

(In December 2024, I received an email from a man named Leonard Hill. Leonard had grown up in the Pacolet area and had worked at [Pacolet Mills](#) until it closed. He wanted to tell me how much he appreciated this Pacolet Memories website. At my request, he graciously consented to elaborate on his email and provide more information about working in the mill. The following was provided by him.)

My name is Leonard Hill and I ran across your articles about Pacolet while I was looking for some information. I attended [Pacolet Mills Elementary](#) and [Pacolet High School](#) when I was younger. I grew up in the community of [Hammett Grove](#).

I remember when I went to work in the mill. However, before that, when I was 12 or 13, I used to go down to the [bridge](#) at midnight on Saturday night to try to get a job cleaning the mill. The mill ceased operation on Saturday and restarted at midnight on Sunday night. On Saturday, there was a company called The Defenders that would go in and clean the entire mill during that 24 hours. We met with people from that company at the end of the [bridge](#) and the crew leader would pick a certain number of people to carry out this duty. I was fortunate that I was picked about every time that I visited (Almost became a regular job during non school hours for me). I enjoyed it immensely and learned a lot about the mill's operation as there were also some of the regular folks from the mill and they were more than happy and willing to answer questions and sometimes demonstrate their skills.

I was working at a little company called Harley Box in Spartanburg when my wife and I met and decided to get married. Since the box plant was relocating to another location my wife and I thought it would be good to work in the same place at the same time so we applied to [Pacolet Mills](#). My brother helped me get me a job in the spinning room, doffing warp spinning bobbins (It was said that you couldn't buy a job in that mill at that time, I was fortunate that my older brother was well thought of there and so they gave me an opportunity).

To this day, I consider that to be the best job that I ever had. The atmosphere was such that you don't find in today's work place, I worked in several places after leaving that mill and retired as a foreman at Nestle here in Gaffney in 2018 but I still remember working with the family there at the mill (Everyone there was like one big family). I remember one gentleman that retired after 55 years' service and he was only 65, that's the kind of atmosphere it had.

I enjoyed the whole experience and stayed with the company till 1980. One day we had a [plant](#) meeting that everyone was required to attend. This is when we were informed that the [plant](#) was shutting down. There were some hard feelings in the plant as everyone there was long term and were more like a family than anything else. I saw people falling in the floor and crying hysterically. Some were talking about going to Roger Milliken's house over near [Glendale](#) and dragging him out of bed and forcing him to confront them (This never happened). There were others that were going to ambush and kill him (Fortunately this never happened either).

In 1975, [Milliken](#) had made the decision that the only way we could compete with the influx of foreign imports was to operate 24 hours a day and seven days a week. We began working 10 hour shifts and rotating first and shifts with a mini shift of 4 hour working every day to fill in the gaps, I remember when the change first came many people fought that schedule hard but for me this was a blessing. The way it worked was we went to work on Wednesday at 8 am and got off at 4 pm and worked 8 to 6 every day till the next Wed. when we worked from 4 to 12 (Wednesday was the only day that the mini shift had off). Then we were off until Friday night when we worked from 10 pm till 8am. That Wed. we worked 12am to 8am then we worked Thursday night from 10pm till 8am, then Friday morning at 8am we were off work until the next Wednesday at 8am. It was like having a week's vacation every three weeks, and we also got paid for the full 48 hours plus incentives for working every day and being on time. This was by far the single best work schedule I've ever worked.

I moved from the Pacolet area in 1977 to the Gaffney area where I live today. Well anyway, I found your articles delightful and brought back a lot of memories, I saw many pictures of people that I went to school with and many memories of a different time. My dad and brothers and myself actually tore down parts of the [hotel](#) for lumber that we used on his house. I really enjoyed the info that you published and wanted to say thank you for the walk down memory lane.

Thanks, Leonard Hill