

# *Pacolets*

## *I Have Known*

By

**Bruce Littlejohn**

**(2003)**

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## **Pacolets I Have Known**

By Bruce Littlejohn

I was born at home in Pacolet on July 22, 1913. My father was Cameron Littlejohn, and my mother was Lady Sarah Warmoth Littlejohn. My daddy carried the mail, farmed a bit on the side, and supported a family including eight children of which I am the baby. Being a better businessman than I, he sent five of us children through college. Three would not go.

Several years ago, sometime between 1955 and 1976, a friend of mine asked me to tell him about this place called Pacolet. He was surprised when I told him more than he expected to hear. **At one time, there were actually four Pacolets: four municipalities, four city councils, and I expect four police departments.**

The first Pacolet I told him about was granted a charter in 1896. It was sometimes referred to as **Pacolet Station**, and the city limits originally extended one mile in each direction from **the town depot.** Since that time, the city limits have been extended in several directions. The first census I can remember indicated 486 people lived at Pacolet.

In 1955, the State of South Carolina granted a charter to three more Pacolets: **Pacolet Park**, **Central Pacolet**, and **Pacolet Mills**. The proliferation of Pacolets

came about in an unusual way. The time has come when people living at [Pacolet Mills](#) wanted to incorporate. Approximately two thousand people lived in the area. It was proposed that a vote be taken on whether a charter would be issued and whether there would be such a thing as a [Pacolet Mills](#) municipality. The original [Pacolet](#) and [Pacolet Mills](#) were about two miles apart, and the people living in between the proposed [Pacolet Mills](#) and the original [Pacolet](#) simply did not want to be voted into the [Pacolet Mills](#) community. These people living in between hastened to get a charter. A municipality may not be merged into another municipality without a vote of the people. All the [Central Pacolet](#) people had to do was get 100 people to sign and indicate the perimeters. So [Central Pacolet](#) people avoided the possibility of being incorporated into [Pacolet Mills](#) by getting a charter of their own.

That same year, [Pacolet](#) people living in the [Pacolet Park](#) area did not want to become a part of [Pacolet Mills](#) municipality, so 100 people, basically executives of the [Pacolet Mills](#) community, applied for and received a charter for [Pacolet Park](#). [Pacolet Park](#) was composed of what we used to refer to as the "boss line" plus the manufacturing plants, which protected the company property from being subjected to [Pacolet Mills](#) taxation. In 1976, [Pacolet Park](#) people forfeited their charter.



In 1997, a vote was taken to determine whether [Central Pacolet](#), [Pacolet Mills](#), and the original [Pacolet](#) would be merged. The people of [Pacolet Mills](#) and [Pacolet](#) voted in the affirmative but the people in [Central Pacolet](#) voted against the merger, so we now have only two Pacolets: [Central Pacolet](#) and [Pacolet](#).

This is a brief history of the Pacolets, as I recited it to my friend several years ago. Pacolet is in the corner of Spartanburg County. It is 15 miles from Gaffney, 16 miles from Union, and 11 miles from Spartanburg. [Pacolet Manufacturing Company](#) has closed, and the [Pacolet Mills](#) community functions largely as a retirement center. People living in the Pacolet area today work in Spartanburg, Gaffney, or Union. No major industry presently operates in Pacolet.

I lived in Pacolet with my mother and father until 1942, when I married at age 28. My father always said no house was big enough to house two families, so I moved to Spartanburg, where I have lived since 1942.

The purpose of my writing is to record a number of incidents that happened in and about the Pacolets. Some of the incidents I recite are a bit of history, but most of them are either just amusing or of interest. I have relied to some degree on [THE HISTORY OF PACOLET](#), by Willie Flemming, and [PACOLET MILLS, A VILLAGE CALLED TROUGH](#), by Ruth Trowell Watson. The Flemming book was written about 1980. The Watson book was written about 1998.

## **Pacolet Baptist Church Minutes**

June 1870

I am indebted to my friend Joseph R. (Joey) Gainey, keeper of the Law Library in the Spartanburg County Courthouse, for providing me with 1870 minutes of the [Baptist Church at Pacolet.](#)

It was about six years after the end of the War Between the States that the [Pacolet Baptist church](#) in a business session charged A.W. Owens (apparently a member) with sedition, being a Republican, a member of the Union League, and with falsification. A committee consisting of fifteen men were appointed to investigate Mr. Owens and the charges.

At a later dated Mr. Owens was found guilty of falsehood and was excluded from the church. While it does not appear from the minutes that the accused person was dismissed from the church because he was a Republican, it is apparent that this was one of the basic reasons for no longer permitting him to be a member.

It will be recalled that feelings between Southern people and Northern people were less than friendly for many years after the war. It was not until almost a century later that Republicans came to gain control of the South Carolina Legislature and of most governmental affairs.

It is obvious from the lengthy report of the church committee that the great bulk of people took a dim view of Republicans. If I am not mistaken today there are more Republicans in the Pacolet area than there are Democrats.



## Murder of Pacolet's Banker

Baseball was one of the popular means of entertainment in the old days. Many of the textile plants had a baseball team and belonged to a league. The schedule was loosely organized but was so arranged that each of the textile plants would play all of the other textile plants during the summer. Up until about 1930 people worked in the mill ten hours a day five days a week and five hours on Saturday. On Saturday afternoons baseball was a popular entertainment.

Over and above the textile games most of the town such as Jonesville, Pacolet, west Springs and Pauline played each other. There was no organized schedule but hatched up games were played with one another from time to time. It was at such a game that I saw my brother Arthur do a triple play unassisted. In the 1920s Pacolet was playing Jonesville at home. Arthur played shortstop. Jonesville was at bat and there was a man on first and second and no outs. The batter hit a line drive over the second base. The runners were so certain it was a hit they were off and running. To everyone's surprise Arthur caught the ball and stepped on second base. That got the batter plus the man on second out. The man on first was almost down to second so my brother ran and caught him so bam, bam, bam the side was retired. Triple plays unassisted are very rare. I have never heard of any other triple play unassisted although there could have been.

