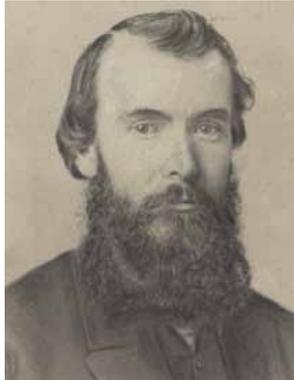


# James L. Shute

(1833 - 1909)



James L. and Sarah "Abbie" Abigail (Merchant) Shute

Born in 1833, James Lovell Shute was the eighth of ten children born to Andrew Breden and Catherine (Grover) Shute. His mother, Catherine Grover (born June 29, 1798), was the daughter of Edmund and Catherine (Bunker) Grover of Durham NH. On April 26, 1818 she married Andrew Breden Shute, a shipbuilder from Newmarket (Newfields) NH. They were the parents of nine children in addition to James Lovell. [Andrew W. (1819-1846), George (1821-1902), Nancy Foss (1825-1904), Henry Breden (1826-1911), Augustus B. (abt 1828), Edmund W. (abt 1830), Calvin (1832), John (1835) and Mary Melvina (1838-aft 1912)] Catherine died March 12, 1867 and is buried in Gloucester's Oak Grove Cemetery nearby her son James.



Catherine (Grover) Shute

About 1851, James L. Shute arrived in Gloucester Mass., the place he would call home for the remainder of his life. Several other members of his family (Nancy, Henry and Calvin) also came to Gloucester, and that may have been due to Nancy marrying Joseph Burnham in 1844.

A carpenter by trade, as was his brother Henry, James L. Shute first took care of the cemetery owned by the Universalist Church after arriving in Gloucester. Later he repaired the church's Christopher Wren-style steeple. As a member of the Universalist Church he served on a variety of committees, and was influential in the decision to raise the church so a lower level could be added when more space was needed.

At some point he became acquainted with the Samuel Merchant family and joined Samuel Merchant in the fishing business. On Feb. 6, 1857, James married Sarah Abigail "Abbie", Samuel's daughter and they raised a family of eight children in Gloucester. After Samuel's death in 1860, James and his brother-in-law William T. Merchant continued in the fishing trade under the name of Shute & Merchant at a large wharf located at the place known as the Head of the Harbor.



James L. and Sarah "Abbie" Abigail (Merchant) Shute

Sarah Abigail Merchant was born in 1836 to Samuel and Sally (Davis) Merchant, the second of eight children. She and James resided at several different homes in Gloucester (all of which are still standing in 2007). One of the homes was located 8 Prospect Court, and was located on a hill with a view that would have looked out across the harbor at the Shute & Merchant wharves. In addition, they also lived at 4 Commonwealth Avenue where Abbie resided until her death in 1927. The will of James L. Shute also indicated that he also owned a house and land at 160 Washington Street.

James L. Shute was not only a business man, he was also an inventor. He was credited with inventing several machines that helped to modernize fish processing operations which were then adopted by many other firms. Earlier in history of Shute & Merchant, he conceived of the idea that it would be more efficient and cost saving to produce the wooden boxes needed for packing fish on site. As a result of his idea, what eventually became the Merchant box company began in a small building on the Shute & Merchant wharves.

James L. Shute is listed in the book, *Twenty-Thousand Rich New Englanders*, published in 1888. This was basically a list of all the men in New England who had to pay a tax of \$100.00 or more during that year. At that time the Gloucester tax rate was \$17.50 on \$1,000.00, and his tax equalled \$122.00. Others from his city paid over \$1,000.00 in taxes, so clearly he was not near the top of the list of wealthiest people in New England. Shute & Merchant was also listed, and the firm paid \$506.00 in taxes.

In January of 1909, James suffered a heart attack as he stepped off an electric tram in Gloucester. His funeral was well attended by the leading businessmen of the community, as well as his cousin Judge Henry A. Shute of Exeter NH. James and Abbie are buried in the Oak Grove Cemetery.

## THE MAN ON THE LOOKOUT

The demise of James L. Shute vividly recalls some of the happiest days of my life back in the 70's when with our families, we were among the pioneers of camp life on the Annisquam River. Pearce's now Merchant's Island, was the spot selected and we were installed for several seasons in Uncle Simeon Merchant's cottages. There were also several families there from Chelsea and elsewhere, and all the comforts and enjoyments of camp life in its full completion were greatly enjoyed.

Mr. Shute and his young family were our most intimate friends, and the long summer days were fully enjoyed, especially by the children, who out 'in G-ds fresh air and sunlight', made the time fly merrily in boating, berrying, picnicking, bathing and the many other pleasures which such a resort afforded.

Of course the men folks went to business nearly every day, esteeming themselves fortunate if they could get a day off now and then, and would go on a fishing excursion out in the bay, or after berries in the West Gloucester woods, finding time between whiles to extricate from their sandy beds a bountiful supply of the succulent bivalves, commonly known as clams, which were served up as most toothsome viands; boiled, or fried, or the most delectable chowder.

Mr. Shute was one of the most social natures, ever ready to do his part to make the time pass pleasantly, and his cottage was the resort for social gatherings long to be remembered by the participants. It was the custom during the pleasant evening hours for the cottages to gather around the flag staff and pass the time in song and social converse. Uncle Sim, as Mr. Merchant was familiarly called, would take in the flag amid the singing of patriotic songs and the hours went joyfully on until bed time asserted its claims.

