

Iron works in S.C. struggled, closed for good in 1850s

Iron ore in this state is found only in the upper tier of counties. Only five mines were ever chartered.

Two of these were in York County: Hill's Iron Works on Allison Creek and King's Mountain Iron Co. on the banks of the Broad River (the latter site is now in Cherokee County, which was formed from York and Spartanburg counties in 1895).

Hill's Iron Works was opened in 1779 when the states, in the midst of the Revolution, were in desperate need of iron. Col. William Hill secured a \$1,000 loan from the state to open the iron works. Hill also mortgaged his property and took in Col. Isaac Hayne of Charleston as a partner.

Hill's Iron Works was not profitable for these reasons:

- The value of the \$1,000 loan rapidly depreciated.

- The British and American Tories destroyed the iron works and took the slaves and livestock.

- Hayne was captured by the British and was executed Aug. 4, 1781, for violating his parole.

In 1786 Hill attempted to renovate and enlarge the iron works. Joseph Atkins and Daniel Bourdreaux advanced him \$4,350. Ten years later Hill was sued by the heirs of his deceased partner, and by other creditors including Atkins and Bourdreaux. The York County sheriff auctioned off the works and 15,000 acres of land. The highest bidder was William Edward Hayne of Charleston who went into partnership with Hill.

They agreed that Hill would continue to manage the works, an arrangement that lasted until 1809 when Hill's Iron Works ceased operations.

The King's Mountain Iron Works began in 1815 when a forge was set up on Kings Creek by Jacob Stroup and Edmund Fewell. Fewell soon died and a flood severely damaged the iron works but Stroup married the widow Fewell, thereby gaining title to his de-

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ceased partner's property. Stroup built a second iron works nearby. This he sold to Duncan P. Campbell of New York in 1825.

Jacob Stroup then built a third iron works. This one was next to an area of the Broad River called Ninety Nine Islands. In 1827 he sold this for \$17,000 to E. Graham & Co. The name was changed to South Carolina Iron Manufacturing Co.

In 1836 a new charter was issued under the title of King's Mountain Iron Co. with capital stock of \$100,000. This ironworks turned out to be South Carolina's most profitable.

Hill's Iron Works and the King's Mountain Iron Co. used charcoal and cold air blasts to process the iron. Each company had dams, races and waterwheels at each of the furnaces. Each had around 80 slaves to provide the labor, plus blacksmiths and master colliers.

Each of the iron works produced pig and bar iron, nails and farm tools. During the Revolution, Hill had furnished field artillery and swords for the army.

In the 1840s and 1850s, King's Mountain Iron Works produced a large number of Franklin cooking stoves.

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Of the area around King's Mountain Iron Works in 1855, a traveler said that the wasted land "presented as far as the eye can reach, the most desolate and gloomy appearance. The lands have all been bought up by the company for the sake of fuel."

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