

SOME WILLS & INVENTORIES
OF THE ADAMS FAMILY OF TREGYE

Very often we can trace the names of families through estate manuscripts but know very little about their personal affairs. Probate documents can help to fill in the picture.

When a person died, an inventory of his goods and chattels, that is to say, his household items, money, debts due to him, clothes, jewels (if any) and farm goods or trade tools, had to be produced before probate of his will would be granted. This appraisal was required to be carried out by "honest and skillful persons" and was in fact usually done by two local men who were friends or neighbours.

The inventory and the will which usually went with it gave a great deal of insight into the circumstances of the individual concerned. This is apparent when we look at the probate documents of the Adams family of Tregye (see article on Tregye in this issue). It is clear that they were a well-to-do family, with Stephen Adams' personal possessions valued in 1719 at over £400, and William Adams' at £183 in 1725 - even this was a large sum then. Their inventories show that like many other Cornish families of the time they were engaged in mixed farming, with cattle, sheep and arable crops all playing their part. The sheep and bees "abroad" in William Adams' inventory must refer to other land distinct from his home farm. In spite of being reasonably prosperous, the Adams family did not indulge in lavish spending on their homes; like many of their local contemporaries, their household goods seem to have been modest.

The making of a will was the opportunity for providing for dependents in the days before State Pensions and Social Security; the Adams' wills make careful provision for the wives and, to a lesser extent, for the children. Stephen Adams left only a shilling to each of his daughters, an indication that he had already given them doweries or the equivalent. Unlike William Adams he also had a thought for the poor of the parish.

Affluence was not necessarily accompanied by even the rudiments of education. Although William Adams was reasonably well-to-do, he was unable to sign his will and, like one of his witnesses, had to make his mark.

The following are transcripts of wills and inventories of the Adams family. They are accompanied by a photocopy of the original inventory of William Adams, made in 1725.

INVENTORY of the goods and Chattles and
Credits of Stephen Adams of Feock deceased, taken and
appraised by John Lawrence and John Cook of the said Parish
this 10th day of July 1719.

	£	s	d
Imprimis			
His purse and wearing apparel	04	00	00
His Chattles and Estate in Treguy	240	00	00
His bedding and their furniture	9	00	00
A hanging press in the Chamber	10	00	
Pannbrass	2	15	00
Three brass pots and two iron potts	2	00	00
The whole peuter	2	15	00
One broken pestle and mortar and one old pasty pan	00	03	00
Five leather chairs	00	14	00
Five wooden chairs	00	07	00
One round table	00	18	00
Two old table boards, two forms and two cubbords	01	01	00
For Shelves	00	03	06
" a Large Stone trough	02	01	00
" Three other Stone troughs	00	08	00
A Syder press	00	10	00
" Cask and other Timber goods	01	14	00
" Hay	01	10	00
" Wood and furse faggots	01	00	00
" Three ladders, one Scyde and one wheelbarrow	00	08	00
A Bar of Iron	00	04	00
A butt wain and wheels	05	10	00
Two harrows, plows, chains and other utensels belonging	01	17	00
For Corn in the Mowhay	01	07	00
One Yoaq of oxen	08	00	00
Two cows	06	00	00
Five young Bullocks	07	15	00
Two nags and one mare	10	00	00
Two calves	01	00	00
For 44 sheep	15	00	00
" fifteen lambs	03	00	00
" 44 fleeces of wool	04	00	00
Three hogs, gees and other fowls	02	00	00
For 6 acres of wheat and 6½ of barley	26	10	00
For Debts Sperate and Desparate	35	00	00
" Things forgotten and unappraised	02	00	00
Sum total	403	07	06

The Will of William Addams. June 1st 1725

I William Addams of the parish of Feock in the County of Cornwall yeoman being sick and weak in Body but perfect and sound of Minde and Memory praised be to God for the same, do make and ordaine this to be my Last will and testament in manner of form following.

Imprimis. I give devise and bequeath unto my Loving wife Ann Addams the sum of six pounds of Lawfull Mony of this Kingdom to be paid unto her yearly by two equal payments by my executrixes hereafter named if she lives on my estate in Tregy in Feock shall so long live the first three pounds to be paid to her six months next after my decease and so to be continued and paid unto her during her widdowhood if she lives as is aforesaid shall so long live. And if not continued satisfied and paid within twenty days next after the six months and then it is my will that my wife Ann Addams is hereby Impowered to enter in and upon my estate in Tregy in Feock aforesaid for any sort of goods on the premises and to have the same with the Arrears if any. It is my will also that if my wife Ann Addams be marryed again after my decease that she shall have but one shilling after her marriage. Also I give and bequeath unto Elizabeth Addams my younger daughter the sum of fifty pounds of Lawful Mony of the Kingdom to be paid to her ten days after my death. Lastly I do nominate and appoint Grace Addams and Ann Addams my two daughters to be my whole and sole executrixes of all my goods chattles and creddits and to pay my debts and legacies and funerall charges of this my last will and testament Revoking all former wills by me made. In witness hereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this first Day of June one thousand seven hundred and twenty five 1725.

The sign of

William } } Addams

Signed Sealed Published and declared
to be the Last will and Testament of
the abovesaid William Addams

In the presence of US

Theo: Harvey
James Trenhaile
Jane (Cook

REFERENCES

Probate collection, County Record Office, Truro
"Farmhouse and Cottage Inventories of Mid Essex", by F. W.
Steer

A True & perfect Inventory of the Goods Chattells & Creditts of William Addams of Feock deceased Taken and appraised by Theodore Harvey and Hopson Woolcock of the said p'ish the 30th day of June 1725 as followeth.

