

Another Branch

Melville Hayes – Ancestors and Descendants

A Burning Desire

"Boys, there ain't no free lunches in this country. And don't go spending your whole life commiserating that you got the raw deals.

You've got to say, 'I think that if I keep working at this and want it bad enough I can have it.' It's called perseverance." ~

Lee J. Iacocca

Life during The Great Depression was extremely difficult. Daily survival required enormous strength, courage, creativity and resourcefulness. The pursuit of luxuries was replaced by constant concerns about barely making ends meet.

Because money was so scarce, the basic joys of life, such as going on a picnic or taking a hike, were the only sources of entertainment. Love was the glue that held families together and allowed them to survive the hardships of those trying times. Any money that could be saved was carefully protected and used only for stark necessities and emergencies.

During this time, a very determined young boy, named Melville, possessed a burning desire to attend college, despite his circumstances. He had dreamed of a college degree from the time he was a small lad. He also knew that his family was one of the poorest, but still he held onto his dream.

He was the youngest of six children and his Mother, a widow, took in laundry and ironing for a meager five dollars per week. Every member of the family worked at any jobs that were available to help supplement

their Mother's sparse income. During the warmer months, the family planted a garden which provided their entire food supply.

Melville knew that, in order to attend college, he alone would have to assume this responsibility. He was determined to make this happen, although he didn't yet know *how*.

In June, 1935, when he was fourteen years old, the *how* showed up. He had heard that the Civilian Conservation Corp. (C.C.C.) was in town recruiting able-bodied young men to perform valuable environmental work, such as building state parks and restoring and maintaining forests. He was determined that he would go to C.C.C. Camp.



Melville Hayes

As he entered the enlistment office he knew that he would look a little older than fourteen because of his height. Since the minimum age requirement was eighteen, Melville wore a hat and suit belonging to his older brother, with two bulky sweaters concealed underneath his shirt to make him appear more muscular.

The tall, burly man that stood behind the enlistment desk seemed nice enough. After asking what seemed to be a hundred questions he finally made a motion with his large arm toward the stairs saying, "Okay, Mel, you appear to be qualified . . . provided you pass the physical. Report upstairs, strip down to your shorts, and take your place in line. The doctors are examining a group up there now. Good luck son."

After taking in a deep breath, Melville's shaky legs somehow carried him up the steps. As he removed his clothing, he prayed that he would pass the doctor's scrutiny. He couldn't help but notice how

young and puny he looked, as he compared himself to the muscular, hairy brutes ahead of him in line. To make himself look more confident and older, he took in another large breath, stuck out his chest, threw back his shoulders and held his head high.

After dressing and returning to the main desk downstairs, another official approached Melville's group saying, "You twenty men have been accepted for a six-month enlistment. Report here at 7 a.m. tomorrow morning. A truck will take you to camp, where you will build a state park."

He could hardly contain his excitement as his papers were stamped and handed back to him. With papers in hand, he hurried over to Mr. Hawley's home, the superintendent of schools.

After Melville requested his leave of absence from school, Mr. Hawley replied, "I'll give you permission to be excused from school for the fall term so you can work at the C.C.C camp, but I expect you to be back here in class by January. Good luck, Mel."

"Yes, sir!" Melville replied with excitement. This was his passport to a college degree. He planned on saving all of the money he earned at camp to begin college in four years.

In January, 1936, this same determined boy returned to school as a man, with \$180 from six months of hard, manual labor in the cold wintry woods of Michigan. In fact, he was so determined, and in such a hurry, to attend college that he completed high-school in only three years.

The money he had saved was enough to pay for books and tuition for his first two semesters. His oldest brother, Charles, who also held a college degree, surprised Melville by contributing enough additional money to cover college expenses for remainder of that first year. Melville continued to work hard throughout the next four years, taking on odd jobs and then studying into the wee hours of the morning.



Melville & Lucille

Graduating from Michigan State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry was only one of many goals that he would achieve during his seventy-two years with us.

Dad's burning desire was to earn a college degree -- something he had visualized since early childhood, despite The Great Depression and the death of his father years before. He knew an education would be his passport to a promising future.

I am proud to have known Melville John Hayes as my loving Father. He was an excellent role model and he knew what was really valuable in life. He was a living example of the need to have goals, to visualize them and to persist in order to achieve them.

*Written by Laura
Hayes Lagana
Daughter of
Melville J. Hayes*

[Note: This story is based on notes that were discovered after my father's death. We shared a common bond

-- the love of writing. Judging by his notes, he had planned to write this story someday. All of the details were carefully preserved, and the events were in neat, chronological order.]

A Burning Desire.

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Lunch Dates

By Laura Hayes Lagana

Mother was delighted when I became a nurse. A long time ago she had dreams of becoming a nurse too, but that was before marriage and children. We enjoyed spending precious time together on our "lunch dates" after I was married and had two children of my own. The time we had together meant more than simply sharing a meal. Being together was a cherished gift -- a gift we gave to one another -- a gift we enjoyed as time allowed. The word time is short and simple -- and often taken for granted. We shared our hearts and souls during our uninterrupted moments in time.

