



The lockkeeper's house at Landsford, constructed in 1823 by Robert Leckie, serves as a visitor's center and houses a small museum.

In 1975, Landsford in Chester County became a state park with picnic facilities and trails along the banks of the Catawba River. Visitors can view sections of a 2-mile-long canal with four lift locks designed to bypass a 35-foot plunge of water over the Landsford shoals. The lockkeeper's house, constructed by Robert Leckie, the Landsford master stonemason, houses a museum.



Nearby History

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museum.

Landsford has a long and colorful history. Indians and frontiersmen used the crossing regularly. It got its name from Thomas Land, the first white man to apply for a state grant. During the Revolutionary War, Landsford was crossed by Lord Cornwallis and used as a camp site by his foe, Gen. Thomas Sumter, "the Gamecock." For centuries the shoals attracted fishermen who could wade among the rocks, frequently catching, or "grabbing," the fish bare-handed.

A canal boom lasted from about 1815 to 1835. South Carolina invested \$1 million — an astounding amount for the time — in an attempt to build four canals on the Catawba River. While the Landsford Canal was successfully completed, it could not reach its potential because the Catawba Falls, or "Great Falls," would not be conquered until 1904.

Electric power came to the Pied-

Landsford's Falls A Key To Area's History

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mont in 1894. For the first time anywhere in the world, electricity was transmitted over bare wires from a river to a location a mile away. The place was Anderson County, S.C. That same year, the Landsford Water Power Co. was chartered as a subsidiary of the Indianola Manufacturing and Power Co.

Indianola was an investment company headed by William A. Courtenay, mayor of Charleston and successful investor in many enterprises across the state. He selected John R. London of Rock Hill as president of the Landsford Water Power Co., which was chartered for \$500,000. London, who had raised money for a number of Rock Hill enterprises, failed to sell enough stock to install equipment at Landsford.

On Oct. 1, 1899, Col. Leroy Springs, owner of Lancaster Cotton Mills, bought the site along with the Indianola charter rights for "spinning, dyeing, printing, finishing, and selling all goods of every kind made of cotton or wool..." Within a month Springs also purchased 1,600 additional acres on each side of the river.

General Electric wrote Springs that they were not so worried about the price of construction as they were that the locality lacked diversified industry. General Electric did not want to rely on an area that had cotton mills only. No other large company was interested in building at Landsford.

Leroy Springs built his million-dollar mill in Lancaster in 1904 by enlarging his existing plant to the point that he would claim that it was the largest cotton mill in the world under one roof. At the Landsford site, Springs set up a power station that produced power from the "natural flowage" of the river only as a backup to the steam engines at the Lancaster Cotton Mills.

In 1905 Leroy Springs sold 588 acres of the Landsford site to the Southern Power Co. — forerunner of Duke Power Co. In 1928 Springs sold the Landsford Water Power Co. to the Wateree Co. Landsford was never developed although, from time to time, other power companies have been intrigued by a site once calculated as having a drainage area of an amazing 3,425 square miles.

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