

## The Murder Of Emma Orr The Secret Of Orr's Lake and The Orr Farmstead

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In researching many of the local buildings and homes in the area I have come upon some rather interesting stories. As I was working on an article a fellow worker mentioned a murder that was rumoured to have taken place in the late 1800's by Orr's Lake. I found myself inclined to know more and began researching what I could.

Eventually, I came upon some useful information. In records of the Waterloo County Jail it was noted that there had in fact been a murder by Orr's Lake, the murder of Emma Orr.

Orr's Lake is situated off of Roseville Road to the west of Barrie's Lake. It was named so after the owner Andrew Orr who according to the Tremaine's Map of 1861 owned a fair sized lot on concession 9.

The Orr's farmstead required workers to aid them with the daily work. They hired various men in the surrounding area to help with labour. One of these men went by the name of James Allison.

James was a younger man and in records it seems that he was not good at school and left after being deemed badly tempered. So, he found employment at the Orr's farm.

After a period of working on the farm he had fallen in love with his employer's wife Mrs. Emma Orr who was reportedly rather beautiful.

There had been rumours that Emma Orr was known to have courted

other men behind her husband's back and James Allison seemed to have thought that he would be no different than one of her lovers and so he tried to have a chance with her.

After confessing his love for her she refused any form of a relationship with him. Frightened that she would tell her husband and enraged by her response he set out for a gun.

Later he approached her on the farmstead and shot her. Hoping to cover up his crime he buried her in a shallow grave. He then went to her husband saying she had fled with another man.

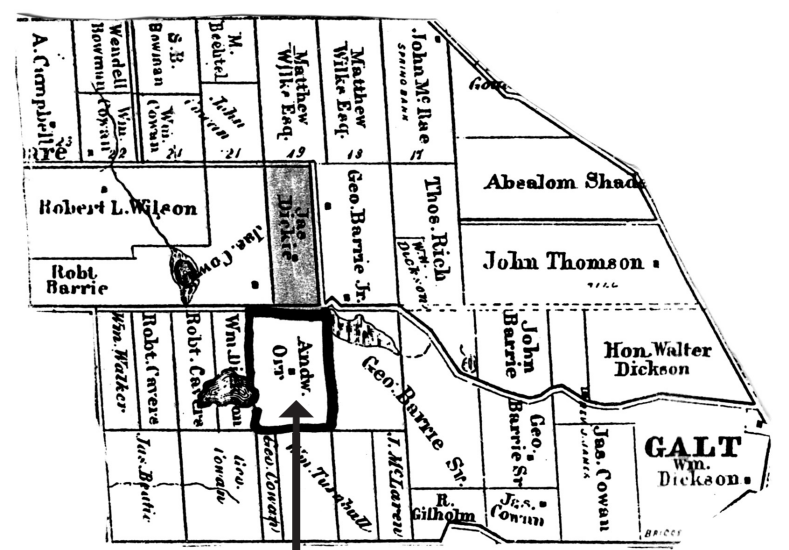
Mr. Orr was not completely convinced by this and so he hired a detective John Murray. Through his investigations Murray discovered Emma's body close to the farmhouse in a rudimentary grave. He had also found that the unknown murderer at the time had begun to dig a more substantial grave spot near the swamp otherwise known as Orr's Lake.

As Detective Murray collected suspects, he found that James Allison was a suspicious candidate as he did not help in any of the searches for Emma. One day Murray found that James' father was oddly heading towards the swamp where the second grave had begun, inclined by this he followed.

After following James' father he found that he had went to finish off the grave that his son began. Afterwards, Murray questioned him however Mr. Allison Senior would not confess to having anything to do with the murder. Murray then found a footprint near the swamp that matched James Allison's. Following this, Murray arrested James for Emma's murder.

James was hanged on February 4th, 1898 in Kitchener at the Waterloo County Jail at the age of 18 for shooting his employer's wife Emma Orr.

During his time in prison James learned how to read and write. Using these skills he wrote out his last words which he read out loud before his death. "I am sorry for my crime. I did it out of ill-will. I hope those whom I wronged will forgive me, and that no one will turn this up to my people.



Andrew Orr's Farmstead

My sentence is just, and I hope God will have mercy on me."

The words that he spoke sealed his own fate. The murder of Emma Orr has since been lost in the passing years only to be exposed to the community after being hidden for generations.