

Manufacturing Pioneers

Anderson Buggy Co. And The Later Motor Co. Were Thriving Rock Hill Businesses

One of Rock Hill's earliest manufacturing concerns not connected with textiles was the Holler and Anderson Buggy Company. Located at the rear A. D. Holler's furniture store on Caldwell Street, the firm was organized in 1889 with a capital of \$8,000.

The stockholders were A. D. Holler, J. G. Anderson, A. E. Holler, David Hutchison, W. L. Roddey, W. J. Roddey, and Rev. J. S. White, A. H. White, Miss Mary White, J. H. Miller and J. M. Cherry.

In 1892 the firm was incorporated with a \$25,000 capital and a new frame building was erected on Laurel Street along the Three-C's Railroad. Immediately the company began competing with the largest buggy manufacturers in the country.

J. M. Cherry bought the Holler and other interests, and was taken in as a partner in the early years of the company's existence. In 1905 Anderson bought Cherry's interest and continued as president and general manager. The buggy company was his greatest achievement and he made a success of it by making the best buggy possible for the money, and letting the public know it by continuous and prodigious advertising. Their slogan "A Little Higher In Price—But" known practically everywhere that buggies were sold — and they were sold by carloads to dealers over the entire South, Mexico, Cuba, England and South Africa.

Every part of the Rock Hill Buggy except the wheels was made in Rock Hill. In 1905 a complete buggy was made, painted, trimmed, packed and shipped every twenty-five minutes of every working day during the entire twelve months. This record continued until 1912.

The Rock Hill Buggy Company made every type of wagon, buggy, farm and delivery wagons, open buggies, top buggies, phaetons, plain surreys and "surreys with the fringe on top."

The Rev. Sam Jones, after his 1897 meeting in Rock Hill, said of his visit to the Rock Hill Buggy Company, "In looking over this enterprise, one is charmed with the system and thoroughness of the whole business."

Names that stand out in the history of the Rock Hill Buggy Company are J. G. Anderson, J. M. Cherry, George Holler, Wade B. Roddey, Boyd Creighton, C. J. Henry, J. W. Anderson, C. S. McCrorey, John D. Holler, W. H. McCaw and J. C. Hardin. J. Wesley Anderson started with the company at 19 and was general manager for many years. He was instrumental in converting the factory into making automobiles and helped design the first car.

The buggy business practically ended with World War I but the company made trucks and trailers for the government while plans were being formulated to convert the plant into the making of the "horseless carriage."

Anderson Motor Company
The Anderson Motor Company was the outgrowth of the Rock Hill Buggy Company and was organized with a capital stock of \$1,500,000.

In 1916 six cars were designed, built and tested, with the help of Joseph A. Anglada, an automobile engineer from New York. Some of the features as advertised that year were: divided front seats, seat for sixth passenger, swivel search light attached to windshield, electric cigar lighter, trouble light, power tire pump, motor meter, luggage straps on running board and foot warmer. These accessories were only featured in much higher priced cars.

Officers in 1916 were J. G. Anderson, president, J. W. Anderson, vice-president and general manager; Joseph A. Anglada, chief engineer; C. J. Henry, secretary and treasurer; C. W. Roberts, advertising manager; C. O. Mainor, factory manager; W. A. Anderson, sales manager; J. W. Sealy, purchasing agent, and Hiram Hutchison, stock department.

As the new business grew it was found necessary to add materially to the plant of the old buggy company. A large steel building was constructed across Laurel Street and a smaller U-shape building at the rear of the original Rock Hill Buggy Company building, covering about ten acres in all.

J. B. Duke offered to go in with the company if the plant was moved to Charlotte, but the Andersons, believing in Rock Hill, decided to stay here.

About 1920 the peak of production of the Anderson car was reached, and about 35 cars were produced a day. The company had dealers in all the large cities of the United States and a foreign agency.

In 1922 the Anderson Light "Aluminum-6" was introduced at the dealers' convention here. The enthusiasm was so great that 5,000 cars were contracted for in a day, making well over \$5,000,000. W. A. Anderson and his sales department had gone "over the top."

Then the war boom burst! Business over the entire country was at a standstill. The Anderson Motor Company, along with numerous other automobile manufacturers, was forced to close in 1924, and so the colorful development of the company, along with the dreams and ambitions of its pioneer founder, came to an abrupt end.

The efforts of its owners were not altogether in vain since this two million dollar property was the trump card in obtaining for Rock Hill the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Company which has for more than 25 years given em-

ployment to hundreds of people.

The Anderson Motor Company gave to the automobile industry the convertible car and the foot dimmer, both features having been patented at the time. The foot dimmer was the work of C. A. Deas, who is now with the Rock Hill Body Company.

R. H. Buggy Is Shown At S. C. State Fair

"Among the exhibits at the State Fair in Columbia attracting much attention, especially among admirers of handsome, well built vehicles of graceful lines and curves and striking substantiability, is that of the Rock Hill Buggy Company of Rock Hill, makers of the buggies that have made Rock Hill famous.

A "cut-under" surrey, a ball-bearing runabout, a light stick-seat surrey, an auto-seat top buggy and a driving wagon are among the specially popular styles of the concern on exhibition."

J. G. Anderson Started Buggy And Car Firms

The name of John Gary Anderson will always be remembered in Rock Hill as the founder and owner of the Rock Hill Buggy Company and the founder of the Anderson Motor Company, the first enterprise of its kind in the South.

A native of Lawsonville, N. C., he inherited his skill with machinery from his grandfather, John Wesley Thomas who made covered wagons for the Confederate Army.

The Thomas family operated a small tobacco factory in Lawsonville and wagons made trips to sell tobacco. William Henry Anderson, father of John Gary, located in Rock Hill to sell tobacco in the surrounding territory. He built the old Woods house on West Main Street, now the home of Jack Creed, and lived there until he died in 1867.

John Gary Anderson came up the hard way. It was his lot to be born the first year of the War Between The States. That meant that his boyhood and young manhood were spent in the trying reconstruction period. Therefore his education was "limited to the three R's and the University of Hard Knocks."

His first job was in a printing office in Reidsville. Later he put to good use this acquired skill by working on the Rock Hill Herald for \$25 per month.

After his mother's death in Lawsonville he came back to Rock Hill in 1877 and lived with his grandfather, Gary Anderson who was then superintendent of the Iredell Jones Plantation at Strawberry Hill.

John Gary soon tired of farm work for his guardian, Iredell Jones at \$5 a month. He soon came to town to work for Bill Roach who operated a combination grocery, restaurant and saloon.

At the end of 10 years Anderson was operating the Holler and Anderson Buggy Company with his father-in-law A. D. Holler and his brother-in-law, A. E. Holler.

In 1884 he was married to Miss Alice Holler who is now almost 85 and living on Oakland Avenue in Rock Hill. A native of Conover, N. C., she has lived in Rock Hill for 80 years and has been a member of Saint John's Methodist Church for three quarters of a century.

Sixty eight years ago John Anderson set up Rock Hill's first telephone, the line extending from his office on West Main Street to the freight depot. So many people started using the line to get information from the freight depot that a 25 line switchboard was installed.

In 1901 the Rock Hill Journal, which later developed into the Record, was established with Anderson as president. Other owner of the weekly were W. L. Roddey, J. M. Cherry, W. J. Roddey and O. S. Poe.

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