

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

LISTED ON:
VLR 06/18/2009
NRHP 09/03/2009

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name American Cigar Company (VDHR #122-0658)
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 1148 E. Princess Anne Road not for publication N/A
city or town Norfolk (Independent City) vicinity n/a
state Virginia code VA county N/A code 710 zip code 23504

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature] July 21, 2009
Signature of certifying official Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal Agency or Tribal government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- x private
public-local
public-State
public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- X building(s)
district
site
structure
object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows: buildings (2, 0), sites (0, 0), structures (0, 0), objects (0, 0), Total (2, 0).

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/ EXTRACTION Sub: manufacturing facility industrial storage

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: COMMERCE/TRADE COMMERCE/TRADE Sub: business warehouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Early 20th-century American Movement - Commercial Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
roof
walls BRICK
other STONE - limestone

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or a grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE
INDUSTRY
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance 1903-1917

Significant Dates 1903, 1917

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A

Architect/Builder likely Albert F. Hunt

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property <1

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
18	386703E	4079420N	2			3			4		

 See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah McPhail & Marcus Pollard
 organization Commonwealth Preservation Group, LLC date March 2009
 street & number 139 N. Main Street telephone (757)923-9991
 city or town Suffolk state VA zip code 23434

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name 1135 Courtney, LLC
 street & number 309 Signal Quay telephone (757) 621-1334
 city or town Chesapeake state VA zip code 23220

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). A federal agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 36 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, 1849 C St., NW, Washington, DC 20240.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**American Cigar Company
Norfolk, Virginia**

Section 7 Page 1

Summary Description

The American Cigar Company was erected c.1903 as a part of the original American Cigar Company stemmery complex. The two remaining buildings, the stemmery and the boiler room, feature similar architectural detailing. The four-story building was the location of stemmery operations while the two story building housed the large boiler. The main building exhibits elements of typical mill construction with an interior frame system supported by wood floors. It rests on a concrete foundation and its exterior walls are of five-course American bond brick construction. The windows feature brick jack arch arches. The few that remain have been covered with louvered and corrugated metal. The flat roof features a corbelled cornice. The boiler room is a two-story, 3-bay brick building resting on a brick foundation. Evidence indicates that Albert F. Hunt (1868-1920) was the architect for the stemmery building; this evidence is supported by his long standing relationship with the American Tobacco Company.

Detailed Description

The subject buildings are located in a mixed-use area adjacent to the Norfolk & Southern Railroad Tracks. The buildings are in an urban environment and surrounded by later adjacent residential, institutional and industrial buildings, as well. The stemmery was originally associated with the American Cigar Company, serving as a tobacco facility processing re-dried tobacco to the point that the stems are removed from the lamina portion of the leaf.

The building was erected along the Norfolk Southern (formerly Norfolk & Western) railroad spur that was constructed in 1885. The facility was intentionally located within an industrial area near the railroad and surrounded by a historic African American residential neighborhood. The direct access to the railroad and ready source of nearby potential employees led to the selection of this particular site.

The facility was originally constructed as a complex c1903. The remaining portion of the complex which comprises this nomination includes the original the four-story factory, which was the location of stemmery operations, and the two-story boiler room. The stemmery building has a rectangular footprint and is a five-course American bond brick structural system with a concrete slab foundation. The building exhibits elements of typical mill construction with an interior frame structural system supporting wood floors. The large window openings on all sides of the building facilitated ample light throughout the interior of the workspace. The few remaining original windows are six-over-six and four-over-four wood double hung sash with limestone sills and three rows of rowlock brick jack arch headers. The windows are currently covered by louvered metal and corrugated metal coverings. Some windows have been removed, and others are deteriorated. The building entrances are characterized by double leaf doors on the first floor; they are articulated with chamfered panel frames and diagonal wood panels. The doors are surmounted by four rows of rowlock brick jack arch headers. There is a rusticated limestone watertable at the first floor that terminates at the first floor window sills. A rusticated limestone stringer course forms the window sill at the fourth floor. At the roofline, there is a decorative corbelled brick cornice, and the building corners are adorned with raised brick quoins.

The interior of the stemmery is relatively simple with a poured concrete first floor and wood frame structural system. The chamfered posts and beams are reinforced with forged metal braces. The upper floors are wood plank though the flooring in the west end of the building has been removed. There is a hoistway at the end of the building that is open to the fourth floor. The hoistway openings on each story have sliding metal-cased fire doors. There is an original office on each level of the building; they are all located in the northwest corner. Lavatories are situated on the west end of the building, north of the hoistway. They have been altered with modern fixtures. There are two terrazzo washstands on each level of the building, as well; they are located at the northwest and northeast corners of the building.