Nearly 40 years have passed since those days of the early campers. The waters of the old Annisquam River still ebb and flow, and many fine houses have been built along its sightly banks as out of door life in the summer time finds added numbers each year. The people thoroughly appreciate the many advantages to be derived from the change afforded, and from the small beginning of the pioneers, there will, in the next decade, arise hotels and many more summer houses, which will bring a large amount of business and pleasure to this section of our city.

Jan. 13, 1909

## The children of James L. and Abbie (Merchant) Shute

James Lovell, Jr.	1857 - 1862	Sally Merchant	1868 - 1952
Samuel Merchant	1859 - 1894	Ada Marian	1870 - 1944
William Thomas	1861 - 1920	Edward Grover	1873 - 1883
Abby Merchant	1864 - 1866	Robert Thomas	1875 - 1920
Frances Grover	1866 - 1956		

photos of some of their children



Samuel M. Shute



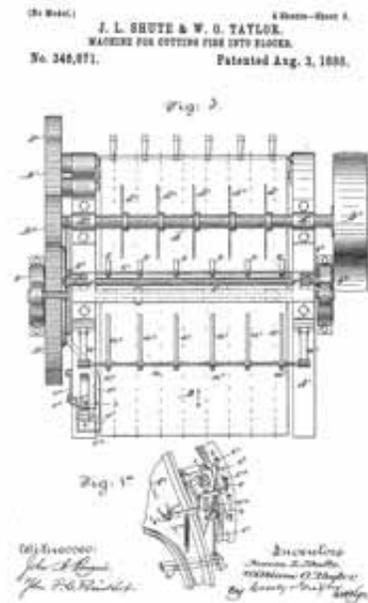
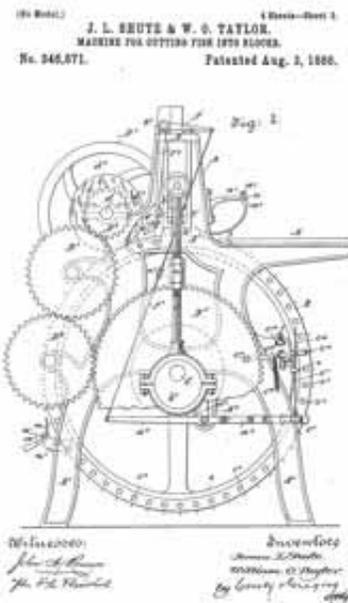
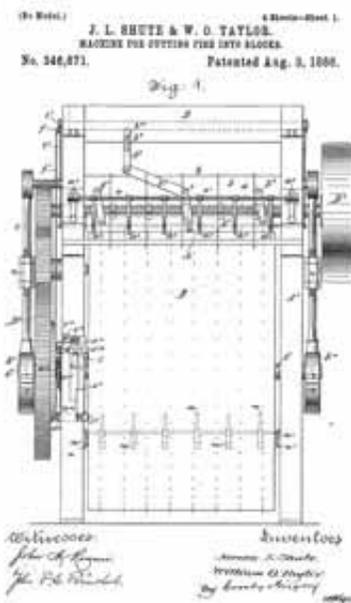
William T. Shute



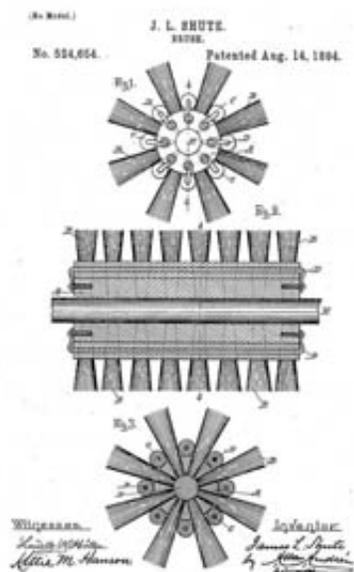
Robert "Roy" T. Shute

## Patents developed fully or partially by James L. Shute

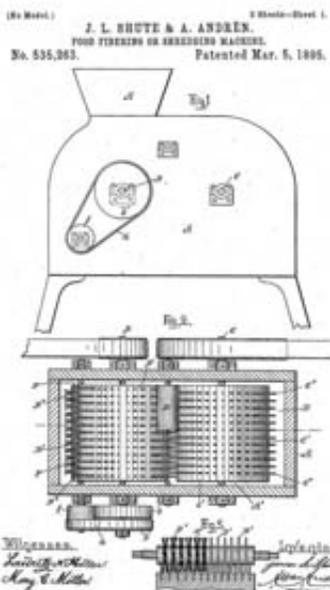
One of his patents, for a fish cutting machine, was specifically described and noted in the 1898 U.S. Fish Commission Bulletin in a section about the way fish were cut when being prepared for packaging. At three of his patents we for machines that were later commonly adopted by the fishing industry.



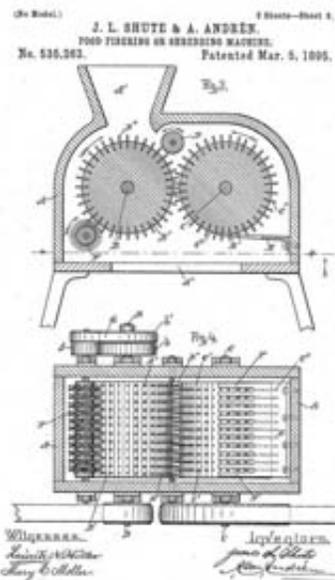
1886 patent - machine for cutting fish into blocks



1894 patent -- brush



1895 patent -- fish fibering/shredding



The brush designed in 1894, a design that greatly reduced the risk of the bristles breaking off, appears to have been an integral part of the fish fibering/shredding machine patented in 1895. The 1895 invention, was developed with Alben Andren of Beverly Massachusetts.