Picture
Out Of Our Past

When this photograph was taken in 1901 at the Orleans Cotton Press on S. Peters between Thalia and Terpsichore, Walter J. Tabary, the contributor, was 18 years old. Tabary is that fellow perched on a bale of cotton (center). He was a bill clerk, collector and abstract clerk for the cotton press. To his right, also seated on a cotton bale, is Edward Roth, a cotton checker, Orleans Cotton Press.

Standing, from left, are: M. F. Tabary, the contributor’s father, who was a cotton weigher for Julius Weis & Company; John Roth, yard clerk for Orleans Cotton Press; Thomas B. Bates, supervisor for New Orleans Cotton Exchange; E. Gueydan, cotton weigher for Hyman Hiller & Co.; Adam Lorch, manager of Orleans Cotton Press, and James Burns, cotton weigher for S. Gumbel & Company. The gentleman standing on the far right, clad in a long white frock and holding two handfuls of cotton, is known to Tabary only as a cotton classer whose last name was McCabe.

Tabary, of 1350 Jefferson Hwy., recalls that cotton was unloaded from steamboats and railcars in both a flat and a compressed condition. At the turn of the century, cotton did arrive at the port of New Orleans in various ways.

Some cotton shipments which accumulated at various points along the Mississippi and interior were sold on sample, subject to examination, at the railroad depot in New Orleans. Usually, this class of cotton was compressed before shipment began.

Other cotton shipments, dubbed “through cotton,” were accumulated at various interior points and sold to a buyer at these sites for direct export. Consequently, the buyer had it shipped to the port of New Orleans on a so-called “through bill” of railroad and water freight.

Although the port of New Orleans continued to be an important deposit market for cotton in the following years, it was not until late 1914 that the cotton presses, warehouses and terminals acquired their most valuable tool, which we know today as the forklift. These devices pull and push bales of cotton from any point in tiers of cotton piled 10 to 15 bales high, with no damage to the fiber of the cotton or the bale covering.

You are invited to submit Pictures Out of Our Past. $5 will be paid for each picture published. Give date and place of photo submitted; those taken later than 1917 are unacceptable. Pictures will be returned only if stamped, self-addressed envelope is attached.