Paul Cotter  
Rockvale, TN 37153

Gilbert Lee Anderson  
Clinton, TN 37716

My written Interview is compiled with a personal Interview with  
Paul Cotter, adopted son and via e-mail interview with Paul’s cousin,  
Gilbert Lee Anderson, both grandsons of Henry Albert Anderson,  
2nd Assistant, 17 September 1910 – 7 March 1912 and 1st Assistant,  
8 March 1912 – 1 January 1915 (End date unsure), Thomas A. Tag book.

My personal Interview with Paul Cotter was held on September 20, 2008  
at Big Sable Point Lighthouse while I was helping during the last bus day  
for season 2008.

Paul has visited the BSPL several times and told of his relationship to his  
grandfather, Henry Albert Anderson but it was never documented.

Gilbert Lee Anderson sent the following information via e-mail.

Several years ago, I was amazed of all the history I found while searching  
many agencies. I have a copy of this search and will try to locate it soon and  
send the documentations on to Big Sable Point Lighthouse.

Our grandfather, Henry Albert Anderson, was born, 21 October 1878 in  
Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin,

With his Norwegian blood, he soon gained a great love for the sea. He  
became a sailor first and served on a Tug boat in Lake Erie. His first year in  
the lighthouse service was on the light-ships stationed at the Ile Aux Galets  
Light on the Chicago to Mackinac channel. Leaving that position he became  
the Keeper of the Light at Big Point Sable in 1910.

“Lighthouse Keeper” and/or “Keeper of the Light” are different terms that Grandpa Anderson enjoyed as  
the title changed during his tenure.

While living in the Lighthouse, near Ludington, he met Ida Marie Greenwald, of German descent, and  
they were married in Ludington on February 28, 1911.

Barely nine months later, they had their first child. The doctor from Ludington could not make the trip to  
the Lighthouse for the delivery, therefore, grandpa delivered my father, Gilbert Henry Anderson 1  
January 1912. The Doctor finally arrived three days after the birth. Gilbert Lee Anderson was able to  
retrieve a copy of the birth certificate from Michigan State Bureau of

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Statistics, it does not state that Gilbert Henry Anderson was born at the Big Sable Point Lighthouse but reads, Ludington, MI. It is framed and displayed in the Gift Shop at Big Sable Point Lighthouse.

This will be our first actual birth certificate of a child being born at Big Sable Point Lighthouse. I am sure there were others born at the Lighthouse, but as of this date, we have no proof other than this of Gilbert Henry Anderson.

Their second child, Alice Amanda Anderson, Paul Cotter’s mother was born 30 October 1914 at Ludington Hospital just a week after Grandpa’s birthday. Alice became a nurse and married Dr. Edward Cotter. Having no children themselves, they adopted 2 boys, one being Paul Cotter and the other child named John, who is deceased.
They spent seven years at the Big Sable Lighthouse before being transferred to the Menominee Light in 1918.

The lighthouse was equipped with kerosene fueled lamps and had a steam fog signals. Everyday Grandpa had to lug those containers of kerosene from the pier up all 130 steps to the top of the tower in order to keep the light burning to guide the mariners safely. Commercial power was established sometime in the 50’s.

Henry Anderson left BSPL in 1915 (End date unsure), and moved to Menominee, MI, North Pier Light Station taking the ferry from Ludington to Wisconsin.

The U.S. Government had a brick duplex in Menominee, fairly close to the lighthouse. Henry and Ida lived there as there was not any living quarters in the Menominee lighthouse. I’m not certain whether the Coast Guard or the Lighthouse Service claimed ownership of the duplex. Grandpa Anderson retired in 1942, and he and Ida purchased their very first home at 4129 North Shore Drive. Grandpa Henry was born 21 October 1878 in Sturgeon Bay, WI. He passed away 18 September 1956 in Menominee, MI.

Henry Albert Anderson is buried in the Riverside Cemetery in Menominee, Michigan, as is his wife Ida and their son Gilbert Henry Anderson.

I so enjoyed my brief Interview with Paul Cotter and the information via from Gilbert Lee Anderson and am excited to put this on display in the Archival files and 3 notebooks on display for reading material.
Gerry Thornton
8081 Amber Creek Dr. SW

Paul Coter, grandson of Henry Albert Anderson

Gilbert Lee Anderson, grandson of Henry Albert Anderson

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