

3 Estey Organ Building

108 Birge Street, Brattleboro, Vermont

The Estey Organ Building in Brattleboro, Vermont is not only locally significant, but nationally as well, when their factory became the world's leading organ manufacturer.

Following the first large reed organ production in 1853, the company quickly produced between 1,600 and 1,800 organs a month, generating an income of one million dollars. By 1876, forty organs were exported to Europe every week. As the company became one of Brattleboro's largest employers, with a factory comprised of almost thirty buildings, organ production became a leading industry in Vermont.



As time passed and new technology was developed, the reed organs became less in demand and pipe organs started to take their place. The Estey Organ Company had to undergo a company-wide transition in order to meet this new demand. The pipe organ became the new core product of the company during the 1920's.

With the impact of the Great Depression, the Estey Organ Company was forced to declare bankruptcy in 1933. The owner, Jacob P. Estey, started a new company later that year in hopes of returning to his former company's glory. His plan failed and was bought by another organ company from New Jersey in 1953.

Today, preservation efforts are underway by the current building owners. Several buildings that survived in good condition are being used for various commercial purposes. In 2002, the Estey Organ Museum was founded with hopes of one day becoming a "world-class interactive music museum." The old factory is a reminder to not only the people of Brattleboro, but Vermont, that a small New England town has just as much potential as a big city to become home to a world class industry. Listed in the National Historical Register in 1986, The Estey Organ Building is a beacon of local pride.

Sources:

Estey Organ Building. (May 1985) *National Registration Nomination Information*. Accessed 27 November 2013, from <http://www.crjc.org/heritage/V02-11.htm>

The Estey Organ Museum. Accessed 29 November 2013 from <http://esteyorganmuseum.org/about/>