

(Notes by Mrs. Anna Black Brooks on the History of Pacolet)

The first settler right where the town of Pacolet is today was Major John Tolleson. He received several grants of land from the Royal Governor of South Carolina in 1784 and later. He also bought a great deal of land, amounting to over eight thousand acres during his lifetime. In 1791, John Tolleson obtained a license to operate a tavern and sell spirituous liquors. This tall log house was still standing in the 1880s and was run as a barroom. It was located a few hundred feet back of Mrs. W. A. McDowell's present home, near a spring. Major Tolleson had a store and it was used as the voting precinct for the area up to 1816. Mill's Atlas of 1824 locates this tavern here on "Tolleson Road", the stagecoach road from Spartanburg to Columbia, and he maintained this section of road. In 1820, Tolleson was worth eighty thousand dollars- that would be millions now. He died in 1821 leaving fifteen children; so many people in this vicinity are his descendants. For some years, as the community grew, it had a rather bad reputation as a drinking, fighting and horse-racing place and it was given the name of "Buzzard's Roost,"

Other early settlers in the area were Stones, McCools, Gossetts, Lemasters, O'Neills, Harveys, Lees, Lewises and Kirbys. A Methodist church was organized some time prior to 1810 on John Tolleson's land. Richard Kirby gave land to the church that year, "adjoining Zion Meeting House". Old time camp meetings were held there before the War Between the States. They also had a Temperance Society there as early as 1830. During Reconstruction Days, the Good Templars had a Society but it did not last long. A parsonage for the, Methodist Preacher was built in Pacolet between 1875 and 1878 and Rev. W.D. Hutto was the first to live there. In 1882 they decided to build a new church next door to the parsonage and the old Zion building was sold to Salem Negro Church.

The Baptists had a church up near the present home of Mr. Fletcher Brown, organized March 25, 1871. About 1879, they moved to the present church location and changed the name to Pacolet Baptist. Rev. John E. King was one of the first preachers and others were Lud Vaughn, W.T.Tate and Davis Bailey.

Mr. James Wood deeded a lot to the trustees of the Presbyterian Church on Sept. 16, 1883 and a building was put up about 1885 or 1886 with a charter membership of twenty five. This church was organized by Rev. A. A. James, pastor of old Fairforest church in upper Union County. Mr. James moved to Pacolet in 1880 and taught school. The present church is the same one built next to his home and is the only old church building remaining in Pacolet. Mr. James was well beloved by the whole community and hundreds of couples came to be married by him. He was pastor here until the date of his death in 1910 and had preached at Fairforest for fifty nine years.

The colored people built another church, in the western edge of town, in 1893 on land bought from George M. and Mahulda Kirby, known as the double-chestnut place.

As early as 1840, efforts were being made to build railroads in this area. About 1846, the Spartanburg & Union Railroad was chartered and work was begun early in the 1850's. By 1855, the line was being built through Pacolet and the first train came through from Union to Spartanburg on Nov. 25. 1859, bringing the president of the road, Col. John L Young and superintendent and engineers Col. Glenn D. Peake and George W. Peake. A huge barbecue and celebration was held in Spartanburg that afternoon, followed by a ball at the Palmetto House that night. Many excursion trips were made on the trains and many were to the popular mineral springs in the up country. Horse drawn hacks (or carriages) met the trains at Pacolet to transport the excursionists to Glenn Springs or Limestone Springs.

Anticipating the arrival of the railroad through Pacolet, a company was formed to buy up land and get a station located here. Reuben Bryant, J. R. and Robert C. Quinn owned a great deal of the old Tolleson plantation and in 1852 they sold it to this firm of James Woods, William Littlejohn and William Norris, a total of 403 acres. This firm employed Squire J.F. Sloan to survey and lay off town lots of one to one and a half acres each. They deeded the railroad a plot of 8 acres for the depot site.