	£	s	d
Imp ^{is} His purse and wearing apparell	3	0	0
Item His Chattle Estate in Tregy	100	0	0
Item Two Cows 4£ 3 small heifers 2 10	6	10	0
Item A young mare	1	10	0
Item for 10 sheep at home & 3 sheep abroad	2	0	0
Item for 5 Lambs at home & 2 Lambs abroad	0	14	0
Item for Bees at home & abroad	1	1	0
Item Two acres of barley	3	0	0
Item for bedding	10	0	0
Item Three Silver Spoons & a Silver Taster	1	0	0
Item A Cyder Beame & one Harrow	1	0	0
Item two Hogsheads & five haife hogsheads	1	0	0
Item potts & brass	1	0	0
Item an old cart and an old gun	0	12	0
Item pewter a Court Cupboard andirons & Spit	2	0	0
Item A round Table two Side Tables & a Form	1	0	0
Item Eleven Chaires a Doz ⁿ & halfe of Glass bottles	0	17	0
Item for Wooll	1	0	0
Item for Debts Sparate & Desparate	45	0	0
Item for things forgotten & unappraised	1	10	0
	<u>183</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>

Theodore Harvey)
Hopson Woolcock) Appraisors



A TALK PREPARED FOR THE WESLEY GUILD AT CARNON DOWNS BY THE LATE MR T. J. TREBILCOCK IN 1952

A True & perfect Inventory of the Goods Chattels & Credits of William Adams of Good West Taken and appraised by Theodore Sparrow and Joseph Woolcock of the said parish the 30th day of June 1725. as followeth. £ = 6 = 8

Imp. and purp. and wearing apparel	3 = 0 = 0
Item his Rattle Stab in Roggion	100 = 0 = 0
Item two Cows 4. 3 small horses 2 = 10	6 = 10 = 0
Item a young mare	1 = 10 = 0
Item for 10 Sheep at home & 9 Sheep abroad	2 = 0 = 0
Item for 5 Lambs at home & 2 Lambs abroad	0 = 14 = 0
Item for Boes at home & abroad	1 = 1 = 0
Item Two Acres of Barley	0 = 0 = 0
Item for Coddins	10 = 0 = 0
Item Three Silver Spoons & a Silver Taster	1 = 0 = 0
Item of Good Roan & one Sparrow	1 = 0 = 0
Item two Hog heads & five halfe hog heads	1 = 0 = 0
Item pots & Brass	1 = 0 = 0
Item an old Cart and an old Gun	0 = 12 = 0
Item powder a Cart Cupboard andirons & Soil	2 = 0 = 0
Item of round Table two Side Tables & a form	1 = 0 = 0
Item Eleven Chairs a Doyn. & halfe of Glass bottles	0 = 17 = 0
Item for Wool	1 = 0 = 0
Item for Debt wiper at o. & Deposits	15 = 0 = 0
Item for things forgotton & unappraised	1 = 10 = 0
	<u>£ 199 = 14 = 0</u>

Theodore Sparrow & Appraisors Joseph Woolcock

The road from Truro to Falmouth ran through Playing Place and continued through the Killiganoon estate to Carnon Downs, with five cottages of cob walls and thatched roofs as you entered the hamlet. One of these was a "Kiddlewink", the Cornish name for a public house where beer only was sold. There were four more cottages as one left on the Perranwell road which was then the main road to Falmouth. The present main road down Carnon Hill, thence to the Norway Hotel and through Perran-ar-Worthal, was made by the Turnpike Trust in 1830. The old cottage at the entrance to the present main road to Falmouth was also a "Kiddlewink", but when the new road was made and Turnpike Gates were placed there it became a gate house and was occupied by an employee of the Trust whose duty it was to let the traffic through and collect the tolls.

When the G. W. R. branch line from Truro to Falmouth was under construction and the Sparnock Tunnel, midway between Carnon Downs and Baldhu was being built, the G. W. R. engaged a gang of Irish navvies and housed and fed them in wood buildings on the site. The nearest place at which they could obtain beer was Carnon Downs Kiddlewink, kept by Henry Nicholls. In 1895 his son Henry told me that these navvies came each evening and ordered several gallons of beer which his father poured into a tin bath placed in the middle of the room. They sat around it; the ganger was given a pewter pint which he dipped into the beer and after drinking the contents passed it to the next man, all drinking in turn until the bath was empty. The Falmouth branch of the railway was completed on 24th August, 1863.

The lane from the Bissoe road across the downs to the junction of the Perranwell road and Carnon hill at Trethewey Cottage, now known as Staggy Lane, was originally Kitty's Lane because it led to Kitty Martin's grocers shop. Kitty's husband kept a night school in the barn during the winter months. The barn is still there and in a good state of repair. Boys attended from all over the district. My father who lived at Playing Place Farm was a pupil. On dark nights they carried lanterns with tallow candles which were lit by their parents at the open chimney fire; these were the days of the flint and tinder box. Mr Martin lit the lanterns for the return journey.

The lane from the Carnon Valley across the downs passes the present Pottery, crosses the Perranwell and Carnon Hill roads and leads through Carnon Crescent to Deadman's Lane.