

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOHN L. BOONE, OF SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, ASSIGNOR OF ONE-FOURTH HIS RIGHT TO CHARLES M. RICHARDSON, OF SAME PLACE.

IMPROVEMENT IN PROCESSES OF AGING CIGARS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **158,021**, dated December 22, 1874; application filed June 9, 1874.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOHN L. BOONE, of San Francisco, California, have invented or discovered a Process for Seasoning and Aging Cigars; and I do hereby declare that the following is the specification describing the same.

My invention relates to a process for treating cigars after they are manufactured, in order to season or dry them and give them the quality which is known as age.

In manufacturing cigars it is necessary that the tobacco leaf be softened or rendered flexible, so as not to break or split while being manipulated, and in order to obtain this quality the leaves are moistened previous to, and to some degree while, making them into cigars. Freshly-manufactured cigars are known as "green cigars," and require age to render them dry and agreeable to smoke.

My process consists in subjecting the manufactured cigars to artificial heat in a chamber after the tobacco has been moistened, which moistening may be applied to the tobacco before being manufactured into cigars, or during the process, or to the cigars after manufacture.

If the moistening is to be applied after the cigars are manufactured, I place them upon suitable racks, trays, shelves, or other supports, in a vessel or chamber. I prefer to stretch wires across the chamber and place the cigars upon the wires. I then introduce steam into the chamber, in which suitable vent-openings are provided, so that the steam will circulate freely around and among the cigars in a moving and passing current. The cigars will absorb moisture from the steam and become swollen, thereby loosening the layers of tobacco and dissolving the gum in the tobacco leaves.

When the cigars have become saturated and swollen sufficiently, (a period readily determined by the skilled attendant,) I shut off the steam and introduce hot air, which will also be kept under motion. I keep up the current of hot air until the moisture is eliminated from the cigars and they are perfectly dry and seasoned. By removing the moisture from the cigars their swollen size will be reduced but not to such an extent as to tighten their layers.

This treatment will not only dry and sea-

son the cigars, but will greatly improve their flavor and smoking quality.

Although the steaming process greatly benefits the cigars, they can be thoroughly seasoned and dried by simply subjecting them to a moving current of heated air, and in cigars manufactured from first-class tobacco leaf the steaming portion of the process need not be employed.

The exact temperature of the steam or air is not material, as long as care be taken not to continue a high heat long enough to burn or scorch the tobacco. I prefer a lower temperature continued a longer time to a high temperature continued a short time, as the process is then more gradual, and the cigars will be more uniformly seasoned to their centers.

Any suitable apparatus, such as is used for drying fruits, vegetables, and other substances, can be employed, but it is necessary that both the hot air and steam be kept under continuous motion, and that a pressure in the chamber be avoided.

By this means I am able to take green cigars, just manufactured, and in the course of a few hours render them equal to old seasoned cigars.

The alternate swelling and contraction of the cigars by the application of the steam and hot air leaves the pores or interstices open, so that the cigars will smoke freely.

It will be perceived that this invention has relation to no method or process of curing or improving tobacco by extracting any portion of its elements or modifying its color, but relates exclusively to the manufactured cigars, which it deprives of a freshness and cohesion of particles usually objectionable in cigars made of American tobacco, and which have hitherto been removed only by the effects of age.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

The process of subjecting manufactured cigars, moistened, as described, to a current of hot air, substantially as and for the purpose set forth.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal.

Witnesses: JOHN L. BOONE. [L. S.]
C. M. RICHARDSON,
WM. P. GERLACH.