In 1860, George W. Brown, Jr. bought some of these lots and built the first frame house in Pacolet, which still stands and was the house that Miss Nannie Wood lived in for many years. The house faced the Grindal Shoals road and Mr. Brown had a store in the large room on that

side. The family lived in the rooms on the east side of the house. This was the real beginning of the town of Pacolet. After the war, Mr. Brown built the large store which is still "Brown's Store" and is operated by a nephew of Mr. Brown. Mr. Jimmie Wood continued to sell lots and by 1875, other stores and houses had been built. Among the first merchants were Winfield Bryant, G. W. Whitman, Holman L. Thomson, Cicero Brown, and later, Charles and Samuel Littlejohn, Dr. C. M. Littlejohn's drug store, Perry Woods, W.E. Black and Albert C. Black. A gin and a flour mill were put in operation soon after and a coal business were run by W.A. McCowell until a few years ago.

In 1874, Dr. J. S. Thomason gave a lot and Pacolet's first Academy was built, a small one-room building on the corner of Glenn Springs Avenue and Grindal Shoals road. Prof. Lawson B. Haynes was the first teacher and his mother boarded several "out of town" pupils - board and tuition was \$10 a month. In 1879 Prof. John G. Clinkscales was the teacher and he married the daughter of the Methodist preacher, Miss Sallie Hutto. Other teachers were Rev. A. A. James, Walter Moore, Newton Littlejohn, W.T. Tate, E.C. Elmore and E. D. Byers, down to 1893. The list up to the present would be too long, but one who taught longest and was loved and highly respected was Mr. E. N. Littlejohn, still living; and Mrs. Ollie H. Brown who celebrated her one hundredth birthday last November.

The second small school house was built about 1890, larger than the first one. It lasted until 1898 when a three room building was erected on the same site. In 1915 it was abandoned for a new brick building at a different place - where the present high school plant is located. The 1915 building burned down in the 1920s and was replaced by a much larger brick building which is now the central part of the Pacolet High School. complex,,

Pacolet's economy received a boost when the cotton factory was built at Trough Shoals in 1882, as all the freight and passengers passed through Pacolet station depot. Later, the railroad built a spur line to the mills. People were coming and going pretty constantly and several livery stables did a good business with "hack lines"

The biggest thing that happened to Pacolet in that period was the discovery of a good, grade of granite on the farm of J. Madison Lee. He was able to secure the interest of northern capital and in 1894, sold the farm to James C. Johnston from Pittsburg, Pa. Operation of the granite quarry got under way very soon and the town's population doubled in a few months. Almost every home was filled with boarders and new houses were built for the men with families. This put new life into the community and really put Pacolet on the map, as the beautifully carved granite columns, monuments and building material were shipped over the southeast. Some of the finish work on the State House in Columbia was done here. Pacolet acquired some good citizens at this time, among them Mr. Samuel E. Miller, B.W. Rector, James and Joe Brockwell, Bryon Nichols and others.

On May 6, 1896 Pacolet was incorporated as a town. The first Intendant (Mayor) was Major H. F. McDowell; wardens (councilmen) B.B. James, Dr. B. R. Brown, W.H. Lane and Gill Barnett; policeman J. K. McMahan. The election managers were F. P. Yates, B. B. James and W.F. Bryant.

Pacolet area men were very patriotic and when the War Between the States began many volunteered their services to the Confederacy. Whole companies were organized and left Pacolet by train early in 1862 for training camps at Lightwood Knot Springs near Columbia and Adams Run near Charleston. From there they went to the battlefields of Virginia, many never to return. Several rose in the ranks - among them Captains A. K. Smith, Alfred Bryant, J. F. Sloan, Lieutenants H.F. McDowell and Moses Wood and others. In all the wars since that time Pacolet has been well represented.

