

The Charleston Cigar Factory

The Cigar Factory was constructed in 1881 as a cotton manufacturing facility with the latest technological advances of the day, such as electricity, steam heat and a fire safety system. As a cotton mill, the factory was ranked sixth of the 20 or so cotton mills in South Carolina. The factory's mild success came to an abrupt end with the Earthquake of 1886. In the aftermath of the quake much of the skilled staff left the region and the building changed hands.

In 1903 the Cigar Factory was leased to the American Cigar Company, producer of famous RoiTan and Certified Creamo cigars. Great success came with cigar production and as many as 1,400 workers were employed at the factory in the 1930's. During the darkest days of the Great Depression the Cigar Factory was one of the few civilian workplaces that provided secure employment for a full day's wages. Cigars were produced in the building for 70 years and at its high point, 1.5 million cigars rolled out of the factory each day. In the late sixties, the U.S. government started requiring warning labels on tobacco products and placed restrictions on their advertising. This pushed the American Cigar Company to focus on overseas markets and they eventually closed the doors on cigar manufacturing in Charleston.

Source: http://www.cigarfactorycharleston.com/experience/building_history.html