasonal activities and risks. Farming involved

many specific tasks including preparing for planting, cultivating, harvesting, soil amendments, trimming trees and vines, sorting, and storage. Each crop had its own requirements, for which the daily diaries do not provide sufficient details to consider here.

Tasks were highly seasonal, while activities for the variety of crops extended across the year. As seen by the average number of tasks per month across seven years, the slack time for farming was (expectedly) the Cape Cod winter (January, 2.4 tasks; February, 2.9; and March, 5.0). The peak activity was recorded in June (21.3) with high activity levels also recorded for April (13.3), May (18.7), July (20.4), and August (13.9). Farming activities decreased sharply in September (5.1), rebounding in October (10.9), November (8.1), and December (7.0 for late crops and storage). The broad spread in seasonal activities was tied to particular timing for each crop, as for example, early for asparagus and lettuce and later in the year for apples, potatoes, and turnips. The drop in September corresponded with shifting work responsibilities to harvest the cranberries. Across the seven years covered by the diaries, engagement with farming was steady, although a few changes in crops are noted. Grains were mentioned in the earlier 1920s, probably to feed animals including a cow that was bred at intervals, calves, and a shoat, in addition to the chickens and the horse. The horse was killed and buried in January of 1929, and its death may have been the reason for declining involvement in grains and hay production. The uses of the horse would have included plowing, harrowing, leveling the ground surface, and hauling the wagon and carriage. Infrequent visits to the blacksmith were noted during the horse's life.

Hens. The daily collection of eggs was likely to have been so routine (or perhaps the responsibility of Victoria or Edward) as to be unrecorded. Andrew's activities included the construction and maintenance of the hen house and related facilities (hatching boxes, fencing, etc.). Cleaning the hen house was the most frequently mentioned task, while sorting and packing eggs and dressing fowl were also noted, albeit less frequently. The time required for packing, dressing and shipping are mentioned, frequently involving particular sales to regular customers. Two summertime customers, the McClennan and Smith families, received regular shipments of eggs to their homes in Boston. Hen related activities were somewhat seasonal, peaking in the slack season (December, 10.6; January, 9.9) and more rarely during primary farming months, with lows from June through October (range 4.7-5.9); the minima were in June and July. No diachronic trends in chicken or egg activity were noted. Many of the trips recorded in the diaries involved deliveries of eggs and chickens—many of these trips were repeated at regular intervals to regular customers—as indicated by the sales accounts.

Cranberries. Cranberry sales were an important source of income, although, unlike eggs, the yield and profits varied widely from year to year. In 1926 the “Old Swamp” or “Footprint Bog” yielded only 10.5 barrels at a sale price of \$3.50/barrel. (In 1923 it had produced 73.5 barrels at \$6.50/barrel.) The “Great Swamp Bog” yielded 78 barrels in 1926 at \$3.30/barrel. (In 1922 it had produced 123.5 barrels at \$7.75/barrel.) Andrew's activities included draining and preparation of the bogs (trimming vines, maintaining ditches, sanding, and cleaning rubbish), harvesting, screening and preparation for shipping, hauling barrels of cranberries to the train depot, and the cleaning and flooding of the bogs. Cranberry-related activities were highly seasonal, peaking in September (16.1) and falling off gradually (October, 14.1; November, 11.0; December, 7.9). He likely hired labor at peaked times, but this has not been analyzed. The winter involved few cranberry-related tasks (January, 2.3; February, 0.6 ; March, 0.1), although

activities increased slowly through the spring and summer months (1.0-6.0 per month) with a low point in July when other farming activities were busiest. Over the seven years for which records exist, cranberries show significant fluctuation, with an annual peak of cranberry tasks for 1928, perhaps tied to a strong urban market.

Wood cutting. Wood-cutting, hauling, and stacking was strongly seasonal work for Andrew, concentrated primarily during winter season from January to April (10.7-18.6) with March as the busiest month. The remainder of the year (May-December), when farming and cranberries dominated the work schedule, wood-related tasks were considerably less frequent (range 1.0-3.3 per month) with a minimum in August, when farming activities were most intensive. Most of the labor to cut and store wood was probably for heating, cooking and fencing wood used locally on the farm, although some cord wood, as well as cedar posts and rails, were sold. In 1926, the income from sales of wood was \$80. Wood activities show a strong decrease over the time after 1922 to 1928, when the range in activities averaged 80-96 total annual wood-related tasks. Such work dropped precipitously in 1929 and 1930 (28, 32) accompanied by indications of a switch to coal for indoor heating.