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**American Cigar Company
Norfolk, Virginia**

Section 7 Page 2

Circulation throughout the stemmery is facilitated by two stairwells; they are situated at the northwest and southeast corners of the building. The stairwells are enclosed and have wood treads and risers with solid beaded board balustrades. Access to each stairwell is provided through a single-leaf fire door. As shown on the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, there were originally segregated sweat rooms on the first and second floors of the stemmery. The perimeter walls have been removed, but vent units remain in place.

The boiler building is an open, two-story brick building with architectural detailing identical to the four-story stemmery building on a much smaller scale. The two-story boiler room features a flat roof with a decorative cornice that matches the cornice of the stemmery building. The first floor of the façade has been altered and features a modern store-front entrance. The second floor of the façade features four windows with arched openings. Each second story window is modern and has four divided horizontal lights. There is a 4 to 5-story brick chimney appended to a modern hyphen which connects the stemmery to the boiler room. The interior is one large space, with no second floor, to accommodate the boiler machinery. The boiler building is connected to the stemmery by a modern two story hyphen.

A developer is interested in purchasing and rehabilitating the stemmery building and the boiler building using Virginia and Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits if the building is listed on the Virginia and National Register of Historic Places.

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**American Cigar Company
Norfolk, Virginia**

Section 8 Page 3

Summary Description

The American Cigar Company, located at 1148 E. Princess Anne Road, consists of two resources: the primary processing building and the boiler building of what was a stemmery complex originally constructed in 1903. Stemmeries were facilities where the stem was removed from the tobacco leaf prior to its manufacture into cigars. The American Cigar Co. operated as a subsidiary of the larger American Tobacco Company. The stemmery was a large facility for the time and immediately established Norfolk as a notable city in the category of tobacco production. The facility was built near the railroad tracks for easy transportation of materials and products. It was also built near to the poorer African American section of Norfolk for easy access to an inexpensive labor force, particularly African American women who represented most of the workforce for many years. It was the site of a failed but noteworthy Women Wage Earner's Association (WWEA) strike in 1917, during WWI. The American Cigar Co. is eligible for listing at the local level of significance in the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register under Criterion A (Industrial and Social History) and Criterion C (Architecture). The building is representative of typical turn-of-the-century mill construction and Victorian industrial design. The interior and exterior are largely intact and retain most of their original appearance and character with strong historical integrity. The building is also closely associated with African American history, particularly the early African American women's labor movement. The period of significance spans the period from construction (1903) to the date of the WWEA strike (1917).

Statement of Significance

The American Cigar Co. was formed only a short time before the construction of its stemmery facility in Norfolk, Virginia. American Cigar Co. was created in 1901 as a subsidiary of The American Tobacco Co. in order to move the substantial cigar market from the hundreds of smaller manufacturers to mass production. At this time cigar and cigarette consumption in the United States were roughly equal but the production of cigars was far more laborious resulting in a much higher cost per unit. While the tobacco companies could never equal the speed and efficiency needed to gain the high profit margins of cigarettes, they created Vice President Thomas R. Marshall's famed "good five-cent cigar" with the introduction of the famous Cremo brand. But, even as cigars reached mass production, tastes were changing and the era of the cigar was over by the end of the first decade of the 1900s.¹

The American Tobacco Co. was formed as a trust in 1890 after James Buchanan "Buck" Duke had used his monopoly of the new, faster Bonsack rolling machines, along with heavy advertising spending, to force the four other major cigarette producers to sign up to the trust under the leadership of Duke. The American Tobacco Co. controlled the vast majority of cigarette production in the United States and soon conquered the plug and snuff markets as well, establishing a monopoly of almost all tobacco product production in the United States. The last tobacco industry to tackle was the cigar, which was the impetus for the creation of The American Cigar Co. The decentralized nature of the cigar industry and method of cigar production prevented Duke and American Cigar from ever achieving the monopoly reached in the production of the other tobacco products. In 1911 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that The American Tobacco Company had violated the Sherman Anti-trust Act and ordered the monopoly unwound. The American Tobacco Co. was split into four large companies one of which kept the name American Tobacco Co. The American Cigar Co. remained a subsidiary of the original parent company.²

The vast majority of workers in the tobacco industry in the areas of "rehandling": sorting, stripping, stemming, and hanging of tobacco leaves—the parts of the redrying process, were African American women. The rehandling of tobacco was generally the most physically demanding and the lowest paying. Several reasons existed for this disproportionate concentration of African American women workers. The primary employment available to African American women, until the opening of industrial jobs, was domestic service, which offered hard work, long hours, and low pay. Factories in the first half of the twentieth century remained largely segregated by job type, leaving the skilled positions for white workers.