Among those players who enjoyed a Saturday afternoon game was a local banker at Pacolet named Ben High. He was a first baseman. One Saturday in May 1924 after a game was over he came

home, which was located adjacent to the [Methodist cemetery](#). His wife told him that a tenant on the farm, a black man, had sassed her. Ben walked over to his house that was a short distance away to fuss at him about his conduct. He did not return and friends went looking for him. He was found dead in a pool of blood on the porch of his tenant's house. The man's name was Hunter. This was nearly 80 years ago. I was about twelve years old. I recall going to the house along with my father. A tremendous crowd had gathered. It was a day when lynchings were not unheard of. Hunter disappeared and for the last seventy odd years has not been found.

Ben High was a very popular man about thirty-two years old, married with two children. He was the only person employed by the bank that was called The Bank of Pacolet. When the bank records were, audited, it was found that \$175,000.00 was missing. The bank never reopened. Records in the Office of the Clerk of Court for Spartanburg County reflect that the bank examiner explained just how High had come about taking the money from the bank. Rumor had it, but it cannot be confirmed, when they found that Ben, had taken the money they stopped looking for Hunter. Rumor had it that the Klu Klux Klan had killed Hunter and had him buried. I do not think this is true. I think Hunter caught a freight train going North or South and disappeared .

## The Four Were Drowned

For many years, Pacolet has been known for the production of much granite and rock. The [rock quarry](#), located about two miles from Pacolet, was served by a spur track from the railroad taken up years ago. Growing out of the mining of rock, there were two pools. Many of us swam in both of them. I can recall on one occasion, when I was about six or seven years old, the [Baptists](#) had a baptizing in the upper pool. Many of us youngsters swam in both pools. In 1921, the [Baptist church](#) undertook a major renovation which provided for a baptistery in the sanctuary.

In 1927, Mr. Rogers, who worked for the [Pacolet Manufacturing Company](#), took his three small boys to the upper pool. It was late in the (day) with no spectators. The bodies of all four were found floating in the pool. The three boys were approximately four, six, and eight. They were buried in Roebuck with Mr. Rogers and the smallest boy in one casket and the two other boys in a second casket. These pools are no longer used for swimming, but over the years a few other people have been drowned in either the lower pool or the upper pool. The [quarry](#) continues to provide gravel for road building purposes.

## Farming at Pacolet

When I, was a boy, there were many farm operators in the Pacolet area. Among the crops usually produced were those of peaches, corn, cotton, and sugar cane. Many people had gardens and produced many vegetables either for personal use or sale. A great many people kept milk cows and sold butter and milk.

It is my recollection that, during the 1920s, Spartanburg County produced 80,000 bales of cotton. In the Pacolet area, there were three cotton gins, all of which were busy during the fall season. There was McDowell's Gin at [Pacolet Station](#), Free's Gin three miles south of Pacolet about half-way to Jonesville, the Murph's Gin at [White Stone](#) about three miles up the road to Spartanburg. Today I am informed that there is not a single operating gin in Spartanburg County. If I were asked to find a cotton gin, I would not know where to look. In the old days, many people who worked in the mill or elsewhere grew cotton and peaches. Many of them would have fifteen or twenty acres of peaches and would do a bit of farming on the side. If there is a peach orchard in Pacolet or the vicinity, I, am not' aware of it. In actuality, the way of the small peach grower has long gone. I suppose, as of 2003, it could be said that peaches are the main crop produced in Spartanburg County. I know of no peach orchards in the Pacolet vicinity.

Employment in the entire Up Country of South Carolina is largely industrial.

## Depression Years

I date the depression years from 1929 when the stock market went haywire until about 1940. Prior to that time the great mass of people lived hard. Spartanburg County and all of South Carolina was primarily an agricultural county and state. When the depression came, there was not a great change in the living habits of the great mass of people. They had little before the depression came and little after the depression came. Many survived by merely tightening their belts and living on less. At the height of the depression, twenty-four per cent of the people were unemployed. Textile plants were operating on a part-time basis oftentimes merely to provide their loyal employees with enough money to buy food which, along with everything else, was cheap.

Most people, who were Democrats, blamed the depression on a Republican president named Herbert Hoover. They named a popular sack of tobacco which was called golden grain in honor of the President by calling it the "Hoover Dust". One could buy a small pack of Chesterfield cigarettes for ten cents or a large pack for fifteen cents, but many people could not afford them so they paid five cents for a small cloth bag, with draw strings, full of tobacco which they used to roll their cigarettes by hand.

One who had regular employment such as my father, a rural mailman, was fortunate. The pay wasn't great but it was

regular and dependable. A carpenter and others had to look for a new job every few weeks. If a rural letter carrier's job came open during the depression, there would be a hundred applicants for the job. Today there are practically no applicants for similar employment.

In the summer during the depression many people lived out of the garden and many, including my father, raised a few pigs and killed them in the fall.

About that time the savings and loans came into being, and the lending policies helped the economy get going again. The Bank of Pacolet which closed in 1924 was never opened again, but the bank in [Pacolet Mills](#), named the Employees Savings Bank, survived because Rip Westmoreland, who operated it, would not lend many people money. Accordingly if you do not lend much money a bank cannot go broke. That bank, to my recollection, is the only bank that did not close during the depression.

Though the depression was vanishing in the late 1930s due to the Roosevelt administration policies, it never got really going until the war broke out in 1941. When [World War II](#) broke out there was a great demand for everything. Actually the demand was greater than the supply such that many items like automobile tires, gas, shoes, cloth etc. were rationed. Many of us anticipated that with the end of World War II the economy would suffer again, but for many years thereafter most industry continued to thrive.



## **The Town Burned Down in 1934**

In June 1934, sparks from the railroad engine set fire to the business section of Pacolet. With no fire department to stop its spread, the fire quickly consumed [Coleman's Store](#), the drug store, the post office, Miss Evins' Grocery Store, a furniture store, [Robinette's Garage](#), Barnette's Garage, a barber shop, Jock Black's store, and the bank building. A residence adjoining [Coleman's store](#) also burned. The business area has never been the same, although several business enterprises have been built since.

