

# Glendale, South Carolina

**Important Past  
Challenging Present  
Significant Future**

*The Wofford College Connection*



**The old iron bridge, former company store, water tank, dam, and shoals at Glendale**

# Glendale, South Carolina

**Past.** Entrepreneur Joseph Bufington, attracted by the water power available at the shoals of Lawson's Fork of the Pacolet River, developed an iron works in 1773. He quickly lost his claim to William Wofford who assumed the operation of the business. In 1778, Wofford sold a major share of the enterprise, and it became known as Berwick's Iron Works. The works were a major feature of the Spartanburg district at the time of the Revolutionary War, and a battle was fought at the site. The plant was destroyed in 1781.

The Old Georgia Road crossed Lawson's Fork at the Shoals (upper) and led to increased settlement including the large plantations of William and Littleton Bagwell.



Glendale Park and Lake with dock  
Source: Hembree and Crocker, 1999, 18-19

## GLENDALE

### **Government**

Spartanburg County

### **Location**

Five (5) miles SE from center of city of Spartanburg. Five (5) miles NW from Pacolet, SC. On the Lawson's Fork.

### **Village Population**

About 500

### **Area Population**

5,321  
(Census Tract 221)

### **County Population**

Spartanburg County  
253,791

### **Median Household Income**

\$60,217  
(Census Tract 221)

### **Landscape**

Rugged upper Piedmont cut by steep river gorge

### **Projects in Progress or Planned**

- Riverfront Park (SPACE)
- Glendale Outdoor Leadership School (PCF)
- Environmental Studies Center (Wofford)
- Iron Bridge Restoration
- Reservoir Restoration
- Water Tank Painting
- Home Improvements
- Kayaking park
- Study of Glendale-Pacolet "corridor"



Glendale Mill with the trolley line at left  
Source: Hembree and Crocker, 1999, 22

Dr. James Bivings built the first large cotton mill in the Spartanburg District at the shoals (lower) after moving from Lincolnton, NC in 1832. It had 1,200 spindles and 24 looms and was one of the largest antebellum mills in the state.

New owners purchased the mill in bankruptcy proceedings in 1856, and Dexter Converse was chosen as manager of the mill. The mill produced goods for the Confederacy during the Civil War. In 1868, Converse and his brother-in-law Albert Twitchell became the managers and principal owners of the mill.

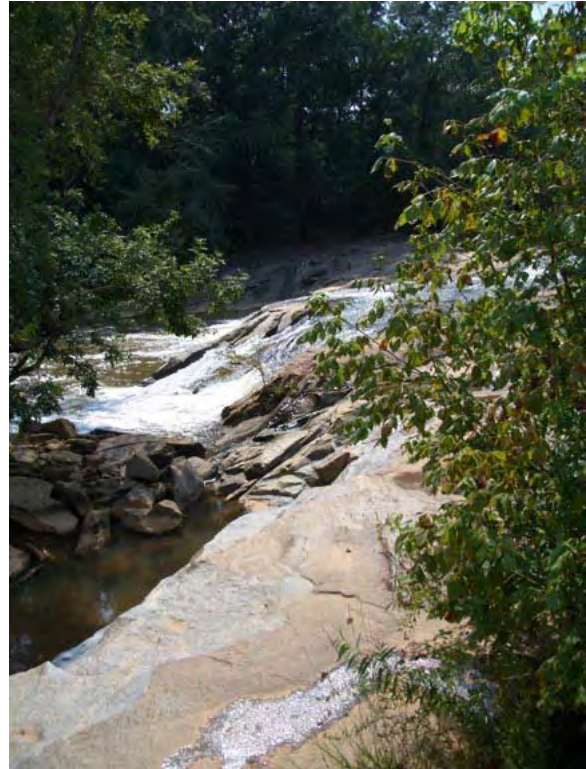
In 1880 the name of the village was changed from Bivingsville to Glendale at the suggestion of Converse's wife, Helen.

Converse and Twitchell steadily expanded the mill, and the community prospered. Dexter Converse founded Converse College in Spartanburg in 1889. Its outstanding performance auditorium is named for Albert Twitchell. About 1900, an electric trolley line extended from Spartanburg to Glendale and on to Clifton and Converse mill villages. Glendale Park on the lake above the mill became a popular destination for outings and celebrations. The trolley operated until 1935 when replaced by buses.

The mill closed in 1961. It was partially used for warehouse space and small manufacturing concerns until it was destroyed by fire in 2004. The current owner (Glyn Morris) had developed plans for conversion to condominiums and retail space, but work had not begun. Remaining on the site are the Victorian mill office, the dramatic stone foundations, two brick towers, and two smokestacks.



**One of the two remaining towers at the site of the Glendale Mill**



**The dramatic shoals of Lawson's Fork**

**Present.** The Glendale community centers on the beautiful shoals of Lawson's Fork, the mill dam, and a historic iron bridge now closed to vehicular traffic. The old company store building houses the Masonic Lodge and U.S. Post Office. The mill houses climb along narrow streets to the old Methodist Church, Baptist Church, and fire station at the top of the hill. Across the iron bridge are a few remaining structures of a small historic commercial district.

Just to the west of Glendale is the Spartanburg Country Club area, and prestigious subdivisions such as Oak Creek, Glenn Forest, and Calhoun Lakes are nearby. To the east, the Lawson's Fork threads its way through a steep canyon to the Pacolet River. Much of the old lake has silted in and is overgrown with vegetation.

**Future.** The Spartanburg Area Conservancy (SPACE) owns 13 acres of land near the mill site (across the river), and is establishing the site as a riverfront park.

In 2005, the Palmetto Conservation Foundation (PCF) entered into discussions with the United Methodist (UM) Church, which had discontinued the church in Glendale, and with the mill owner regarding the six-acre flood plain. PCF is developing the Glendale Outdoor Leadership School (GOLS) that uses the church property and the donated flood plain. Initial funding was provided by the Mary Black Foundation and the Spartanburg County Foundation. *The mill office and three acres of surrounding property including the dam and shoals below the dam have been donated to Wofford College for the development of an Environmental Studies Center.*

### Stake Holders

- American Institute of Architects (AIA)
- Glendale Residents
- Mary Black Foundation
- Palmetto Conservation Foundation
- Spartanburg Area Conservancy
- Spartanburg County
- Spartanburg County Foundation
- Spartanburg School Districts 3, 6, 7
- Spartanburg Water
- State of South Carolina
- Urban Land Institute (ULI)
- Wofford College



Glendale in the mid-1920's  
Source: Hembree and Crocker, 1999, Back Cover



GOLS at former Glendale UM Church property

### Questions and Next Steps

- ❖ Are recreation and natural beauty enough to attract people to Glendale?
- ❖ Would it be too ambitious to dredge out the lake and restore the reservoir?
- ❖ New condominiums on the mill site?
- ❖ Use towers and smokestacks for climbing?
- ❖ How can Glendale's heritage best be preserved and used to stimulate revitalization?
- ❖ Will a "destination" bed and breakfast be successful?
- ❖ How best to make a kayaking destination out of the reservoir, dam, shoals and "blueway" to Pacolet?
- ❖ Restore old iron bridge? Water tower? Iron works?
- ❖ What further collaborative efforts among PCF, SPACE, and Wofford?