



The

# Four Drive

A Genealogy Newsletter



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WHOLE NO. 26

## “The Railroad Story?”

by *Alice Fitch Chinnery* (ca. 1960)

Railroads were a potential factor in the development of this section of our state. The origin dates back to Jan 1857. The first rail was laid August 19, **1859** near Saginaw River.

By **1862** the line extended to Flint. The Flint and Holly Line joined the Flint and P.M. in **1868**. By 1871 the track reached Reed City and three years (1874) later the line was laid to Ludington

The Bay City and East Saginaw Railroad transferred it's holdings to Flint and P.M.

Manistee was connected by rail in **1882**.

The first train consisted of a locomotive named Pollywog, a small second hand machine costing \$2,000, with one baggage car and one coach.

On the west side of Michigan various lines connected Chicago with LaCrosse, Ind., St. Joseph, Mi. and north to Petosley in **1899**.

In **1905** Pere Marquette Railroad Co. consolidated with Cincinnati - Hamilton - Dayton line and also with Chicago, Cincinnati and Louisville R.R. making direct connection to Ludington.

Other consolidations had taken place prior to 1905. Three railroads joined in **1899**. Flint and P.M. RR, Chicago and West Michigan RR, and Detroit, Grand Rapids Western

### Our Michigan Genealogical Timeline

- 1787 - Northwest Territory Created
- 1800 - Indiana Territory created (included Michigan)
- 1805 - Territory of Michigan created
- 1837 - January 26th Michigan became 26th state.
- 1850 - ca 1850 Andrew J. Heath family came to Lapeer Co., MI from New York.
- 1853 - Andrew J. Heath family moved to Macomb Co., MI
- 1854 - ca 1854/5 Henry Rose family came to Macomb County from Ohio.
- 1859 - James A Chinnery and family came to VanBurenCounty
- 1863 - Andrew Jackson Rose and Mary Melissa Heath married on 29 October 1863 in New Baltimore, Macomb County, MI.
- 1864 - James A Chinnery and family came to Mason County
- 1865 - Chinnery's purchased land in Amber Township.
- 1867 - July Michigan counties started local recording of vital records.
- 1867 - Mabel A. Rose born 10 January 1867 in Macomb Co., MI
- 1868 - John Anthony Chinnery and Sara Flora married. 2nd marriage to be recorded in Mason County
- 1868 - Estella M. Rose born 3 Dec. 1868 in Macomb County, MI.
- 1868 - January 25, 1868 John Henry Fitch and Harriett C. Lano were married
- 1868 - ca 1868 John and Harriett settled in Antrim County. They took out citizenship papers on October 19, 1868.
- 1875 - John Henry Fitch became citizen on February 16, 1875.
- 1881 - Ethel Vivian Rose born 26 Jan 1881

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

RR embracing nearly 2000 miles of rail and water lines. This combination was known as Pere Marquette RR. {P.M.R.R.]

An ad in Epworth bulletin 1899 stated "Try West Michigan Ry this year to Ludington. Our service via Baldwin and Flint & P.M. cannot be excelled".

Train service was available from Pentwater south through Muskegon, Grand Haven to Chicago. This service was still in effect in 1916.

"One two, three, out" is a refrain that fits the passenger train story in Ludington. Three depots served the community from 1874 to 1951 when passenger trains ended service to Ludington.

The first depot was a small wooden structure at the west end of Foster Street. With the coming of the trainferry in 1897 it was necessary to move the depot site. The second one was built a short distance east of the southern end of James Street. The building was razed in the late 1970's. After 1930 the depot was on South Madison, a brick structure that served it's original purpose till 1951.

While passenger train service existed the railroad afforded every facility for reaching Ludington from any point in the state with its docks, the largest carferry steamships making daily crossings to points in Wisconsin.

Even Epworth Heights was connected by rail in 1895 by Epworth League Railway, better known as the Dummy. It left every half hour from Flint and Pere Marquette station in 1897.