My life was hectic and occasionally chaotic. There never seemed to be enough time to juggle everything that had to done. Keeping all of the balls in the air at

the same time was an almost impossible task. Still somehow, Mother and I always managed to make the time to have our special "lunch dates." I'll never forget one particular afternoon in early April. The two of us

drove to the mall for a morning of shopping before we "did lunch." After walking for only a few minutes, she pointed toward a display of brilliantly colored spring dresses. "Let's stop in here," she said in a child-like voice filled with delight. This was an unusual day because Mother seldom indulged in the luxury of spending money on herself. We walked over to the finery, and she eagerly shuffled through the hangers. After scrutinizing each dress, she finally pulled one out and held it up with an inquisitive glance. "Look at this beautiful blue one," Mother exclaimed. "Is there enough time for me to try this on dear?" Without a moment's hesitation I said, "Certainly. After you have it on come out and model it for me." Mother was a generous size, and it was wonderful to see her rare excitement over a new dress. She appeared from behind the fitting room curtains and slowly sauntered toward the full-length mirror, turning around and around to view every angle. She looked at me with the wide-eyed enthusiasm of a schoolgirl. "Where could I wear this if I did buy it?" she inquired. "A graduation or . . . a funeral?" I was thinking ahead to our son's college graduation in May. We both agreed that would be the perfect opportunity for her to wear the new dress.

As we walked out of the store mother tried to disguise her discomfort. I noticed she was walking more slowly than on previous outings, and she was breathing harder with each new step. She stopped frequently to window shop and discuss the displays, but I knew in my heart that she was trying to disguise her need to catch a breath. When I mentioned it, she dismissed the subject with her usual, "I'm just fine dear . . . not used to walking in these gosh darned sandals." We seemed to be closer than ever. We shared feelings and thoughts about everything and everyone in our lives. Suddenly I saw her in a different light. We surpassed mother and daughter. We were close friends – two adult women, connecting. Two weeks later, on a lovely Sunday afternoon in April, my father telephoned me at home, hysterically mumbling something about paramedics. He instructed me to meet him at the emergency room, as quickly as I could. I drove to the hospital, trying to concentrate on the traffic, despite trembling hands and a racing heart. I gripped the steering wheel for support. This was the hospital where I worked, and my car seemed to pilot itself.

The emergency room nurse was waiting for me at the door. She immediately escorted me into a tiny, dimly lit office. There sat my father, shaking and sobbing. He stood up as I walked over to him. We hugged. His tear-filled eyes disclosed the dreadful truth. He managed to choke out a few words. "She never knew

what happened. Her heart just stopped. I did all I could for her but . . ." Then he fell into my arms, and we both cried. It seemed like a nightmare – so unreal. The soft-spoken nurse gave us a few details about mother's condition and assured us that death had come quickly. Then she took us to see Mom, leaving the three of us alone for our final farewells. Before the nurse left the room, she said gently, "Take as long as you need," closing the door behind her. Mother was lying so peacefully on the stretcher, covered almost entirely by a white sheet, except for her pale face and shoulders. Although I had seen many deceased patients before, this was different. This was my one and only Mother, and my first experience with losing a dear loved one. Dad and I held onto one another as we cried. That shopping trip suddenly seemed like ages before. Thank God I had the chance to get to know and appreciate my mother while she was still alive. Not everyone has this miraculous opportunity.

The funeral director requested that we bring mother's burial clothing with us the next day, and we would finalize the arrangements. When Dad and I stepped into her closet, the first piece of clothing we saw was her new blue dress, with the tags still dangling from the sleeve. I choked back the tears as I remembered her recent question, "Where could I wear this if I bought it?" Holding up the dress, I said, "I know mother would want to wear this one." Dad looked up with tear-stained cheeks and nodded in agreement. Mother looked beautiful at the viewing. Her blue dress went well with her pale complexion and soft pink cheeks. I will always be grateful to this generous, caring woman who gave me life, her time and unconditional love.

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Genealogy of Melville J. Hayes

From Don Chinnery notes and accumulations of information from my mother Alice Fitch Chinnery, Melville Hayes, and Laura Lagana. Melville was one of six children born of George Hayes and Nora Belle Fitch

**The descendants of  
GEORGE ALBERT HAYES  
and  
MARY DONAHUE**

**1. George Albert Hayes.** Born on 17 Apr 1843 in CANADA WEST<sup>1</sup>. George Albert died on 3 Aug 1911; he was 68.

George Albert married Mary Donahue. Born on 7 Sep 1847 in Brockville, CANADA WEST. Mary died in 1924; she was 76. They had several children, This study reflects only the descendants through son George Albert:

- 2 i. George Albert (1876-1927)



Charles Wesley Fitch(l) & George Albert Hayes(r)

Background believed to be Nora Belle. The children believed to be son Charles Preston and Beatrice in her mother's arms. (Daughter Mary Harriett died in January 1906).<sup>2</sup>

### Second Generation

**2. George Albert Hayes.** Born on 7 Apr 1876 in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, Canada. George Albert died on 22 Sep 1927; he was 51.

