

Touring Edgecombe – Seeing What You’ve Been Missing The Tarboro Cotton Press



In 1794, Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin. This was not only one in a series of inventions that would bring about the industrial revolution and change our way of life forever, but more specifically it ignited the fuse that would cause the explosion of the cotton industry in the south. And right here in Edgecombe County, you can see and touch a well preserved piece of that agricultural past with the Tarboro Cotton Press.

It was built in mid 18th century on the Norfleet Farm in the southwestern part of the county, and later brought to the Town Commons in Tarboro. It was originally built as a cider and wine press, but with the increasing need for cotton, it was converted to press bales of cotton for transport by train to cotton gins in other areas. When you visit the Cotton Press, you can see that a long wooden pole extends from the top of the press, which was attached to the top of a very large...well screw. Mules would pull the arm around to tighten down on the screw to press the cotton into a bale. The structure was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1971.

You can visit the Cotton Press any time to learn more about our agricultural past and to see what you’ve been missing.

For more information on great places to visit and upcoming events in Edgecombe County, visit www.edgecombecountync.gov