The train had a queer looking engine named after Rev. Parsons, president of the assembly and was propelled by steam. The three open

in Osceola County, MI

1881 - Nettie Mable Fitch was born 17 January 1881 in Custer Township, Antrim County, MI. [First sibling to be born in Michigan]

1883 - Nora Belle Alice Fitch born 11 Jul 1883 in Ludington, Mason County MI.

1898 - Harold L. Stock was born in Detroit Michigan on 28 April 1898.

1902 - 29 October 1902 Charles Wesley Fitch and Ethel Vivian Rose were married in Summit Township, Mason County, MI.

1902 - 27 November 1902 George Albert Hayes and Nora Belle Alice Fitch were married in Mason County.

1916 - John Henry Fitch dies suddenly.

EDITOR NOTE: This timeline presented as a parallel to the Railroad Story to enhance the happenings of early Michigan History. I am hoping to expand this concept and use in other situations. dgc

coaches seated 75 each and had boarding areas at Dowland, Foster, Filer, Loomis and Tinkham. The ticket office was at Charles (now Rath Avenue) and Ludington Avenue. Fare was 5¢ to Epworth and to to Hamlin 15¢

The train went up Charles Street, through the woods, skirting Lake View Cemetery on the north to Epworth, then across the outlet of Lincoln Lake on the railroad bridge to the South Bayou. The Dummy followed Hamlin Lake, stopping at the foot of the bluff to sauble Inn and then continued north.

Launches met the train and took passengers across the lake to Upper Hamlin resorts.

The coming of the automobile and the improvement in roads put to death in 1918 this active little train that couldn't turn around, but made it's way backwards from whence it came.

For years the tracks were the route followed by hikers from Epworth to Ludington City Limits.

---- Alice Fitch Chinnery

**Fitch Family Reunion****July 28, 2001 - Ludington**

Your editor is very happy to have been able to attend this year's annual Fitch Reunion. I flew to Wisconsin and the following day Daniel and I took the ferry to Ludington, where cousins Judy and Elaine met us. The following report of the reunion is a combination effort of Judy Jett and your editor.

**Fitch Family Holds Reunion***By Judy Jett and Don Chinnery*

The descendants of Charles Wesley Fitch held their annual reunion at the Crooked Tree Park in Ludington, Michigan, on Saturday, July 28, 2001. Approximately sixty people attended the potluck event. The families of Hazel Fitch McDonald and Waunita Bates hosted this year's event. Hosting is rotated according to the birth order of the children of Charles Fitch. Next year the hosts for the reunion to be held on **Saturday July 27, 2002** will be the families of Helen Fitch Burmeister and Clarence Burmeister (deceased) and descendants.

The reunion was blessed by the attendance of three of Charles Wesley Fitch's daughters: Hazel McDonald, Arlene Brant, and Helen Burmeister. Ethel Cassan and her daughters were not able to attend because of the marriage of a grand daughter.

Waunita Bates conducted games and activities for the children and young people while Elaine Stevens and Don Chinnery presented ancestor charts. Elaine has been developing pedigree charts for her Henry branch while the chart presented by Don Chinnery covered the ancestors of Charles and Ethel Fitch going back to the Plantagenets circa 1200. Sample copies of "The Four Drive" the family genealogy newsletter were passed out to those interested.

