

Endor Furnace ^[1]

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The furnace opening at Endor Furnace, ca. 1970.
Courtesy of North Carolina Office of Archives and
History, call #: N_70_7_586-594 – Endor Iron

by Michael Hill, 2006Furnace, Lee County, 1970.

Endor Furnace ^[2], a large smelting furnace near Cumnock in **Lee County** ^[3], provided iron to the **Confederacy** ^[4] from 1862 to 1865 and thereafter operated periodically through the end of the nineteenth century. Two months after chartering the company in 1862, the investors purchased the Deep River plantation of **Alexander McIver** ^[5] and constructed the furnace on the site. The furnace probably supplied the **Confederate arsenal** ^[6] at **Fayetteville** ^[7] in addition to small nearby arms factories. In 1864 the **Wilmington** ^[8] businessmen who composed the company sold their interests to local buyers. These individuals emerged from the war heavily in debt, and in 1870 their holdings were sold at auction. George Lobdell of Delaware, a manufacturer of railroad car wheels, bought Endor Furnace, paying \$1,000. With his partner J. M. Heck of **Raleigh** ^[9], Lobdell formed the Cape Fear Iron and Steel Company and invested more than \$500,000. By 1872 there was in place at the site one of the South's largest and best-equipped iron furnaces along with a rolling mill and foundry.

Two years later the operators discovered that the local mineral deposits were smaller than had been estimated. In addition, the system of dams and locks necessary to reach the port at Wilmington were never satisfactorily completed. By 1876 the operation had ceased and most of the machinery was dismantled and removed. The furnace continued to operate until 1896 on a much smaller scale but served only local manufacturers. Its structure, built of reddish-gray rough-cut stones and standing 35 feet tall, was still standing at the end of the twentieth century.

References:

Lester J. Cappon, "Iron-Making: A Forgotten Industry of North Carolina," *NCHR* 9 (October 1932).

Malcolm Fowler, "The Endor Iron Furnace," *The State* (19 Apr. 1941).

Brent D. Glass, ed., *North Carolina: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites* (1975).

Additional Resources:

Endor Iron Works, NC Highway Historical Marker H-102, NC Office of Archives & History:
<https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?ct=ddl&sp=search&k=Markers&sv=H-102%20-%20ENDOR%20IRON%20WORKS> ^[2]

Subjects:

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Mines and mineral resources ^[13]

Natural resources ^[14]

Reconstruction (1865-1876) ^[15]

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Origin - location:

Lee County ^[17]

From:

Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press. ^[18]

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