

## JOHN GARY ANDERSON

John Gary Anderson was born in Lawsonville, N. C. November 27th, 1861, at the home of his maternal grandfather, John Wesley Thomas. His mother was Eliza Saunders Thomas Anderson, and his father William Henry Anderson. His Grandfather Thomas made carriages and wagons for the Confederate Army during the War Between The States. John Anderson got his first taste for mechanics playing in the shop of his Grandfather Thomas.

In 1862 John came to Landsford, S. C. with his mother, to stay with his Grandfather Anderson, who was running a grist mill there, his father was in the Army at the time.

His Grandfather Thomas and Uncle Henry Thomas and John's father started a little tobacco business in Lawsonville, and John's father came to Rock Hill, South Carolina and brought his family to live, while he peddled tobacco in the surrounding territory. His father built the house that is known as the Woods house on West Main Street, and lived there until he died in 1867. He and his baby daughter, Annie, who died two months previously, were buried in the garden on the Woods lot. John and his mother returned to North Carolina where she died in 1870. She was buried in the old Penile Church Cemetery at Lawsonville, North Carolina. John and his little Sister Jessie were left orphans at the ages of nine and two. He spent his early boyhood days with his Thomas grandparents, who at the close of the war were old and broken.

He went to school for a short while to an Uncle Creed Harville, studying Webster's Blue Back Spelling Book, McGuffey's Readers, Cornell's Geography and Smith's Arithmetic, so John's education consisted of the three R's and what he could learn from reading and the "university of hard knocks."

John's first job was in a printing office on the Reidsville News. Knowing that he and his little Sister Jessie were a burden on his Aunt Callie and Uncle Henry Thomas after the death of his Thomas grandparents, he asked his Grandfather Anderson in Rock Hill if he and Jessie could come and live with them. So, in 1877 John Anderson came back to Rock Hill to make this his home.

Grandfather Gary Anderson was superintendant of the Iredell Jones Farms and lived at Strawberry Hill about two miles from town. Mr. Iredell Jones was appointed guardian of John and Jessie Anderson. John worked for him as a general handy boy and plow hand at \$5.00 per month. Growing tired of farm work, he came to town and worked at Mr. Bill Roach's store, the firm name was Roach & Ratterree. In a few months a job opened up at The Herald and having had some little experience in a printing office, he got the job. This job paid \$25.00 per month.



From the time that John Anderson came back to Rock Hill in 1877 until he got into his life's work, he did a little bit of everything from plowing, running restaurant, setting type, to buying and selling farm machinery and running a general repair business. He was in the farm machinery business with Mr. Iredell Jones when he was married in 1884 to Miss Alice Holler, Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Holler. She was born near White Sulphur Springs, N. C. in 1867, and moved to Rock Hill in 1872. She went to the old Pine Grove School taught by Miss Emma Roach, also to Captain Alston's School and to the old Pinopolis School. She later went to Columbia to Miss Isabel Martin's Private School for Girls. Alice Holler joined St. John's Methodist Church in 1877.

In 1886 John Anderson started a small repair business at the rear of Mr. A. D. Holler's furniture store, using the tools from the old farm machinery business. He and Elwood Holler ran Mr. Holler's store and this repair shop. They sold everything from furniture, coffins to buggies and wagons, and ran a blacksmith and general repair business at the rear. In 1889 they bought out Mr. A. D. Holler and continued as Holler & Anderson.

The Holler & Anderson Buggy Company was launched in 1889 with a capital of \$8,000.00. The Rock Hill Buggy Company was incorporated in 1892 with a capital of \$25,000.00. Rock Hill friends subscribed to around \$7,500.00. A new building was constructed along Laurel Street on the three C&S Railroad. Mr. J. M. Cherry bought the Holler and other interests and was taken in as a partner during the early years of the company's existence. In 1905 Mr. Anderson bought Mr. Cherry out and continued as president and general manager. The buggy company was his greatest achievement and he made a success of it, by producing the best buggy possible for the price and continuous advertising. Their slogan "A Little Higher In Price -- But" was known everywhere that buggies were sold.

While the buggy company was enjoying years of success John Anderson was very active in church and civic affairs. He was superintendant of St. John's Sunday School for many years and an active member of the Board of Stewards, serving as its chairman for a number of years. He helped organize The Journal in 1901 and was its President, the name of the paper was later changed to The Record.

In 1888 John Anderson installed the first telephone in Rock Hill, from his office to the freight depot. This later developed into what is the present Rock Hill Telephone Company. In 1898 the Andersons built their present home on Oakland Avenue, there were only three or four houses on the street at the time -- no paving, no water works, no sewerage. A large tank was built in the attic so water could be pumped up from the well in the back porch. Mr. Anderson, Mr. O. S. Poe, Mr. W. J. Roddey and Mr. John R. Barron got together and put in private sewerage system, the first in Rock Hill.

2

In 1906 Mr. Anderson helped organize the Chamber of Commerce and was its first president. In 1908 on his doctor's advice, Mr. Anderson bought a farm, which he developed into a dairy, an ice cream business and later a poultry farm. The "diversion" got too complicated and he sold the Oakland Dairy Farm.

Again, on his doctor's advice Mr. Anderson took a three months' tour of Europe, Asia and Africa.

In 1911 when the South was paralyzed from an overwhelming cotton crop and the price dropped to 5¢, Mr. Anderson inaugurated what was known as the "Rock Hill Plan" for the reduction of cotton. This was the first cotton control that was ever put in practice. This was Mr. Anderson's biggest outside undertaking, at a terrific cost in time and money.

In 1914 the buggy business was brought to an abrupt end by World War I, and for the next two years the plant was busy with war orders for trucks and trailers.

In 1916 the Anderson Motor Company was organized with a capital stock of one million five hundred thousand. They manufactured cars and had agencies in all the large cities in the United States, Canada and England. When the war boom burst and 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 Anderson Motor Company, along with the dreams and ambitions of its pioneer founder, came to an abrupt end. The efforts of its owners were not entirely in vain, however, for this two million dollar plant was the trump card in securing the Rock Hill Printing & Finishing Company.

After Mr. Anderson's health failed, he and Mrs. Anderson spent their winters in Lakeland, Florida until his death in 1937.

As a pasttime, Mr. Anderson wrote his autobiography, which was printed in September 1937. He died at Lakeland, Florida, December 16th, 1937, just three months later.

Mr. Anderson was a charter member of the Rock Hill Rotary Club and served as president in 1921.

He was a Trustee of Winthrop College from 1919 until his death in 1937. He was also a Director of the American Trust Company of Charlotte at the time of his death.

Mr. and Mrs. Anderson were the parents of the following six children: John Wesley Anderson, Genevieve Anderson McCaw, Mary Anderson Hardin Barrett, Carrie Anderson Johnson, William Adlai Anderson and Alice Anderson Gill.

*Submitted by Mrs. Alice Anderson Gill*