

## Finding Ancestors in old Wills, Inventories and Estates



puzzle

In past times, many household and farm implements were accumulated. That is because each farm or plantation was its own business. Books were kept which itemized purchases, debts, loans and every item on the place. Business as usual was agriculture, planting, harvesting, shipping and factoring one's crops to London and the West Indies.

Cotton was spun into cloth, herbs provided for medicine, etc. Inventories list such items. Then, there is an Estate Sales, wherein neighbors and relatives make purchases. None of these names should be ignored, rather researched to learn a possible family relationship. It was common procedure to advertise the Sale in the local newspaper. This ad is usually in the legal section, and is useful because it mentions acreage and location.

A diligent search in the deed records which define land lot numbers and districts, will usually steer one to the old homesite. How valuable is this? Annual Returns frequently mention letters written to relatives in other parts, funeral costs and who inherited the funeral gloves and rings. As one follows the Annual Returns from year to year (until the Final Return where all inheritances had been paid out), there are some surprises.

This is where receipts were given by husbands of the daughters and sometimes the only place where a marriage is discovered. Anyone listed on the Return with an adjacent amount is suspect as an heir of some sort.

Thus, that name should be researched in order to learn more. The idea is to search out everyone connected with your ancestors.

Assembling the facts will lay out the puzzle and solve it!