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**American Cigar Company
Norfolk, Virginia**

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By employing African Americans exclusively in one factory, or one area of a factory, owners could keep wages below industry standards and overlook health and safety standards. Even with poor ventilation, hot and dusty air, inhumane toilet facilities, and low wages, the work was still generally better than domestic service in that it offered higher pay, fewer hours, and more independence. The general lack of jobs was also a mitigating factor in the large number of African American women willing to take factory work. But with hours still quite long, working conditions very difficult, and pay less than enough to live on, African American women greatly resented the conditions of the tobacco factory jobs. To fight boredom and misery, African American women in the tobacco industry often sang while they worked. For them it was in part a form of protest as well, but the managers mistakenly interpreted the singing as a sign of contentment in their work.³

Frustration over low pay and poor working conditions finally led the African American women workers in the American Cigar Co. to join a union and strike in 1917. The Women Wage Earner's Association (WWEA) was created by middle-class African American women in Washington, D.C. specifically to focus on exploited women workers in domestic service and the tobacco industry. In September 1917, the Norfolk, Virginia branch of the WWEA organized 600 black women workers to demand better working conditions and higher pay to meet wartime inflation increases. These workers came from domestic positions, restaurants, and laundries as well as the tobacco stemmery. The case for the workers was also supported by the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, the leading African American newspaper in Norfolk. When American Cigar Co. refused to increase wages, the workers of the stemmery struck the factory. In addition to the traditional challenges of organizing a union and striking during this period, the workers faced the "work or fight" policy which threatened prosecution for those who did not work during wartime. White women with families were exempted from "work or fight" but African American women were not. With the American Cigar Co. refusing to give in to any demands and facing legal threats from the government as a result of wartime labor demands, the strike failed before the year was out and the Norfolk branch of the WWEA folded as well. While a nearly complete failure at the time, it represented a huge step forward in laying the groundwork for future organization of African American women workers.⁴

Because of the need for employment and the lack of both positions and jobs they were allowed to work, in 1920 most of the African American women employed in a factory job in Norfolk were still employed at the American Cigar Co. All wage and poor working condition issues aside, it was unfortunately still one of the better jobs for African American women at that time.⁵ By 1925 the American Cigar Co. still employed roughly five hundred African American women workers at the stemmery under largely the same conditions as before the strike.⁶ As the 1920s progressed, the nature of the tobacco industry changed with greater automation and mechanization, resulting in fewer workers needed, and nearly 20,000 workers displaced by the end of the decade. Another result was the near elimination of unions in the cigar industry because of the rapid decline in the number of workers and the heavy demand for the decreasing number of positions available. The same factors also led to the depression of wages during the later 1920s and, of course, during the Great Depression.⁷ With the significant retooling of tobacco facilities as a result of mechanization and fewer workers, many factories underwent substantial transformation.

The American Cigar Co. stemmery was the original and primary building on site; it retains its historic configuration and clearly conveys its original use. A complex of buildings on the site evolved through several expansions of business operations; these expansions included additions to the stemmery and new buildings on the site. Early records indicate that the small two-story boiler room, which faces the railroad tracks, was constructed c1903 at the same time as the stemmery. The boiler room remains in place but the interior has been substantially altered as the boiler system was enlarged and updated. The boiler room was connected to the stemmery with a hyphen by 1910 but the hyphen was replaced with a modern two story connector after 1928. By 1910, three large warehouses and a small warehouse were constructed in addition to a two story storage house. The construction of the storage house necessitated bricking in windows which had existed on the north side of the stemmery.

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**American Cigar Company
Norfolk, Virginia**

Section 8 Page 5

By the late 1920's manufacturing processes were changing, necessitating ongoing updates of the complex including the addition of a large curing room in place of the small warehouse, as well as a large "heat-steam-fuel coal" structure on the opposite end of the site from the stemmery.⁸ Two additional storage warehouses were added to the complex after 1951 as well.⁹ The only buildings remaining on the site today are the original, primary stemmery facility and the boiler building.