## Merchandising

During the 1920s and before and until the early 1930s, there were three main stores providing general merchandise for Pacolet people. There was [Coleman's Store](#), which was burned in 1934, [Brown's Store at Pacolet](#), and the [Company Store at Pacolet Mills](#). At the time, it was not unusual for textile manufacturers to provide a company store. The store stocked substantially about everything a person would need from groceries to cloths and oftentimes drug-store items. The [Company Store](#) would extend credit to employees by issuing to them Jay Flips or other evidences of credit. Oftentimes an employee would sell these tokens to interested friends at a discount. It was well understood that prices at the [Company Store](#) were higher than anywhere else.

At [Coleman's Store](#) and [Brown's Store](#) at Pacolet, one could find unlimited groceries, shoes, stockings, shirts, ties, socks, cloth for sewing, buttons, and just about anything else poor people needed and could afford. Coming to Spartanburg to shop did not come into popular practice until the late 1930s and early 1940s. Company stores have for the most part ceased to exist.

As people came to own automobiles, they preferred to drive to Spartanburg where the choice of items to be purchased was more abundant. It has become difficult, if not impossible, for country stores to survive.

## More About Merchandising

M.W. Brown operated a general merchandising store at Pacolet. Among the people he served were farmers who farmed as sharecroppers. There is no such thing as a sharecropper any more, persons with limited income would operate a farm and share the profits with the owner of the farm when crops were gathered in the fall. Mr. Brown financed many of these sharecroppers by extending credit to them throughout the summer and until the cotton was ginned and sold in the fall. Adjoining [Brown's Store](#) were hitching posts, and it was not uncommon for farmers to hitch their mules and wagons to the hitching posts in "Brown's Parking. Lot". Adjacent to the store was a public well. I cannot remember whether the well was operated by the town or by Mr. Brown. A trough was provided such that farmers could water horses and mules at the well. The well had a pump and anyone needing water was at liberty to take from the well any amount.

Practically all of the houses in the community had a well. The only running water I can recall was that of Mrs. Atlanta Bryant who owned about one hundred acres of land and pumped water from a spring about a half mile away by way of a ram. I hasten to add that I never did understand how a ram operated, but I do know that the use of a ram permitted one to take advantage of gravity at the spring and force water into a tower. That is the first experience of running water I can recall at Pacolet. It was not until about the time [Camp Croft](#) came into being and extended water lines. half way of Pacolet, that city water was extended to the Pacolet area. Pacolet is now supplied with water from the Spartanburg Water Works. It, and just about everyone in this area, now have the benefit of public water.

A friend of mine named Jack Easler was a well digger. If one wanted to build a new house the first thing he had to do was employ Mr. Easler to punch a well and put in a hand pump, and later on an electric pump. After water became available to people in the Pacolet area, bathroom facilities were usually included but there was no sewage disposal plant, so septic tanks came into prominent use and according to my information septic tanks are in common use and will be until people in the area are able to afford a sewage system.

## **The Coming of the T-Model Ford**

On the 90th birthday of my father, he told a newspaperman that he had carried the mail in a buggy, in a two-horse wagon, in a one-horse wagon, on horseback, on a motorcycle, had walked, and had worn out five Chevrolets and three Fords. The first car which my father came to own was a 1917 T-Model Ford. He then began carrying the mail in a motor vehicle, but there were no hard-surfaced roads, and, in the winter, roads were not always passable for an automobile. Accordingly, he had to keep a horse and buggy available for use on days when an automobile would get stuck in the mud. I recall riding with him on one occasion when the T-Model Ford he was driving got stuck. One of his patrons brought a team of mules and pulled the Ford out of the mud so we could continue the route.

The automobiles of yesteryear are not to be compared with the automobiles of today. The first Ford at the Littlejohn house, did not have a self-starter. We cranked it. Self-starters only became available about 1920. One could buy a Ford with or without a self-starter. A self-starter vehicle could be bought for about \$600 instead of \$500. Occasionally, one who cranked the Ford would get a broken arm. Doctors made money setting broken arms growing out of the cranking of automobiles.

Over the years, many automobile features have been added. I can remember the time when one could buy an automobile with or without a self-starter, with or without a

radio, with or without a heater, with or without electric window lifts, with or without power steering, and with or without power brakes. The time has now come when all of these fine features are on almost all of the vehicles available to the public.

In 1941, I bought a new Chevrolet Club Coupe for \$807. It was an excellent automobile which my wife and I drove about 85,000 miles between 1941 and 1947. The time has now come when every adult member of the family needs an automobile. Nothing is built on the theory that people will walk. If every adult does not have an automobile, somebody has to be a chauffeur.



## Garages

At Pacolet for many years there were two garages maintained for the repair of automobiles. One was operated by L.B. Barnett. In addition to repairing-motor vehicles, at one time, he had a franchise to sell Chevrolets, and some new cars were brought into Pacolet on a freight car and unloaded at the depot. It was about 1928 or 1929 that two new Chevrolet automobiles were shipped to Barnett. He kept them in his garage. One night someone broke into the garage and stole both automobiles. It is my recollection that neither of the cars were ever found. Some years later Mr. Barnett closed the garage and-moved to Spartanburg where he opened a used car lot. He died many years ago.

The other garage was operated by [Zack Robinette](#). He was a skilled mechanic and serviced cars well for a number of years. Later, he closed his garage and maintained a business of another nature in the vicinity. Both garages were active when I was a student at Wofford College. I recall that each had a gas pump and sold gas for about 20¢ a gallon. I was commuting to Wofford College in a 1929 model Ford Pheaton, sometimes called a touring car. There are no touring cars left on the market; they were characterized by no glass in the doors but curtains were stored under the back seat. When it rained or in cold weather, we would take the curtains from the back seat and mount them on the car to keep out rain and the cold. These

cars had no heater, no radio, no air conditioning, but, by this time, self-starters. had become common place. My 1929 model Ford would get about 20 miles to the gallon of gas which meant gas transportation cost me about a penny a mile. Compare this to modern prices where the cost is about six or seven cents per mile.

Many people in the Pacolet area went to Detroit to work for Ford Motor Company. The attraction was the fact that Ford Motor Company paid \$5 a day to people who worked at the factory. About that time, a new Ford Pheaton could be purchased for about \$500 but nearly \$600 when the self-starter was added .

This was also about the time when rumble seats became popular. To youngsters who are not familiar with the rumble seat, I report that it was a seat where the trunk of the car opened up in a backward sort of fashion such that you could close down the trunk area or open it up and seat two people.

