

Tom Anderson: Corinth Church Founding Father

Article by Martha L. Wilson

Granddaughter of John Thomas Anderson, Founding Father of Corinth United Baptist Church

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The following was taken from the SHARP-ANDERSON family book compiled by my cousin Laura Waters, Laura's mother, Martha L. Wilson, daughter of Louisa Anderson Newport and Ewen Newport, granddaughter of John Thomas Anderson and Sally Adkins Anderson, wrote this about J.T. Anderson. Tony Gerber

My grandfather, Tom Anderson, as he was called by everyone who knew him, was a man of many affairs and was born July 28, 1863. He owned a store, mules for logging, and a logging camp, a mill for grinding grain. He was a farmer, a deputy sheriff, a leader in the Corinth Baptist Church, he was one of the four who founded the church. He was a loving, compassionate man.

When mother died, granddad didn't want us three separated, so he and Grandma Lassie took us in. With their three, we were like stairs. Evelyn was eight, Hubert seven, Ella six, me five, Wolford four, and John three. We must have been very congenial, because I can't remember us ever quarreling or fighting. In addition, Aunt Lurainey, granddad's widowed sister, and Adam, a cousin, lived with granddad. Adam was badly crippled and stayed for thirty-five or forty years.

Aunt Rainey, who was mentally off, became angry and ran away from home. I remember one night, just at dusk, granddad and I walking along in a light rain. He was very troubled and was talking to me about Aunt Rainey. Perhaps that is why all my life, when something has upset me, I have found comfort in walking in the rain.

Granddad told us stories about when he was young, he was born in Kentucky and was about five or six when the family moved to Tennessee by wagon. They camped along the way by night. One night, the grownups were trying to start a fire with a flint. A firefly lit on the wood. The grown-ups thought that it was a spark and were frantically blowing on it, trying to start a fire. The children knew that it was only a firefly and were enjoying the joke very much.

Granddad loved to have someone read to him. He would have sat up all night if he could have someone read. I don't know if he couldn't read or if he just liked to hear someone else.

Mother had given me a calf. I never could name her as no (name) was beautiful enough. I would name her but, in a week or two, some other name would appeal to me and the name was changed again. Granddad finally just called the cow "Martha's Cow". Poor thing, she had to go through life with that for a name.

One weekend a month, church was held at Corinth Church. How the women would cook and bake, because they never knew how many would show up for dinner! Granddad gave everyone an invitation. There would be a table after table. We kids would get worried that there would be



Figure 1: Tom Anderson

nothing left for us, but there always was. The women probably enjoyed showing off what good cooks they were, even if it were a lot of work.

Herbert Phillips was staying at granddad's going to school at Norma. One time, he raided Aunt Belle's cakes and pies. Next church time, Aunt Belle hid her goodies. This was like a dare to Herbert. He searched until he found the hoard, had a big slice of cake, and left a note saying, "Ha, you'll have to find a new hiding place".

We had honey because there were several hives of bees. Once a year, granddad would put on a big hat, roll some cloth up, set fire to it so as to get lots of smoke, and rob the bees. We also had molasses all year because each fall granddad had molasses made. Excitement was high at school when we knew someone was having a stir off. People from miles around would come. We played games, dipped into the molasses, and had fun. I remember going to the Lowe's for one stir off.

John Thomas Anderson's great-grandson has built a modern house near where the old house stood. This land has been in the Anderson name for over one hundred years.



Figure 3: Wiley, Belle and (first child) Maxine Anderson Pennington. Wiley is the son of J. T. Anderson, founding member of Corinth United Baptist Church.

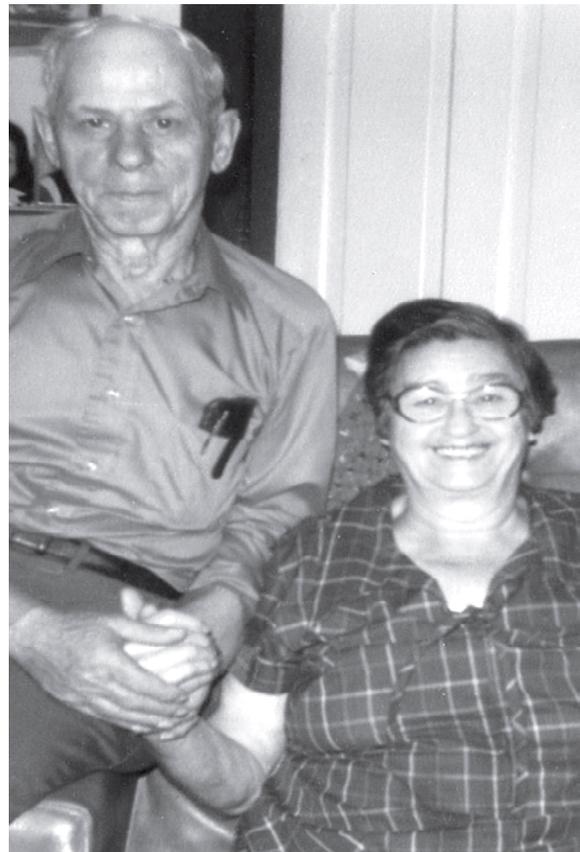


Figure 2: Wiley & Belle Anderson in Later Life