<sup>1</sup> Information supplied to the editor indicated places as being Ontario. Ontario did not exist in 183. It was called CANADA WEST.

<sup>2</sup> From these assumptions we ascertain that this photo was taken summer 1908, the boy about 4 1/2 and the girl about 18 months. We have no information regarding location of the house. Charles and George were very good friends. George worked for Charles during summers of 1905 & 1906 as written in Charles's journals.

On 27 Nov 1902 when George Albert was 26, he married Nora Belle Alice Fitch, daughter of John Henry Ficht & Harriett Cecilia Lano, in Riverton Twp, Mason Co, MI. Born on 11 Jul 1883 in Ludington, Mason Co, MI. Nora Belle Alice died in Ludington, Mason Co, MI on 5 Jun 1958; she was 74.



**Nora Belle Alice Fitch**

They had the following children:

- |          |      |                              |
|----------|------|------------------------------|
| <b>3</b> | i.   | Charles Preston (1903-1989)  |
| <b>4</b> | ii.  | Mary Harriet (1905-1906)     |
| <b>5</b> | iii. | Beatrice Lucille (1906-1963) |
| <b>6</b> | iv.  | Marion Bishop (1910-1967)    |
| <b>7</b> | v.   | Rockwell Clancy (1915-1971)  |
| <b>8</b> | vi.  | Melville John (1920-1992)    |

### Third Generation

**3. Charles Preston Hayes.** Born on 27 Sep 1903. Charles Preston died on 3 Mar 1989; he was 85.

On 20 Jun 1944 when Charles Preston was 40, he married Harriet Hillyer Reynolds. Born on 17 Jun 1915.

They had the following children:

- |           |      |                           |
|-----------|------|---------------------------|
| <b>9</b>  | i.   | Charles Preston (1945-)   |
| <b>10</b> | ii.  | Jonathan Douglass (1947-) |
| <b>11</b> | iii. | Susilee Catherine (1949-) |
| <b>12</b> | iv.  | Fletcher Paul (1951-)     |

**4. Mary Harriet Hayes.** Born on 16 Mar 1905. Mary Harriet died on 28 Jan 1906.

**5. Beatrice Lucille Hayes.** Born on 29 Oct 1906 in Ludington, Mason Co., MI. Beatrice Lucille died on 7 Feb 1963; she was 56.

On 5 Sep 1927 when Beatrice Lucille was 20, she married Edward Michael Organ.

They had the following children:

- |           |     |                     |
|-----------|-----|---------------------|
| <b>13</b> | i.  | Dale Edward (1932-) |
| <b>14</b> | ii. | Patrica Lee (1930-) |

15      iii.      John Emery (1934-)

**6. Marion Bishop Hayes.** Born on 29 Jun 1910 in Ludington, Mason Co., MI. Marion Bishop died on 22 May 1967; he was 56.

On 31 Jul 1936 when Marion Bishop was 26, he first married Ruth Leslie, daughter of George Leslie & Edna (leslie). Born on 9 Nov 1914.

They had the following children:

- 16      i.      George Leslie (1938-)  
17      ii.     Roger Douglass (1939-1939)

Marion Bishop second married Kathryn Kelley. Marriage was annulled.

On 14 May 1966 when Marion Bishop was 55, he third married Louise Berg.

**7. Rockwell Clancy Hayes.** Born on 28 Jan 1915 in Ludington, Mason Co., MI. Rockwell Clancy died on 15 Aug 1971; he was 56.

On 16 Nov 1940 when Rockwell Clancy was 25, he married Frances Theresa Sobanski, daughter of John Sobanski & Stella Sobanski, in Ludington, Mason, MI. Born on 17 Jun 1915.

They had the following children:

- 18      i.      Roger George (1942-)  
19      ii.     Rockwell John (1942-1942)  
20      iii.    Steven Frank (1944-)  
21      iv.     Walter James (1946-)

**8. Melville John Hayes.** Born on 9 Nov 1920 in Ludington, Mason Co, MI. Melville John died in Newark, DE on 13 Mar 1992; he was 71. Buried in Newark, DE. Occupation: Chemist.

On 13 Jan 1943 when Melville John was 22, he married Lucille Anne Shreattle, in Midland, MI. Born on 28 Jul 1925 in Traverse City, MI. Lucille Anne died in Wilmington, DE on 23 Apr 1989; she was 63.

They had the following children:

- 22      i.      Linda Marie (1944-)  
23      ii.     Laura Anne (1948-)

#### Fourth Generation

**9. Charles Preston Hayes Jr.** Born on 2 Jul 1945.

On 4 May 1965 when Charles Preston was 19, he married Amy Joyce Wheat.