Automobiliary is not what it used to be -- and I am thankful.

For many years, the garage repair business and blacksmith shops operated simultaneously. Each had its clientele. L.B. Barnett and [Zack Robinette](#) were operating automobile repair shops. W.S. Spake was operating a blacksmith shop. His work was to shoe horses and mules and repair plows, buggies, and wagons. I do not recall when the blacksmith shop

became unprofitable and closed, but it had to go out of business because there were no horses or mules of consequence to be shod, and no wagons, buggies, or plows to be repaired. I do not know where I could find a mule in Spartanburg County. There are a few horses retained for riding and similar purposes. Truly the automobile world has abolished the need of a blacksmith. If I owned a horse and needed to have it shod, I do not know where I would go today.

Until 1928 when Ford produced the well known Model A, few cars had a spare tire. The T-Model was phased out in 1927. Until the Model-A was produced, all Ford cars had a hand pump, a jack, and a box of patching under the back seat. If one had a flat tire, he merely jacked the wheel up, took the tire off, patched the tube, and replaced it. All cars at that time used tires with tubes. The tubeless tire came into being many years thereafter.

The hand pump was necessity before garages came to advertise "Free Air". For several years, garages and filling stations had a sign out front advertising the fact that free air was available. It made the hand pump less a necessity.

## **Repairing Punctures**

The durability of automobile tires has progressed in keeping with the efficiency of the automobile itself. The T-Model Ford, about which I write in another chapter, used comparatively small tires on the front and on the back wheels. The front wheels used a tire and tube 30 x 3; the back wheels used a tire and tube 30 x 3. These tires were pumped up to about 55 pounds. Contrast that to the tires used today. They use about 32 pounds. There was little durability in the tires. I recall the time when Firestone proudly announced their tires would be guaranteed for 5,000 miles. All tires required tubes

The T-Model Ford at that time had no spare tire. Under the back seat there was (in addition to the curtains about which I have mentioned in another chapter). a hand pump, a container of patching, a jack, and a tire tool. If one had a flat tire, he would remove the tire with a tire tool, place the tube over one of the doors, and patch the hole that caused the tire to be flat. In hot weather it was difficult to have a patch that endured. It was not unusual for the patch which covered the hole to become unattached because of the heat. Tubes are now a thing of the past.

Today automobiles are greatly different. Today tires are greatly different. It is not unusual for tires to last forty to fifty thousand miles. Punctures are still a possibility, but this problem is solved by a spare tire which all automobiles have today.

## Taxi Business

In the 1920s and early 1930s, only a few people had an automobile. Many people who worked at the mill or in farming used their family car as a taxi. One did not have to be licensed to go into the taxi business. These persons would meet the eight passenger trains which passed through and stopped at Pacolet. The demounting passengers needed transportation to Pacolet Mills two miles away. These taxi operators would carry passengers to Pacolet Mills for a quarter. For many years thereafter, these taxi operators regularly carried people to Spartanburg for fifty cents - round trip. Today we find that at just about every house there is one or more automobiles. As far as I know, no one operates a taxi in or about Pacolet.



## The School Burns Up

A school building was constructed in Pacolet about 1915. It served both the grammar school and the high school. On the second floor, there was a small auditorium and classrooms. This building had no modern facilities such as a restroom or running water. Each room was heated with a pot-bellied stove. Separate outhouses were provided for the girls and boys. I'm not at all sure that the cause of the fire was ever determined, but the building was completely consumed.

The high school students completed the year in the Methodist church. The grammar school students completed the year in the Baptist church.

A new and much better school building was constructed on the premises. My class graduated in May of 1930 and was the first to have its commencement in the new building. This building served the community well until about 1985, when most of the school facilities were demolished as Pacolet merged with Cowpens to form Broome High School.

There was a time when the trustees would not hire local people to teach. Some of the teachers boarded in private homes, but while I was in high school the school district constructed a teacherage. It was in actuality a sort of boarding house for teachers who resided out of town. Each teacher paid \$25 per month for room and board. The teacherage, which adjoined the high school building, has now been demolished.

## The Ice House at Pacolet

The electric refrigerator for kitchen use such as are common today came into being in the late 1920s and/or the early 1930s. Prior to that time we used the conventional ice box. An ice box usually had a compartment in the upper part for storage of ice and a place for food in the bottom.

Pacolet people were supplied ice from the ice house located at [Pacolet Mills](#) between the textile plant and the bridge over the [river](#). During the summer months and perhaps to a lesser degree through the other months of the year, the ice house produced large blocks of ice approximately two feet by four feet by three feet. One could go to the ice house and procure a block of ice adapted to his or her particular refrigerator. There was always a hole in the bottom of the ice compartment to drain off the water melted from the ice. One had either to place a pan under the ice box or bore a hole in the floor such that the water would drain through a tube to the earth below.

To supply these needs there were persons who would buy a block of ice and place it in a pickup truck and make deliveries of ice to houses. A block of ice adapted to one's particular refrigerator cost, between 15¢ and 20¢. It lasted four and five days.

Children liked to follow the iceman around because when he would saw the ice to the proper size, shavings would fall; and children would catch the shavings in their hands and eat them like snow balls or snow cones without flavor.

The ice house is long since gone and now substantially all people are served by one or more modern day electric refrigerators.

Things just aren't like they used to be and the iceman and ice house are gone forever.

## The Fourth of July

The Fourth of July was usually a holiday at Pacolet. Among the things designed to entertain the people was a baseball game, a picnic, and kindred activities. At Pacolet I well recall one year a greased pig was turned loose at home base on the baseball field. It was in the scheme of things that if you caught the pig you could take it home and keep it.

So far as I know now no one at Pacolet has pigs, but it hasn't been too long ago that pig pens and cow shelters were provided for employees.

On the Fourth of July there were many contests of different sorts, and it was truly a day of celebration.

## Telephones at Pacolet

It has been a long time, but it doesn't seem so, since telephones at Pacolet were scarce. At Pacolet there were only three -- one at [Brown's General Merchandise Store](#), one at the home of Dr. A.B. Stowe, and one at [Walter McDowell's Gin-nery](#).

