



Once the world's raw peanut marketplace

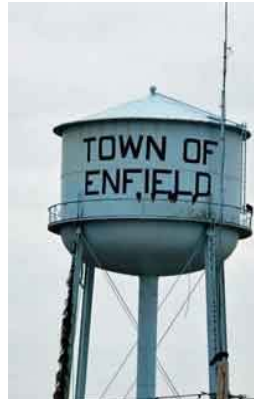
Enfield is the oldest town in Halifax County, North Carolina. Settled in 1725, founded in 1740, it was originally called Huckleberry Swamp. The origin of the town's present name, Enfield, has not been confirmed. Various stories place it as a town in England, a stage line inn called "Inn-field," and possibly an area located in the present town called "Enfield Tract." <enfieldnc.org>

Enfield and Halifax became key in the encouragement of pushing for independence from England. The Halifax Resolves of April 12, 1776 was a catalyst in the revolution. An agricultural part of North Carolina, by the 1890s, tobacco was the chief agricultural crop. As the tobacco market dwindled, peanuts became the leading market crop. Enfield became the world's largest raw peanut marketplace. The climate and soils are ideal for peanut growing. <ncgenw>



Friends of my wife suggested we visit Enfield and especially "Aunt Ruby's" peanut store. Being five miles from Interstate 95 on our travels, we ventured into Enfield and found the A&B Milling Company warehouse and retail shop for Aunt Ruby's. We had the opportunity to speak with Aunt Ruby's grandson who manages the operation. He told us that their operation has continued the tradition developed during the early 20th century. They clean and distribute peanuts to houses (warehouses) around the town. The peanut process includes digging, shaking and drying peanuts. In the fall, Enfield has had a peanut festival since the 1930s. The peanuts grown in the region are a Virginia type. That variety has "the biggest kernels of any U.S. peanut and a rich-meaty flavor." Aunt Ruby's peanut business includes many varieties of peanuts and ships nationally through their catalog and internet operation. <ncfolk.org>

This photo program shares some sites around Enfield. Today, its population is over 2,500. Photos include Aunt Ruby's retail shop, the town's outdoor art and cotton growing/harvesting. Recently an electric company has begun to develop several solar power areas. Local agricultural folks are seeing many farmers selling their land to the electric company. The reason is that family members no longer wish to farm anymore. Some say that this will be a problem in the future in terms of arable land use.





Aunt Ruby's peanut products is in the heart of one of the largest peanuts producing counties in the state of North Carolina. A&B Milling Company is a family owned business began in 1945 as a feed, seed and fertilizer store for area farmers. The climate and soil are excellent for growing peanuts. Aunt Ruby's began a mail-order peanut business that purchases Virginia style peanuts, shells, processes and distributes them nationwide from their A&B Milling establishment today. Aunt Ruby's grandson, Bob Allsbrook, above is president of the company. The family business was named after Ruby Thomas Shearin Allsbrook "Aunt Ruby." She was born in 1917 and died in 2010. Ruby was a registered nurse in private practice in Enfield. She also was the "quality controller" in the chocolate kitchen at the business. <legacy.com> <auntrubyspeanuts.com>



Sources: <https://enfieldnc.org/>, <https://enfieldnc.org/town-history>, <http://www.ncgenweb.us/halifax/history/enfield-hist.htm>, <https://www.ncfolk.org/2009/peanuts-at-the-ab-milling-co-enfield/>, <https://www.auntrubyspeanuts.com/>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enfield,_North_Carolina and <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/rockymounttelegram/obituary.aspx?pid=143431572>.