They had one child:

- i.      Robert Preston (1978-)

**10. Jonathan Douglass Hayes.** Born on 9 Oct 1947.

On 30 Dec 1969 when Jonathan Douglass was 22, he married Gale Barbara Hanney. They were divorced on 29 Oct 1971 in Annulled, .

**11. Susilee Catherine Hayes.** Born on 26 Feb 1949.

On 18 Aug 1973 when Susilee Catherine was 24, she married John Charles Dean.

They had one child:

- i.      Michael John (1981-)

**12. Fletcher Paul Hayes.** Born on 15 Aug 1951.

On 4 Jun 1977 when Fletcher Paul was 25, he married Pamela Dawn Dumke.

**13. Dale Edward Organ.** Born on 8 Jun 1932.

On 21 Feb 1951 when Dale Edward was 18, he first married Mae Marie Schneider.

On 10 Sep 1959 when Dale Edward was 27, he second married Barbara Behan.

They had the following children:

- i.      Michael  
ii.     David  
iii.    Jan  
iv.     Nancy  
v.      Donna

**14. Patrica Lee Organ.** Born on 28 Jan 1930.

On 26 Jun 1948 when Patrica Lee was 18, she married George Corey.

**15. John Emery Organ.** Born on 10 Nov 1934.

On 10 Sep 1959 when John Emery was 24, he married Mildred Christina Young.

They had the following children:

- i.      Dairlis Jane (1961-)  
ii.     Bobby (1973-)

**16. George Leslie Hayes.** Born on 1 Feb 1938 in Ludington, Mason, MI.

On 17 Nov 1956 when George Leslie was 18, he married Mary Hurley.

**17. Roger Douglass Hayes.** Born on 3 Jan 1939 in Ludington, Mason, MI. Roger Douglass died on 8 Mar 1939.

**18. Roger George Hayes.** Born on 13 Dec 1942 in Ludington, Mason, MI.

On 22 Feb 1964 when Roger George was 21, he married Cheryl Lea Carlson.

They had the following children:

- i. Scott
- ii. Lisa
- iii. Todd

**19. Rockwell John Hayes.** Born on 13 Dec 1942 in Ludington, Mason Co, MI. Rockwell John died on 17 Dec 1942.

**20. Steven Frank Hayes.** Born on 16 Sep 1944 in Ludington, Mason Co, MI.

On 19 Jun 1965 when Steven Frank was 20, he married Sandra Gaye Boerner.

They had the following children:

- i. Kim
- ii. Brian

**21. Walter James Hayes.** Born on 18 Oct 1946 in Ludington, Mason Co, MI.

On 24 Aug 1968 when Walter James was 21, he married Kathleen Ellen Lowry.

They had the following children:

- i. Daniel
- ii. Jess

**22. Linda Marie Hayes.** Born on 7 Aug 1944 in Ludington, Mason Co, MI. Occupation: Secretary/Homemkr.

On 28 Sep 1968 when Linda Marie was 24, she married Robert E. Pyle III, son of Robert Pyle Jr. & Bessie, in Wilmington, New Castle Co., DE. Born on 7 Oct 1942 in Wilmington, DE.

They had the following children:

- i. Robert Edison (1970-)
- ii. Bryan Christopher (1972-)

**23. Laura Anne Hayes.** Born on 15 Mar 1948 in Traverse City, MI. Occupation: RN/Author/Professional Speaker.

On 28 Feb 1970 when Laura Anne was 21, she married Thomas Gaetano Lagana Jr, son of Thomas Gaetano Lagana Sr. & Catherina Jenni Gilardi, in Wilmington, New Castle, DE. Born on 2 Nov 1944 in Philadelphia, PA.

They had the following children:

- i. Brandon Thomas (1971-)
- ii. Daniel Anthony (1974-)

### George Albert Hayes

#### ADDITIONAL NOTES

The marriage of George Albert Hayes (2nd Generation of this chart) to Nora Belle Alice Fitch linked the Hayes descendants to descendants of John Henry Fitch and Harriett Cecila Lano. We have information that traces the ancestry of the Lano's back to King Edward I. I have previously passed this information onto to our more active researchers of the family. Reviewing past issues of this newsletter I am quite surprised that I have not featured this ancestry. Another time hopefully. I can pass on this information in a GEDCOM file for active genealogists or as "RTF" file for others desiring a record. dgc

#### New Subscribers

We welcome two additions to our mailing list starting with this issue: Susilee Catherine Dean nee Hayes and her brother Fletcher Paul Hayes. Susilee and Fletcher would be first cousins to your editor and of course to my first cousins of the Fitch line. Additionally this newsletter is being sent to Linda Hayes Pyle. Brandon Lagana, and Mr and Mrs Daniel Lagana - all Hayes descendants

## Nicholas J. Royal

Nicholas J. Royal of Bath recently donated his extensive accumulation of genealogical papers to the The Somerset & Dorset Family History Society. Your editor first came in contact with our cousin upon joining the S&DFHS. My name was published with a query as to possible connection to "Weston" line. I received a letter from Mr. Royal supplying information that confirmed our supposition that Martha Weston Fudge was indeed descended from Westons. i.e. The middle name Weston was a family surname.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent correspondence - he sent me additional family information including an ancestor chart back to King Edward I.

