

## **Introduction to Asbury**

A quick drive through the Asbury Community in lower Cherokee County may cause one to miss an impressive look at history. The main road passing through is only about five miles long but a pre-Revolutionary War church, a post Civil War chapel and a post Revolutionary War plantation are all located on less than a half-mile stretch of highway in the heart of the rural South Carolina community.

And these are only three local landmarks - all on Asbury Road (Hwy 211) - steeped in tales of life from days gone by. In just a hop, skip and a jump, there's Asbury United Methodist Church established in 1763, Mulberry Methodist Chapel built about 1890 with its original structure still standing although in need of repair and a more recently named and restored Wagstop Plantation where owners Ken and Lynda Ramage live and enjoy their house built about 1840.

Both Mulberry Chapel and Wagstop have roadside markers issued by the National Register of Historic Places, defining their places in the development of the area. Asbury Church has a stone monument and plaque at the entrance placed by the Littlejohn family who gave land to build the church in the 1800s commemorating where their ancestors held annual reunions for too many years to count.

If you stop your vehicle, stand at the front door of Asbury Church with your eyes closed, follow your nose north toward Gaffney, you can almost envision Thicketty Creek through the thick woods. The creek divides the upper perimeter of Asbury and the Timber Ridge Community. Across the sometimes muddy, rugged water is [\*\*Whig Hill Cemetery where John Nuckolls Sr. \(1732-1780\) is buried near the site of his former plantation. Nuckolls was murdered by Tories for his support of the Patriots in the Revolutionary War.\*\*](#)

A marker also placed by the National Register of Historic Places on Highway 18 recognizes the role of Nuckolls.

Still in the Timber Ridge Community, but traveling by imagination from Whig Hill south on Highway 18, continuing your tour envisioning the history, you make a loop and cross Thicketty Creek, this time by road, and enter the Asbury Community again where the Dawkins Grist Mill built in 1813 once did a steady business, but only a stone pillar remains today.

Looking further south down Highway 18, other boundaries defining Asbury

include part of the Rehoboth Community, [Grindal Shoals](#) to the far south and its part of the [Pacolet River](#). Traveling upstream, you see Red Hills as mentioned in the 1940 U.S. Census, a nearby area referred to as White Hills by local folks and moving away from the river, you soon leave Asbury and come to part of the all-but-forgotten Ravenna Community.

In the last few decades, Ravenna lost its voting precinct but is remembered by the local folks today.

Turning to the right, the next neighbors of Asbury are the outer edges of the ever-growing population-wise [Goucher Community](#) and Knuckles Chapel Baptist Church. You have arrived at the upper end of Asbury Road which takes you back to Asbury Church where your tour began.

If you could physically walk those boundaries, checking a map, you would see you've gone in a rough circle from Whig Hill back to Asbury Church.

Asbury has always had close ties to Pacolet, only about 8 miles away. Jonesville is 10 miles or so to the south, and Gaffney in the opposite direction is 12-15 miles in the distance. My family always felt we lived closer to Pacolet.

Daddy who was born in 1925 often shared stories with me when I was a child about going with his family to visit relatives in Jonesville in the summer. "We would leave Asbury in the morning with Momma when it was cooler and wait until late in the day to return home," he explained.

"What kind of car did you have?" I once asked.

"We walked," he replied. "Thought nothing of it. Didn't even have a horse and buggy."

His most memorable tale for me was about visiting his grandmother in Jonesville who always asked him for a kiss when they left, and he always told her, "I will if you wipe that snuff off your mouth!"

One reason for the Pacolet ties may have been available work in the [Pacolet textile mills](#) for Asbury residents until the mills closed by the late 1950s or so, and another is mail came by carrier from the Pacolet Post Office.

Both of my parents worked in the mills.

Momma always chided Daddy, because early in their marriage, he was sent word he had a job in the mill and should report the next day. But Daddy sent word back that he would go into work a day later, because he already planned to go "bird" (quail) hunting on what was to be his first day on a new job. But he was

hired, and we had quail for supper that night and Daddy reported to his new job like he promised!

