Old Edgefield Pottery, 230 Simkins Street, Edgefield, SC. Open Tuesday through Thursday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Pottery is on hand to turn a pot while you watch and to talk in greater depth about the history of Edgefield pottery. Pottery is also for sale, as Old Edgefield Pottery is a working artisanal pottery today.

The Dr. Arthur F. and Esther Goldberg Edgefield Pottery Groundhogs Kiln, corner of Meeting Street and Crest Road, Edgefield, SC.

This modern wood-fired kiln is used to fire alkaline glazed pottery.

Cedar Grove* (NRHP LISTED)

This house was built by the Blocker family, a generation or so after the Blocker house became the center of the landscape by the Blocker family when they emigrated from Prussia. Michael Blocker, the patriarch of the Blocker family was known as "the Colonel" because he made many trips back to Prussia with the goal of persuading his countrymen to settle in the region.

Pottersville, Edgefield, SC. Currently, Pottersville is invisible as you drive past it on Highway 25. However, the site has been a location of interest for historians, archaeologists, and pottery enthusiasts. Pottersville was once a thriving industrial-scale pottery.

Pottersville was established by the Landrum brothers, Abner and John, and is sometimes called Landrumsville. The Landrums trained enslaved Africans to work as skilled potters turning wares. The present building dates to 1839 and is much grander, and was built expressly as the family residence. The two-story house features a neo-classical façade with a triangular entry portico and a large fanlight over the door. The landscaping also features Prussian cedars and English boxwoods.

This made Pottersville unique in the history of American pottery.

Gilgal Baptist Church* End of Gilgal Church Road, Edgefield, SC.

Famous potters like Dave Drake, often known by the rhyming name Dave the Slave. Dave was owned by several persons over his career, including Harvey Drake, the Landrums, and Lewis Miles. He was an accomplished potter who could produce jars as large as 40 gallons in size, but he is best known for inscribing rhyming couplets into his pots, as well as making his pots with his name, the initials of his owner, various symbols, and dates.

Gilgal Baptist Church is one of the oldest churches along the Highway 25 corridor, founded around 1810. A 1813 citation nailed to the church door contains the oldest remaining reference to a building on the site. The present building dates to 1839 and is much plainer in style than many of its contemporaries.

Blocker House, 1563 Highway 25 North, Edgefield, SC (NRHP LISTED)

This house is one of the oldest in the area, begun in the eighteenth century. It was initially an overseer’s house for the plantation, but the Blocker family moved into the structure when their own home burned. The yard in the surrounding landscape was bought by the Blocker family when they emigrated from Prussia. Michael Blocker, the patriarch of the Blocker family was known as “the Colonizer” because he made many trips back to Prussia with the goal of persuading his countrymen to settle in the region.

Nearly all of the enslaved potters worked on the same family’s plantation, so the potters would often work in teams to produce items for the whole plantation. Some Edgefield pots were decorated as face jugs, which were made by African American slaves and featured eyes and teeth made of white kaolin clay.

The site of the old pottery kiln, a rectangular kiln built partially underground with a firebox, a ware chamber, an arched roof, and a chimney. This modern wood-fired kiln is used to fire alkaline glazed pottery.

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US Highway 25 takes travelers through one of South Carolina’s most historic places, Edgefield County, where Washington once roved and where plantation owners, enslaved master potters, ministers, educators, industrialists, and farmers contributed to its distinctive culture. That heritage is preserved in the pecan orchard, old churchyards, historic homes and churches, country stores and historic towns that line the historic highway. This driving tour provides highlights of these historic sites, starting at the juncture of US 25, and Interstate 20, and heading northward towards Trenton and through Edgefield to Greenwood County.

1 Bettis Academy & Junior College, 78 Nicholson Road, Trenton, SC. (NRHP LISTED)

Bettis Academy was an outgrowth of the Mt. Canaan Education Association founded in 1880 by Alexander Bettis, other ordained ministers, and representatives of various black Baptist churches in the area. Bettis, born a slave on a nearby Edgefield District plantation, is considered the founder of the academy that educated African American children from Edgefield, Saluda, Aiken and Greenwood counties from 1881-1895. The complex, once a campus of fourteen classrooms, a dormitory, and related buildings, now consists of three historic buildings and one triangular historic landscape.

2 Mount Canaan Baptist Church and Cemetery, 2451 Edgefield Road, Trenton, SC. Reverend Alexander Bettis (1836-1895) preached to enslaved African Americans during the early 1860s. When the Civil War ended, the freedmen and women wished to ordain Rev. Bettis and to have a church of their own. Several South Carolina preachers met with willing congregants to form the Mount Canaan Baptist Church. This new church sponsored Alexander Bettis and ordained him to the ministry, making him the only ordained African American preacher in the part of the state. The first services were held in a boiler before the building of a wooden church. That building has been succeeded by the brick sanctuary you see today, built in 1877.

The Mount Canaan Cemetery is as old as the church, and burials are still permitted there. Note the large obelisk flanking the grave of Alexander Bettis, which is directly behind the church. Legend has it that his grave was often visited by a gray mare, which he is said to have owned.

3 Padgett House and Store, 3611 Edgefield Road, Trenton, SC. The Perkau/Padgett house retains the look of a farmhouse of the early twentieth century. The associated store was built around the same time, in a style more often seen in urban settings such as downtown Edgefield. The large display windows flanking the front door would have been filled with items designed to catch the eye of passersby. The store also serves as a bus station in the early twentieth century, and persons waiting for the bus or disembarking would provide foot traffic for the store despite its rural location.