Our common link is Henry Weston (b. CIR 1701) and Edith Marshallsay. Henry and Edith being my 6\*great-grandparents while they are Nicholas's 5\*great-grandparents. The Weston family is an ancient family of Weymouth.

### **Review of the February 2001 version of the John H. Fitch biography**

by Christopher Dixon

The biography on my Great, Great-Grandfather John Henry Fitch was originally written as a 9th grade English assignment in December 1981 while I was attending Whitehall (MI) High School. My teacher remarked that it was the best paper of 50 he read over the Christmas vacation and that I must save this for my family. Since that time, I have conducted extensive research and located more information and periodically updated this biography. [see "*The Four Drive*" Vol. I No. 8 Sept. 18, 1997 for a review of a previous revision of the biography].

What started as a 7-page written report has grown to over 50 pages filled with graphics and photos. The biography now includes 3 family group sheets, information on the company after John passed away, tractor production information and a new chapter on Fitch Four Drive Tractors known to exist today. New graphics include an actual Fitch Four Drive logo from 1929 and two collages. The first collage is now the cover and includes portraits of John and Harriet; John's signature from his Homestead application; a portrait of John and his brothers George and Michael; a photo of the Riverton

<sup>3</sup> See *The Four Drive*, Vol. IV, No. 2.

farm; a photo of John and the tractor outside the Big Rapids plant in 1916; two Four Drive logos and an illustration of his street car switch. The second collage features a photo of John and the tractor outside the Big Rapids plant from 1916; two Four Drive logos; a Marfa, TX tractor test photo; a small portrait of John and two tractor photos from 1916 and 1929 brochures.

The biography does NOT include additional information obtained since March 2001.

Future plans include an Internet webpage featuring the biography as well as information about the company and the tractors that are currently in existence around the world. The Website is about 70% complete at this time. Additional plans are for a fully interactive CD-ROM featuring the website and including entire scanned images and documents. I am also working on a database of all Four Drive Tractors that were sold, those that are still in existence and any tractor specifications that can be used for determining model and year of production.

There is a list of bibliography references with all John H. Fitch information that I have in my possession. I will photocopy any of the sources upon request; however, there is a small fee for photocopying and postage for large quantities of material. I can e-mail any of the graphics and photos used in this biography in various computer graphic formats.

This is an on-going project. If anyone has any information that they would like to have included, please contact me. Your information would be greatly appreciated.

## VITAL RECORDS

### Births

**Janet & Rod Perkins** announce the arrival of their third son, **Travis Carl Lee** at 9:40 A.M., March 10th, 2001, at the Warton Hospital. (Ontario Canada) Welcomed home by big brothers Marcus & Lucas. Grandparents Tom and Betty Perkins.

### **Adrienne & Terrance Dixon**

announce the arrival of their daughter, **Ariane Atlanta Dixon** born on 8 May 2001 at 4:44pm. She weighed 8lbs 8oz and was 20 1/2" long.

### Marriages

**Terrance S. Dixon and Adrienne R. Gines** were married on 24 November 2000 in Fremont, Newaygo Co, MI. They reside in Loxahatchee, FL, 20 miles west of West Palm

Beach. Their daughter Ariane Atatlanta Dixon born on 8 May 2001 at 4:44pm. She weighed 8lbs 8oz and was 20 1/2" long.

## **Deaths**

### **Doris Vivian (Dixon) Schram**

Doris died Friday, April 13, 2001.

Doris V. Schram

Born: 1-18-1939

Died: 4-13-2001

Funeral Service 4-18-2001 at Esterdahl

Mortuary, Ltd.

Rock Island, IL

Officiate: Rev. Jesse Truitt

Pallbearers: Roger Milburn Grandson

Steve Miller-son in law

Cliff Nelson-Nephew

Place of Interment

National Cemetery

Rock Island Arsenal

Rock Island, IL

Survivors include mother Arlene Brant, Ludington, MI, a son Casey (Audra) Schram, Sterling IL, daughter Cheryl Schram, Daughter Judy (Steve) Miller both from Rock Island, IL, five grandchildren, a sister Judy Jett, Muskegon, and brothers Earl (Betty) and Chuck (Dee) Dixon both of Whitehall, MI. She was preceded in death by her father Clifford Dixon and an infant son Cleon Schram

### **Grace Eileen (Gates) Cross**

Grace passed away at the Kingway Nursing Home, St. Marys, Ontario on Thursday February 8th, 2001, in her 91st year. Wife of the late T. J. "Jim" Cross (1981). Mother of Raymond and his wife Marlyn Cross of Thorndale, loving grandmother of Brenda and her husband Launie Fletcher of Ilderton, and Bradley Cross of Springfield. Great Grandma to Joel, Craig and Scott. Predeceased by:

3 brothers, George, Fred & Russell

6 sisters: Edith Gates, Emily Gates, Agnes Dawson, Mary Schope, Annie Scribner, Lavina Clifford. Funeral Service from the Harland B. Betzner Funeral Home, Thamesford, Ontario on Saturday February 10th, 2001 at 11 A.M. Rev. Marjorie Smith

officiating. Interment Forest Lawn Memorial Gardens, London, Ontario.

