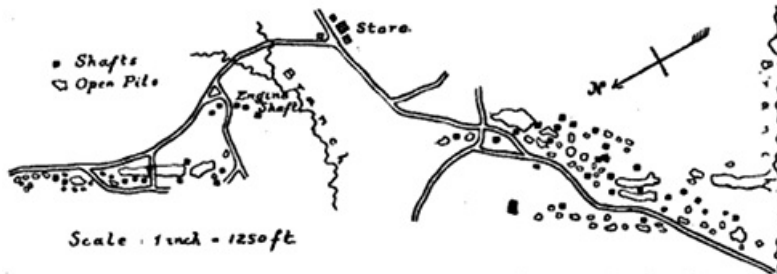


Big Ore Bank ^[1]

Big Ore Bank

by John Hairr, 2006



Plan showing outside workings of the Big Ore Bank, Lincoln County, N.C.

Image from Google Books.

^[2]Big Ore Bank is a bed of iron ore found in eastern [Lincoln County](#) ^[3]. Worked extensively in the first half of the nineteenth century, this bed was described by [Denison Olmsted](#) ^[4] in 1824 as "extending from the base of Little Mountain on the north, to the foot of King's Mountain on the south." Exploitation of the [iron](#) ^[5] deposits began in 1789, when Peter Forney obtained grants to a large section of barren hills. Soon, others joined in the operations, including [Alexander Brevard](#) ^[6], [Joseph Graham](#) ^[7], and [John Davidson](#) ^[8]. Forges, furnaces, and bloomeries were established along the Big Ore Bank, and by 1810 Lincoln County was home to six iron bloomeries.

By the 1820s the Big Ore Bank led the state in the production of iron. Most of it was utilized locally for such things as cooking implements, tools, hinges, and nails. Bar iron was turned out for use by local blacksmiths. But lack of adequate transportation limited the market for the Big Ore Bank iron. Despite this drawback, the iron works in Lincoln County prospered between 1820 and 1840, generating up to 900 tons of iron per year.

The coming of the [railroads](#) ^[9] flooded the market in North Carolina with cheaper iron from Pennsylvania, and the operations along the Big Ore Bank declined. They were no longer economically viable and ceased to function following the [Civil War](#) ^[10].

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"Fig. 19. Plan showing outside workings at Big Ore Bank, Lincoln County." Nitze, Henry Benjamin Charles. *Iron ores of North Carolina: A preliminary report*. Raleigh [N.C.]: Josephus Daniels. 1893. p.91 <http://books.google.com/books?id=JFARAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA91#v=onepage&q&f=false> ^[14]

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