

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Peanut Factory  
AND/OR COMMON Edenton Peanut Company

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER East Church Street Extension at the head of Wood Avenue/located in the triangle bound by the Hertford Road and NS RR  
CITY, TOWN Edenton  
STATE North Carolina  
VICINITY OF  
COUNTY Chowan  
CODE 037  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT First  
CODE 041

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: VACANT

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME John Kirkman, Jr.  
STREET & NUMBER Kirkman Lumber Co., Inc.  
CITY, TOWN Columbia, NC 27925  
STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Chowan County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER  
CITY, TOWN Edenton  
STATE North Carolina

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Engineering Record  
DATE  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS  
CITY, TOWN  
STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Edenton Peanut Factory was built about 1909 on a 4.9 acre site alongside the Hertford Road and the Norfolk and Southern Railroad.<sup>2</sup> The five story brick building consisted of a large central core approximately 66 feet square, with engine room attached at the southwest, office area attached at the southeast (by 1920), and a six-story elevator tower rising above the building on the south. A peanut storage warehouse stood immediately north of the factory.

The five-story brick factory building, which is by far the tallest structure in Edenton, features a deep wood cornice seven boards wide and a tin hip roof broken by two louvred vents. Of typical mill construction with brick walls and wood beams and floors, the building is seven bays wide on the south and north and five bays wide on the east and west. The arched windows do not appear regularly on all sides, though opposite sides generally exhibit symmetrical spacing. Pilaster strips of brickwork divide the bays on each side and terminate in a corbel cornice that sets off the fifth story from the lower levels.

The factory's main entrance is on the east side where two wooden doors, approximately 4 feet by 8 feet, open onto a wooden platform. A three-room office area extends alongside the platform at the southeast corner of the building with a gabled tin roof and a parapet on its south side.

A one-bay wide brick elevator shaft, flared slightly at the top, rises flush to the middle of the south side, extending beyond the roof line. The shaft has windows on the third, fifth, and sixth story levels on the south. At the elevator shaft's base, and across much of the south wall of the factory, is a one story extension housing the engine room and other machinery. This extension is divided into two segments, with a parapet between the two and at the southern most end. A vat is built into the cement floor in the southern segment. The walls of this extension are three bricks wide.

The factory has a wooden loading platform on the west side by the railroad tracks, connected to the interior by an arched doorway with two wooden doors comparable to those at the east entrance. A metal fire escape winds down the west wall.

On the north stands a wooden warehouse on brick pilings, its outer walls covered by tin, connected to the factory by a tinpipe from the third story and abutting the building at the northwest corner. The warehouse, 104 feet long and 16 feet high, designated Warehouse No. 1, is also attached to the loading platform at the east entrance of the factory by a wooden walkway.

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By 1920 two more warehouses had been added north of the factory.<sup>3</sup> Both Warehouse No. 2--to the northeast of No. 1--and Warehouse No. 3--north of No. 1--were built of wood on brick pilings, with 16 foot ceilings and tin outside walls.

A 25,000 gallon water storage tank and tower east of the factory is no longer standing.<sup>4</sup>

The factory appears to be structurally sound, though cracks are appearing in the outer walls in several places. Ivy covers the walls, obscuring the north and west sides. Virtually all the windows are broken.

Inside the floors remain sound, as are the wooden stairs in the northeast corner connecting the five stories. The office area is strewn with garbage, but is in good condition, as is the machinery/engine segment. An old safe remains in the office; some of the machinery remains in the part of the extension nearest the factory core and the elevator shaft. The old weighing room is also littered but intact just inside the east entrance (which is topped outside by "The Edenton Peanut Company" painted in black on a white background).

The wooden loading platforms on the east and west are collapsing.

Warehouse No. 1 is also badly deteriorated, with several roof sections rotted through. Warehouses No. 2, and especially No. 3, appear in good condition. No. 3 has signs of still being in use.

The 4.9 acre site is weedy, but the road connecting the warehouses remains open, and the vines seen confined to the factory proper.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      ca. 1909

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The original Edenton Peanut Factory, consisting of a core building and attendant storage warehouse, was built about 1909 on a site on the eastern outskirts of Edenton. At the time of its construction and for many years thereafter, the factory was an important factor in the area's peanut industry, which dominated the economy in the early twentieth century. The dramatic form and handsome brickwork of the building makes it one of the finest examples of factory construction in eastern North Carolina and a local landmark.

- A. Associated with the late-19th and early-20th century development of agriculture-related industry in Edenton: the railroad, a major lumber processing mill came in the 1880s, and textile mills processing cotton as well. The Edenton Peanut Factory initiated the processing of peanuts and thus contributed greatly to the economy of the region and the development of Edenton in the early twentieth century.
- C. Embodies distinctive functional characteristics of turn-of-the-century industrial architecture, with the five-story factory and six-story tower elevator tower creating a dramatic and functional composition. The detail of the brickwork is bold and skillfully executed.

