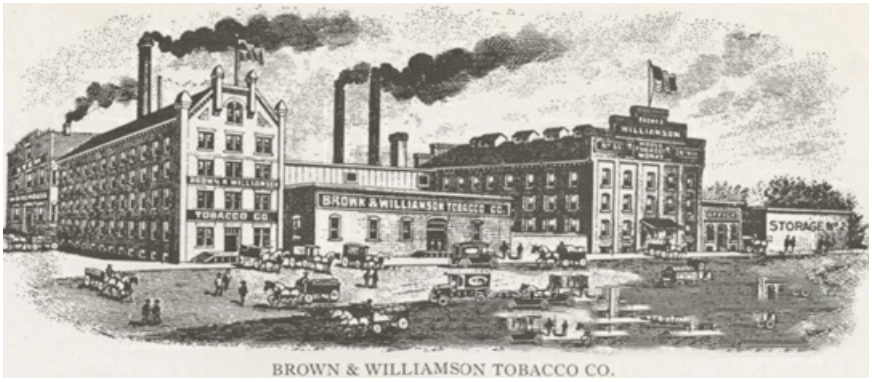
Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company [1]

Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company

by Anna Withers Bair, 2006

See also: Tobacco [2], American Tobacco Company [3]; Bull Durham Tobacco [4]; R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company [5]; W. Duke Sons and Company [6]; Tobacco Barrels: Hogsheads [7]; Inventions in the Tobacco Industry [8]; Tobacco Belts [9]



"Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company, located at 104-120 North Liberty Street, 1918." Image courtesy of Digital Forsyth.

[10]George T. Brown [11] and Robert L. Williamson [12] started manufacturing chewing tobacco in 1894 in a building at the corner of Liberty and First Streets at the southern border of the town of Winston (which later became Winston-Salem [13]). Both young men's fathers were tobacco manufacturers. Williamson had worked in his father's plant near Yanceyville before he moved to Winston, where he had become superintendent of the T. L. Vaughn Tobacco Company[14]. Brown speculated in the buying and selling of leaf tobacco. When the financial panic of 1893 left him with 100,000 pounds of tobacco for which he could find no buyers, he and Williamson, his brother-in-law, who had practical experience in tobacco manufacturing, decided to go into business together as partners. They named their company Brown & Williamson, with Williamson's brother-in-law Walter R. Leak as treasurer.

During the new firm's first year, Brown & Williamson took over the T. F. Williamson & Son company and its brands of Red Juice and Red Crow twist chewing tobacco and Golden Grain granulated smoking tobacco. To these they added their own products, including Bloodhound, Bugler, Kite, and Shot chewing tobacco. All of these became immensely popular brands, and the young firm grew so fast that in 1906 it was incorporated as Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company, with Brown as president, Williamson as vice president, and Leak as treasurer.

In 1925 Brown & Williamson bought theJ. G. Flynt Tobacco Company [15] and its Sir Walter Raleigh [16] pipe tobacco brand, which had been manufactured since 1884. The firm expanded further in April 1926 by buying R. P. Richardson Jr. & Company of Reidsville, which manufactured the Old North State brand of smoking tobacco, dating to 1873. Richardson also made cigarettes with the brand name of Old North State. With the purchase of this company, then, Brown & Williamson entered the field of cigarette manufacturing.

In 1929 all divisions of Brown & Williamson except chewing tobacco and snuff were moved to Louisville, Ky., and headquarters for the company remain there. The company merged with R. J. Reynolds Tobacco [5] in 2004 to form Reynolds American, Inc.

Additional Resources:

Kleber, John E., editor. "Brown and Williamson Tobacco Corporation." *The Encyclopedia of Louisville.* University Press of Kentucky. 2001. 133-134. http://books.google.com/books?id=pXbYITw4ZesC&pg=PA133#v=onepage&q&f=false [17] (accessed December 4, 2013).

RJ Reynolds Public Document Repository: http://www.rjrtdocs.com/rjrtdocs/index.wmt?tab=home&selection=home/bw_home [18]

RJ Reynolds History:http://www.rjrt.com/history.aspx [15]

RJ Reynolds About Us: http://www.rjrt.com/aboutus.aspx [19]

Image Credit:

"Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company, located at 104-120 North Liberty Street, 1918." Image courtesy of Digital Forsyth. Available from http://www.digitalforsyth.org/photos/4664 [10] (accessed June 27, 2012).

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Tobacco [24]
Authors:
Bair, Anna Withers [25]
Origin - location:
Winston-Salem [26]
From:
Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.[27]

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