A number of notable events took place in Pacolet. In August, 1873, a Teacher's Convention was held at Zion Methodist Church, participated in by Rev. A. A. James, Prof. L. B. Haynes, J. B. Williamson, and Peter J. Oeland. In the summer of 1883, a Scientific Convention was held here and a very learned program carried out. Lectures were given by Wofford professors, several leading physicians of Spartanburg and other places in the county, lawyers, engineers and prominent business men. This convention was organized by Dr. J. S. Thomason of Pacolet,

assisted by Moses Wood, W. F. Bryant, Dr. S. B. Smith, S. H. Littlejohn, J. F. Sloan, and George W. Brown

A branch of the National Grange a farmers organization, was organized, and meetings were held in their building on Church street some distance back of the Presbyterian church in the 1880's. The Alliance, a political organization of farmers also built a hall on Glenn Springs Avenue on the Farm of Rev. H. M. Haynes later the home of Mrs.Ollie Brown and not the Coleman residence.

The young people had a croquet club in the 1890's and the court was on Main Street between Dr. Littlejohn's drug store and W.F. Bryant's store on the corner. School boys always had baseball games. Tennis was a favorite game later, with a court on Glenn Springs Avenue between the McLaughlins and Thomsons.

The present Garden Club was organized about 1923 as a Home Demonstration Club by Miss Kate Hooper and was the first one in the county to build their own club house. It was an attractive log cottage built on the schoolhouse lot near the teacherage. The first president was Mrs. Jeffcoat, wife of the Methodist minister, and Mrs. Stowe was the secretary. Mrs. Reuben Coleman Sr. was the organizer.

In September of 1923, the John Davis Jefferies Chapter of United Daughters of the Confederacy was also organized and a charter received on March 10, 1924.

A Masonic Lodge was active in Pacolet as far back as the 1870's and Major H.B. McDowell was an officer. For a long time the lodge hall was the upper story of the W.E. Black store about where the post office is now. Later, it met in the old building back of Brown's store.

Pacolet had a telephone exchange in the late 1890's, several years before Southern Bell had an exchange in Spartanburg. It was located in an annex to W. E. Black's store and the operator was Miss Bessie Black, now Mrs. Frank W. Littlejohn of Charlotte.

It is not known just when the first post office was established but it probably was soon after completion of the railroad. One of the first postmasters remembered was Frank. P. Yates in the 1890's. A Mrs. Gilreath worked in the post office then and it was located in the small room at the end of the porch on Brown's store, facing the depot.

At the eastern edge of Pacolet, stood an old log house, probably built in the 1840's, and was the oldest log house anywhere around at the time it was torn down in 1960 when the Duke Power Substation was erected. This was the home of Oliver Kirby and his wife, "Aunt Betsy". The story goes that without being touched, the spinning wheel would begin to buzz or the baby's cradle start rocking. In the night, they would hear things drop into the cradle. The doctor went there once; knocked on the door but nobody came. He felt sure they were at home because he could hear the spinning wheel "just a humming" and he looked in the door. Nobody was there - Aunt Betsy had gone to grandma's house across the road.

Oliver Kirby was a class leader at Zion Church.

He must have been well respected for when he died, this stone was placed at his grave:

Oliver Kirby
age 64
Put up by devoted friends
in 1852

His grave is in the old M. C. Lee Family graveyard just off of Highway 176.

Some time before the War Between the States, an old woman disappeared from her home at Pacolet and the rumor spread around that her husband had killed her and thrown her in the well under the oak at the depot.

Ben Scott was section master on the railroad, probably the first one here. His "old woman" was weak-minded and wandered around a lot. One night a shot was heard in the direction of their house (Just above the section house which was torn down just a few years ago). Some of John Vandiver's family heard the shot and one of them remarked: "Well, Ben Scott has shot his wife."

They knew the couples had been quarreling that day but nobody went to investigate and nothing was ever done about it. The old woman was never seen again and no explanation was ever made for her disappearance.

The well was about where the depot is now and was filled up before the first depot was built. John Vandiver lived down the branch just beyond the Genoble place.