### **Wennie Lee (Bowen) Chinnery**

Mrs. Wennie Chinnery, 70 died Thursday, March 22, 2001, at her residence. Widow of Mr. Carleton Chinnery. Survived by two sons, Thomas Alan and Timothy Lee; one daughter, Pamela Chinnery Miles; three sisters, Mary Stallings, Annie Pearl Carroll and Juanita Witt, two brothers Calvin L. Young and Leroy Young, 5 grandchildren, and one great grandson.

Funeral services were held March 25, 2001 Home West Chapel with interment in Bellevue Memorial Gardens.

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## **SURFING THE INTERNET**

Where have you been surfing?

Have you found any exciting sites?

**Editor has been remiss in this area.**

**What about you?? Any leads?**

Summerset & Dorset Family History Society

<http://www.sdfhs.org>

## **Four Drive Tractor Research on the Internet**

by Christopher Dixon

In March 2000 while editing the John H. Fitch biography to add additional information, I decided to conduct a search on the Internet for Fitch Four Drive Tractors. I located a website in Australia that listed a 1924 Fitch Four Drive that was on display at the Gunnedah Rural Museum. [The Gunnedah Rural Museum is located in the town of Gunnedah (population 8,800) which is about 300 miles north of Sydney. The museum features many tractors manufactured in various countries that were used around the Gunnedah area.] I later located the website of Mr. Ian Johnston, an Australian agricultural historian and author. I e-mailed him inquiring about the Gunnedah Fitch and he said that he did have some information. Four months later, I received five pages that were photocopied from his book "*The Classic World of Tractors*". In his letter, he stated that he has only seen one other Fitch and that was in a museum in New Zealand.

After receiving the information from Ian, I conducted another Internet search found three inquiries on the Yesterday's Tractors website [<http://www.ytmag.com/index.htm>] regarding Fitch Tractors. Mr. Richard Toy of Washington State was looking for information on Fitch Tractors and Climax engines. I contacted Richard and he stated that a friend of his - Mr. Ken Christensen of Westport, WA - owned one and that Richard had made a few replacement parts for the tractor. Richard gave me Ken's phone number and I phoned him to ask him about his tractor. The following week, I sent Ken a copy of the biography as well as a 1916 brochure.

In addition, there was a response on the Yesterday's website to an inquiry about the first four-wheel drive tractor. A Four Drive tractor (test #165) was listed in the Nebraska Tractor Test Lab book as being conducted in 1929. I then located the Nebraska Tractor Test Laboratory website. [The "Nebraska Tests" began in 1919 after being mandated by a Nebraska law to encourage the manufacture and sale of high quality and reliable tractors with the results of these tests made available to the public. Companies submitted advertising literature and specifications for their tractors being tested so that the test results could be compared with the claims and statements made by the companies.] The website allowed for ordering lab results as well as any advertising material that was submitted for the test. I e-mailed the Lab and they verified that it was the Four Drive Tractor Company of Big Rapids, MI and that they did have advertising information as well. I ordered the information for \$30 and received the information in a few weeks. The advertising information included a 11"x17" brochure on the 1929 "The Cat" Model E 15-30 version of the tractor and an 18-page brochure which included specifications, many photos and testimonials from satisfied customers. ["The Cat" 1929 Model E 15-30 was shorter but wider than the "Fitch" 1929 Improved Model D 20-35 and featured a Waukesha 4-cylinder engine vice the Climax 4-cylinder engine.]

I located an inquiry on the Antique Tractor Internet Service (ATIS) website [<http://www.atis.net>] posted by Mr. Joe Haze of Big Rapids. I contacted Joe and he stated that he was a member of The Big Rapids Antique Farm & Power Club [see "*The Four Drive*" Vol. III No. 4 November 8, 1999 page 7 for information on the club's 1st show in July 1999]. He said that other club members included Mr. Keith Schuberg of Rodney, MI [see "*The Four Drive*" Vol. II, No. 5 pgs 7-8 for information on his 1929 "The Cat" Model F and Vol. III, No. 1 April 12, 1999 page 1 for a photo] and another man who owns a gas tank that he found in a dump 50 years ago. Joe stated that the only information that he had seen was in the book "*The Illustrated History of Tractors*" by Robert Moorhouse [1996]. That book briefly mentioned that the Fitch Four drive first built during the Great War and remained on sale into the early

thirties and was the only one to be exported.

