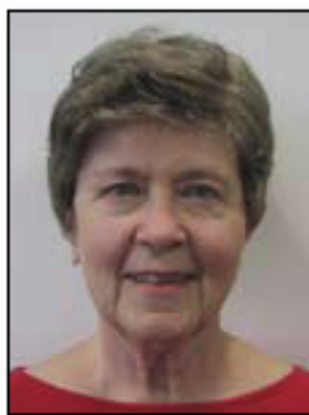


Genealogy Rocks!

Wills and Probate Records Are Not Just For the Dead!

One of the most rewarding records in family research is your ancestor's will. This is the document most men and many women used to distribute their property after their death. It was recorded at the local courthouse when the person died, and when the Probate Court needed to know the person's wishes in regard to their estate. Ideally, the person named their heirs and made our search easier. Also many times the decedent named the heirs in the order of birth so that adds another set of clues to the makeup of the family. Or perhaps they stated "to my oldest son" or "to my youngest daughter" or "to my minor children, etc." All of these statements can be important clues for the genealogist.



Pat Johnson

However, sometimes the will

does not answer all the questions. If a child or heir had been provided for before the person died, they may not have mentioned that heir by name. Or perhaps, an heir had been disinherited so may not be mentioned. Often a will is not written the way we genealogists would like, but that is the wonderful challenge of genealogy.

If the person of interest did not write or leave a will they "died intestate." If the person had property, the county Probate Court lists and finds every heir to dispose of the property. For the genealogist this is the ideal situation.

❖ *Pat Johnson is a Larimer County society member, author, DAR Council Tree Chapter Registrar, regional speaker, and volunteers at the Family History Center in Fort Collins. Our next society meeting is about Post Office records on September 15 at the Harmony Library at 6:30 pm in Fort Collins. Please visit our website at www.lcgsc.org or our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/lcgsc for details and learn about our many other events.*