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Edenton has long been one of the largest peanut markets in North Carolina, drawing on a large local crop of Jumbo and other Virginia-type peanuts.<sup>5</sup> The loamy soil and advantageous climatic conditions,<sup>6</sup> coupled with Edenton's location along the Albemarle Sound and the once-important Ocean Highway,<sup>7</sup> combined to make the town one of the most important peanut processing centers in the United States.<sup>8</sup> As late as the mid 1950s, Edenton was the largest peanut market in North Carolina and the second largest in the nation.<sup>9</sup> Peanuts shelled and cleaned in Edenton were sold to many roasters, salters, peanut butter producers, and candy manufacturers.<sup>10</sup>

The Edenton Peanut Company's factory was built in the early twentieth century to take advantage of this strong market and soon prospered. The Edenton Peanut Factory was the first of its kind in Edenton. Locally owned, it was established by members of the prominent Wood and Shepard families. It produced at its height 1400-1500 100-po bags of peanuts per day. In the first half of the twentieth century, additional peanut factories came to Edenton as well, and there is still a flourishing industry there.

Sanborn Insurance Company maps and other sources indicate that originally the first floor of the factory was used for peanut storage; the second floor for picking; the third and fourth floors for polishing; and the fifth floor was devoted to hoppers. By 1920 the first floor had been converted to a shipping area, the storage function taken over by additional warehouses." The factory was originally powered by a steam engine fueled by peanut hulls.<sup>12</sup>

The Edenton Peanut Company was organized as a corporation of from fifty to sixty stockholders and capitalized at \$40-\$50,000. The factory employed about 100 workers, many of them black women. Most workers were black except managers, foremen, and office staff.<sup>13</sup>

In the years immediately following World War II, federal regulations governing the purchases of peanuts were changed to require that peanut processors purchase their entire stock at once rather than gradually over the course of a season. This necessitated large capital outlays--\$1 million at a time--which the Edenton Peanut Company had trouble assembling. This and other market and business conditions made it increasingly difficult for the firm to operate<sup>14</sup> and it was sold in 1957 to the Birdsong Corporation of Suffolk, Virginia. In 1958 it was sold to the W. D. Holmes Wholesale Grocery Company,<sup>15</sup> which in turn sold it to the Kirkman Lumber Company of Columbia, N. C. in 1975.<sup>16</sup>

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Ann Snider Interview with William B. Shepard, former president, (1940s-1957) and son of Thomas H. Shepard, first president, Edenton Peanut Company, September, 1978. Hereinafter cited as Shepard interview.

<sup>2</sup> Chowan County records (Chowan County Courthouse, Edenton, N. C.) Deed Book 105, pp. 29-295.

<sup>3</sup> Sanborn Insurance Company Edenton, N. C., 1920, Page 14.

<sup>4</sup> Sanborn Insurance Company map, 1920.

<sup>5</sup> Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce Edenton, North Carolina (Edenton, N. C., The Chowan Herald Print Company, July, 1939) Page 21.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Page 22.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Page 18.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., Page 16.

<sup>9</sup> Robinson, Blackwell P., editor The North Carolina Guide (Chapel Hill, N. C., The University of North Carolina Press, 1955), Page 179.

<sup>10</sup> Edenton, North Carolina, Page 21.

<sup>11</sup> Sanborn Insurance Company map, 1920.

<sup>12</sup> Shepard interview.

<sup>13</sup> Shepard interview.

<sup>14</sup> Shepard interview.

<sup>15</sup> Chowan Herald.

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<sup>16</sup>Chowan County records (Chowan County Courthouse, Edenton, N. C.)

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Chowan County Records, Chowan County Courthouse, Edenton, North Carolina, Tax Office and Office of the Register of Deeds.

The Chowan Herald, Edenton, North Carolina, May 11, 1961

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4.9 Acres

Latitude: 36° 3' 39"

UTM REFERENCES

Longitude: 76° 31' 07"

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Edenton Peanut Factory and warehouses occupy 3.9 acres, with one acre beyond (north) of the warehouses, on a site 590' by 150' north of the East Church Street extension and east of the Norfolk and Southern Railroad in northeast Edenton. The total is 4.9 acres.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Description and Significance prepared by Barry Jacobs, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

DATE

N. C. Division of Archives and History

November 8, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

109 East Jones Street

919-733-6545

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Raleigh

North Carolina 27611

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*James E. Tise*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE July 12, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



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Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce, Edenton, North Carolina. Edenton, N. C.: The  
Chowan Hearld Print, July, 1937.

Robinson, Blackwell P., editor, The North Carolina Guide. Chapel Hill: The University  
of North Carolina Press, 1955.

Sanborn Insurance Company, Edenton, N. C.--1910, 1920, 1927, New York, New York.  
Copies found in the North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel  
Hill, North Carolina.

Snider, Ann. Interview with William B. Shepard for the North Carolina Division of  
Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina, September, 1978.