I have incorporated all the new information into a new 54-page biography. After editing and printing, I located more information after conducting searches on the Internet auction site eBay. One item of interest was "*The 1929 Tractor Field Book*". I e-mailed the seller and she photocopied 4 pages of information on the Four Drive tractor including a blueprint and advertisement.

I also located the book "*The Agricultural Tractor 1855-1950*" by R.B. Gray. It appears that a white outline of "The Cat" Four Drive is in the upper left corner on the cover. I am trying to bid on this book at a reasonable price.

Another item up for auction on eBay was a 1917 Four Drive brochure (it was probably from 1920). The brochure was 18 pages in length and was 6"x9". The seller included scanned images of the cover and 4 pages. I did bid on the brochure but it sold for \$129. I asked the seller if he could photocopy all the pages but said he would not do it because he did not want to take the risk of damaging the brochure. I have since contacted the buyer about photocopying it but have not received a reply at this time.

One of the bidders on the brochure stated that he had seen a Four Drive at a tractor show in Madison, SD about 5-6 years ago. I have located that show's website and I have contacted the president of the club to see if they can help me locate this tractor - again, I have not received a reply at this time.

While on vacation in New Hampshire, located a new book containing information as well as a price guide on the Fitch Four Drive in "*Standard Catalog of Farm Tractors*" by C.H. Wendel [2000]. [Mr. Wendel is the author of the "*Encyclopedia of American Farm Tractors*" published in 1992.] I have contacted the publisher in regards to the information that I have with a request to forward my name, address and phone to the author but have not received a reply. The price guide listed that a well restored or extremely well maintained Four Drive is worth \$17,000; a new or restored to new is \$10,000; a functional or restorable Four Drive that runs but needs restoration or replacement parts is \$6,500; and a Four Drive that may or may not be functional, weathered, wrecked or incomplete, rusty or stripped for parts is worth \$4,000.

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Fitch Four Drive Tractors Still Existing Today

by Christopher Dixon

Bishop's 1929 Fitch Model D4 20-35 serial #1640. Originally purchased by F.E. Bishop of Bando Station, Mullaey, Gunnedah, New

South Wales, Australia, this tractor is now on display at the Gunnedah Rural Museum along with the original owner's manual and correspondence relating to its purchase.

Mr. Bishop ordered a Fitch Four Drive Tractor with the Sydney Auto Truck Company in Brisbane instead of one of the numerous Australian-built tractors or the more popular McCormick tractors. He must have felt that the Fitch Four Drive would not get stuck in the sticky, self-mulching black soil of the North West Plains in Australia.

The tractor was ordered with an optional center-mounted grader blade and industrial solid rubber tired cast wheels in addition to the standard steel lugged agricultural wheels. Bando Station had a large network of railroad tracks to maintain. Each time cattle or sheep were rounded up and driven by mounted stockmen along the tracks in wet weather, the surface became a sea of mud. When the hot sun reappeared, the mud baked into dangerous, rutted roadways which only a grader blade could smoothen.

Bishop's tractor was powered by a Climax K Series 4-cylinder engine (#8422) and was to develop 20 drawbar and 35 belt horsepower at 800 rpm. The tractor weighed 7,000 pounds when equipped with the cast wheels, solid tires and grader blade.

Schuberg's 1929 "The Cat" - Model F 15-30 serial #3064.

Keith Schuberg and his sons, Randy and Terry, purchased this tractor in Florida and hauled it to their farm in Rodney, MI, which is about 10 miles from the location where it was built in Big Rapids.

I had the opportunity to visit with Keith and play around with the tractor during a family trip to West Michigan during the summer of 1998. I when I first saw the tractor, I made the comment that this tractor looked different than other Fitch Four Drive Tractors that I had seen in photographs. Two years later, I acquired two company brochures from 1929 on this specific type of Four Drive Tractor known as "The Cat". Instead of the standard steel lugs that were used for farmer work, Keith's "Cat" is fitted with tamping grouser (or growers). The grouser added an additional 4,000 pounds that made this machine the ideal equipment for packing and rolling streets and roads.

The manufacturer's plate identifies Keith's tractor as a Model F 15-30 with a serial #3064. This tractor may actually be from late 1929 or 1930.

The Big Rapids Antique Farm & Power Club has adopted Keith's tractor for use in the club's logos on jackets and ballcaps. Keith's Fitch Four Pull was the subject of the club's first show button during the 1st annual Engine & Tractor Show on July 23-25, 1999 at the Paris Park Fish Hatchery (East M-20 and New Mill Pond Road) north of Big Rapids.

Christensen's Model 20-35.