The pecan orchard on the other side of the road is an important part of the Padgett property. Pecan nuts have a long history as a source of food and commerce in the United States, but their association with the Edgefield District is relatively young. In 1822, Edgefield District native Dr. Abner Landrum discovered a grafting technique for pecans that would enable growers to produce better nuts. The idea did not catch on immediately and Landrum was forced to make his money in a number of other endeavors. Pecans are grown and sold at many places along US 25, as are peaches and other crops.

4 Trenton, SC

A loop through the town of Trenton passes many houses of the Victorian and Queen Anne eras, built in the last decades of the 19th century. Trenton was incorporated on December 20, 1877, after the Charleston, Columbia, and Augusta Railroad was established in the 1860s. First referred to as the “Pine House Community,” the railroad town with streets oriented to the tracks, was later named Trenton. Today, the town is best known for the Ridge Road Festival, begun in 1971.

Some of the sights of Trenton include the Wise Houses (111 W. Wise Street), built circa 1870 for James Monroe Wise, who is credited with the probable founding of Trenton, and his uncle, George W. Wise. Trenton also has the beautiful Carson-Marley-Hoffman House (370 Augusta Road), a Greek Revival house built in 1847. The house was originally built as the home of Nathan L. Griffin, circa 1828. Griffin’s daughter married Milledge Luke Bonham, who resided at Darby. Griffin was governor of South Carolina from 1862 to 1864. The historical marker was unveiled on November 4, 2019. In a special ceremony, Civil War re-enactors shot muskets and cannons in memory of the distant cannon booms that could be heard at Darby at the start of the Civil War.

5 Ebenezer Baptist Church and Cemetery, 303 Airport Road, at the far eastern end of Wise Street.

The church, founded in 1871, is built in a simplified Greek revival style. The large cemetery next to the church is called a garden cemetery or rural cemetery. These graveyards were designed with the living mourner in mind and feature lush landscapes among the graves.

6 Taylor Nursery, 53 Girl Scout Camp Road, Trenton, SC. www.taylor-nursery.com

Since its inception in 1928, the South Carolina Forestry Commission has grown and distributed over 2.5 billion forest tree seedlings. Contact Jimmy Lindsey (803-275-3578) if you are interested in a group tour of the history and silviculture of this South Carolina Forestry Commission seedling nursery.

7 The Pine House, 5995 Edgefield Road, Trenton, SC. In 1786, the Piney Woods Tavern was established as a stagecoach stop between Augusta, Georgia, and Ninety Six, South Carolina. In 1847, it was reestablished when Washington stopped at the tavern and dined during his tour of the southern US, cementing its importance in local tradition. In 1847, the parcel across the road was purchased from the tavern owner by General J.R. Weaver and he may have erected a massive Greek revival mansion at that time. The house was rebuilt in a similar style in 1870, after a fire, although the two smaller buildings survived the fire and may date to 1847. A historic column of pecan trees signal your approach to the historic house. The Pine House property features a richer thick hedge of privet, is one of the most significant structures of the area, anchoring the later town of Trenton.

8 Piney Woods Tavern Site, Edgefield Road, Trenton, SC.

The eighteenth-century tavern was established at the intersection of two historic trails to garner patronage; one from Augusta, Columbia and the other from Charleston to Ninety Six. Land records date back to 1757, when it was surveyed for Richard Price. The property was acquired by Van Swearingen in 1786, and he may have erected his tavern at a tavern. In 1791, George Washington stopped at the log tavern and dined during his tour of the southern US, cementing its importance in local tradition. Francis Bettis owned the tavern between 1811 and 1847. The tavern property was purchased by General J.R. Weaver who constructed the residence that would later be called the Pine House. The 1791 Piney Wood Tavern was located across the road from the Pine House.

9 Darby Plantation, 1150 Augusta Road, Trenton, SC. (NRHP LISTED)

This plantation features a Greek revival house built for Nathan L. Griffin, circa 1842. The Greek revival style was popular at that time, and features columns on the front façade that mimic a classical Greek temple. Despite the classical influence, Darby also retains the look of a large farmhouse in its wide front porch, simplified columns, and clapboard siding. Griffin’s daughter married Milledge Luke Bonham, who resided at Darby. He was governor of South Carolina from 1862 to 1864. The historical marker was unveiled on November 4, 2019. In a special ceremony, Civil War re-enactors shot muskets and cannons in memory of the distant cannon booms that could be heard at Darby at the start of the Civil War.

10 National Wild Turkey Federation’s Winchester Museum, 700 Augusta Road, Edgefield, SC. www.nwtf.org/about_us/wtc_museum.html. Open Monday through Friday 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM. The Museum features exhibits on the history of wild turkey management, restoration, and hunting.

11 Edgefield, SC

The Edgefield Historic District encompasses a large portion of the town, especially the portion you will drive through as you continue along Highway 25. Edgefield village has been the county seat of Edgefield County since 1791. The current courthouse building located on Court House Square was completed in 1839 with the state house building adjacent to US 25 dates to 1839. The village that has grown around the courthouse, and the nearby spring, has more than 40 nineteenth-century buildings. Information on many homes and churches is available online at www.historicedgefield.com.

The Rainsford Discovery Center sits off Highway 25 just outside of courthouse square. The Miller House, which holds the Center, was moved to this location from its original location 7 miles south of Edgefield on Highway 25 in 1992. Stop at the Discovery Center for a history of Edgefield, an introduction to Edgefield pottery, and for literature on the downtown walking tour and Edgefield driving tour.

Ferrell’s Antiques and Museum 101 Courthouse Square, Edgefield, SC is an antique store, but also houses a collection of pottery and artifacts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The Pine House, 5995 Edgefield Road, Trenton, SC.