

GAINESBORO MAN WRITES ABOUT CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

By James Carl Anderson
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James Carl Anderson remembers the adventures he had growing up in Gainesboro and, with the help of friend Polly Purnell, has written a portion of his memories down in his book, "Spirit of the Americana."

Author James Carl Anderson plays a tune on his guitar. Megan Trotter | Herald-Citizen

Even as a child, trouble seemed to be attracted to Anderson. He told the story of a boy named Caleb who was a bit of a troublemaker in school. Caleb had been held back in school several years, so he was 16 while



his oldest classmates were 10. During recess the boys would play marbles, but Caleb started the bad habit of scooping up all of the marbles and pocketing them at the end of the game. One day, the boys decided they'd had enough.

"So when the bell rang and he grabbed our marbles, eight of us jumped him. We put him on the ground -- we didn't choke him or stomp him or kick him -- but seven of us held him while another one took all the marbles out of his pockets. He never did that again," Anderson said.

Anderson had a confrontation with Caleb another time as well. When Caleb found out that Anderson's mother regularly packed him a Hershey bar in his lunch, Caleb started helping himself to it every day. After Anderson caught him in the act several times, he decided to get even.

"I thought, 'I'll fix him.' So I took Exlax and wrapped it in the same wrapper, as neat as I could. It was a dirty scene," Anderson laughed. "He messed up his pant leg and the floor. I never did tell him it was me, but he never did take my Hershey bar again. I think he figured it out."

Caleb eventually did get expelled from the school after a dangerous prank, Anderson says. One day he came running through the schoolhouse on a mission.

"He said, 'Get out of my way, I'm going to come through like a storm!' He didn't have his fists up, but he had his hand in his pocket. I didn't know whether he had a pistol or a knife or what he meant to do," Anderson remembered. "He took out of his pocket a whole box of 22 shells. But he didn't have a gun. He just opened the door and threw the whole box in the stove. The bullets didn't come out of the stove, but the back ends of the shells flew off, all 22 of them, and it sounded like a machine gun. It blew the door open, it blew the cap off the stove; it even blew the stove pipe loose from the stove and flames and smoke shot out. He got expelled. He never went back to school after that."

When Anderson was in the seventh grade, a military truck broke down on their land, where it sat for two days.

"That was a special truck and I didn't know why it was so special," he said. "They had a machine gun set up 200 yards away on our farm, guarding that truck. Then there was another machine gun in the woods, also guarding that truck. They had probably a whole squad of soldiers around this truck."

Anderson later learned that the truck was filled with uranium on its way through a secret route to New Mexico. It was later used in the bombs dropped on Japan to end World War II.

Anderson went on to join the army and received his master's degree from the University of Colorado. He worked with nuclear energy and later went on to teach high school assemblies about the peaceful

applications of nuclear energy, as well as helping to put together training videos.

"Spirit of the Americana" is available at Dairy Queen in Gainesboro, the library in Gainesboro, the Veterans Hall in Gainesboro, the Tennessee Tech Library, Amazon or by e-mailing the author at jcarl.anderson@yahoo.com.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR James Carl Anderson showed a great deal of interest in the fine arts while in high school. For example, he was a member of the high school choir, President of his senior class, President of the Beta Club, and played a lead role in a Beta Club play. He also helped the Carter Family (Mother May Belle, sister, Sarah, and daughters, June and Anita) perform a concert at Jackson County Central High School in his senior year.



While attending Tennessee Tech (1950-1954), Anderson was the student librarian of the college athletic library. He helped edit the Tennessee Tech Homespun magazine and sold ads to finance the project. Anderson improved his speaking and writing ability while debating some very important issues. His speeches, while in a dress Rural Officer Training Corps (ROTC) uniform, helped Tennessee Tech reach and surpass its stated goal. Perhaps Anderson's most useful writing was accomplished when he served as Exhibits Manager for Oak Ridge Associated Universities in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

He played a key role in writing This Atomic World. In addition, he presented the 45-minute high school assembly program, based on the script, more than 1000 times across the United States of America. He spent four

summers at the University of Colorado in Boulder, Colorado, while employed at Oak Ridge, and wrote a professional report, A Study of Evaluating the Effectiveness of High School Assemblies. A summary of that report was published in Student Activities Magazine in 1963. As an employee of Combustion Engineering, Inc., in Windsor, Connecticut, Anderson helped world renowned scientists write and prepare videotapes of two training programs, Introduction to Nuclear Power and Introduction to Environmental Protection (40 hrs. and 20 hrs. respectively). The sales department training program helped the company reach 2,000,000,000 in sales of nuclear steam supply systems and clean-up systems for coal-burning electrical power plants.