**Those attending:**

Bob Rotman  
 Marlene Rotman, wife  
 Elaine Henry Stevens  
 Kevin Motyka (son of Nancy Herrick Motyka)  
 Betsy Motyka, wife  
 with children Kelsy, Isaac, and Andrew  
 Janet Raspotnik (daughter of Martha Herrick Smith).  
 with children Ryan, D.J. and Deana  
 Betty (Herrick) DeCicco,  
 Ronald A. DeCicco, husband  
 Lois Herrick Winsemius  
 John Winsemius with children  
 Justin, Amber, Alex, Dalles  
 Nancy (Herrick) Motyka  
 Ken Motyka, husband  
 Helen Fitch Burmeister

Sara Burmeister Gilbert

Arlene Fitch Brant  
 Judy (Dixon) Jett  
 Joe Dixon with fiancée Stephanie  
 Jeanne ' Dixon  
 Tammy Nelson and Troy Thedorff  
 Hazel Fitch McDonald  
 Waunita (McDonald) Bates  
 Raymond Bates  
 Diamond Bates  
 Doris (Henry) Bates with husband Lee Bates  
 Andrew and Debra Trevino with children Mandy  
 and Andrew  
 David and Sheila Bates with children Curtis and  
 Tyler  
 Greg Bates  
 Susan Regina and Anthony  
 James and Rebecca Jenson with children  
 Kelsey and Zachary  
 Destiny and Alvonya Brown  
 Earl and Betty Dixon  
 Don Chinnery, Asheville, NC  
 Dan Chinnery, Marinette, WI  
 Mary Ann Gatke  
 History Noted: It has been the custom at every  
 reunion for attendees to report on recent family  
 statistics. Family information reported at this  
 reunion:

**Deaths**

Doris Dixon Schram 13 April 2001  
 Wennie Chinnery 22 March 2001

**Marriages**

Linda Bates Keller and Deano Moore 24 July  
 2001

**Births**

Jaylon Ray Bates 7 Feb. 2001  
 Eli Jordan Rotman 22 Dec 2000 to Eric and Dawn  
 Rotman, parents  
 Angie Marie Keller Mayse 20 July 2000 to Stacy  
 Keller and Billie Mayse, parents

\*\*\*\*\*

**Health Terms of the 18th Century**

Apoplexy - Stroke  
 Consumption - Tuberculosis  
 Hives - Acute allergy  
 Lung Fever - Pneumonia  
 Stroke - Rupture of blood vessel in brain

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**Sponsors for 2001**

The following are helping to sponsor the  
 cost of publication and mailing of The Four  
 Drive for the year 2001/2. Thank you  
 Laura Lagana (nee Hayes)  
 Carlton and Carol Lee Finch  
 Raymond Bates

## Putting Your Family Genealogy Stories to Work

by Judith Stock

Genealogy is the third most popular hobby in the United States and the second most popular topic on the Internet. According to a Maritz Marketing Research study conducted for American demographics Magazine, approximately 19 million people are actively tracing their lineage.

When I began writing my family genealogy stories nearly two decades ago, I knew if I could get my stories published in magazines and on websites, I would stand a better chance of 'tripping over' their relatives who were also looking for the same families.

A simple equation, more exposure meant more opportunities. When my first check arrives in my mailbox I was amazed the editor had actually paid me to write an article about my family, one I would have written anyway. It hardly gets better than that!

No matter what stage your family tree is in, if you're anything like most family genealogy researchers, you have tons of information and are wondering what the heck to do with all those papers, files, and cardboard boxes. My research papers began life in one small filing cabinet drawer. Much like two rabbits left unattended, the files just seemed to explode all over the place, with fallout to other surrounding filing drawers. Before long, my bulging research files took over the entire four-drawer cabinet.

A question to ask yourself, where are you going to put all those family pictures, mementos, ancestor charts and scraps of information scribbled on strained napkins from the local Starbucks. Well, of course, they're lying all around the house. Here is another added bonus, if you write your stories it's an opportunity to get organized, put all your research together and write that family tale that's been buzzing around in your head for longer than you want to remember. You know which story I'm talking about, the one you'd hoped would write itself only the years have passed and there is nothing on paper yet.

When you do what you love, nothing is difficult not even writing. If you are already involved in genealogy then you love the hobby because

no one would put up with the frustration or have the persistence without really loving the pursuit of genealogy.

