

THE MODEL HOME'S CHAIN OF TITLE: LOT 6, 1612 NORTH OBSERVATORY

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COMPANION TO "VENEERS OF HISTORY IN GREEN HILLS EAST", NASHVILLE SCENE

FINDING

The identification of 1612 North Observatory as the Tennessean Model Home rests on a deed-by-deed chain walked from the present owners to the 1927 originating conveyance, each of the six links confirmed against its deed image.

SUPPORTS IN THE ARTICLE

- *an automated search of 14,375 pages of deeds to reconstruct the broken chain of title*
- *1612 N Observatory is the Tennessean Model Home*

ABSTRACT

The identification of 1612 North Observatory Drive as the 1927 Tennessean Model Home rests on a chain of recorded deeds walked from the present owners back to the originating conveyance, each link read from its image. The county database reaches back only to 1971; the older transfers survive in bound deed books, digitized as page images but never indexed. The reconstruction was read from deed images: a deterministic Python script, written with Claude Code, scanned approximately 14,375 pages of digitized deeds to surface candidate records and classified nothing; the author walked the Lot 6 chain by hand, confirming each link against the deed image. Six instruments, two of them obstructed by a missing or blank derivation clause, carry the walk from the 1971 database record to the 1927 originating conveyance. The chain on which the article rests is a sequence of read deeds.

THE RECONSTRUCTION, MAPPED

This map is interactive online – **the Green Hills chain of title**, available at alexaustinpemberton.com/journalism/veneers-of-history/maps/chain-of-title/

Lot 6 – 1612 North Observatory, the Model Home – within the full reconstruction of the 1927 Plan of Green Hills. Select any parcel to read its chain of title, grantor to grantee, from the American Trust Company originating deed to the present owner; deed references link to the document images at the Davidson County register's portal.

METHODOLOGY

The reconstruction is reproducible from public records, and it runs from the present backward, the direction the evidence runs.

The database stops in 1971. The Metro Nashville ParcelViewer carries an ownership history for every parcel, but for the lot now addressed 1612 North Observatory that history opens with a 1971

deed and goes no further back. The transfers between the 1927 sale and 1971 were recorded in the county's bound deed books, scanned and served as page images through davidsonportal.com. No full-text index covers them. A chain that reaches 1927 has to be built out of those images, one citation at a time.

A deterministic script surfaced the candidates. Reading 14,375 pages by eye to find the handful that carry one lot's chain was not feasible; nor could the recognition text be trusted to read them for meaning. A deterministic Python script, written with Claude Code, scanned the recognition text of the corpus and reported the pages on which a target string appeared, ranked by match strength, returning a worklist of candidate pages.

The image, not the text, decided. Each candidate page was opened as an image and read: the lot number confirmed verbatim inside the instrument, the grantor matched against the prior grantee, the consideration and the dates transcribed from the document, never from the recognition layer. Each portal image is a two-page spread that commonly carries several stacked instruments, so the correct deed was isolated by page and column before any link was recorded.

The walk closed two broken clauses. A deed ordinarily recites the instrument from which its grantor took title. Following that recital backward from the oldest database-era deed yields the next instrument, and the one before it, until the walk reaches the originating conveyance. For Lot 6 the walk had to survive two links where the recital was absent or left blank.

THE COUNTY RECORD REACHES BACK ONLY TO 1971

The Davidson County database opens Lot 6's history with a 1971 deed from Vernon E. and Josephine B. Lynch to R. Booth and Georgeanne Bates Chapman (Book 4500, page 90; \$29,400 by the affidavit on the instrument, though the record field shows none). Nothing in the database predates it. Every transfer from the 1927 origin to that 1971 record had to be recovered from the deed books, and with no index covering them, the problem was locating the relevant pages among 14,375.

A DETERMINISTIC SCRIPT FLAGGED THE CANDIDATES; THE DEED IMAGES DECIDED

The county has digitized its bound deed books as page images and run optical character recognition across them, but it offers no search of the result, and the recognition text is unreliable on its own terms: words break across line ends, surnames decompose into fragments, and "l" and "1," "O" and "0" trade places. The reconstruction treated that text as an index to the images, never as the evidence. A deterministic Python script, written with Claude Code — Anthropic's command-line coding assistant — scanned the recognition text and reported the pages on which a target string appeared: the lot and subdivision names ("Green Hills," "Lot No. 6"), the names of parties to a known transfer, and the book-and-page citations embedded in derivation clauses.

The script ranked these candidates by match strength and returned them as a worklist. It made no determination.

Across the wider 67-lot reconstruction, a Claude vision model read the flagged pages from their deed images and transcribed them for the author's confirmation. The Lot 6 chain, on which the article's identification turns, the author read and walked by hand. Each page the script surfaced was opened as an image and read. The lot number was confirmed verbatim inside the instrument; the grantor was matched against the prior grantee; the dates and the consideration were transcribed from the document, not the recognition layer. Because each portal image is a two-page spread that usually carries two or more separate instruments stacked in its columns — the routine case, and the commonest source of false matches — the correct deed was isolated by page and column before any link entered the chain. Search narrowed 14,375 pages to a worklist; the deed images settled what the worklist meant.