Ken Christensen of Westport, WA purchased a Four Drive Tractor Model 20-35 in 1996 from a man in Tenino, WA, which is located 15 miles south of Olympia. The tractor was originally located in Georgia, moved to Wisconsin and then spent a number of years in a museum in California. The man from Tenino bought it at an auction in California and moved it to Washington State. Shortly after purchasing it, he suffered a stroke and was unable to restore the tractor. The tractor spent about 10 years in a berry patch on his farm. The man received numerous offers to sell the tractor but each time, he stated that he would not sell it. One of Ken's friends called Ken after he visited the man and said that Ken stood a very good chance at purchasing the tractor by the comments that the man made regarding why he did not want to part with the tractor. Ken showed the man some photos of a couple of other tractors that he had restored. The man liked what he saw and said he would sell the tractor to him; however, the price was a lot higher than what Ken had expected. The man also had an old rambler on the farm, so Ken offered to take both the tractor and the rambler for the same price. The man accepted this offer and Ken moved the tractor to his business (KC Trucks and Reliable Blacksmith Shop, Inc) in Aberdeen, WA. Ken had the tractor running at a tractor show just 9 days after purchasing it. The man from Tenino was very pleased when he saw what Ken had done. Shortly afterward, he passed away.

Ken has since fully restored the tractor and gave it a fresh paint job close to the original color. One bearing on the worm drive to the rear axle and the steering chain had to be replaced. A new clutch friction and part of the intake to the carburetor had to be made. Ken takes his tractor to various old engine and tractor shows in the Pacific Northwest, including shows in Shelton, Roy and Toledo, WA.

The manufacturer's plate is missing, so the full identity of the tractor is unknown. The tractor features a Climax engine.

Ken stated that the tractor design was ahead of its time. Most tractors of that era were belt or chain driven. The Fitch Four Drive was gear driven - this allowed for more transfer of power to the front wheels.

We will be driving to Washington in June-July 2001 and plan on driving to Aberdeen to visit with Ken and to see his tractor. We have been in Aberdeen on 4 occasions from 1996 to 1999 and at least once have driven past the shop where the tractor is located. However, we did not find out about that the tractor was there until a year after we moved out to Connecticut.

FUTURE ISSUES

Your editor is interested in the following subjects for future issues. Informative articles relating to your family. The specific information regarding the "begots" may not be of interest to the majority of our readership, the research techniques used to obtain the facts would be. Recently we have featured Dixon, Stock, and Chinnery as well as families on our common ancestral trees such as Lano and Fudge.

Our thanks to Laura Lagana and Christopher Dixon for the material submitted for inclusion in this issue of The Four Drive.

Back Issues Available

I have a backlog of past issues of "The Four Drive", Charles W. Fitch Journals, and Poems of Alice Chinnery. Prices quoted are essentially for postage and little bit left over to cover the photocopying costs.

"The Four Drive"

Volume #1 (Issues 1-9 complete with index.) \$7.50

Individual issues @ \$1.00 each postpaid.

Volume #1 (1-9)

Volume #2 (10-15)

Volume #3 (16-19)

Volume #4 (20-23)

Every issue contains research information, family information, surfing the internet and current vital record information. Many of the more recent issues has photographs. Recent acquisitions. Each issue also featured a specific theme or family.

#1 General Our First - Heath and Chinnery

#2 General - Rose and Chinnery

#3 Deeds Can Provide Wealth of Information

#4 Sibling Research

#5 JHF Homestead papers - Researching Options

#6 "A Rose is a Rose, is a Rose"

#7 The Bannister's

#8 John Henry Fitch - Preserving Photographs

#9 Our Heath Ancestors

#10 More on Heath Ancestors

#11 Bartholomew Heath

#12 The Mayflower Connection

#13 Heath/Fuller Connections

#14 William Haynes

#15 Jonathan Haynes

#16 "The Four Drive Tractor Company"

#17 "Letters from home"

#18 Photographs

#19 Alsace and Ingenheim

#20 "The Aunts"

#21 Our Fudge Ancestry

#22 The Other Branches - Dixon

#23 Another Branche - Chinnery & Amber Twp.

#24 Another Branch - Hayes

The Journals of Charles Wesley Fitch

Charles recorded his daily activities in journal/or diary practically every year of his life. Many of these journals have been found. We are working on transcribing (typing) so that all would be able to read. This is an important project because those of 100 years ago are becoming more difficult to read writrn as it has started to fade. So far we have transcribed the years of 1900, 1908, 1955. 1955 is complete but has not been printed. Copies of 1900 and 1908 are available @ 2.00/ per copy. I would be happy to email any of the above to those requesting.

I am currently working on a diary that contains portion of 1904/ all of 1905 and portion 1906. We have several other diaries that need to be transcribed.

Alice Rose Fitch Chinnery, 1904-1993

Over the years mother wrote quite a few poems, holidays, family, friends, travels and many other topics. After our mother died Lucille and I decided as a memorial to mother to print all of her poems and combine into one booklet A few copies are still available. Postage is estimated as \$7.50

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

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. Photocopying cost and postage appreciated.

PUBLISHERS STATEMENT

The F O U R D R I V E, a genealogy newsletter is published on irregular schedule by Donald Chinnery. Please let your family genealogists know about this newsletter.

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