Miscellaneous. Most of Andrew's activities in this category were episodic, without seasonal or annual patterns. Repairs to the house and barn, including painting, shingling, and carpentry, sometimes required considerable time. Individual jobs like replacing the floor in the barn, shingling or painting the house, and other repairs were outside jobs. Other activities ranged from "rubbish" hauling (removing dead vines, leaves and branches from the bog ditches and probably other underbrush growth), grass cutting, repair of farm tools, clamming, and visiting neighbors and relatives, gatherings for whist games, town meetings, or visits to the post office and depot.

Male activities. Andrew's work and activities were almost exclusively undertaken outside the house, a pattern noted quite generally for farmers across New England. Some interior activities by males may have been left unmentioned, because they were seen as routine. In interviews with long-term residents, I asked specifically whether men ever cooked. The answer was no, except for preparing clam chowder. Clamming and scalloping are mentioned infrequently in the diaries, but were undertaken by him during winter months.

Seasonality. Many of the Andrew's farm's activities were highly seasonal, as highlighted above. Perhaps most important was the cranberry harvest, undertaken in September and October, when other farming tasks decreased sharply in frequency. Together, farming and cranberries evidently dominated the daily tasks during both the summer and fall. Chicken- and wood-related work seems to have been undertaken at those times in the annual cycle when the requirements of farming and cranberries had ended. Noting planting tasks was evidently important for future planning, because each individual crop requirements differed.

Annual trends. Life on the farm appears to have been fairly stable through the years covered in the diaries. Farming for subsistence and for local or regional markets continued, albeit with some adjustments in crops that reflected market demand, perhaps most pronounced in cranberries and an emergent Cape specialization in the production of asparagus and turnips. The most evident changes appear to have been technological, with purchases of a car/truck and oil/coal heating eliminating reliance on a horse and the burning of wood.

Non-work Activities. Religious, civic, and recreational activities are mentioned irregularly by Andrew, perhaps because these activities were considered to be routine. For example, no mention is made of church attendance, although Sundays were days of rest, with far fewer tasks listed. Often, Sundays had no activities recorded (94 times, with an annual range of 9-15 blank Sundays per year). He was definitely involved in cemetery administration, which was most probably associated with the board of directors for the Evergreen Cemetery in East Harwich. He mentions attending cemetery meetings and visits to the cemetery, perhaps for particular projects. He also occasionally attended church suppers.

Some non-work activities were recorded, but not frequently, perhaps because of a cultural consideration of what was 'important.' Because of infrequency, these activities are best described by the total number of mentions over the seven years (a total of 2555 days). Civic duties included routine democratic participation (voting in each even-numbered year) and attending annual town meetings (the voting body of a Massachusetts town). Andrew mentions 'directors' meetings' (4) and the 'farm bureau' (2). Irregularly he attended funerals (16), weddings (3), and graduations (2). Although the diaries emphasize repetitive farm work, he did enjoy simple pleasures, including clamming/scalloping (24 mentions), whist (19), movies (6), church suppers (5), 4th of July celebrations (2), Barnstable Fair (2), and one note each for a boat race, frost fishing, a picnic, and a visit to Franklin Park in Boston.

Each month, Andrew made multiple trips around Harwich (Center, Harwich Port, and North Harwich) and to neighboring towns (Chatham, Orleans, and Brewster). Notes recorded regular Sunday afternoon visits to Chathamport to visit his brother Edward and his brother-in-law, Frederick P. Allen. Longer trips were more infrequent, primarily to other towns on Cape Cod. Trip frequency was not seasonal, ranging on average from 8.4 to 11.9 per month through the year. Some trips were likely recreational or social, but many were probably farm related. The busiest months for trips (>11) were June-August when farming activities peaked, while the relatively slack winter months (January to March) each averaged fewer than 10 trips. Over time, He made more trips (average trips was 133), from an early low (1922, 63; 1925, 90; 1926, 93), suddenly increasing to a peak in 1927 (215), following purchase of his first automobile (October 1926) and remaining higher through 1928 (157), 1929 (166), and 1930 (149).