

Anderson, James Way

Anderson a man of many pursuits

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Although the dock — called Anderson's shoal — at which he berthed the "Mary Ethel" is still partially visible, Anderson's business didn't last long.

The unsuccessful company was discussed in Anderson's obituary — published in The Daily Intelligencer on Tuesday, April 21, 1914, the day after he died.

"When the agitation was at its highest for better ferry accommodation between Ameliasburg and Belleville, the late Captain Porte and Anderson built the ferry 'Mary Ethel' in 1879. While a considerable improvement both in transit and reduced fares was given to the public through the efforts of Porte and Anderson, it was a very unprofitable investment, as many will remember the many years of litigation which followed."

The root of the legal dispute is not known, but, according to a 'Marine Memories: County Ferries' article written by Wil-



Gord Babbitt, wearing his great-grandfather James Anderson's ferry boat cap.

lis Metcalfe, Porte and Anderson were defendants in a costly lawsuit with Captain John Jeillett.

Babbitt also has the embossing stamp from another of Anderson's companies — the

Quinty Grange Patrons of Husbandry. Anderson's hobby was raising Percheron horses, a dappled gray workhorse, and this stamp was likely connected with this pastime.

Another of Anderson's businesses was a cheese factory.

"For many years an effort was made to start a cheese factory in the vicinity of Rednersville. Mr. Anderson came to the rescue and built what was known as the 'Bayside' factory about the year 1870, drawing the milk, manufacturing the cheese and doing all the other duties required in those days for successfully operating an industry of that kind," his obituary reads.

Anderson's busy mind was not content with only these pursuits.

"Early in years James showed mechanical intellect to a considerable extent. Being of an ingenious turn of mind and having a fondness for machinery, many evidences of his skill in this direction are to be found upon the farm today. He was the inventor of several appliances," the obituary says, "several of which he had patented."

On top of his business activities, Anderson was a farmer. The old barn across the road from his house stood for over 100 years — until Halloween of 1993, when it was burned by arsonists.

Babbitt and his wife, Corinne, recently tore down 110 feet of dilapidated carriage house behind the old Anderson homestead. Because there were bedrooms in the carriage house, Babbitt believes Anderson provided living accommodations for many of the people who worked on his farm or in the cheese factory.

Anderson predeceased his wife, Theadocia, by two years. Before both died, however, they buried two of their children: Mary and Frederick, both of whom died before their 30th birthdays.

Shortly before Theadocia passed away, the two living sons, Harry and Edward, divided the farm property. Harry stayed in the Anderson homestead and later married Gertrude Peck. Together, they cared for his mother and their child, a daughter named Mary Eleanor.

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Remember When
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James Way and Theadocia Anderson's children were known for their musical talents. Edward is holding the trumpet, Harry the violin, Mary the guitar and Fred the cello. Babbitt still has the trumpet and the cello.

Mary later wed Francis Sherman Babbitt, and they had two sons: William Sherman and Harry Gordon.

Babbitt, named after his grandfather Harry Anderson, often thinks fondly of the great-grandfather he never knew.