

Pacolet Mills Company Created by Special Act Of Legislature in 1881

Disastrous Flood Wrecked Plant in 1903; Mill Is Model Community

Disaster and cyclone have never for long hampered the development of Pacolet mills, home of 1,200 of Spartanburg county's textile workers.

A summary of the history and ideals of this model mill community has been prepared in a booklet issued by the company several years ago. The foreword reads in part:

"Pacolet Manufacturing company was created Feb. 9, 1881 by a special act of the legislature of South Carolina.

"The site for Pacolet mills was bought in 1881 by Walker, Fleming and company on the advice of Capt. John H. Montgomery, a member of the firm.

"From the very beginning of this industrial enterprise, Capt. Montgomery shaped the policy of the company and directed its activities in industrial, social and religious life.

"Capt. Montgomery's policy was based upon generous views, far-sighted vision, and a clear-clean conception of human obligations to God and man. His liberal ideas, broad vision, and business sagacity assured his success in every undertaking. His business foresight in the original purchase of the site, flood right, etc., for Pacolet mills has been amply justified by the growth of the plant and the development of the enterprise in every respect. A summary of his first report to the stockholders is very significant in respect to the permanency of his building and his vision of greater things. His vision, foresight, and influence are still manifest in the business policy of the company and in the educational and religious interests of the plants in both South Carolina and Georgia.

Builds Georgia Plant

"In the course of time the growth and development of the South Carolina plant called for business expansion, and his son, Mr. V. M. Montgomery, went to Georgia in 1900 to secure an additional mill site in the Piedmont section of that state.

"His sound judgment in selecting New Holland for the new plant has been fully justified and marks him as a pioneer in the textile industry of northeast Georgia.

"The policy of the Montgomerys, father and son, has been, and is, to give all to employes comfortable homes, sanitary environment, good schools and churches, wholesome recreation, an opportunity to earn and save; in short, the best and happiest conditions procurable for wage-earning and home-making. The business value of such a policy is sound beyond question, as proved by regular and unfailing dividends on the investment.

"The outstanding characteristic of the company's plants is the intimate knowledge the executives have of the industrial and community conditions, their complete undertaking of their employes' needs, the cooperation of everybody concerned in making these conditions the best possible, and in meeting all needs intelligently.

Cyclone, Flood Strike

"The story of the rebuilding of New Holland, wrecked by a cyclone in 1903, and the rebuilding of Pacolet mills, destroyed by a flood the same week, is an epic that has no

parallel in the history of the industry. This double disaster of storm and flood came two weeks after Mr. V. M. Montgomery was elected treasurer and president of the plants to succeed his father. The story is too long to tell in detail here, but the re-establishment of both plants, on a paying basis, bears eloquent testimony to the invincible character of the founder and his successor.

"Mr. Montgomery had had no financial experience and the success of the rehabilitation of the Carolina and Georgia mills was due to the confidence and help of Mr. S. M. Milliken, senior member of the firm of Deering-Milliken & company, who had handled the output of Pacolet's plants from the beginning.

"Mr. Montgomery, inexperienced in finance but fully realizing the complete physical and financial wreck of the two mills whose fate was in his hand, knew that money was the first essential for the rebuilding of the two plants. Therefore, immediately after the double disaster he went to New York to seek the advice of Mr. Milliken and secure help. Mr. Montgomery did not finish his statement of the need of money before Mr. Milliken said to him, 'You can get money if you can write.' To which Mr. Montgomery replied, 'Thank you. There's nothing before me now but work.' These two pithy statements contain the status of relationship between Deering-Milliken company and the Pacolet Manufacturing company which prevails to this day. Mr. G. H. Milliken, son and successor to Mr. S. M. Milliken, supplies the same confidence and support given by his father, and to this alliance of business interests the continuing success of Pacolet is due. Pacolet Manufacturing company makes the good. Deering-Milliken company sells them. These statements set forth the mutual advantages and common interests of the two-firms, and show the cause of Pacolet's success and prosperity.

Human Factor Uppermost

"Uppermost in the policy of the Pacolet Manufacturing company has always been the human factor in its industry. Opportunity for education of its youth and the various advantages for a progressive community have resulted in a direct and valuable contribution of good citizenship to South Carolina and Georgia.

"Pacolet Manufacturing company has made a notable contribution to the textile industry of the South by training mill executives for other plants besides her own. Mill treasurers, managers, superintendents, overseers without number, have been developed in her plants. The policy of the company is such as to note and give full play for development to any and all operatives showing special or marked ability on the job.

"Not only many executives in the textile industry have been trained and developed in Pacolet's employ, but men and women in various pursuits owe their opportunity for development to her schools and village environment. Positions as school superintendents, teachers, preachers, merchants, farmers, doctors, clerical workers of every type, auto mechanics, any and all jobs open to the average man or woman have been opened to those whose tastes or inclinations led them to these various employments.

Purchase Small Farms

"Notable among Pacolet's contributing to good citizenship are the owners of small farms in the Piedmont belt of South Carolina and Georgia. Formerly tenants, these men moved to the mill villages

earned for the first time more than the bare necessities of life, saved the surplus, and in time bought for themselves land they had once tilled as tenants. Cases of this kind could be cited by scores. Another contribution to good citizenship is the wiping out of illiteracy by the night schools and the further on-

portunity provided by the continuation of classes. The health work done under the direction of skilled doctors and trained nurses has given to the villages standards of hygienic living unsurpassed anywhere.

"The percentage of boys and girls graduating from high schools and entering college is slightly above the average for both states in which Pacolet's plants are located.

"These facts only attest to the truth that Pacolet's first concern is for the human factor in her industry and that the human element shows inspiring response to her interest.

"That the human factor interest in Pacolet's policy is paramount is clearly manifest to the intelligent observer. We quote, by permission, words of Dr. A. E. Winship, of Boston, Mass., who has visited both our South Carolina and Georgia plants.

Schools Are Praised

"Of the many demonstrations of the remarkable educational achievements of the country in recent years nothing has surpassed that of the textile mill schools in the Spartanburg district in South Carolina and in the Gainesville district of Georgia. The Pacolet mills, near Spartanburg, and the New Holland mills, near Gainesville, under the management of Victor M. Montgomery and his associates, demonstrate the realization of the highest ideals of so educating children and youth that the entire community is ennobled by the educational activities of the mill management. We have studied the educational activities of these two mill communities as thoroughly and as critically as of any city or county in the country, and nowhere have we seen more definite and valuable re-

sults in the school attainments in life out of school, and in creating personality which could be attributed to no other influence."

Pacolet mill is capitalized at \$4,000,000. The capitalization includes the mill at New Holland, Ga.

There are 77,016 spindles and 2,000 looms.

Officers are: D. W. Anderson, president and treasurer; Marshall C. Stone, vice-president, and W. B. Lawson, secretary and assistant treasurer. M. B. Lancaster is superintendent.

Sheetings, drills and twills are manufactured.