

## Notes from a Daughter-In-Law

Edited by Trail End State Historic Site Superintendent Cynde Georgen; from *Trail End Notes*

*When Clara Diana Cumming married Manville Kendrick in January 1929, she moved from her home in Washington, D. C., to the “wilds” of Wyoming. There she set up house at Trail End, her husband’s family home. While Manville was occupied with ranch business, Diana had to find things to occupy herself. She often felt lonely and sometimes out of sorts, feelings she expressed in her correspondence, infrequent though it may have been.*

*The following are excerpts from letters written by Diana to her mother-in-law, Eula Kendrick, between February 1929 and February 1930. The originals are part of the Manville Kendrick Collection, housed at Trail End.*



Diana Cumming Kendrick (center) with Eula and Manville, 1936 (Harmon Collection, TESH5)

**4 February 1929, San Francisco, California** - Dearest Mother K.: Such a daughter as I’ve turned out to be should be “turned out” for sure! Not a line to my new mother in this whole month since I’ve had her. ... We have had the most perfect honeymoon any two undeserving young scamps could have had. Just a marvelous time ... I’ve done no work, I blush to say it -- but there is an excellent reason. There was no time when I wouldn’t have had to leave Manville to his own devices – and he didn’t seem to want to be left – and what more can a bride want – and what else would she do! We are happy – later we’ll be happy and busy! ... Your loving daughter, Diana

**12 March 1929, Trail End** - Mother K. Dear: We are in the midst of a whirling snowstorm again! ... The drifts have piled up on the steps, and the world is all white once more. Not a very friendly greeting for the Senator, who I just heard is arriving tomorrow instead of today. Also, Manville, who has been gone since midnight Thursday, got into Hardin this morning in time to see the train pull out, so must take a local which, as he said, would get him here “sometime

between seven and twelve tonight"! ... we are getting along very nicely indeed, and you needn't waste a thought on us. I'm sure we can take care of the Senator and make him as comfortable as can be. I suppose Mother told you [cousin] Eva expects to come visit me this summer – and am sure you won't mind. She is really a fine girl – and will be lots of fun – and company when M. is away – tho' I hope, of course, to be with him much more than the four days out of twelve of this last two weeks! ... Dearest Love, Diana

**April 1929, Trail End** - Dearest Mother K.: I finally got down to the ranch, and find it spoiled me -- for now I am so nervous and fidgety til I can get back that I can accomplish little of all there is to be done. ... The [phone] lines still being down makes things very difficult – communication by mail being so frightfully slow. ... Isn't it a dreadful fix to be in not to like having your husband away, and not to want ever to like it – but to know you must stand for it – and cheerfully!! You understand all I'm raving about, don't you, dear Mother K? I hope I don't sound unhappy. I am, just at the moment, but not the kind of unhappiness that is "sorry they came" and "wants to go home." I'm just lonesome for Manville – and that proves I'm really happy – you see! I thought I'd tell you this because I don't know that I ever have, before – and because it may be a comfort to you to know that if one of us is very happy, both of us are apt to be fairly so, at least! And that's that. Perhaps it will be a comforting thought for Mother's Day! ... Affectionately, Diana

**1929, K Ranch** - Dearest Mother K.: I am so afraid I made you think I was not happy by my last letter. As I said, I was only miserable for a day or so, 'cause I missed Manville – usually I get along better – and I've never really had an unhappy moment. I'm happy and enjoying myself immensely, and keeping busy as a bee – or two bees! ... Heaps of love to you both, Your still-pretty-new-daughter, Diana

**1929, K Ranch** - Mother K. dear: I hope you don't mind my having had Trail End put on my new stationery. I hope to use it all up before we move! ... I am a pig – never to have thanked you for the unbreakable bottles. I hardly realized you were responsible for them – tho' the principal reason is what I've been telling my gift correspondents – that there is just too much to do and see and enjoy out here. And our frequent trips back and forth recently have completely disorganized me – I never seem caught up! ... Much, much love to you both – and a gr-r-r-and trip, Diana

**June 1929, Trail End** - Mother K., you dear but reprehensible lady! Thank you so much for your generous birthday present. You weren't supposed to know I was having a birthday – but I might have known you wouldn't let it get by you! ... Don't forget what M. told you – that you are especially on a holiday from your desk. Instead of being pleased if you write us letters, we will foam at the mouth – which you must admit, will be both alarming and disfiguring! ... May all the little – and big – waves lie down flat as Sir Walter Raleigh's coat, for you to glide safely and

smoothly over. And if they don't, try a little champagne – or is it “verboten” on the eastbound trip? In any case, a happy trip all the way to you and my dear Senator-Father, and the other two re-unionists! And lots of love, Diana

**1929, K Ranch** - Mother K. dear: In a day or so we go up to Sheridan, then immediately to the OW for the round up. I've been looking forward to it so much – and I know Rosa-Maye would like to be there too, if and only if, she could be in two places at once. ... Manville started his usual behavior in your absence, yesterday – by hurting his knee handling one of those mysterious machines. Not badly, of course, just a little skin off, and a bruise, both of which I have well-doctored with iodine to his scorn! – But secretly, I think, to his greater comfort. But outside of that, we are both thriving mightily. ... Love to all four of you, Diana

**August 1929, Trail End** - Dearest Mother K: Just a line to welcome you and the Senator home – the first line, as we both know only too well, since those written just after you sailed. ... Of course it isn't necessary to say that my delinquency cannot be used as a measure of my affection for you all. I've thought about you constantly and love you dearly – and still hope to write you regularly, someday! ... No need to go into a recital of this summer's experiences now, when we'll see you so soon. It has been delightful, and gay and busy altogether – and Manville and I are good partners – in crime as well as in friendship! We both agree, that if “the first year of married life is the hardest,” as everyone says, we are very, very lucky, and have much to look forward to. ... Dearest love to you both. Always affectionately, your delinquent daughter, Diana

**3 February 1930, Trail End** - Dearest Mother E.: I was so thrilled by your last letter and the description of the White house dinner – and just tickled to death that when you did go, you did it in such style as to be the honor guests. Weren't you smart to think up things to say to H. H. [President Herbert Hoover] ahead of time – I'd have been paralyzed by his mere reputation for silence, golden and enduring. ... I will have the Metz dinner as soon as I can get a husband and a few other customers to share it with me. MK is now at the Ceded Strip ... left Thursday and won't be back for three or four more days – so I am a “widdy.” ... I look back with such pleasure on our visit at Christmas time. You were so sweet and generous with us, and it seems as tho' we gave so little of our time in return. Next time perhaps we will manage better. Much love to you and Dad, both. Affectionately, Diana



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