

Farming in the Cartmel Peninsula in the 19th Century: Presenting Data from the Census

At the beginning of the 19th century the small communities located on the Cartmel Peninsula were predominantly occupied in agriculture, with a small fishing industry located on the northern shores of Morecambe Bay. It was the time of the enclosure of the common land when these rough grazing pastures were allocated or sold to the rich land owners. In the early part of the century there were significant improvements in farming practise, with improved land drainage, the introduction of winter feeds, crop rotation and manures, and selective breeding of sheep and cattle. By the time of the 1841 census, the farming in the area was thriving. This article presents data from the Census for the Ancient Parish of Cartmel, which covers the whole of the Cartmel Peninsula. The data presented was extracted from a digitised database of the Census records prepared by members of the Cartmel Peninsula Local History Society in a project lead by Peter Roden (1). The article reports information from the seven townships (Fig. 1) ranging from Cartmel Fell in the North to Lower Holker and Lower Allithwaite in the South and bordering on the northern shores of Morecambe Bay in Cumbria, UK. The aim of the paper is to discuss the distribution of the population of the farming community and discuss how it changes between 1841 and 1911. Similarly, the occupations of those employed, adults and children, on the farms are examined.



Fig 1. Map of the Ancient Parish of Cartmel and its' seven Townships (2)

The Ancient Parish of Cartmel covers approximately 29000 acres (3), with approximately 160 farms between 1841 and 1911 (Table 1) and the largest estate was owned by the Cavendish family (4). The more elevated area of the parish of Upper Holker and Cartmel townships have a higher number of farms, with the lowest number of farms located in the lowland of East Broughton and Lower Holker. See Appendix 1 for more details.

Table 1. Average number of Farms in the Parish of Cartmel 1841-1911 (defined as properties occupied by a farmer)

NB Broughton East includes Grange

Township	No.
Upper Holker	30
Cartmel Fell	28
Lower Allithwaite	26
Upper Allithwaite	24
Staveley	22
Broughton East	19
Lower Holker	14
Total	163

The only comprehensive survey of the size of farms in the area was taken at the population censuses of 1851, 1861 and 1871. Subsequently an agricultural census has been held every year (5). However, enumerators of the population censuses were instructed to exclude upland hill pastures, although rough grazing in lowland area may have been included. The average acreage of farms on the Cartmel Peninsula is 94 acres (Table 2). Farmers managed larger areas in the townships of Broughton East and Lower Allithwaite and lowest acreages in Cartmel Fell. Within the Parish, the average of acreage for the farms increased from 85 in 1851 to 105 acres in 1881.

Table 2: Average acreage of farms noted in the 1851-1881 census

Township	1851	1861	1871	1881	Average
Broughton East	78	105	122	189	123
Lower Allithwaite	98	112	92	136	114
Upper Holker	75	111	152	88	100
Lower Holker	79	136	64	81	89
Staveley	94	75	94	90	88
Upper Allithwaite	84	83	93	84	86
Cartmel Fell	85	53	70	86	74
All townships	85	92	96	105	94

Appendix 2 contains a list of the farmers with large acreage. The two largest farms with 1000 acres in 1881 were farmed by John Allan of Grange and William Nash at Pitt Farm, Cartmel. In 1861 William Nash resided at Allithwaite Lodge and farmed 500 acres. Francis Clark farmed 801 acres at Tarn Green in 1861 and 600 acres there in 1871.

The Census data shows that 65% of the farms in the area are classified as small, with only 5% classified as large (Table 3). Clearly this shows that small farms still predominate after the Enclosure Act at the beginning of the 19th century. The number of small farms is also very similar to the numbers (63%) reported for England and Wales by Sir John Chapman (6).

Table 3: Size of farms noted in the 1851-1881 Census

Size	Acres	No. of Farms	%
Large	>299	8	5
Medium	100-299	40	28
Small	5 to 99	93	65
Smallholder	1 to 4	2	1

In 1841, 2038 residents were working, increasing to 3847 in 1911 (Table 4). Included in these statistics are the occupants described as family members e.g., farmers wives and farmers sons / daughters, as it is assumed that these family members will have helped out on the farm. Whilst the working population increased by 89% over the period of 70 years, the farming community declined by 38% with 406 fewer working on the farms by 1911. In 1841 the community on the peninsula were predominantly employed in agriculture: i.e., 52% of the working population and 22% of the total population. By 1911 those employed on farms represented only 17% of the working population in the Parish and 10% of the total population.

Table 4: Agricultural workers in the Parish of Cartmel

Occupation	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
No. working in Agriculture	1064	902	831	837	797	703	657	658
Total Working Population	2038	2488	2402	2770	2837	3256	3350	3847
Total Population	4920	5212	5109	5489	5602	6318	6271	6653
% of Working pop in Agriculture	52.2	36.3	34.6	30.2	28.1	21.6	19.6	17.1
% of Total Population in Agriculture	21.6	17.3	16.3	15.2	14.2	11.1	10.5	9.9

The question is: why was there a decline in the number employed in Agriculture on the Peninsula when there was an 89% increase in the overall working population?

