

# In 1910, bachelors put the 'fun' in funeral

**M**ore odds and ends: **Mournfully good time:** Back in 1910 a Rock Hill club made up of young bachelors sent out this invitation: "In their deep bereavement, The Ancient Order of the 'Has-Beens,' desire your consoling presence at a funeral service to be held at the Carolina Hotel Monday evening, February the twenty-eighth at nine of the clock."

When the guests arrived for the "funeral," they were marched into the dining room accompanied by "The Funeral March" as played by Johnson's orchestra. The hotel dining room was draped in black and the waiters wore black on their arms. Tiny booklets ornamented with a grave served as menu cards.

The evening may have been done in "funereal style," but The Record newspaper reported that the "most charming entertainment" was a going-away party in

honor of Miss Bleeka Lindsay, whose family was moving to Cheraw.

**Evangelist visits:** The Sam Jones Tabernacle was built in Rock Hill in April 1897 as an auditorium for the forthcoming visit of a famed evangelist of that time. The seating capacity was 5,000 — which exceeded that of any circus tent and exceeded every auditorium in the area until the Winthrop Coliseum was built.

The tabernacle was 100 feet wide and 120 feet long. There was a platform for Jones and a large choir that was described as "the size of a country church." There was no floor but dirt covered by sawdust. The cost for this gigantic structure was \$450, paid for by contributions of Rock Hill admirers of Sam Jones. Entrance to the tabernacle was free, but it is understood that Sam Jones took quite a bit of Rock Hill money with him to his next site.

**What's in a name?** The Rock Hill Buggy Co. was founded in 1876 by John Gary Anderson. Anderson was a great believer in advertising. He wanted to name his company the Carolina Buggy Company, but

that name was already taken by a firm in Yorkville.

In 1895 Anderson bought out the Yorkville firm and was able to protect the words "Rock Hill," "Carolina," and his famed slogan, "A Little Higher in Price, But ..." as it applied to vehicles.

Trademarks had to be renewed every 10 years. In 1906 there was a conflict with a North Carolina company, The Carolina Buggy Manufacturing Co., and its traveling salesman tried to sell his company's buggies as "Carolina Buggies." Anderson hired lawyers and let the company know he had registered the trademark.

By 1917 all of the buggy company arguments were gone as the Rock Hill Buggy Co. became the Anderson Motor Co. Times had changed; buggies were out and automobiles were in.

**Old flames:** Back in the 1880s, Rock Hill had a volunteer fire department. Two men pulled a pump that sat on a four-wheeled vehicle. The water came from a nearby well (one of the wells was on Main Street). Later, cisterns were built in areas that had no nearby well.

Elizabeth Reid in 1952 interviewed old-timers who recalled that "a fire was an event. Everybody enjoyed it, except the one whose property was at stake. The spectators got a kick from watching the sweating, puffing and blowing firemen scale the front porch roof and mount to the comb of the house. Then they passed from hand to hand the little rubber buckets forming a human hose from each well."

In the 1890s, a steam engine named Marian Jones was purchased. The Marian Jones was pulled by horses that were stabled at Kimball's Stables. It took half an hour to secure the horses, hitch them to the fire wagon and get to the fire.

Later the Fire Department was housed in the City Hall, and the horses were stabled in front of the building.

When asbestos roofing replaced the shingle roof, the number and damage of fires went down considerably.

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