

Susie Simpson, a master craftswoman who makes and sells handmade, honest-to-goodness brooms is laughing as she greets guests at her shop, the aptly named Broom Place, in Boykin.

"Welcome to the Boykin Industrial Park," she grins. "After we're finished here we'll head across town and get some lunch." For a visitor from anywhere but Boykin, the term "across town" conjures uncomfortable images of traffic stuck in a mid-day rush of office workers. But then Susie's sly smile dances across her face again. "Oh, by the way, there's across town," she explains, pointing across the street to a group of buildings. "This is one of the few places where you can yell and they'll hear you across town."

But we're not ready to head over just yet. There's the "industrial park" to explore.

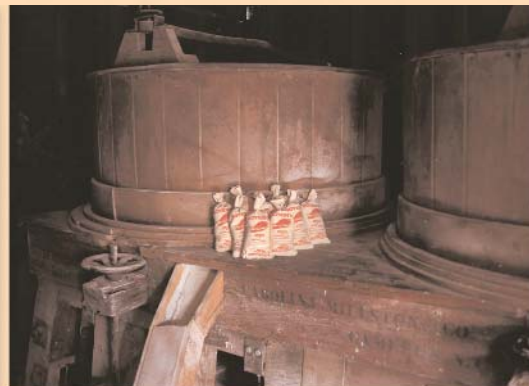
farmers throughout the region, who brought their corn to be milled into grits and cornmeal. A post office and cotton mill brought more people and by the mid-1800's Boykin was a thriving community.

After the Civil War, the community stood still until 1989, when Hurricane Hugo blew threw, nearly destroying everything in its path, including Boykin's historic buildings. Alice Boykin, whose family had owned the land and buildings for more than 200 years, realized she had a decision to make. "I had to fix them up or lose them," she says. "I chose to fix them up."

Today, the old post office is the kitchen for Boykin's at the Mill Pond, a fine dining restaurant known for it's cornmeal crusted oysters, crab cakes and fruit cobblers, as well as a stunning view of the tree-ringed 250-acre mill pond alive

Swept Away in Boykin

By Katie McElveen



The community of Boykin includes the Boykin Broom Place, where brooms are made by hand on 100-year-old equipment. A gristmill, built c. 1790, still grinds corn into grits. Diners at Boykin's at the Mill Pond overlook the same pond where soldiers fought South Carolina's last Civil War battle.

Built in 1740 from local cypress, the building, which originally stood about a half mile away, was once home to two slave families.

Inside, the shop is a jumble of smells and textures. Colorful floor brooms, each dyed and tied by Susie, hang from pegs while whisk brooms, fireplace brooms—some with intricately carved handles—and cleaning sets for children, share space on the walls. Bags of grits, ground just a few yards away at circa 1800 Boykin Mill, are for sale alongside cookbooks from local churches. The fragrance of damp straw permeates everything.

Susie makes each broom she sells herself, using antique equipment taught herself to use. She averages about a dozen brooms a day.

The Boykin Community is named for the Boykin family, planters who first arrived in 1750. When the mill pond was built in 1790, the grist mill became a center of activity for

with alligators, herons and other wildlife. "Across town" is the more casual Boykin Company Grill, where deep fried pickles and crispy catfish, along with juicy burgers, are local favorites. Shrimp and grits are made with grits ground just a kernel's throw away. In the six years that the restaurant has been open it's become as much of a gathering spot as the old grist mill was more than a century ago.

With its old Southern charm and small town feel, Boykin is the perfect place to visit whether you want to brush up on your broom collection or escape from everyday life for a while. So come enjoy the history and charm. Boykin will be expecting you.

Find out more...

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