

Maple Hall of Fame Inductee - May 16, 2009

Norman Anderson

My father, Norman Anderson and Grandfather Paul, started Anderson's Sugar Bush way before the beginning of time, about 1930! Norman Anderson was raised in rural Cumberland, Wisconsin. His parents Paul and Clara Anderson, who had moved to Minneapolis, MN for a few years in the early 1920's, moved back to rural Wisconsin just after Norman was born in 1928. Sapping was one of Paul's passions from his early days in rural Cumberland and when they returned he immediately started tapping his trees. This passion was quickly passed on to Norman. By the time Norman was old enough to be helpful they were putting out close to 500 taps. In search of more taps, Paul and Norman partnered with a cousin who had more land. This brought the tap total to around 3,000 in 1940. This growth was good, but in 1946 Paul and Norman decided it was time to expand again and purchase a commercial evaporator for \$600. The cousins were out. "Too much money," they said.

Norman and Paul were on their own. The pair continued to tap trees and sell their syrup to local stores throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin. In 1953 they suffered a small set back. A Tornado destroyed 4,000 taps and forced them into another purchase, an 80 acre plot of land about 4 miles from home this brought their total taps up to 5,000. In 1953 Paul and Norman agreed to become equipment dealers for the Leader Evaporator Company. Up until this time they had been managing a dairy herd as well. In 1957 they sold the cattle and turned solely to the maple syrup industry to provide for their family. In 1960 more land was rented to bring the total taps up to 12,000 with two boiling locations, one 40 miles away in Minnesota and one at home in Wisconsin. In 1963 Norman married Janice Carlson and took over control of the company. Paul remained very active for many years after. In 1973 another 100 acres was purchased about 25 miles from home and that brought Norman to his peak production of almost 18,000 taps (all on buckets). Norman ran at this capacity for about 10 years until an aging uncle whom had been running the Minnesota operation was no longer able to help.

Taping was then cut back to around 10,000 and Norman only cooked at the home location. Over the next 10 years production was cut more and more, as the syrup sales business grew larger and larger. In the best year Norman was only making 15 to 25% of what he was actually selling. The emphasis of the business was moving to packaging and distributing maple syrup, now all those producers that Norman and Paul had help set up over the years were relied upon to provide most of the product that was needed to fulfill the large market that Norman and Paul had created and maintained.

Norman has been a member of both the Minnesota and Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Associations for many years. He was also one of the early members/directors of the IMSI and Anderson's Maple Syrup still holds a director's position today. Norman served as a Director of the WMSPA for several years and currently serves on the State Fair Committee (1995 to present). Norman has been the head maple syrup judge at the Minnesota State Fair for the past 8 years as well as serving as judge at local county fairs. Norman and his wife Janice were given the *Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producer of the Year* award in 1993 and also hosted the WMSPA fall tour that year. Anderson's Maple Syrup, Inc. was also home to the annual first tree tapping in 1992 and 2003. Norman takes every chance he can to promote maple syrup. He loves to invite groups, especially from Sweden (as he is Swedish), to feed them pure maple syrup over waffles and tell them about how maple syrup is produced. In 2008 Norman and Janice Anderson were among the first to be given the *Lifetime Membership Award* by the WMSPA for their service in the maple industry.

Norman built up Anderson's Sugar Bush and in 1994 incorporated and changed the name to Anderson's Maple Syrup, Inc. to reflect the company's true purpose: "providing the best maple syrup possible to our customers."

Norman continued to be run the business until 1997 when I, Steven Anderson, took over. Norman is still an important part of the business today and I rely on his experience and guidance daily. Anderson's Maple Syrup, Inc. is now one of the largest packagers of pure maple syrup in the mid-west and among the top equipment dealers in the region. This is all thanks to the hard work and determination of Norman Anderson and his father, Paul. I only hope that I can follow in this rich tradition of quality and integrity. Thank you dad!

When I think about my father and the friends and relationships he has created over his years in this industry, I know it is due to integrity and devotion to them and the industry. I don't think you would ever find a person that my father has dealt with, that would say anything negative. He always treated everyone as a friend, with respect and fairness. I hear on the phone almost daily, "How is your dad doing?" then followed by "I sure enjoy your father, please tell him hi." This is only proof to me of his impact on our customers and the industry.