SIX INSTRUMENTS, TWO BROKEN DERIVATION CLAUSES

The 1971 Lynch-to-Chapman deed cited the instrument behind it, and the walk began. The first link back, a 1967 reconveyance that restructured the Lynch holding into a tenancy by the entirety (Book 4201, page 462), carried no derivation clause for the Lynches' own acquisition — a dead end on its face. The next, a 1962 deed of trust given by Edith E. Lynch (Book 3485, page 459), did recite one — “being the same property conveyed to Edith E. Lynch, unmarried widow, by deed from Salome Bean, a widow” — but the scrivener left the book and page blank. The walk closed only by pulling the Bean-to-Lynch warranty deed itself (Book 3460, page 152, recorded October 30, 1962), whose derivation clause at last named the origin in full: “being the same real property conveyed to Holt Bean and wife, Salome Bean, by deed from T. J. Haile, Jr. and wife, dated May 23, 1927, filed November 13, 1933, and recorded in book 919, page 110.”

That citation led to the Haile-to-Bean deed (Book 919, page 110; \$12,250), and from its recital to the originating conveyance: American Trust Company, as trustee for David Lipscomb College, to T. J. Haile, Jr., recorded March 9, 1927 (Book 700, page 652; \$400 cash), taken under the trustee's power of sale at Book 700, page 428. Six instruments had to be read to carry the walk from the 1971 record to the 1927 deed, two of them obstructed by a derivation clause that was missing or left blank; each was confirmed from its image. The chain on which the article rests is a sequence of read deeds — American Trust Company to Haile, Haile to Bean, Bean to Lynch, Lynch to Chapman, Chapman to the present owners — not an inference from the Model Home's fame.

RECORDATION LAGGED OWNERSHIP BY SIX YEARS

The walk also fixed the sequence at the origin. T. J. Haile, Jr. — the builder of the Model Home — took the originating deed himself in 1927, built the house, and conveyed it to Holt and Salome Bean by a deed executed May 23, 1927. That deed was not recorded until November 13, 1933 (Book

919, page 110); the six-year interval is one of recordation, not ownership. Bean's title to the Model Home dates to 1927, the year it was built, and the Lynch deed at Book 3460, page 152 independently confirms the dates — "dated May 23, 1927, filed November 13, 1933" — from a second instrument written by a different hand.

WHAT THE SEARCH DID NOT DECIDE

The script flagged pages; it resolved nothing that the article relies on. It did not determine that 1612 North Observatory is the Model Home — that identification rests on the architectural and documentary record set out in [Identifying the Model Home](#). It did not establish the racial covenant: the restriction against ownership or occupancy by persons "of African blood or descent" in the originating American Trust Company deed was read from the deed image, as it was for the other Plat 1 lots traced in [Reconstructing the Chain of Title](#). And it did not choose among the several instruments stacked on a single portal spread; that was done by reading the lot number inside each one. A search tool that only locates candidate pages cannot carry a recognition error into the evidence, because no link is accepted on the strength of a search hit — only on the strength of the image.

SOURCES

Primary records (Davidson County Register of Deeds), the Lot 6 chain

- American Trust Company power of sale (David Lipscomb College), [Book 700, page 428](#).
- American Trust Company, as trustee for David Lipscomb College, to T. J. Haile, Jr., [Book 700, page 652](#) (recorded March 9, 1927; \$400 cash) — the originating conveyance, carrying the racial covenant inline.
- T. J. Haile, Jr. and wife to Holt Bean and wife, Salome Bean, [Book 919, page 110](#) (executed May 23, 1927; recorded November 13, 1933; \$12,250).
- Salome Bean, a widow, to Edith E. Lynch, [Book 3460, page 152](#) (recorded October 30, 1962) — the recital that named the 1927 origin.
- Edith E. Lynch deed of trust, [Book 3485, page 459](#) (1962).
- Lynch reconveyance into a tenancy by the entireties, [Book 4201, page 462](#) (1967).
- Vernon E. and Josephine B. Lynch to R. Booth and Georgeanne Bates Chapman, [Book 4500, page 90](#) (1971; \$29,400) — the oldest record in the county database.
- The 2014 conveyance of the parcel to its current owners — the most recent link, and the point from which the walk runs backward.

All deed images were accessed via davidsonportal.com.

Derived dataset and tooling

The candidate-search step ran a deterministic Python script, written with Claude Code (Anthropic’s command-line coding assistant), over the optical-character-recognition text of the digitized Davidson County deed books. The script performs exact and approximate string matching and reports ranked candidate pages; it applies no classification and makes no evidentiary finding. Deed images were read against the recognition text by a Claude vision model across the wider reconstruction and by the author for the Lot 6 chain, and every link was confirmed by the author against the image. The deed-image corpus searched totals approximately 14,375 pages. The author’s chain-of-title dataset records, for Lot 6, each instrument in the chain with its book and page, the parties, the consideration, and the execution and recordation dates, together with the page on which each was image-verified. The underlying records are public — the recorded deeds cited above and the Metro Nashville ParcelViewer ownership history — so the chain can be rebuilt from the same sources by hand.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Davidson County, Tennessee. Register of Deeds. [Deed Book 700, page 428](#); [Book 700, page 652](#); [Book 919, page 110](#); [Book 3460, page 152](#); [Book 3485, page 459](#); [Book 4201, page 462](#); [Book 4500, page 90](#). Deed images accessed via davidsonportal.com, 2026.

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SUGGESTED CITATION

Pemberton, Alex. “The Model Home’s Chain of Title: Lot 6, 1612 North Observatory.” Research Brief M7, *Veneers of History in Green Hills East*. alexaustinpemberton.com/journalism/veneers-of-history/#lot-6-chain-of-title-reconstruction. Accessed [date].