

FULTON BAG AND COTTON MILLS

The History of the Mill

The beginnings of the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills can be traced to Atlanta in 1868, when Jacob Elsas, an immigrant of German Jewish descent, arrived in Atlanta and began to work in the city's rag, paper, and hide business. Elsas soon recognized a growing need on the part of many local businesses for cloth and paper containers to house their goods.

Within two or three years Elsas had switched to the new business of manufacturing cloth and paper bags. Elsas, May and Company was founded in 1872 with partner and fellow immigrant Isaac May. By 1881 the company had become known as the Fulton Cotton Spinning Company and had relocated to a site adjacent to the Georgia Railroad line east of downtown. The Elsas May partnership ended in the late 1880s, and Jacob Elsas founded what became the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill Company.

Within a few years Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill Company had outgrown the capacity of its existing buildings, resulting in the construction of a second mill in 1895, with more than 40,000 spindles. A third mill added 50,000 additional spindles by 1907. In addition, a neighboring village with housing for the mill workers was well established by the turn of the twentieth century.

Changes in packaging after World War II led to the manufacture of new products such as multiwall paper bags and canvas goods. The Atlanta mill, which remained known as the Fulton Cotton Mill, continued operation under the management of Elsas family members until 1968. In that year Fulton Industries Inc. was sold to Allied Products Corporation.

The Atlanta mill finally ceased operations in 1978. In 1997 Aederhold Properties redeveloped the historic Fulton Cotton Mill in Atlanta into a mixed-income community of 182 loft apartments.