

THE  
FOUR DRIVE

A Genealogy Newsletter

Volume I No 3

January 3, 1997

Whole No. 3

## Deeds Can Provide a Wealth of Information

by Chris Dixon

Nearly everyone who has done family history research has at one time or another been to a county courthouse and searched vital records - births, deaths and marriages. From this, you have a time period and a location of where your ancestor lived. Armed with this, you can now find the exact location of where the person lived through deed records.

Deeds are land transactions between two parties. They include sales of land, gifts of lands to relatives (or others) and settlements following disputes. They are usually kept in the county courthouse in the Register of Deeds office. One thing to remember is that these are not the actual deeds, but rather a re-written record copy of the transaction (there were no Xerox machines in the 1800's). There are no actual signatures or official seals or stamps, only facsimiles or hand-drawn seals. The following paragraphs contain general tips and information on deeds and deed research.

When you go into the deed office, tell the clerk that you would like to do some research on land transactions concerning your ancestors. They will show you where the record books are kept and explain how things are set up in the records area. One of the first things you will notice is the size of the books, most are larger than 11" x 17", especially the older books.

The first step is to look up the last name of the person of interest in a Grantor/Grantee Index. A grantor is the

seller of a parcel of land while a grantee is the buyer. The indexes are listed from A to Z according to the person's last name. Normally, grantors are on one page with the grantees of that transaction listed in the next column and another column with a book (or liber) number or letter and a page number. Grantees with the same first letter of the last name are on the next page with the grantor, book and page number listed. Usually, one person would be listed twice in the index for each transaction, once with the grantor (or grantee) and once as the grantor (or grantee).

On a piece of paper, write down all the persons with the same last name as the person you are researching along with the book and page numbers. Do this because even if you cannot find your ancestor listed as a grantor or grantee, you may be able to find him listed as a witness to one of his relatives. He may have been living with this relative instead of owning his own property. Next, obtain the book and turn to the page number.

Many of the older deeds are handwritten, while others have forms that are pre-printed two to a page from the book manufacture with pertinent data handwritten in the spaces provided. Still others are typewritten. Nearly all deeds contain the following information: the date and time received by the clerk or register, the date the transaction took place, the two parties involved and their residences, a description of the land including

acreage, section and township number or name, the amount of money paid for the property, a list of witnesses, the grantor(s) name and a statement signed by the notary public.

Because of all the valuable information contained on the record of deed, it is best to obtain a photocopy of the entire deed information. These are inexpensive, usually 10 to 25 cents for each page and you can get either a standard letter-size copy, a legal -sized copy, or a full size page of 11"x 17".

Now that you have the location of your ancestor, you can find the location in a plat book map or city map of the time period or look in a current plat book to see who owns the property now. You may chose to visit the location. You may find that the house your ancestor built is still standing or that the current owner of the property is a distant relative. Finding the township where your ancestor lived will make census research much easier by narrowing your census index search to a particular township in the county. With your ancestor's pervious residence listed, you can then do research this location. If he obtained this property through the Homestead Act, you can request his homestead application papers which would contain previous residences and other valuable information.

Sometimes, you may come across wills and records of probate listed in the deed books, especially when an order in determining heirs has taken place and it involves land property. These could be filed many years after the death of the landowner, up to as much as 10 years in some cases.

Many counties have separate books to record mortgages - temporary transferals of title to property for the purpose of paying debts. Relatives of parties to mortgages are often mentioned in these records.

Another type of deed book is called a

"Lis Pendens" meaning that there is litigation pending on a parcel of land. These usually refer to a mortgage and that a foreclosure has commenced on the property. If you are unable to go to the courthouse of the county of interest, you can research deed information from your local Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints (LDS) Family History Center. The Center should have a microfiche and CD-ROM containing all the microfilm and microfiche in the Family History Library at Salt Lake City, Utah. Look up the county of interest in the microfiche first by state then by county or you can do a locality search by county and state on the CD-ROM. Once you have the film number, you can order the film as a short-term, long-term or indefinite loan. There is a fee involved (around \$3 for short-term) and the Center should receive the film in 4 to 6 weeks.

A quick lesson on legal land descriptions. Counties are made up of townships. A typical township contains 36 sections with each section measuring one mile by one mile and containing 640 acres. Each section is divided into quarters, labeled NW, NE, SE and SW and each containing 160 acres. These quarters are further subdivided into quarters with each containing 40 acres.