Firstly, it is evident that the number of workers described as farmers was relatively stable over the period (Table 5). There were a higher number of farmers in the ‘uplands’ of Upper Holker and Cartmel Fell and fewer in Broughton East and Lower Holker.

Table 5: Farmers in the Townships of the Parish

Township	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Upper Holker	31	29	35	48	31	36	30	30
Cartmel Fell	26	33	32	30	28	31	32	28
Lower Allithwaite	33	21	28	29	31	33	27	23
Upper Allithwaite	29	23	24	27	27	33	29	24
Staveley	18	23	25	25	24	25	22	24
Broughton East & Grange	19	19	17	18	23	21	28	21
Lower Holker	15	15	17	14	18	19	18	18
Total	171	163	178	191	182	198	186	168

Secondly, the decline in the number working in agriculture during the period is similar in all the townships (Table 6), except in Broughton East (which includes the town of Grange).

Table 6: Agriculture workers and families

Township	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	Total
Lower Holker	235	159	126	110	128	126	116	136	1136
Upper Allithwaite	181	167	152	136	134	119	94	92	1075
Lower Allithwaite	174	149	139	153	132	116	104	107	1074
Upper Holker	154	125	135	155	110	102	100	99	980
Cartmel Fell	118	115	96	100	115	89	79	76	788
Staveley	98	101	83	93	103	82	64	63	687
Broughton East	104	86	100	90	75	69	100	85	709
Total	1064	902	831	837	797	703	657	658	6449

The number of adults (defined as the workers over the age of 13) employed as agricultural labourers and farm servants declined, especially in the number of farm servants (Table 7).

Table 7: Adults (>age 13) - Farm servants include dairy maids

Occupation	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Farmer	168	163	176	188	180	198	186	167
Farmer's Family		94	112	162	193	131	135	138
Ag Lab	566	499	334	214	193	161	212	229
Ag Lab family		5	9	56	8			
Farm Servant	267	74	109	136	154	138	45	50

Agriculture in the 19th century was a male orientated occupation with the majority of agricultural labourers and farmers male (Table 8). The data suggests an equal split of male /

female farm servants and family members on the farms. However, it is important to note a quirk in the data: in 1841 the enumerators noted 267 female farm servants, whereas there was an average of 14 in the other years from 1851 to 1911. The majority of the female farmers were widows presumably continuing to care for the farm after their husband had died (Table 9). The female farmers were more elderly (average: Females = 59, Males = 48 years of age) than the male farmers too.

Table 8: Gender of the Agriculture Workers (>13 years of age) – average across 1841-1911 data. (see Appendix 3 for the full data).

Occupation	Male	Female
Ag Lab	301	19
Farmer	166	13
Farmer's Family	70	66
Farm Servant	61	47
Ag Lab family	1	9

Table 9: Marital status of the female farmers

Marital Status	Total
Married	10
Unmarried	11
Widow	71
blank / uncertain	13

Fewer children worked on farms as agricultural labourers or farm servants in the second half of the 19th century (Table 10) presumably a result of the introduction of the Education Act of 1870 creating compulsory education for children aged between five and thirteen (7).

Table 10: Children (<14) working in Agriculture - Farm servants include dairy maids

Occupation	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Ag Lab	16	7	13	5	2	3	3	1
Ag Lab family				6				
Farm Servant	22	3	7	3	6	8	2	1
Farmer				1				
Farmer's Family		16	24	18	21	8	2	6
Total	38	26	44	33	29	19	7	8

Farm Servants tended to be young and lived on the farm and were probably contracted for at least 6 months or a year for a wage and board and lodging with no set working hours. On the other hand, the agricultural labourer lived with his family in the farm cottage or close-by in the local community and was hired on a short-term basis as and when work was needed for a weekly wage for a set number of hours (8): for example for planting, hoeing or reaping the arable crops (9). The census data indicates that 90% of the agricultural labourers and 85% of the farm servants were relatively local i.e., born in Lancashire or Westmorland. Farmers on the

Peninsula will therefore have recruited at the local hiring fairs in Ulverston, Kendal or Lancaster at Whitsun or Martinmas as it is said that most farm servants were footloose when contracts ended (10).

The period between the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 to 1850 is regarded as the period of transformation and between 1850 and 1879/80 the golden age of prosperity for local farms (11). The decrease in the agricultural workers towards the end of the 19th century coincided with the Great Agricultural Depression in the last quarter of the 19th century (12) (8). During this period when wheat prices declined, John Backhouse of Cartmel reported poorer crop yields and lower prices in 1882 (13). Livestock breeding improved stock (14) and farms on the Peninsula will have gradually reduced their arable crops. For example, in Westmorland in 1866, animal grazing land occupied 58%. By 1900, the grazing area had increased to 65% of the farmed area in the county (15).