Each of these phones were mounted on the wall and in order to activate the instrument and get the attention of an operator one would crank it up. The operator, if she were awake, would say, "Number please."

All of these were on a party line and if one of the parties wished to phone one of the other parties, he could do so without going through the operator. [Brown's Store](#) would answer two short rings, Dr. Stowe would answer three short rings, and [Mr. McDowell](#) would answer one short and two long rings. It is my recollection that these three telephone owners were charitable to people in the community. If one needed to use the phone, permission was readily given. The telephone lines were strung to tall telephone poles. The poles were rather fragile and in case of a storm, it was not unusual for one of the post to break off, and the service would be discontinued until a repairman could come to the rescue.

Compare the phones of yesterday with the phones of today. I would approximate that-there are now in the Pacolet area-approximately 2,000 telephones. Phones have become no longer a luxury but a necessity. As far as I know, there are

no party lines in the Pacolet area. In fact party lines may be a thing of the past. I am not at all sure. Recently I was talking with a member of the telephone company in Spartanburg. I asked him how many telephones could I talk to from my bedroom in Spartanburg. The answer at that time was 486 million. These phones are, of course, all over the world and my friend added that the phone companies are adding on approximately 20 million telephones every year.

It is interesting to observe that a great portion of the people now have cell phones. I see youngsters 15 to 16 years old all over town talking on their cell phones. In my home I have nine phones -- one in every room. I have no cell phone but that day will probably soon come.

## Cotton Picking Time at Pacolet

In another chapter I have referred to the fact that in days of yore the Pacolet area was largely agricultural. Enough cotton was grown in that area to support the [McDowell Gin](#) at Pacolet, the Murph Gin at [White Stone](#), and Free's Gin near Jonesville.

The last part of August and the first part of September was cotton-picking time. Some of the schools met for two weeks in early August in order that the school could be in recess during a similar period of time in September so that school children could pick cotton.

I well remember my sister Mildred and I picked cotton for one cent a pound. It was our ambition to save up at least a dollar so we could go to the Spartanburg County Fair which usually met during the first week of October. Friday was county school children's day at the fair. Schools were in recess so that students could be in attendance. Back then money was worth something. School children were admitted to the fair without pay. Once inside the gate we could ride any of the machines available, including the Merry-Go-Round for ten cents or we could go into any show for a dime. This meant we could have ten delightful activities during the day for a cotton-picking dollar.

One of the events held on Friday of the fair week was contests between the various grammar schools and high

schools throughout the county. I recollect that D.C. Littlejohn, Essie Robinson, Henry Kirby, and I formed a relay team to run the one-hundred yard relay race. We beat all of the teams from other schools and especially the runner up which was Cowpens seventh grade. For this achievement each of us received a small medal which I have kept these many years as a souvenir growing out of delightful times spent at the Spartanburg County Fair. That fair has now been renamed The Piedmont Interstate Fair.



## Four Trains at Pacolet

The principle way to travel in the 1920s and 1930s was by railroad train. Few people had an automobile, and, for traveling any substantial distance, the train was used. At Pacolet, there were four passenger trains going north and four passenger trains going south everyday. One could buy a ticket from Pacolet to Spartanburg for 42¢, and a ticket to Columbia for \$2.90. The depot had an agent on duty at all times, and there were two waiting rooms at the depot one for blacks and one for whites. As people came to own automobiles and fly on airplanes, the trains were discontinued one at a time such that today there is no passenger service at Pacolet and no active depot.

In the 1920s and early 1930s a great part of the products available in the stores were brought in by freight train. In addition to the spur line which serviced the rock quarry, there was a spur line which served Pacolet Mills. Bales of cotton would be brought in on the freight train and left at Pacolet Station. A dummy engine based at Pacolet Mills would come and get the cotton and would from time to time haul cloth from Pacolet Mills to Pacolet.

As of today it is my understanding that one or two freight trains go north and one or two freight trains go south everyday. They do not stop at Pacolet. Today substantially everything except coal and maybe sand are hauled by way of trucks. People travel either by automobile or plane.

## **Pacolet Funerals**

I was telling one of my young friends recently about some change that had been brought about in society and in the governmental world.

My friend said, “Judge, there is no use to point out anyone thing that has changed; everything has changed.” I believe my young friend was right.

Among the things that have changed greatly are funeral customs. It used to be that the preachers preached a long; fire and brimstone sermon at funerals, rationalizing that the people in attendance would be more attentive then than on any other occasion .

The long preaching type funeral has long since gone. There is an inclination now to have a prayer, a song, a reading of scripture, and a short message with the funeral service concluding at the grave site. Many people now prefer a grave-side ceremony only. Cremation has become increasingly common.

When I was a small boy, I remember attending one funeral where the hearse was drawn by two white horses. On another occasion, I recall a casket being hauled to the Jerusalem Baptist Church in a two-horse wagon.

A grave site was often prepared by neighbors who brought picks and shovels and prepared the grave for receipt of the casket.

Not everyone could afford the services of a mortician and a funeral director. Underprivileged people would do what was referred to as “laying him or her out” at the home. This process involved the bathing and dressing of the body in preparation for burial. Burial had to be provided promptly to prevent a deterioration of the body. I can barely recall when one could buy a casket at the furniture store. Skilled carpenters in the area would build caskets of varying size and sell them to the furniture stores for retail purposes.

It was customary for a body to be brought home from the mortuary and left in the residence overnight. It was also customary for two persons to sit with the body. Usually a pot of black coffee was prepared to keep the sitters awake until dawn. Oftentimes, they would alternate napping.

Occasionally, friends and members of the family would take pictures of the body in the coffin.

In certain churches, it was customary to leave the casket open during the service and members of the congregation were invited to walk by and gaze on the body of the deceased person. Memorials are a comparatively new custom. In days of yore, the only way to show respect to the family was to bring flowers which were oftentimes made up from flowers grown in and about homes of friends.

## Spade Wood

I cannot recall when [Pacolet High School](#) did not have a [baseball team](#). Among those who were truly good at the game was a local boy named Charlie Wood, a southpaw. Several colleges would have been glad to get him, but he chose to take a scholarship from Wofford College and pitch for the Terriers.

