

Schenck-Warlick Mill ^[1]

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by Daniel W. Barefoot, 2006



The Schenck-Warlick cotton mill, the first cotton mill in North Carolina. David Schenck Papers, no. 652, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-

See Also: [Cotton Mill](#) ^[2]Chapel Hill.

The Schenck-Warlick Mill, erected about 1814, was the first [cotton mill](#) ^[2] built in North Carolina and an important factor in the emergence of the southern [textile industry](#) ^[3]. Michael Schenck, a Pennsylvania native, arrived in [Lincoln County](#) ^[4] in about 1790 and established the small cotton-spinning mill on a fork of the [Catawba River](#) ^[5] located about one mile east of Lincolnton. Some pieces of the machinery for the facility were purchased in Providence, R.I., while others were crafted locally by Absalom Warlick, a skilled iron worker and a relative of Schenck's wife. The mill operated profitably and emerged as the first successful textile mill erected south of the Potomac River.

A flood destroyed the mill and the nearby dam in 1816, but Schenck promptly joined with Warlick to rebuild. Within 12 months, a larger mill was in operation on Warlick's land below the original site. In 1819 Schenck teamed with two other local men, James Bivens and Col. John Hoke, to erect the larger [Lincolnton Cotton Mill](#) ^[6] on the South Fork River some two miles south of Lincolnton. The 3,000-spindle factory continued in operation until it was destroyed by fire in 1863.

References:

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Brent D. Glass, *The Textile Industry in North Carolina: A History* (1992).

Sharpe, Bill. "Patriots, Iron and Spindles." *State [Our State]* 27, no. 24 (April 30, 1960): 8–23.
<https://digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/state/989050?item=989091> ^[7].

Subjects:

[Textile industry](#) ^[3]

Authors:

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Origin - location:

[Lincoln County](#) ^[9]

[Lincolnton](#) ^[10]

From:

[Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[11]

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