

PETTUS

ANDERSON CAR ASSEMBLY LINE

By 1923 John Gary Anderson's Anderson Motor Company in Rock Hill had the process of manufacturing and assembling fine cars down pat.

It started in the woods where Anderson's sawmill crews cut the trees, mostly oak, which would provide the "Coachbilt" body. Anderson owned a small logging railroad to bring the wood into Rock Hill to be turned with lathes following patterns designed for particular parts of the car's body. The pieces were put together with screws. The wooden frames were given a rigorous inspection and if passed went on to the next phase of the assembly line.

At the next step aluminum panels were cut by a special machine and then carefully hammered into shape by an electric hammer. The metal was twenty-two thousandths of an inch thick. The panels were then bent to follow the wooden framework. The seams were hand-welded and the metal hand-rubbed with pumice stone until it was smooth.

The paint shop was next. Six coats of paint went on the chassis, two on the engine, and sixteen coats went on the body. The paint was baked on in a kiln set at one hundred and fifteen degrees. When dry, the body was then taken along the chassis assembly aisle way to the "trimming room."

In the trimming room, seats, upholstery, curtains, and tops were added. The seats and upholstery were made of a leather composition material. The upholstery varied. For some models the upholstery was cowhide purchased from a factory in the West, in others velvet corduroy, and in the ultra-sport model, moleskin was used.

In groups of six, the automobiles were assembled step by step as they proceeded down the long aisle. Finally, the body was suspended and dropped down on to the chassis. It took two weeks to complete a car. The last thing added was a tank of gasoline. Mr. Anderson sold the gas at cost.

The Anderson car was built in the building that he had formerly built buggies. Rock Hill Buggy Company had furnished most of the capital for the Anderson Motor Car Company. The building on West White Street was the main area of the Rock Hill Printing and Finishing Co., a subsidiary of Springs Industries. Now, the City of Rock Hill is hoping to modernize the property and change it sufficiently to

attract shops, restaurants and museums.

Four Anderson cars were on display at the "Made-in Carolinas Exposition" in Charlotte in 1922. Anderson had the only car company in the southern states and this helped to attract crowds to the exhibit but the cars were handsome enough to attract crowds in Detroit. The cars displayed in Charlotte were the coach, the five-passenger touring car, the 30-series speedster, also called the big six, and the ultra-sport model.

The coach was painted Packard blue and had a "tent-folding" front seat. The interior was blue velvet corduroy. A steel running board, extra large doors and a luggage trunk ran the price up to \$1950 f.o.b. Rock Hill.

The five passenger touring car with leather upholstery and a 6-volt 50 hp engine was similar in appearance to the coach except that it had no luggage trunk. It was priced at \$1495 f.o.b. Rock Hill.

The Naples yellow speedster was described as "natty" and displayed on a revolving table. The 66 2/3 h.p. car had a nickeled top trim. The f.o.b. price was \$1785. The ultra sport model was similar to the speedster except that it had bumpers in the front and rear. It also had the newly patented foot dimmer invented by Anderson

The Rock Hill Motor Company's chief design engineer was C. A. Deas. The price of the ultra sport model in moleskin was \$1945 f.o. b. Rock Hill.

Anderson Motor Company not only displayed their cars out of town but also had conventions in Rock Hill for dealers from across the country. After the unveiling of new models, orders were taken on the spot. One year over \$6 million worth of Anderson cars were sold in Rock Hill at one such gathering of dealers but in the long run the Anderson car couldn't compete with Henry Ford's cheap Tin Lizzies which came in only one color--black.