As for the Asbury mail, delivery was never a set-up folks in my parents' or my generation understood. For the mail to come from another county seemed a waste of gasoline even in Momma's day, she said. Plus, Asbury residents by association were identified as being from "Pacolet" and "Spartanburg County."

Momma and Daddy were married in 1950 and moved to Asbury, joining the mail patrons on the Pacolet route. First, it was rural Route 1, Pacolet, with a Pacolet postmark. Then, the mail changed in the 1980s when Cherokee County implemented the E911 emergency dispatch system and named all roads.

Previously, Asbury Road had been simply Route 1, Pacolet, or SC Hwy 211, although during the Revolutionary War, it was part of the old [Green River Road](#) that still carries that name where it runs a northerly route in the upper part of what would be Cherokee County toward the [Cowpens Battleground](#). Momma often said, "I guess I will explain 'til the day I die that we don't live in Pacolet!"

And she did - every chance she got - and she continued to "straighten" people out when too often for her, she had to explain once more she did not live in Spartanburg County.

Change, for certain, comes to all towns, cities and communities, and Asbury is no exception.

Gone is the Asbury School/community center building where now the Asbury-Rehoboth Fire Department is located.

Baines' Grocery Store, serving up hamburgers and hotdogs, and pumping gasoline on Hwy 18 has been torn down. In its place, a new BBQ restaurant JT's Woodshed closed recently after a year or so of trying to fight the pandemic and stay in business. Next door and built at the same time as the restaurant is the office for Tri-County Utilities. Both are on the property where two generations of the Baines' family for more than half a century had their home and business that started out as a wood frame country store next door to the main house.

Frances Peeler's beauty shop on Asbury Road closed decades ago, and the original Cherokee Small Engine repair shop next door to Baines' store on Hwy 18 closed its door, and its building was razed within the same timeframe.

But history continues to be made and recorded, even if it's only at the local level and not at break-neck speed.

A log cabin built by William Byars on Asbury Road prior to 1900 still stands. That was at least 120 years ago. Its owner today has maintained the roof and the grounds in the summer, although it has not been occupied for a couple of decades. It has also never been renovated or restored but is a sign of another time, still defining a generation and way of life.

The [Littlejohn Cemetery](#) surrounded by a brick wall remains with monuments to yester year and its people, mostly Asbury residents.