It was on a Sunday night in 1928 that he and three of his friends were playing Bridge in Snyder Hall on the campus. Charlie Wood drew thirteen spades in one hand. It was such an unusual combination that he hastened to tell the [Spartanburg Herald-Journal](#) about it. The paper ran a story about it on Monday morning.

At that time, discipline on and about the campus for the students was greatly different from the customs of today. President Henry Nelson Snyder called Mr. Wood to his office and expelled him. Card playing, especially on Sunday, was a no no.

Charlie became known as “Spades” Wood. He went on to the major leagues and played good baseball. He married a girl from Oklahoma and has not been a Pacoletian since that time.

## My First Movie

There was no radio available in the Pacolet area until 1930, when Virgil. Evins applied for and procured a franchise to operate WSPA-AM in Spartanburg. There was no television available until the late forties or early fifties. Oftentimes we would go to Spartanburg to see a movie for 10 cents at the Criterion Theatre. There were no intermissions between shows, and one could sit through four or five and enjoy such cool facilities as the theatre provided. There was no air conditioning as we know it today.

The first movie I recall having seen was “The Birth of a Nation”. It was a popular show at the time. There was a theatre of sorts in the mill community building where a movie was shown every Saturday night. Reels were mailed in and provided , but the show was interrupted every ten or fifteen minutes so the operator could change reels. The machine was not operated by electricity; the operator manually controlled the speed with which the show would proceed.

In those days there were no talking movies. The words of the speaker on the screen were translated into writing. Persons who could not read would oftentimes sit close to those who would read aloud.

At that time we never dreamed that the day would come when there would be talking and color movies, and certainly we never dreamed that movies would be shown on facilities that we know as TV.

## Revival Meeting in August

During my boyhood days at Pacolet, there were three churches: The [Pacolet Baptist Church](#) more recently named [The First Baptist Church of Pacolet, the Methodist Church of Pacolet, and The Presbyterian Church of Pacolet.](#) Since that time other churches have come into being including one named [Morning Star and Tate Memorial.](#) In addition, there was a [Baptist church](#) at [Pacolet Mills](#) and a Methodist church called [Montgomery Memorial](#) and also [Brown's Chapel Baptist Church.](#)

I have indicated elsewhere in these anecdotes the fact that there was a great deal of farming in the Pacolet area during my boyhood days. I worked on the farm along with all the other boys in my family and we planted cotton, corn, sugar cane, sweet potatoes, and an abundant garden.

We planted in the spring and cultivated the cotton and corn crops along about June and the first part of July. Then came lay-by time. Now I hasten to tell my young friends what is meant by lay-by times. After the crops had been planted and cultivated, there was a time when the crops were permitted to mature. This was during the last part of July and a substantial part of August.

It was during lay-by time that the churches had revivals. It was planned for this time because people who worked on the farm didn't have anything to do except wait for harvest time. The revival to which I refer was

was usually held during August and was normally conducted by a visiting preacher. There would be a church service at 11: 00 o'clock every morning and a church service at 7:30 every evening.

These revivals according to my information have pretty well been discontinued. A few may remain, but if so it is only for two or three days and/or nights.

The [Baptist Church of Pacolet](#) was not able to pay a fulltime preacher, and so we shared our preacher with the Clifton Baptist Church. The [Methodist](#) could not afford a fulltime preacher and so they shared a preacher with [Whitestone](#) Church.

Church groups, especially among the young folks, would arrange party activities. The hay ride was a popular means of going to a picnic. Two of the more popular ways to have a party were to arrange a wiener roast or a marshmallow toast. One of the popular places for such an event was Whitestone Springs. [Whitestone Springs](#) was about four miles from Pacolet, and once provided water commercially to people with certain ailments. I have been to Whitestone Springs many times, but I am not at all sure I could find it today.

## **Bicycles at Pacolet**

When I was a boy, the bicycle was a familiar means of transportation. At that time not all of the families owned even one automobile much less two. One could buy a bicycle for about \$25, and it served a great purpose. At Pacolet many things were within walking distance or certainly within bicycling distance. We walked or rode the bicycle to the post office, to [Brown's Store](#), to [Coleman's Store](#), to the garage, to the school, to the churches, and to our neighbor's house.

Today nothing is built on the theory that one is going to walk or ride a bicycle to get there. The time has come when every adult in the family needs or certainly could advantageously use an automobile. It has come to my attention recently that at Spartanburg High School students look down their noses at other students who either walk or ride a bicycle. Parking Lots at high schools are usually not sufficient to accommodate all the students who now have a car and use it as a means of getting to places of education.

Today I look on the bicycle as a toy. Few people use it as a means of transportation.



## Swimming Holes at Pacolet

I do not recall that anyone in the Pacolet area had a swimming pool when I was a boy. This did not keep us from swimming. There was at least three or perhaps four, places where swimming was to be had in the summertime.

The first place to swim that comes to mind was in the pasture of Mrs. Atlanta Bryant. Flowing through this pasture was a reasonably bold creek or perhaps I should call it a branch. Pacolet boys developed a place to swim by damming up the creek. We dammed it up by filling croaker sacks with sand and constructing a small dam. The water wasn't deep but it was sufficiently deep to provide a place to swim. I learned to swim at this pond, supported by the aid of a 30 x 3-1/2 inner tube originally used on a T-Model Ford. When tubes became unserviceable on a car, we would patch them up and use it somewhat as a lifesaver. It was the use of such a tube that provided me. a swimming learning experience.

There was also a creek dammed up on the property of John Harvey. This property is near the Floyd Pacolet Cemetery, and it was at this place that I learned to dive with a summersault.

And then there was Crocker Pond. This pond was located about a half mile from Pacolet, and to get there one would go through the Methodist Cemetery oftentimes on a bicycle.

Then in addition there were ponds at the [rock quarry](#) about which I have written in another chapter.

It was not until about 1930 that there came available at [Rainbow Lake](#) in the Boiling Springs area a swimming pool. The time came when this was the logical place to go for a swim. [Rainbow Lake](#) as a swimming pool has long been discontinued.

I observe that there are several conventional swimming pools in Pacolet at this time. We never dreamed of such when I was a barefoot boy in Pacolet.

Incidentally all of these pools were sufficiently hidden from public view so that no swimming suits were necessary. It goes without saying, lady swimmers were not permitted in any of these arrangements to which I have referred.

