

## **Analyzing the Estates of your Ancestors**

Not everyone files a Last Will and Testament to be probated in the county court, however, most families had an administrator appointed for any number of practical reasons.

For one thing, they needed the authority to gain access to funds and sell property. For this reason we must systematically research all the court house papers such as Annual Returns, Inventories, Distributions, Sales, Vouchers and the Minute Books of Inferior Court. Because this is so important in locating relatives, whenever possible, I am adding the indexes to Annual Returns and estates for the various counties to [GeorgiaPioneers.com](http://GeorgiaPioneers.com).

The first Annual Return for the estate generally pays doctor bills, funerals and miscellaneous expenses of the administrator. Thereafter, in later returns, funds are dispersed to the heirs. You should really review these returns carefully and attempt to identify everyone receiving payment. Receipts are given to administrator.

You want to read the vouchers and receipts because this is where you will find the husbands of the daughters.

Married women did not directly inherit; their husbands received the goods and signed for them. The Inventories and Sales contain the names of relatives and neighbors who were purchasing items. Also, this is where you will find a general description of parcels of land owned by the decedent and a list of notes owed him.