



This photograph was taken long after the storm, probably in the 1940's. The rebuilt grandstand can be seen to the far right.

Tragedy at the Ball Park

On July 21, 1934, a terrible tragedy struck the crowd watching a [baseball game](#) at [Pacolet Mills](#). This story has been mostly forgotten by the Pacolet community. However, thanks to [Mrs. Eloise Seay Mathis and her granddaughter, Drenda-Michell Brennan](#), the story can once again be told. Mrs. Mathis was born and raised in the [mill house](#) located right beside the [ball-park](#). She was about eight years old when this happened and remembers the event. She told the story over the years to her family. Recently, her granddaughter, Drenda, made an Internet search to see if she could find out more information about it. She found a book that gave more details and confirmed that Mrs. Mathis' story was true! She had even remembered the victim's name. The story from the book is as follows:

Robert Joseph Thrift, 37, was attending a game in Pacolet Mills, SC on July 21, 1934, when a heavy rain, lightning, wind and hail storm struck the area. The grandstand roof was blown backward and came crashing down on the crowd below. Thrift died moments after falling debris struck his head and chest. About two dozen others received electrical shocks when the falling roof became entangled with a power line at the rear of the stand, causing the line to come into contact with the pool of rainwater at the base of the stand.

The book is *Death at the Ballpark* by Robert M. Gorman and David Weeks. It was published by McFarland and Company Publishers of Jefferson, North Carolina.

Further research has found more information about Robert Thrift and his family. The “Find a Grave” website gives the following details about him and his wife Carrie Elizabeth. Huskey Thrift.

Name:	Robert Joseph Thrift
Birth Date:	27 Apr 1897
Death Date:	21 Jul 1934
Cemetery:	Macedonia Baptist Church Cemetery
Burial	Cherokee County, South Carolina, United States of America
Has Bio?:	N
Spouse:	Carrie Elizabeth Thrift

Carrie Elizabeth *Huskey* Thrift

BIRTH	21 Jul 1902 Cherokee County, South Carolina, USA
DEATH	25 Mar 1989 (aged 86) Cherokee County, South Carolina, USA
BURIAL	Macedonia Baptist Church Cemetery Cherokee County, South Carolina, USA



In addition, the obituary of Carrie was also found on the site. It is shown below, along with her photo. Carrie outlived her husband, Robert, by 55 years.



Carrie Thrift

Cowpens- Carrie Elizabeth Huskey Thrift, 85, of Catawba Street, died yesterday at the home of her granddaughter.

A native of Cherokee County, she was the widow of Robert Thrift and the daughter of the late Mr and Mrs. Ed Huskey. She was a member of Central Baptist Church and a retired textile employee.

Survivors include a daughter, Irene Elliott of Spartanburg, a son Roy Thrift, of Fayetteville, N.C.; two sisters, Mittie Cantrell of Forest City and Marie Elders of Inman; 13 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be held from 7 to 9 tonight at the Seawrights Funeral Home. Services will be held at 3 pm tomorrow at Central Baptist Church in Cowpens. Burial will be in Macedonia Baptist Church Cemetery.

Body will be in the church at 2 pm.

Family is at the home of a granddaughter, Linda Loftis, 217 Rainbow Circle. Inman.

The Macedonia Baptist Church and Cemetery as they look today.