There is strong evidence that the Norfolk American Cigar Company Stemmery was designed by architect, Albert F. Huntt (1868-1920), who had prepared architectural drawings for several other tobacco manufacturing facilities for The American Tobacco Co. and its subsidiary the American Cigar Co. Huntt was a Richmond native, and graduated with degrees in architecture and engineering from the Pennsylvania Military Academy. He designed a number of warehouses, factories, and commercial buildings in North Carolina; Oswego, N.Y.; and Madison, WI before establishing his own practice in Richmond, VA c1895, where he was associated with Carl Ruehrmund. His practice designed a number of commercial and residential buildings in Richmond, including the American Tobacco Company warehouse on Cary Street. He also designed a warehouse for B.D. Chalkley and Company in Manchester, VA.¹⁰

The American Cigar Stemmery represents a strong candidate for individual listing on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register under Criterion A (Industrial and Social History) and Criterion C (Architecture). It has a high degree of architectural and historical integrity, retaining much of the interior and exterior historic features and character of the Victorian industrial design. The American Cigar Stemmery facility at 1148 E. Princess Anne Road played a significant role in the development of the cigar industry; the economy of Norfolk; and the emergence of African American women into industrial occupations as well as into the labor movement from 1903 to 1917.

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**American Cigar Company
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Section 9 Page 6

9. Major Bibliographical References

Jones, Jacqueline. Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present. Basic Books, Inc, Publishers: New York, 1985.

Lewis, Earl. In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth-Century Norfolk, Virginia. University of California Press: Berkeley, 1991.

Mack, Russell H. The Cigar Manufacturing Industry. University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 1933.

Mjagkij, Nina, Ed. Organizing Black America. Taylor & Francis: 2001.

Parramore, Thomas C. Norfolk, The First Four Centuries. University Press of Virginia: Charlottesville, 1994.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Norfolk, VA, 1910.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Norfolk, VA, 1928, vol.3.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Norfolk, VA, 1951, vol.3.

The American Tobacco Story. The American Tobacco Company pamphlet: 1964.

“Virginia Department of Historic Resources Preliminary Information Form For American Cigar Company Stemmyery.” Prepared by Kimble A. David and Paige Pollard: July 8, 2007.

Wells, John E. and Robert E. Dalton. The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955. New South Architectural Press: Richmond, 1997.

Whitten, David O. and Bessie E. Whitten. The Birth of Big Business in the United States, 1860-1914. Praeger: Westport, 2006.

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**American Cigar Company
Norfolk, Virginia**

Section 10 Page 7

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the American Cigar Company are shown on the accompanying map entitled "American Cigar Company – Tax ID#00663400. The building outline is shown with a dotted line.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the American Cigar Company include the four-story main building and the boiler building, as they are currently owned by 1235 Courtney, LLC.

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**American Cigar Company
Norfolk, Virginia**

Section Photographs Page 8

Photographic Documentation

The following information is the same for all photographs:

Name: American Cigar Company

Location: Norfolk, VA

Photographer: Paige Pollard

Date of Photographs: March 2009

Digital copies of the photographs are stored in the archives department at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Richmond, VA.

Photo Number	Description	Direction
0001	Façade and south elevation	looking east
0002	East and south elevation, oblique	looking northwest
0003	East elevation	looking west
0004	Rear of property	looking northeast
0005	Typical ceiling, 1 st floor warehouse	looking east
0006	1 st floor Warehouse space	looking east
0007	Typical stairway	looking northwest
0008	Typical Warehouse space	looking northwest
0009	Typical Warehouse space	looking south
0010	Top floor warehouse space	looking southeast

