

The Edwin Alderman Cash Journal

This journal was found in Jack Cobb's old antique store when it was being cleaned out for sale. Eleanor Doyle gave it to me along with a box of miscellaneous ephemera found there.

I first thought that the journal was entirely veterinary school notes taken by Edwin in the 1890s. Starting at page 100 he re-purposed the book into a cash journal with receipts on the left side even numbered pages and disbursements for the same time period on the opposing odd numbered page. The time period is from mid-1924 until mid-1927. It gives a detailed picture of what the family did to make a living in an economic model that is more readily identified with the 19th century.

The family sold large quantities of eggs, milk, maple syrup and sugar, honey, various animals, blankets, potatoes, apples and orchard products - and worked on the roads and for neighbors for cash money or barter. They mainly traded at the Pease store in Chester and sold many items to Middlefield neighbors. Of particular interest to me was that Edwin was hiring my grandfather John Ferris' to haul his milk to the depot.

Many transactions are identified by people's initials. This will enable a lot of detective work ferreting out the identity of everyone mentioned.

I have scanned the cash journal as it provides an intimate view of life in 1920s Middlefield. There are 100 pages. Towards the end there is a reconciliation of the 1925 entries on page 186 that I have compiled separately. A list of cows bred with "Cook's bull" are listed on pages 190-191. The final page (unnumbered) contains a list of everyone a blanket was sold to. I have only put the first ten pages on the web site.

I have electronically scanned the interesting material and deposited the original at the museum.

Howard Knickerbocker

October 2019