The assertion that over the whole of the north the percentage of servants within the farm labour force probably increased over the 19C (10) has not been supported by the data from the Cartmel Parish. There were also other factors affecting the labour force employed on farms. Farmers had to pay higher wages for labourers as there was demand for railway workers in 1882 (13) and for labourers to construct the Manchester Corporation's water pipeline around 1890 (16).

In conclusion, at the time of the first national census in 1841 approximately half the working population in the Parish were employed on farms. By 1911, the population had nearly doubled and there were fewer labourers employed in farming, with only 17% of the community working on the farms. The rapid expansion of Grange-over-Sands and the growth of tourism following the opening of the railway in 1857 provided increased opportunities of employment.

Phil Rowland v1. Nov 2019.

Appendix 1: Number of Farms in the Ancient Parish of Cartmel

Township	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911
Upper Holker Cartmel Fell	28	29	33	34	29	31	29	27
Lower Allithwaite	24	32	30	28	28	29	26	25
Upper Allithwaite	29	20	27	28	28	29	24	20
Staveley	24	23	22	23	24	30	27	21
Broughton East	17	22	24	23	23	24	22	22
Lower Holker	18	18	16	17	21	20	23	20
Total	11	14	14	12	15	17	15	17
	151	158	166	165	168	180	166	152

Broughton East includes Grange

Appendix 2: List of the Large farms in the Parish (1851-1881)

Year	Township	Location	Address	Forename(s)	Surname	Acres
1851	Lower Allithwaite	Cartmel	Springfield	John H.	Thompson	475
1851	Upper Allithwaite	Lindale area	Wilson House	Lucy	Robinson	400
1851	Upper Allithwaite	Cartmel Fell South	Tarn Green	Francis	Clark	400
1851	Lower Allithwaite	Allithwaite South	East Plain	Richard	Walker	380
1851	Staveley	Staveley	Chapel House	William	Jefferson	300
1851	Upper Holker	Upper Holker Mosses	High Frith	John	Bibby	300
1861	Upper Holker	Cartmel Fell South	Tarn Green	Francis	Clark	801
1861	Lower Allithwaite	Cartmel area	Pit Farm	Joseph Burt	Binyon	552
1861	Lower Allithwaite	Allithwaite	Allithwaite Lodge	William R.	Nash	500
1861	Upper Allithwaite	Lindale area	Wilson House	James	Hudson	499
1861	Lower Holker	Flookburgh	Flookburgh	Thomas	Butler	360
1861	Upper Holker	Upper Holker Mosses	Stribers	Robert	Clark	300
1861	Lower Allithwaite	Allithwaite South	East Plain	Richard	Walker	300
1871	Upper Holker	Cartmel Fell South	Low Tarn Green	Francis	Clark	600
1871	Upper Allithwaite	Lindale area	Wilson House	Francis	Atkinson	480
1871	Broughton East	Aynsome & Longlands	Longlands Farm	John	Backhouse	370
1871	Broughton East	Field Broughton	Hampshire Hall	James	Crow	350
1871	Staveley	Staveley area	Fiddler Hall	Joseph	Bell	350
1871	Upper Holker	Upper Holker Mosses	Mean House	John Barrow	Storey	300
1871	Upper Holker	Upper Holker Mosses	High Frith	John	Bibby	300
1871	Upper Holker	Upper Holker Mosses	Stribers	Robert	Clark	300
1871	Broughton East	Field Broughton		James	Backhouse	300
1881	Broughton East	Grange	Hawthorn Villa	John	Allan	1200
1881	Lower Allithwaite	Cartmel area	Pitt Farm	William R	Nash	1000
1881	Upper Allithwaite	Lindale area	Wilson House	Joseph	Atkinson	480
1881	Lower Allithwaite	Allithwaite South	East Plain	John M.	Tyson	402
1881	East Broughton	Aynsome & Longlands	Longlands Farm	John	Backhouse	349
1881	East Broughton	Field Broughton	Hampshire Hall	James	Crowe	340
1881	Upper Holker	Upper Holker Mosses	High Frith Farm	John Beck	Clark	300
1881	Staveley	Staveley area	Gummers How	George	Preston	300

Appendix 3: Adults working on the farm

Adult males (>13 year of age)

Occupation	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	Total
Ag Lab	567	497	350	215	165	162	214	227	2406
Farmer	159	153	163	172	173	181	176	154	1331
Farmer's Family		63	68	58	79	90	111	94	563
Farm Servant		70	94	119	135	133	35	22	488
Ag Lab family				1	3				4
Total	746	814	683	591	605	601	573	537	5150

Adult females (>13 year of age)

Occupation	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	Total
Farmer's Family		39	58	122	128	58	56	65	526
Farm Servant	267	4	15	17	19	5	10	28	375
Farmer	12	10	14	18	9	17	10	14	105
Ag Lab family		5	9	55	5				74
Ag Lab		3	6		2	2	1	5	19
Total	279	61	103	213	163	82	77	112	1095

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