You may also walk around with the idea of publishing a small family history book to give to relatives, for reunions, or to pass on to your children. However, you haven't quite gotten around to it yet. Well, if you write family genealogy articles for magazines, you will be well on the road to having that "dreamed about" family genealogy book completed, being paid for your research time as you have the fun of writing your stories.

With the popularity of the Internet, the groundwork has already in place for you to easily jump onto the net in search of your roots. In fact, the resources on the Internet for genealogy websites can be down right overwhelming in size and scope. When does one begin....more sites come online daily. What this means to any family genealogy researcher, more websites seeking out writers of family stories for publication. If you can get your hands on the magazines or go to the websites before you submit your family story, so much the better for you. That way you'll have a good clue about what each publication is interested in and what they don't want to see in their mailbox.

The following is a small list of publications interested in your stories:

Genealogical Helper Magazine pays \$50.00 for stories in their Relatively Speaking column. Everton Publishers, Inc., P.O. Box 368, Logan, UT 84323 or contact the magazine editor at: Magazine: [magazine@everton.com](mailto:magazine@everton.com)

FolksOnLine pays \$100 for "Folks Family Trees a place for Folks to discover their roots." Send manuscript to [webmaster@folksonline.com](mailto:webmaster@folksonline.com)

Missing Links: A Newsletter for Genealogists from RootsWeb. Contact the editor Julia M. Case at [RWR-Editor@rootsweb.com](mailto:RWR-Editor@rootsweb.com)

Family Chronicle's web address is: [www.familychronicle.com](http://www.familychronicle.com) and the magazine's email address is: [magazine@familychronicle.com](mailto:magazine@familychronicle.com)

Ancestry Magazine at: [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com). Contact the editor, Jennifer Browning at [jbrowning@ancestry-inc.com](mailto:jbrowning@ancestry-inc.com)

Family Tree Magazine  
<http://www.familytreemagazine.com>; pays

\$25.00

for "Everything's Relative" column. Send completed manuscripts to Susan Wenner, Associate Editor at susan.wenner@fwpubs.com.

No need to do the old procrastination thing where you drag your feet or sit around all day and toss cards into a hat....only kidding. This is really the perfect time to get your computer keyboard warmed up and launch right into those family stories you've been holding hostage in your head.

I know from personal experience how rewarding it is to see your story on the Internet or in a magazine with your byline underneath the title. I've had over 30 family stories published within four years. There is nothing better. This is an opportunity to share your family stories with others. I hope you will find it as rewarding as I have.

My latest family story will appear in Family Tree Magazine in April 2002, in the "Everything's Relative" column. Yes, I have already gone to the bank with the check, but I'm not worried about getting used to the 'lap of luxury.' I've shared my story and that story just might connection with a new relative and add several branches to my Family Tree. ....Judith Stock

## **VITAL RECORDS**

### **BIRTHS**

**Mikayla Marie Dixon** born Friday 16 November 2001 at 6:28am "Kayla" was measured at 8 lbs 11oz and 20" long. Born at Lawrence & Memorial Hospital in New London, CT. Parents are Janelle and Christopher Dixon.

### **MARRIAGES**

**Carrie Anne Lyla Filsinger and Robert Harvey Bannister** were united in marriage on Saturday, 18 August 2001. The marriage took place in Harrison Park, Owen Sound, Ontario, and was performed by The Rev. Scott Sinclair of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Owen Sound. Bob's brother Scott was best man, and a friend of the bride was the matron of Honour. The reception was held in The Rusty Gull, Owen Sound. Carrie is the daughter of Marlene and Frank Filsinger. Robert is the son Marilyn Bannister and the late Fred Bannister. Robert is the grand son of the late Robert Bannister.

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## **ON THE MOVE AGAIN**

### **& OTHER EXCUSES**

We have sold our condo in Asheville, NC. Mover picks up our possessions for storage on August 28. We close on 29th. We will remain in the area using our RV until the middle of October when we will head for Florida and Sun City Center. Our "stuff" in storage will remain there until we can find a larger home in Sun City Center[SCC]. Summers if not traveling in the RV we will spend in [RV] Western NC.