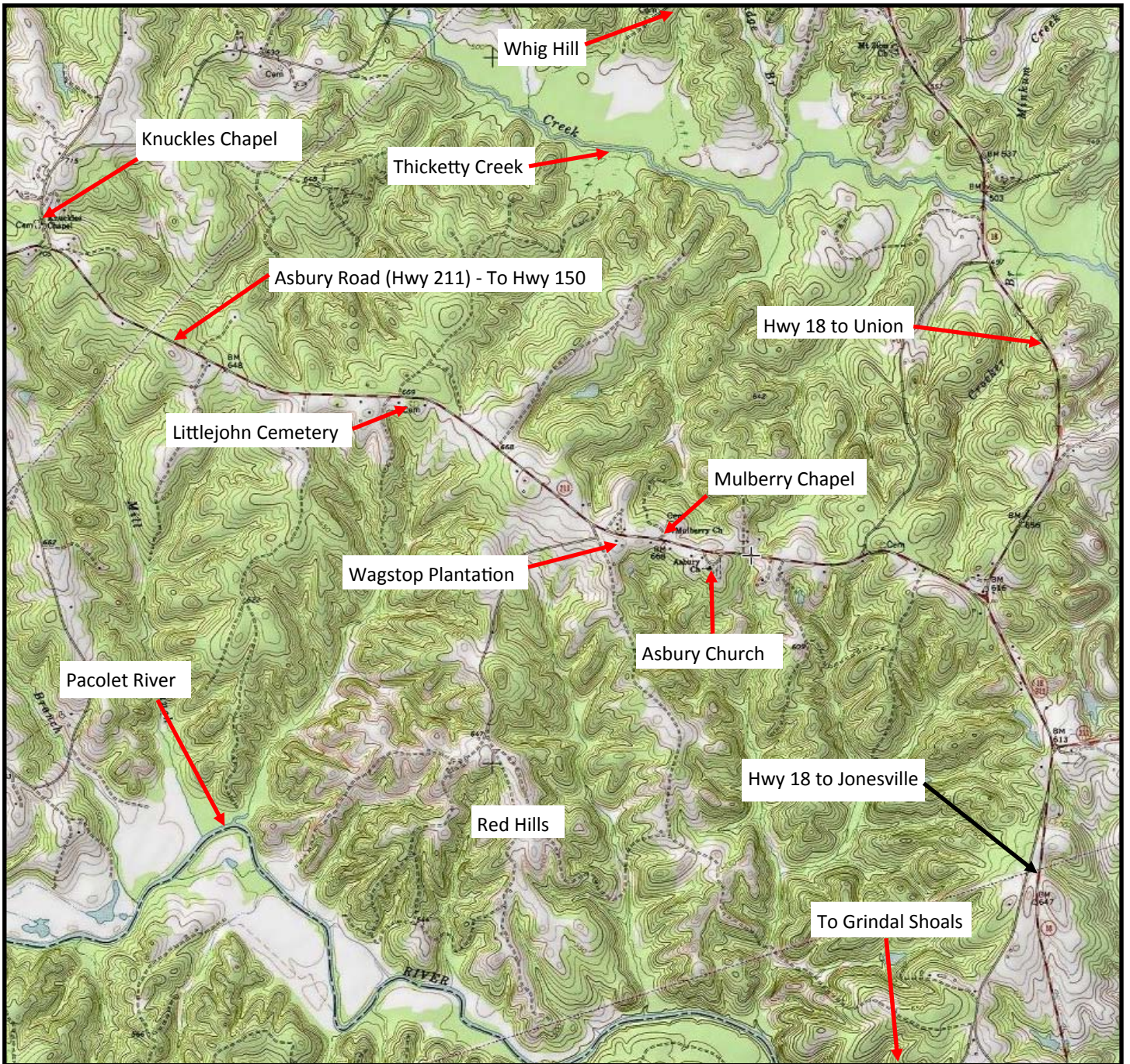
In 1976, two properties, owned then by the [Littlejohn](#) and Goudelock families, were named 1776 Bicentennial Farms and proudly displayed signs they were issued along the road, long after the 200th anniversary of the birth of our nation ended. The signs are long gone.

Names of residents and property owners in Asbury over the years continue to attract genealogists and history buffs. Baines, Goudelock, Byars, Dawkins, Hall, Parris, Hughes, Peeler, Sanders, Baldwin, Harris, Foster, Becknell, Murphy, Ballentyne, Blackwell, Horn, Spurlin, [Teaster](#), Parker, Loftis, Pryor, [Littlejohn](#), Jefferies, Knuckles, Nuckles, Fowler, Walker, Owens, Goode and Turner are on the short list. The only contribution by some was making way for others to move in and call Asbury home.

Businesses today include Brantley's Dog Grooming. The Hair Saloon (a play on the word salon) is located on the Bar B Ranch property that opened its season of barrel races in February. Log Cabin Kennels offer dog training. The Piedmont Animal Hospital provides care for pets of all sizes and even livestock. The Goucher Water Works office is also on Asbury Road.

But there's more to learn about people and times from the earlier days than by a brief glimpse with your eyes closed in an effort to keep histories alive.

With that goal in mind of preserving what we know and discovering new facts in this day of modern technology and with our eyes wide open, let's hope the information highway never ends.



Map showing the general vicinity of Asbury and some of the locations mentioned.

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