## Barber Shops - Hair Cuts -Ten Cents

Money isn't what it used to be. Fortunately or unfortunately, money never will be the same.

The first hair cut I ever experienced was given to me by a black barber named Bailey Wallace, who served white patrons only and the price was 10¢. A shoe shine could be procured for 5¢.

If one felt as though he needed a better hair cut, he could go to Pacolet Mills where hair cuts were 15¢ at Can Hollow where Oscar Brown maintained a shop and talked constantly. Barber Bailey Wallace didn't exactly cut my hair. The electric clippers had not come into being, and hand operated clippers were constantly dull. Actually, Wallace didn't cut my hair; the dull clippers pulled out half of it and cut the other half off.

Other well known barbers in the Pacolet area were Paul Brown, son of Oscar Brown, Fatty Hamrick, Baxter Jett, and Pug Guyton.

By comparison, a hair cut now cost a minimum of \$10. Said another way, I could have gotten 100 hair cuts for the price I am now paying. Among the barbers who came to Pacolet was a black Methodist preacher who operated a shop which burned down in 1934, about which I write in another chapter.

## **Dr. Robert Dennis Hill**

Among the great personalities I have known at Pacolet over the years was one of the few remaining country doctors who made house calls.

**Dr. Robert Dennis Hill** was a native of Bishopville and came to Pacolet fresh out of medical college in 1928. He served the community for approximately thirty-five years and died in harness in 1964 or 1965

He was an excellent diagnostician beloved by all of the Pacolet people. Little did he care about collecting fees. I have often thought if he could have collected all of the monies owed to him he would have died a rich man. Actually he died without great wealth and was buried at Bishopville his native town. It was well known that the doctor would serve you in case of need whether you had money or not.

Truly he was one of the most beloved Pacolet citizens I have ever known.

## **The Pacolet Jail**

I can barely remember when there was a Pacolet jail. It was a truly crude structure by comparison to the modern air conditioned jail we know today. The one at Pacolet was across the road from the depot. The entire building was about ten by twenty feet divided into two sections -- one for blacks and one for whites. It is my recollection that there was no floor in the jail except dirt. I cannot recall when persons were imprisoned in the Pacolet jail. Certainly, there were no water or toilet facilities available.

I cannot envision what practical purpose the jail I have described served. However, I well remember Pacolet did have a jail and presumably also incarcerated drunks at least overnight -- until they could sober up.

## The Trial Upstairs

The first court case I remember hearing tried was held upstairs in the warehouse of [Brown's Store](#). An individual was accused of assault and battery. Mr. Ruben Coleman, the town mayor, sat as the judge. Lawrence Southard, a prominent Spartanburg lawyer, came to defend the accused. When the testimony was in and the trial had ended, the lawyer told the judge he would have to charge the law to the jury. Mayor Coleman had never charged the law and was entirely incompetent to do so. He instructed Mr. Southard to do so. Mr. Southard complied, and the jury found the man not guilty.

The courtroom, as we called it, had no seats, and we, along with the jury, sat on sacks of seed fertilizer and other products stored in the warehouse.

## **The Coming of Electricity**

Perhaps electricity in residences came into being in Pacolet before I can remember. I do recall that when I was about six years old Lewis Barnett came to our house and wired it for electricity which would have been about the year 1918 or 1919. Until that time we, along with a great part of the Pacolet residents, were using kerosene lamps instead of electricity. The wiring of our house for electricity involved a drop cord and a light bulb in each of the six rooms plus one in the hallway. We paid a minimum of 72¢ a month for the use of electricity. For some time there were no appliances whatsoever. By contrast I counted the electrical motors at my house, and I found there were nineteen. These were in addition to my cooking stove and microwave.

Near our home was one street light. It was suspended from a pole, and it seemed that regularly the light bulb burned out and the man from the power company in Spartanburg would come and skin up the pole with spikes in his boots and replace the light bulb. There was no such thing as the cherry picker used by electricians these days to service electrical wiring with safety. Over the years people at Pacolet and everywhere came to use more and more electricity all the time. I do not know if there is now a minimum charge but in lieu of 72¢, the average bill would probably be \$50 to \$100 per month. We just couldn't do without electricity now, but we did so at my home until I was about 6 years old.

## The Whistle Blew Three Times

When textile plants were built in the late 1800s and early 1900s, it was necessary for the ownership to provide houses for the employees. Traditionally the plants were built on the river so that power, for running the machines in the factories could be propelled by the use of water mills. The houses which the manufacturers built were rather crude by modern-day standards. They had to be built in walking distance of the factory because transportation just wasn't available by way of automobile or horse and buggy.

About that time not every house had an alarm clock. All of the houses were in loud hearing distance of the factories. On a clear day we could hear the mill whistle blow at Pacolet which was almost two miles away. Traditionally it blew three times every morning -- at 5:00 o'clock to wake up the employees, at 6:50 a signal for the employees to start walking, and at 7:00 o'clock to signal the employees to start the machinery.

It was in the late 1930s when the manufacturers decided to leave the house rental business. Houses were rented often-times for 50¢ per room per week. Keeping the houses in decent living conditions was always a chore. For this reason the manufacturers were anxious to leave the housing business. It was in 1937 that young Victor Montgomery told me they were selling all of the houses at one of the plants. My question to him was, "Will you require the grantees in the deed to sell the house back to the company if they cease to work at the mill?"



His answer was, "The time has come that we are no longer dependent upon employees living within walking distance of the [mill](#). Pretty well everybody," he continued, has at least one automobile in the family and people will drive in from miles and miles around to get employment."

As employees became property owners, they began taking pride in improving the dwellings. They added rooms; they underpinned the [houses](#); they glassed in the porches; and they did many other things to make the house more livable. Today so far as I know, none of the textile manufacturers own the houses for its employees.

[Pacolet Mills](#) no longer operates. It is now largely a village of retired employees.