Land descriptions are read left to right but written right to left with the largest quarter (containing 160 acres) at the right. For example, a parcel of land described as "the South half of the SouthWest quarter" would be written S1/2 SW1/4 and would contain 80 acres. A parcel of land described as "the NorthWest quarter of the NorthEast quarter" would be written as NW1/4 NE1/4 and contain 40 acres. A parcel of land described as "the West half of the NorthWest quarter of the NorthEast quarter of the SouthEast quarter" would be written as N1/2 NW1/4 NE1/4 SE1/4 and would contain 5 acres.

Some descriptions contain the symbol "fr" which means fractional. This would indicate that the quarter does not contain a normal full acreage. Others include a "+" indicating that the person owns a parcel of land that lies in two quarters, such as S1/2 NW1/4 + N1/2 SW1/4 and containing a total of 160 acres. ccd

*The FOUR DRIVE*, a genealogy newsletter brought to you for promoting genealogy of our ancestors and their descendants.

#### SPECIAL NOTE

The scope of this newsletter is not limited to just the ancestors of the editor. While the editor will be pre-paring articles relating to his ancestors and their siblings and descendants we encourage others to submit information for inclusion in future issues.

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## Recent Acquisitions

**John Henry Fitch**, Homestead entry packet. This packet contains original application, receipts, certification of compliance for homestead and grant of an 80 acre homestead in Antrim County, MI.

**Andrew Jackson Rose**. Thanks to Dennis Hansen, great grandson of Andrew Jackson Rose for the following materials.

1. Letter(copy) dated 23 January 1907 from Andrew to daughter Estella. Copy of envelope included.
2. Certified copy of marriage record of Nels Hansen and Estella M. Rose dated 29 Oct, 1904 Record #2530.
3. Letter(copy) dated 22 Sept. 1860 Lockington, Ohio. A letter of recommendation for A.J. Rose. signed by 5 residents of Lockington.
4. Copy of newspaper article reporting on a going away parties given the A.J. Rose family preparatory to their moving to Summit. (no date given for article)
5. Copy of "Reward of Merit" certificate awarded to Cecil Rose by his Grandma, Teacher.
6. Copy of Discharge of A. J. Rose from the U.S.S Forest Rose and the naval service. dated 23 June 1865.
7. Teachers Second Grade Certificate (copy of) No. 9 dated August 30, 1905 awarded Estella Rose.
8. Copy of military record of A.J. Rose showing date of enlistment ( 6 Sep. 1864

for period of 1 year as Lds (landsman) Showing his birthplace as Shelby Co., Ohio at age 25, occupation as shoemaker, blue eyes, dark hair and height of 5 ft 4 inches.

Our thanks to Dennis for providing copies of this information.

**Andrew Jackson Rose**. Thanks to Chris Dixon, great-great grandson of Andrew Jackson Rose for copy of Andrew J. Rose obituary published in "The Ludington Chronicle" 8 Jan 1908.

**Matilda Rose**. Thanks to Chris Dixon, great-great grandson of Andrew Jackson Rose for copy of Matilda Rose obituary published in Ewart MI paper about 22 May 1885.

**Andrew Heath**. Death record information has indicated that Andrew's parents were Jacob and Abigail Heath. Census information indicates they were from NY. Through the Ancestral file of the Family History Library we found a reference with several Heaths listed. We contacted the name of the submitter and our thanks to Linda Blake of Apple Valley MN for responding and submitting a wealth of information covering Heath families of that area. While we have not confirmed any direct connection at this time, there are two Jacob Heaths listed and this information gives us a starting place.

**CURRENT RESEARCH EFFORTS****Four Drive Tractor**

The Four Drive Tractor appeared about 1916. Known as the Fitch FWD Tractor, it was built with few changes until the mid-1930's. A 20-36 model with a larger and heavier frame appeared in 1920. Powered by a Climax four cylinder engine, the 20-36 had a three thousand dollar price tag, compared to the \$1,000 list price on the 1916 model. The 20-36 weighed 5,100 pounds. The Fitch Four Drive Tractor was built by the Four Drive Tractor Co., Big Rapids, MI.

This paragraph was taken from the:  
The Encyclopedia of American Farm Tractors  
Published by Crestline Publishing  
1251 North Jefferson Ave.,  
Sarasota, FL 33577 ISBN No. 0-912612-15-0  
researched by Joyce Burchett, Nov 1996

**DONALD CHINNERY** has been researching his great grandmother Rebecca Thompson nee Watts, her husband Alfred Thompson and parents Robert and Mary Watts. Recent research has centered in the Chicago area. I need access to newspaper files of 7 June 1877. Rebecca Thompson's death occurred June 6, 1877 and was published in Chicago Tribune and Chicago Daily News on 7 June 1877. I am hoping this obituary will provide additional family information. Does anyone have access to large libraries that keep these newspapers on file?