Perhaps his greatest impact on society during a 50-year career in the military, industry, and education was when he served as Supervisor of Adult Education for Jackson County, Tennessee. He also doubled as the Assistant Football Coach for twelve years. During those 20 years, Anderson wrote approximately 100 feature articles for the Jackson County Sentinel that described the Friday night games of the local high school football team. Anderson also prepared more than 1000 lesson plans related to English, mathematics, social studies, history, creative writing, and science. His professional report on adult education helped him earn an Ed.S Degree at Tennessee Tech. Spirit of Americana, gave the author a chance to recall some of the most fascinating, funny, fulfilling, educational, and, yes, sad experiences of a lifetime. The author said, Some of those events of the 1930s are clearer in my mind now than some experiences of 2010. However, these book-worthy events were never printed until he sat down to write Spirit of Americana.

ABOUT THE CO-AUTHOR AND EDITOR James Carl Anderson's first cousin, Polly Betty (Anderson) Purnell, is the youngest of seven daughters of Robert Benjamin Anderson and Rose Lee (Pharris) Anderson. Polly was born three months after the death of Polly Birdwell Anderson, Robert's mother. Her death was caused by the epidemic that ravaged the community also causing the death of her first cousin's father. That cousin is the author of this book.

Robert Anderson decided to name this child Polly after his own mother who was so dearly loved and missed. Polly always enjoyed public speaking and acting. As early as third grade she attempted to write plays and would show off by reading aloud to the class because she was the fastest reader. One day she read so fast she skipped a word and was embarrassed to be seated while someone else was given the honor of reading aloud. She was promoted from first grade to third grade with 5 other children in the small country school she attended. This caused her to always be the youngest in her classes, but did not suppress her scholastic abilities. Polly graduated from Oak Ridge High School, a member of the National Honor Society, where she participated in plays at the school. She went on to graduate from Business College in Knoxville, Tennessee, the only child in her family to be educated past high school. Her employment included the Department of Energy's (DOE) predecessor in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, in administrative positions. Later as a DOE subcontractor employee, she held positions of editorial significance and assisted in the maintenance and publication of DOE contract appendices. Polly greatly enjoyed participation in Toastmasters during these years at DOE, honing her public speaking and writing skills, while forming friendships lasting to this day.

Polly traveled to various distant locations with her husband, William (Bill) Purnell, while he pursued his military career. They parented five children, who blessed them with nine grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. Being a co-author and editor to *Spirit of Americana* has been a labor of love inspired by the words of the song, *TWIN COFFINS*. Polly first wrote a chapter about the circumstances surrounding that song and that chapter prompted James Carl Anderson to encourage her to write a book with his assistance. Little did they realize that the story would unfold to be a microcosm of American living that so many people experienced during the 1930s and following years. James Carl's life was the story of so many families living and working during those years. This one man's life story was lived in the *Spirit of Americana*.

*See Chapter 3 on the Anderson family, Anderson files and Rash Cemetery at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>

SHARING THE GIFT OF MUSIC

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Singer Honored at Monthly Morningside Musical Performance:

COOKEVILLE – Rozell Johnson Brown, a singer and mandolin player for the Henry Johnson String Band of the 1930s and '40s, attended the Morningside Assisted Living musical recently. Rozell sang and played the mandolin for her father's band on WHUB's Saturday morning programs. Those WHUB programs of the early 1940s in Cookeville featured gospel, country and blue grass music.



(Pictured: Eugene Dunn, Morningside Assisted Living resident, performs with James Carl Anderson's monthly performance at the facility).

Saturday evening rehearsals for those WHUB musicals often attracted 50 to 100 spectators to "Uncle Henry's Front Porch." Some popular songs were "You are My Sunshine," "Old Ninety Seven," "Flowers in the Wild Woods," "Good Old Summer Time," "Precious Memories," "Father Along," and "Camping on Canaan's Land." Guest performers were permitted to "blow the jug," play the harmonica, play two spoons, "scrub a rubboard," or play a homemade bass instrument with one string and an adjustable handle.

Members of the band welded two Model A Fords together and made a nine-passenger limousine. They toured key places in the Great Smoky Mountains, sang and made music. The limousine had no top and was named "Please Don't Rain."



Morningside Assisted Living).

During Rozell's visit to Morningside, Eugene Dunn, a resident and World War II veteran, sang some songs and played the guitar. The Front Porch Singers of Morningside helped him perform.

(Pictured: James Carl Anderson, Rozell Brown and Brown's daughter Linda Dennis enjoy a monthly musical performance at the

Carl Anderson does a special 45-minute musical performance on the second Friday of each month at Morningside, and he welcomed Rozell with songs that she did on WHUB and her father's front porch 68 years ago.

Monthly musicals by Eugene Dunn of Morningside, the Front Porch Singers and Carl Anderson of Gainesboro have become popular with Morningside residents, staff members and many visiting family members.

<http://www.ajlambert.com>