After the middle of October use the SCC address. As of this writing we are in the "Little House" in SCC BUT EFFECTIVE December 1, 2001 our new address in Sun City Center is:

**1232 Fordham Drive  
Sun City Center FL 33573**

At this writing [December 11, 2001] the mover arrived with our furniture from North Carolina. Now to get things set up and unpacked. Unfortunately, it appears that "The Four Drive" will be limited to three issues for this year's volume. [I am sorry but I didn't make it by the end of the year. We will still count this as the third issues of Volume V.

Many thanks to Judith Stock and Christopher Dixon for supplying material to help me get this issue released.

### **dongeni is now dgc560**

The web site of your editor has had some changes. First of all the email address I was using for genealogy purposes has been closed "dongeni@aol.com" This address was getting hit with too much spam. The web site still uses <http://members.aol.com/dongeni>.

You will note however that the email address now shown on the web pages is "dgc560@aol.com" and that it is no longer an active link. Instructions provided- indicate user should use cut and paste the address. The reason for this approach is many spammers have software that can scan the "html" source code and extract email address that have been designated as an active link.

dgc

**SURFING THE INTERNET**

<http://www.personalchef.com/chefdanielspersonalgourmet.htm>

Meet your cousin, Daniel Lagana, son of Laura (nee Hayes) and Thomas Lagana, Jr.

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***Tractors and Our Trip***

*by Christopher Dixon*

[From eMail by Chris to Editor Don Chinnery. I have included this update on Christopher's research for those that are interested in the tractor]

We returned from our trip to Washington state on 22 July after stopping into Ludington for about 3 days. We were unable to stay for the family reunion because I had to return to work and teach that week. We did not plan on stopping at all in Michigan but we had a change in plans. The kids ended up staying in Michigan another month with my Dad and my Mom. They are suppose to be back here in Connecticut late Sunday/early Monday.

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**Report of Tractor viewing:**

We did see Ken Christensen in Aberdeen, WA. I called Ken before we left and let him know the day we planned on going to Aberdeen and asked if I could tape record his Fitch tractor running. The tractor started quickly and I have 15 minutes of it running. He even moved the tractor forward and backwards in his large garage. After I returned home, I was able to patch the output of the tape recorder to my computers line input and recorded 3 stages of the engine in WAV formats (each over 1 meg). One was the starting of the engine, another at low speed idle and another going from low to high speed. I plan on having these on my future tractor website.

After Ken purchased his tractor, he

completely sandblasted it and repainted it. It is painted in John Deere like colors. I believe the original Fitch's were olive green with red wheels. Ken's is a brighter green with yellow wheels. There is no manufacturer's plate on the tractor so he does not know the exact year or serial number. His tractor has an oval-shaped gas tank - I have a brochure that matches his tractor but there is no date on that brochure. Ken's daughter made stickers for the tractor

- FITCH is on the front above the radiator and he has a Fitch logo on the sides of the gas tank that they copied from various photos he had seen in magazines and books.

Ken and his friend Jim Savage (another tractor owner/collector) were very friendly and helpful. They showed us in depth details on the operation and function of various parts of the tractor. They were glad to see that younger people were interested in the old tractor because most of the people they see at shows (as well as other tractor owners) are much older. They said that many old tractor owners are a little "funny" in the way that they deal with each other. It seems that they feel like the other tractor owners are going to steal their tractors and parts, etc.

Ken takes his Fitch to various shows in Washington and actually competes in tractor pull demonstrations at these shows. He says that the tractor always draws a crowd because not many people had ever seen a Fitch. He believes his is the only one in Washington and Oregon and there might be a couple in California. There is one in a field in New York. He was in contact with the owner a few years ago via a middle-man. He tried contacting his middle-man a few months ago but he was reluctant to give Ken the other man's phone number. It goes back to the "funny" thing that Ken mentioned above.

