

**THIS PROPERTY IS LISTED IN THE
TARBORO MULTIPLE RESOURCE
NOMINATION. FOR FULL FORM,
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RESOURCE NOMINATION.**

TARBORO MULTIPLE RESOURCE NOMINATION

D. Edgecombe Agricultural Works ED431

Center of block bounded by Main, Howard, Albemarle, and Walnut Streets, Tarboro, NC

LESS THAN ONE ACRE:

Owner: Mr. Cary Livesay
c/o Pilgrim Laundry
102 West Walnut Street
Tarboro, North Carolina 27886

UTM REFERENCE:

Description

Surrounded and nearly hidden by later buildings, the brick structure is little altered since its construction soon after the Civil War. The long, low gable roof structure is of brick laid in common bond, with flat arches over the windows. Simple pilaster strips with caps separate the bays and carry a corbel cornice. The ends are parapetted, stepped gables. The main (east) facade is finished with a lunette in the gable. Around it is the painted inscription, Edgecombe Agricultural Works. The interior is a large room with heavy timber frame construction including chamfered support posts, heavy, with lambs tongues finishing each chamfer.

Significance

The Edgecombe Agricultural Works building is significant to the postwar industrial development of Tarboro and Edgecombe County, as it is evidently the oldest surviving industrial building in the community. It predates the many mill, tobacco, cotton, and other industrial/commercial buildings of the later 19th and early 20th century industrial development of the community. It was the central building of a complex that repaired and manufactured agricultural implements and was thus crucial to the postwar agriculture of the county.

Branson's Business Directories for North Carolina do not list the operation in 1867 or 1869, but in 1872 A. J. Hines is listed as proprietor of the Edgecombe Agricultural Works. Turner and Bridgers's History of Edgecombe County, North Carolina (Raleigh: 1920) pp. 343-344 implies that the operation was begun before the Civil War in a frame building; Mr. Hines was described as being from Wilson. The "large brick building" is described as dating from the time "when Mr. Howard became a partner" -- thus the 1870s. By 1877 George Howard was proprietor, and the locally influential and numerous Howard family maintained ownership for several decades. Howard family tradition (Romaine Howard interview) recalls that George Howard (the judge) had learned of his brother William's being wounded during a battle in the Civil War and had returned his wounded brother to Tarboro to recover. After the war, the energetic George set up his brother in charge of the agricultural works. The firm is credited with the invention of a cotton planter of unusually good design.

TARBORO MULTIPLE RESOURCE NOMINATION

D. Edgecombe Agricultural Works (Page 2)

Significance

Gray's 1882 map of Tarboro shows the building as the core of the complex, which is in Howard's property. At that time no other industrial complexes had yet developed in the town, and this one, near the railroad at the north of town, attracted farmers from miles around who came and filled the large yard with implements awaiting repair. The Sanborn Map of 1890 shows the building containing an engine room, large machine shop, pattern shop and storage rooms. By 1901 it was the Edgecombe Machine Shop. The firm continued to manufacture and repair farm implements to the early 20th century. In the mid-20th century the complex has been altered, but the central building survives and is now part of a laundry.

Source of information:

Verbal Boundary Description: