

# **The Last Hardware Store in Rochelle: Ace Hardware at 1383 N. 7th St.**

**By A Student, Spring 2020**



Ace Hardware on 13 March 2020, photographed by M. Hagemann

Rochelle Ace Hardware's building has been there at the southeast corner of Flagg Road and Route 51 (now 251) since 1977. I currently work at Ace. I have worked there as a cashier for 8 months now. It is the only hardware store in Rochelle and has been for many years. I wanted to know the history of my workplace because many people have lived in Rochelle and have seen the building change. The store has been a hardware store so many times.

My property now has the address of 1383 North 7th Street in Rochelle, and [it's on a lot of 1.48 acres](#), but this land was part of a much bigger piece of land first purchased

from the federal government [by Charles Dement](#) by on May 19, 1849, and this was made official on Dec. 20, 1850. Dement had a military warrant earned by Daniel Sweeney, and so he paid nothing to the government for the property.

At this time the property was just “dry prairie” land. According to an [1840 survey of Flagg Township](#), my property is in the southwest corner of section 13. The only thing close to it is a road between Rockford and Ottawa.

In aerial [photos from 1939](#), it looks like there might be a farm on the location where Ace Hardware is now. There are buildings but free land behind it. It looks like Rochelle as a town ends at what is now Route 38, which would be a half-mile south of the hardware store. Everything between looked like farm fields.

This land was probably undeveloped (other than as a farm) before 1976, according to an [“Easement for Ace Hardware”](#) dated April 5, 1976 (Easement). The legal description on the easement says the lot contains 2.149 acres more or less. This is about a half-acre larger than the current property size. The easement contains 0.19 acres. A 2008 deed granted 0.341 acres to the state, 0.273 acres of which was already in the roadway. The owner of the land according to the 1976 plat was Bob Barron.

In a deed dated April 5, 1976 and recorded Aug. 12, 1976, Trust LT 18, trustee City National Bank & Trust Co. in Dixon, sold the land to Robert W. Barron and Dorothy J. Barron, of 206 Linder Lane, Rochelle ([Deed filed August 12, 1976](#)). In a 1977 city directory, Ace Hardware at U.S. 51 (the former name of Route 251 aka 7th Street) was one of 3 hardware stores in Rochelle. As of 2020, it's the only one still open.

In another [deed dated Aug 13, 2004 and recorded Aug 20, 2004](#), Barron and Dorothy Robert sold their land to R & D Hardware for \$482,000. After owning the property for over 14 years, [R & D Hardware then sold the land to Rochelle Hardware](#)

[Leasing](#), LLC, located in Manhattan, Ill., for \$450,000. The date on the deed was February 28, 2019. The date filed at Ogle Co. Recorder's Office was March 1, 2019.

I've been working as a cashier at Ace Hardware since Oct. 2019. It has been my favorite place to work. The winter season for us is a little slower; we usually don't see people coming in the store after 6:30. But the spring season is very busy. We have to have two cashiers instead of one. Even with the virus going around currently, our store is packed. There is not one parking spot open on the weekends; the workers can't even park on the property anymore. It is the only hardware store we have. Before it was Ace, it was a Do it Best. We can see the marks on the floor of where everything used to be from when it was Do it Best, and how Ace made the store seem bigger. Ace Hardware is essential to Rochelle.

### [Works Cited](#)

Deed filed August 12, 1976 from Trust LT 18 to [Robert W. Barron and Dorothy J. Barron](#) at Ogle County Recorder's Office, Oregon, Illinois, in book 284 of deeds page 937.

Deed filed Aug 20, 2004 from [Barron, Robert and Dorothy to R & D Hardware](#) at Ogle County Recorder's Office, Oregon, Illinois, document number 200409729.

Deed filed 1 March 2019 from [R & D Hardware Inc. to Rochelle Hardware Leasing LLC](#) at Ogle County Recorder's Office, Oregon, Illinois, document number 201901052.

Easement [for Ace Hardware filed 12 Aug. 1976](#). Located at Ogle County Recorder's Office, Oregon, Illinois, in Book 65 of Miscellaneous page 183 and at Plat File B, Page 6.

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“Township 40 North of the baseline Range 1 East of the 3rd Principal Meridian.”  
Government Field Notes. Circa 1840. Ogle County, Illinois, County Recorder’s Office, Oregon, Illinois. Found online at [this address](#).