Attached is photo of Ken's tractor in JPG format. We shot a whole roll plus part of another on the tractor.

**The World of Classic Tractors...**

A week ago, I won a bid on the book "The World of Classic Tractors" by Ian M. Johnston (the author from Australia that I had been in contact with over the past year). In addition to the pages that I emailed you, there were 6 more pages that were from a brochure and booklet that I believe are at the Gunnedah Museum with the tractor on display there. That model tractor is a Model D4 20-35. It is the same style as Ken's in Aberdeen (with the oval shaped gas tank) but the one in Australia has rubber tires instead of steel wheels and a grader attachment on the bottom. The pages from the brochure include a drawing

of the gear arrangement, a photo of the front axle arrangement, and complete specifications of the tractor. I will make photocopies of all the pages of the book and mail to you. I will also send a copy of the brochure pages to Ken because it is of his model tractor (built late 1928 early 1929). The three photos of the Gunnedah tractor in

the book are actually in color.

The book is one of the best tractor books that I have seen. Many color photos, brochures and stories. There is another available now on eBay from the same seller for \$20. Total with shipping for me was \$25.

My brother Terry (the one in Florida) is looking at making a model of a Fitch tractor from either plastic or metal. He was looking at possible 2 feet long - total length of Ken's is 10' 10" [130"] - so it will probably be like 1:5 or 1:6 scale. I gave him a set of the photos we took of Ken's tractor. I have to send him some additional photos from brochures in addition to the pages from the new book I have.

We did no other family research on this trip. I did look for various tractor books at any store/shop we went to. Found a few books with info on Fitch tractors but not many.

~~~~~Chris~~~~~

## **FOUR DRIVE TRACTOR COMPANY STOCK CERTIFICATE**

While conducting an Internet search for Four Drive Tractor Company, I found a message that was posted on "Yesterday's Tractors" website [<http://www.ytmag.com>] by Bill Addison on January 28, 2001. The message read:

**"I have a stock certificate for the Four Wheel Tractor Co. which was located in Big Rapids, MI. Are there any of these tractors still in existence? If in a museum I will donate the certificate. If in private hands, will discuss."**

I emailed Bill the first week of June 2001 and told him that I had been researching the Four Drive Tractor Company and its President and founder John H. Fitch for the past 10+ years and

that John was my Great, Great Grandfather. I asked him about the certificate and that I was extremely interested in purchasing the certificate from him if he still had it in his possession.

He replied that he was surprised by my email and enjoyed finding that some of my Great, Great Grandfather's tractors are still in existence. He stated that his only concern was to find someone who has a genuine interest in the certificate, and hopefully, will ensure that it would be preserved as part of the tractor and John's history. Bill said that it sounded like I would take care of the certificate and that he would be pleased to forward the certificate to me as a donation to my project. His only request was that should my heirs not share my interest in the history of the tractor and of the founder (John Fitch), that the certificate be donated to an appropriate museum.

Bill stated he resided in Pensacola, FL and spends the summers in Maine where he was in June and that he was in the process of building a new house in Pensacola. He had sold his old home in Florida and was presently living in an apartment. The certificate was stored with his excess goods and it will probably be late fall or winter until he got things sorted out. He said that once he did find the certificate, he would forward it to me and that if I had not hear from him by December, to remind him by email.

Around mid December, I emailed Bill to verify his email address and to remind him about the certificate. He said that things went a little slower than anticipated with the new house and he had just moved in around Thanksgiving. They had gotten the goods out of storage and the boxes were in the garage. He stated that when he did find the certificate, he would let me know. I received the certificate in the mail 4 days after Bill's last email.

Bill is a retired U.S. Navy Captain and is currently a volunteer at the National Museum of Naval Aviation Library in Pensacola.

~~~~~Chris~~~~~

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.

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**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

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

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