**DONALD CHINNERY** Recently reviewed LDS film # 1006450, Mason County, MI Marriage Index. Retrieved record information for the following marriages: Frederick Dean and Mabel A. Rose. married July 21, 1898 in Summit. Record #1555. Liber 3/#126. f. Dalus Dean and m. Louisa Silverton. Bride f. Andrew J. Rose and m. Mary Heath. Witness were Clarence French and Estella Rose. (Clarence is step son of Louis Rose)

Marriage of Nels Hansen and Estella M Rose. Marriage record #2530. Liber 3/#196 Copy of record was received as part of information from Dennis Hansen.

Marriage of Charles W. Fitch and Ethel V. Rose

dated 29 Oct 1902. Liber 3/#174 Record #2194. f. John H. Fitch and Hattie Lano. Brides parents were Andrew J. Rose and Mary Heath. Witnesses were David Grover and Nelli Fitch.

**CHRISTOPHER DIXON** is researching Illinois census records for the Dixon families of Mercer County, IL.

**Our Thanks:**

Thanks to Joyce Burchett for her research into The Fitch Four Drive Tractor and to Chris Dixon for his article using Deed Records as a research tool.

**Need copies of any of the information referenced?** Contact the editor or the individual shown.

What about Family Group Sheets? Editor is most happy to provide what we have available upon request. GEDCOM files can also be provided. Your editor also accumulates as much information as he can concerning siblings. Family group sheets and information in many cases are also available.

**BACK ISSUES** are available upon request to the editor/publisher.

**Genealogist information** (please submit your information & interests)

Joyce (Herrick) Burchett, 11868 North Deja Rd., Edmore, MI 48829

e-mail address: joyeburch@aol.com

Burchett - Guy, Robart, King

Fitch - Rose, Lano, Heath, Boncrotz, Fudge, Firman(Sherman or Hennan), Geer

Herrick - Hemingway, Gamertsfelder, Richardson, King

Computer is IBM compatible, Microsoft Windows 3.1

Donald Chinnery, F70321, P.O. Box 44209, Cincinnati OH 45244 - e-mail

Chinnery-Thompson, Eplett, Watts, Lambert, Ward

Fitch - Rose, Lano, Heath, Boncrotz, Fudge, Firman(Sherman or Hennan), Geer

Siblings of above: Gates, Clifford, White,

Computer program is MacRoots II on a Macintosh LC III with capability for file exchange of text files to and from DOS disks.

Chris Dixon, 3034 Albacore Circle Apt. E-3, Silverdale, WA 98315-9707 (360)697-3279

e-mail address : pjmp93a@prodigy.com (after 1 Apr 97)

Dixon - Hartwig, Kellogg, Tolle, Beach, Collins

Fitch/Ficht - Rose, Lano, Geer, Heath, Boncrotz, Fudge, Firman/Forman/Sherman

Luedke - Laehn, Endris, Boettcher

Kistler - Cribbs/Krebs, Rupert, Strock, Muhleysen/Milliron, Frey,

Christoffersen, Petersen

Computer: Brother's Keeper 5.2 for Windows on a Pentium 75mhz, with color

inkjet printer and flatbed scanner; WordPerfect for Windows 6.2 for word

processor; can save graphics and text in many formats

Judith Stock, 11228 Balboa Blvd., Granada Hills, CA 91344.

e-mail address: writestock@aol.com

Stock - Lansing, Rose, Formen, Murket

Van Court - Spencer, Hughey

Computer is IBM compatible using Family Tree Maker.

### PUBLISHERS STATEMENT

The FOUR DRIVE, a genealogy newsletter is published on irregular schedule by Donald Chinnery. Please let your family genealogists know about this newsletter.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

to this newsletter are free. If you wish to continue receiving this newsletter please acknowledge receipt of this newsletter with your comments and request to continue to the editor .

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### Corrections/errata

The Susan Chinnery referred in the John Anthony Chinnery article of issue #2 of The FOUR DRIVE should read as Sarah J. Chinnery. Her maiden name was Flora.

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### RESEARCHING

### The HENRY ROSE FAMILY

**A lesson learned.** In issue #2 of The Four Drive we reported that the eldest daughter of Henry and Matilda was not enumerated with the family in the 1850 Census of Shelby Co., Ohio. This was incorrect. A review of the film LDS#444722 did list Nancy E. Rose age 13. How I skipped over her name is anyone's guess. Perhaps because of the excitement in finding Jackson listed I recorded his name and inadvertently skipped over Nancy. The lesson learned here is OBTAIN PHOTOCOPIES of RESEARCH INFORMATION for future reference.