

## CHARLES REAGAN WOOLSEY

The first of the Woolseys to live in Brooks, Charles got there by a circuitous route. He was born in Byrds Town, Tennessee, in 1856. While his father, Isaac Grey Woolsey, was away in the Confederate Calvary, his mother, Clemanza, died of heat exhaustion while caring for General Zollicoffer's beaten troops after Mill Springs.

The next year, I. G. Woolsey was wounded at Chickamauga, so he took his family out of the "war zone" to Locust Grove, (Henry County), Georgia, and located, of all places, on the edge of Sherman's route.

When offered land or education by his father, Charles chose college. While at Mercer University, he cultivated his two great passions, Latin and politics. He was Tom Watson's roommate there and they remained friends, (and Populists) as long as they lived. Meanwhile, his family had moved to Fayette County in 1872.

He returned to Fayette County to marry Stella Gay, granddaughter of Thomas Bolling Gay, (who built the house I. G. Woolsey bought) and daughter of Wiley Jones Gay and Pellie McElroy. They had nine children.

Over the years he ran for several elective offices in the County. He was County School Superintendent for ten or so years around the turn of the century.

As for scholarship, it is reported that discipline in his classroom often suffered from his attention to his own academic pursuits. Furthermore, his forgetfulness once caused him to walk two extra trips from his home near Antioch Church to Fayetteville, a distance of some eight miles. He had forgotten that he had driven to work that morning, so he had to go back for his horse. Such minor inconveniences could not distract him from his lifelong devotion to Latin. He studied it as long as he lived.

The Woolsey family lived in Brooks at the corner of the road to the School in the house now owned by R. C. Chappell, but the old Wesley place near Antioch was his residence during most of his time in Fayette County.