## Can Hollow and Keg Town

Can Hollow and Keg Town were two areas which adjoined the Pacolet Manufacturing properties. It is my understanding that Can Hollow got its name from the fact that employees would dump their garbage, including a multitude of tin cans, on the adjacent property. In Can Hollow, were Bonner's Store. and Oscar Brown's Barber Shop. I do not remember what year, but somewhere along the line Bonner's Store burned up. Many of the employees attended the fire and helped salvage merchandise around about midnight. The story is told of one man who salvaged a pair of shoes and was found cursing near the blaze because the shoes didn't fit.

Keg Town was on the other side of the Pacolet Mill's property near the Cherokee County line. It was well known as a rough community especially on Saturday night. It was during the era of prohibition, about 1919 to 1934, that people drank a whole lot of homemade corn liquor. There was some beer-joint-type enterprises at Keg Town, and it was not unusual for fights to break out every Saturday night. Keg Town is gone and Can Hollow is not what it used to be.

## Entertainments Are Different

Radio and television has changed everybody's life. No longer are we dependent upon the simple games which children played while parents worked.

Some of the games unknown to children today were routine in days of yore. Organized games such as baseball and basketball were in vogue. Also in vogue were such things as marbles, mumble peg, rook, jacks, checkers, and stray cat. It was somewhat routine for senior citizens loafing around the pot belly stove at the store to hatch up a game of checkers. They had no checker board and so they merely took a piece of cardboard and a bit of shoe polish and designed one suitable for play. Since they had no checkers they had to come up with a substitute. The substitute was bottle caps from soft drinks. One contestant would play with the bottle caps turned down and the other contestant would play with the bottle caps turned up.

Gone also is the traditional fiddlers convention. At regular intervals there would be a fiddler convention at the [auditorium of the high school](#). Admission was fifteen or twenty cents, and fiddlers came in from many miles around to participate in the program on Friday nights. It was a poor substitute for the hillbilly programs which came to be popular from WSM radio in Nashville, Tennessee.

I am not at all sure whether the traditional plays produced by the English teachers at the [high school](#)

continue to be popular. I well recall being in one during my junior and senior years before graduation. Traditionally the senior class would produce a play as part of the commencement program.

## Campaigning at Pacolet

Before radio and television became the best way to reach the people in pursuit of votes, most every community in the county had a Democratic campaign stump meeting. Oftentimes there were thirty or forty people running. For various local and statewide offices [Pacolet Station](#) usually had a campaign meeting on the depot grounds using one of the depot trucks for a platform. Inasmuch as there were so many candidates, only about three minutes were allowed one to prove his right to election.

In addition to the meeting at [Pacolet Station](#), a meeting was usually also held at [Pacolet Mills](#) on a platform at the community building.

When I ran for the legislature in 1936 I reminded Pacolet people that they were entitled to have a representative in the Legislature. I called attention to the fact that a Pacoletian had not been elected in that capacity since Mr. J B. Kirby of [Pacolet Mills](#) was a member of the House in 1916.

About 1930, Rip Westmoreland, who operated the bank in [Pacolet Mills](#), was a candidate for the Legislature, but he was not elected. His son, General William Childs Westmoreland, ran for governor in 1974 and was not elected either. James Stephens, who later became a Circuit Judge, and who was born and reared at Pacolet; was elected to the House of Representatives and later to the State Senate.

The Pacolet person who drew the most attention was a man referred to as "Rat Tail Brown". Actually his name was Raymond Brown. Oftentimes people would come to the stump meeting with in view to hear him speak. After he had spoken, half of the people went home. Mr. Brown was never successful in getting elected, but he was truly successful in drawing a crowd.

## Things We No Longer Know

I have indicated in other chapters that corn was one of the crops planted by farmers in the Pacolet area. Corn was often used to feed the horses and mules that worked on the farm.

In addition corn was used to produce corn meal to make corn bread. Between [Pacolet](#) and [Pacolet Mills](#), there was [Robinette's Grist Mill](#). It was operated by electricity. We would take shelled corn to [Robinette's mill](#), and he would grind it for a fee. The fee was collected in the form of a toll. Instead of paying him cash for grinding our corn into meal, [Robinette](#) would toll the product by keeping one-eighth of the corn.

On the other side of Pacolet toward the town of Glenn Springs, there was a grist mill known as Kennedy's Grist Mill. This one was powered by a wheel in a stream. The dam created the water for powering the grinder. The pond was also used for swimming purposes. Long gone also are the molasses mills. At home one of the products we produced was sugar cane. In the fall a molasses mill operator would bring his equipment to our house and set it up for business. The sugar cane was fed into a vice-like device propelled by a mule. The mule went round and round creating force to squeeze out the juice.

We ended up with a barrel of molasses on the back porch. It was unusual if we did not have a pitcher of molasses on the table. There was a spigot on the bottom of the barrel. Oftentimes visitors, if we liked them pretty well, would be give a quart of molasses.

Gone also is the coffee grinder. We used to buy coffee grains by the pint or by the pound from a barrel in the country store. On the wall in the kitchen was a hand operated coffee grinder. It is not easy to find grained coffee today. Everything is produced and ready for the coffee pot.



## Life at the Littlejohn House

My father Cameron Littlejohn (1874-19677) of the [Cherokee County Goucher community](#) and my mother Lady Sarah Warmoth Littlejohn (1872-1960) of the Asbury community were married in 1895. Between that time and 1913 eight children were born of whom I am the baby. There was Myrtle Littlejohn (1895-1992), Boyd Littlejohn (1898-1990), Arthur Littlejohn (1900-1983), Mable Littlejohn McConnell (1903-still.living age 100), J.R. Littlejohn (1905-2002), Henry Guy Littlejohn (1908-1989), Mildred Littlejohn Gravely (1910-1993), and Bruce Littlejohn (1913-still living age 90).

My father was appointed rural letter carrier in 1906 and carried a rural free delivery route for a period of thirty-two years before retiring in 1938. In addition to being a rural letter carrier my father was a farmer, and I have often said he was a better businessman than I because he reared eight children and sent five of us through college. Three of them would not go.

For several years before my brother Arthur married in 1920, my mother prepared ten meals three times a day to keep the family healthy. We had a large garden and raised chickens, pigs, and kept a cow to assist with food for the group.

I frequently visit Pacolet but am often depressed that there are so few people with whom I am now acquainted. I moved to Spartanburg in 1942 and have now outlived most of my Pacolet friends and a lot of my Spartanburg friends too.