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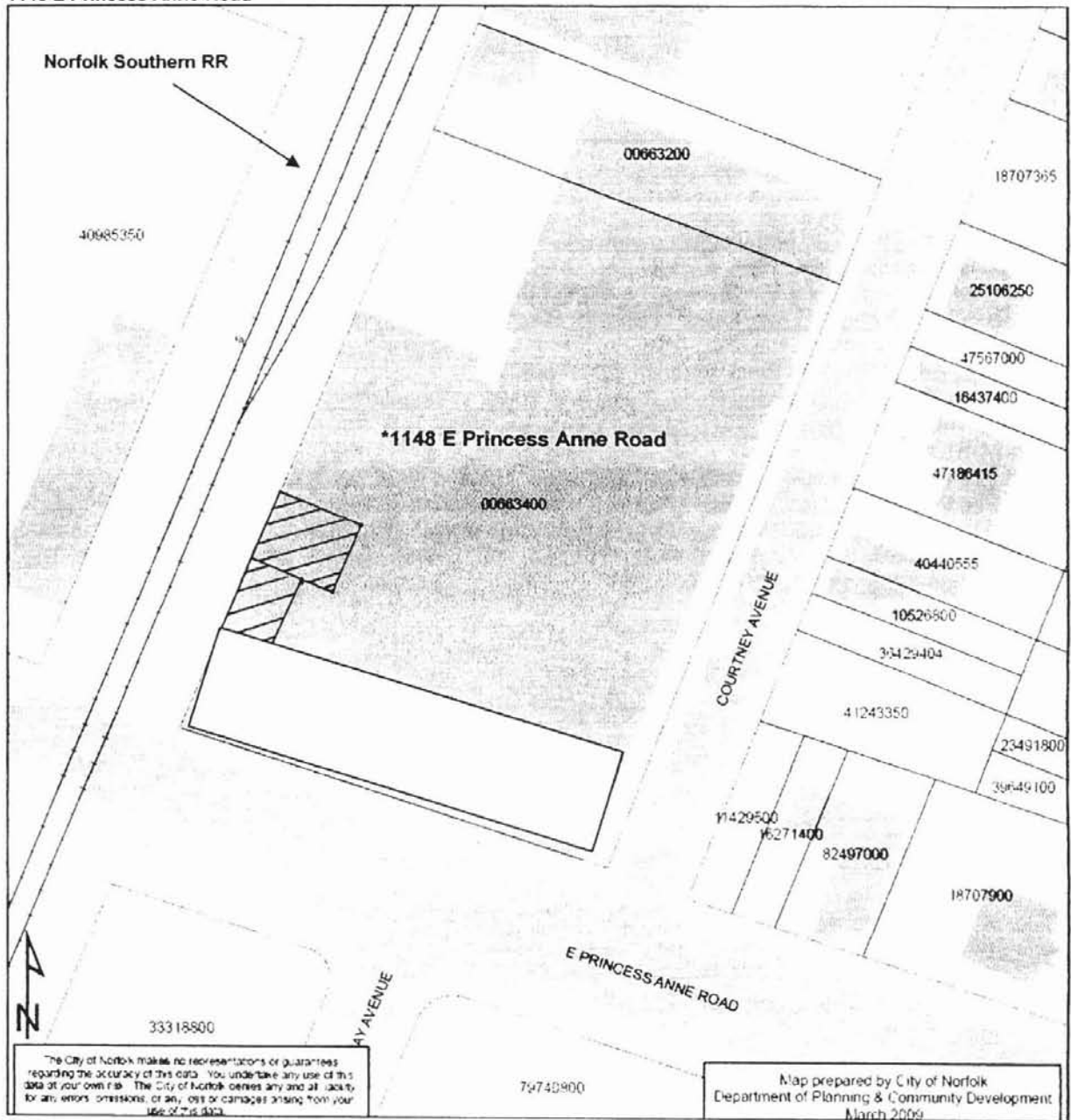
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Section Endnotes Page 9

Endnotes



1. Mack, Russell H., The Cigar Manufacturing Industry, 1933: p.60-61. The American Tobacco Story, The American Tobacco Company pamphlet, 1964: p.26-27.
2. Whitten, David O. and Bessie E. Whitten, The Birth of Big Business in the United States, 1860-1914, 2006: p.87-93.
3. Jones, Jacqueline, Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present, 1985: p.134-140.
4. Mjagkii, Nina, Ed., Organizing Black America, 2001: p.698.
5. Lewis, Earl, In Their Own Interests: Race, Class, and Power in Twentieth-Century Norfolk, Virginia, 1991, p.36, 60.
6. Parramore, Thomas C., Norfolk, The First Four Centuries, 1994: 313.
7. Mack, p.74-81.
8. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Norfolk, VA, 1910; sheet 155 and 1928, vol.3, sheet 330.
9. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Norfolk, VA, 1951, vol.3, sheet 330.
10. "Virginia Department of Historic Resources Preliminary Information Form For American Cigar Company Stemmary." Prepared by Kimble A. David and Paige Pollard, (July 8, 2007). Well, John E. and Robert E. Dalton, The Virginia Architects, 1835-1955, 1997: p.218-220.

American Cigar Company: Site Map *Norfolk, VA*
 VDHR #122-0658
 1148 E Princess Anne Road



*not to scale

Legend

-  American Cigar Company Main Building (CB)
-  American Cigar Company Boiler Building and Hyphen (CB)

NORFOLK SOUTH QUADRANGLE
 VIRGINIA
 7.5-MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)



AMERICAN CLADY CO
 1148E PRINCIPLES AVENUE #4
 NORFOLK, VA
 VDHK# 122-0698
 1 060 000
 METERS
 UTM COORDINATES
 79
 18 386703E 4079420N