

JOHN JAMES SUTOR

John James Sutor was born in Ontario in either 1860 or 1861. It is most probable that he was the son of Samuel and Harriet Sutor, and it is not known whether or not he had any brothers or sisters. The family name Sutor has been found spelt five other different ways: Suitoer, Suitar, Soutar, Souter, and Suter. However, John James always signed his name "Sutor", and this is how it was passed on to his children. The name itself comes from Ireland, one book mentioning that it means "shoemaker" and has been in use in Ireland since the 14th century.

The first place the family can be traced to is Tupperville, Ontario, where they are found at the end of April 1883. At this time Samuel, in conjunction with John Jsmes (who were at the time yeomen) bought part of the $\frac{1}{2}$ of the south part of Lot 27 and part of Lot 28, both in the 2nd concession of the Township of Chatham Gore. The two were co-partners composing the firm of S. J. Soutar (spelling on deed), manufacturers of staves and lumber, and it was on this property that their mill stood. It was a good location, being near the town of Dresden whose principal business consisted of the shipping of square timber, staves and cordwood. In this same year, 1883, a post office opened for the first time in Tupperville, and Samuel became its first postmaster

Samuel died on July 1885 at Tupperville at the age of He died intestate (without a will) and his wife Harriet became the administrator. In November 1885 she rightly transferred all property, assets, and effects of the lumber business to John James. After this point, however, no other record can be found of her.

Around the year 1886 John James married Hannah Holmes, the eldest daughter of Bryan and Alice Holmes (nee Farrell). They had naturally met because her father Bryan's farm was right beside John's mill property on Lot 27. There is, however, no government record of their marriage.

In February 1887, John's $\frac{1}{2}$ acres of mill property on Lot 27 were worth \$800, and the 1 acre on Lot 28 priced at \$200. He had one cow, and four horses, the latter probably being used to drag the lumber to the mill.

On May 27, 1887 their first child, a daughter Luella May, was born.

In December of that year, John James bought all 100 acres of the $\frac{1}{2}$ of Lot 10 Con 12 in Chatham Township, probably just as an investment as the land **was never cleared**. The assessment roll of 1889 values it at \$1000, and tells us that two steam boilers are used in the sawmill and that his horses are worth \$100. We also see that he has started up a store, the goods in it being worth \$300, and that a Mr. A. J. Davis was employed as a clerk there. (This man was in fact Hannah Sutoer's brother-in-law, as he had married her sister **Eliza**.) On the 1890 roll, the situation is pretty well identical,

On November 25, 1890, another child was born to John and Hannah. This time it was a boy, and he was named W. Lorne.

John James was a true entrepreneur, and he made his biggest move in 1891 at the age of 30. Going north with A. J. (Arthyr James) Davis and taking their families with them, he took out a six year lease for six acres of the Northeast corner of Lot 6 Con 12 in the Township of Brooke Lambton County on February 24, 1891 under the name of J. J. Sutor & Co., mill owners. The yearly rent--\$30.

Although Absolum Saunders had built a sawmill on Lot 6 Con 13 around 1877, John James' coming and the building of his stave mill brought about the height of the lumbering industry at the north end of the Brooke swamp. The area was named Sutorville in honour of him, and a post office on Lot 14 Con 13 bearing that name was opened in 1891 with James Davis being its first postmaster. John and James also operated a general store there together. Besides this, there were two blacksmith shops, an old school (built in 1882) which was used as a church, a new school, a boarding house for the mill workers conducted by Mrs. McDonnell, and several houses.

The two mills had a ready means of transportation their lumber (mainly oak, elm, and ash) when in 1892 the Kingscourt Branch of the Grand Trunk Railway (now the Canadian National) was built and a flag station established at Sutorville Siding. For some unknown reason, though, in November of that year Henry P. and William F. Lawrence took over the operation of the Sutor mill. Whether John James no longer had the money to run it or just was bored and ready to try bigger and better things is now known.

(As a point of interest one book states that it was a William Sutor who built the stave mill. I know that this information is wrong, but William Sutor could have been an actual person, and maybe been a brother of John James. Another factor is that Lorne's first initial was W., and could have stood for William.)

Following the sale of his mill, John moved to nearby Arkona and it was there that his other two daughters were born--Bessie Irene on February 2, 1894, and Alice Elma on August 5, 1896.

At the end of March 1893, John sold his 100 acres of Lot 10 Con 12 to a Robert Barber (who had been a tenant there) for \$1800, and at the same time also sold his property on Lot 27 Con 2 to his father-in-law Bryan Holmes for \$1000. Both of these prices paid, according to the assessment roll, were a lot more than what the land was worth, so John got a good deal. It is not known at this time how long the land on Lot 28 remained his, although he did still own it in 1899.

It is not sure what John James did for a living after this point. and how long he remained in Arkona. The 1899 assessment roll lists him as living in Tupperville again, but this information cannot be trusted.

At some time before 1918 the family did. Move to Windsor, Ont. though, and lived in a semidetached house at 561 Hall Ave.

Around 1920, John James decided to go out west and try to make his fortune there. His wife Hannah wanted him to stay home, but he was adamant and went anyway. No-one is sure what happened to him, although it is rumoured that he was working on a farm. Therefore, the date and place of his death remains a mystery even today.

The fate of Sutorville was not a happy one either. John's old mill burnt down in 1896. By 1902 the forest was almost all gone, and so after a while Saunder's mill became idle as well. The general store run by the Davis family continued for some years after the passing of the mills, and their nephew Walter Holmes remembers playing at the back of it when he was young. Later it too burned down though, and was not re-opened. In 1912 the now drained and cleared land was planted with sugar beets, and the handling of these kept the station there open until 1933. Today even the railway tracks are gone, and all that remains of Sutorville is the Anglican Church built in 1906, which appropriately stands on the same piece of land where John James' mill once stood.