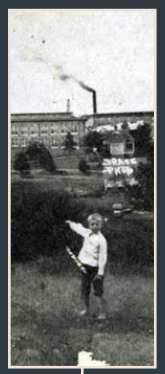
FROM INDUSTRY TO CREATIVITY



1901
Brandon Mill is Constructed in 1901



1918
The Mill Village Blossoms



1940s
The Mill Experiences a Boom During World War II



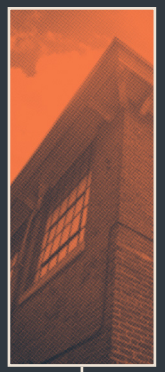
1977
Brandon Mill Shuts Down Production



2000s
Small Businesses Revitalized the Mill Village



2015
Greenville Center for Creative Arts Opens



2025
GCCA Celebrates a Decade of Community Impact



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RESEARCHED BY
DONNA RIESS



GREENVILLE CENTER FOR CREATIVE ARTS

BUILT TO MAKE

A HISTORY OF INDUSTRY, COMMUNITY, AND CREATIVITY IN THE HEART OF WEST GREENVILLE

THE BRANDON MILL HISTORY

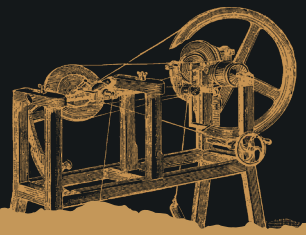
Brandon Mill is located on the West side of the City of Greenville, SC. The primary mill building was built under the management of J. Irving Westervelt and constructed by Captain Jacob W. Cage in 1901. It was designed in Early Twentieth-Century Commercial Style brick masonry and eventually added onto. The mill complex continued to expand with additions like the engine house, boiler house, machine shop, cloth building, cotton house, and fan house. Later the pump house, smoke stack, water tower, and ash hopper were added. The mill complex was surrounded by a mill village which housed many of the employees of the mill. Brandon Mill played a significant role in the development of the textile industry in the city of Greenville from 1901 to the 1950s. Because of the mill's success, a strong community formed and supported economic and social development.



Since the mills closing and the decline of the textile industry, thousands of jobs were lost and families were forced to move away. This had a major effect on the community and many businesses in the village were forced to close its doors along with the mill.

In the early 2000s, small businesses began renovating the village buildings and brought light back into the Brandon Mill village. Through time and hard work, the village is now full of determined small business owners and locals that want to celebrate the history of Brandon Mill's contribution to the West Greenville area.

2000S







1918

After Brandon Mill was constructed and began hiring employees, the community around the mill quickly grew. Hundreds of houses were built surrounding the mill creating a village. By the year 1918, the company built a baseball park, a school, two churches, a nursery, a library, and a nurse's station. These additions helped create a lively and close knit network of families.

1977

Through the tough years of the Great Depression, the mill president decided to reduce hours for the employees instead of eliminating jobs. This helped create a sense of loyalty to the mill and staff. Not long after, World War II broke out across the ocean and large amounts of textiles were needed. The mill prospered during the 1940s and the government consistently ordered duck cloth, medical gauze, and uniform twill fabric to help the war cause. Through the 1960s and 1970s the mill's revenue slowly decreased and the mill closed in 1977.



THE GCCA FOUNDERS



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WHY GCCA WAS STARTED

After a local art museum suspended its art education program in 2013, the artists and teachers were looking for a new space to gather with students who wanted to continue to learn. The teachers conceived the idea of creating a space that held art classes, art studios, and a gallery to display the work of local artists. The goal was to "enrich the cultural fabric of our community through visual arts promotion, education, and inspiration."

In 2014, the founders formed a committee and made plans for the formation of the Greenville Center for Creative Arts. A local contractor donated the Cloth Building of Brandon Mill, now the Linda Quinn Furman building, to GCCA and Dunlop Sports. On May 1, 2015, GCCA opened its doors and held its first First Friday event.

GCCA NOW

The Greenville Center for Creative Arts is a welcoming community space where creativity comes to life. The main gallery features rotating exhibitions showcasing local, regional, and national artists, so that visitors are provided with an ever-changing experience. Beyond the exhibitions, GCCA offers classes, programs, and resources that help artists grow and connect with the community like artist studios, the Brandon Fellowship, Art of Business Podcast series, and Aspiring Artists Program. The center also hosts a variety of public and private events, bringing people together in a creative setting. As a regional leader in accessible arts, GCCA is passionate about supporting artists and creating opportunities for the community to experience and celebrate art together.