

machines arose.

Due to the specialization of most of the factories in Lluçmajor in luxury women's shoes, subject to the constant changes in fashion and the consequent technical difficulties of manufacture, the auxiliary industries played a fundamental role, in particular mechanics, blacksmiths and carpenters, who adapted the industrial machinery to specific production needs adjusted as needed and with great skill and ingenuity.

Furthermore, the factories use the work-at-home system as an additional resource to supplement or reduce during periods of declining orders. In particular, the preparation for shipment was mainly done from home or in workshops separate from the rest of the factory. This was mostly done by women, who were often not paid. This work provided families with additional earning opportunities that could be combined with childcare or other occupations. It was especially the work of the riveters, highly valued for their skill and recognized throughout the island.

Thus, the shoe produced in Lluçmajor was exported all over the world, gaining great recognition and prestige, while remaining subject to the fluctuations of the market with constant ups and downs. Finally, and due to several factors such as rising wage costs for workers increasingly poached by the tourism sector, factories and workshops closed from the 1960s, ending in 2006 with the bankruptcy of the last shoe factory in Lluçmajor.



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Lluçmajor was city of shoemakers

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The shoe industry in Lluçmajor experienced constant ups and downs, moments of growth and prosperity followed by periods of declining production.

The beginnings were characterized by manual production by small shoemakers and rivet workshops, which developed in the middle of the 19th century. Most of the workers combined this activity with work in the fields or with other jobs. The shoes were mainly exported to France and America. As a result of mechanization, the first factories were built and work processes were systematized. The workers began to make demands, some skilled workers emigrated, trade unions and cooperatives emerged.

The repression under Franco began. With the civil war came moments of uncertainty, but the demand for shoes for the national troops led to a sharp increase in production.

In its heyday, Lluçmajor had a total of 48 registered factories and workshops. There were also associated businesses such as tailors, mechanics, carpenters, salesmen and printers. All this formed the important industrial base for the economy and society of the city of Lluçmajor (City Charter 1916).

In the 1960s, the decline of this sector began with increasing closures of factories and workshops, the very last of which closed its doors in 2006.

1870-1924. From craftsmanship to machine production. The way to the shoe industry.

Since the beginning of the 19th century, shoe production has been growing in the municipality of Lluçmajor documented as an important handicraft sector with a guild structure. Many peasants, who, due to the drought, were forced to work in shoemaking or other professions in addition to farm work, hired themselves out in shoe manufactures.

The flourishing of the first shoe workshops in Lluçmajor is linked to the names of two neighbors: Joan Mir Thomàs, representative of shipping companies that operate lines between Barcelona and Cuba, teamed up with Joan Catany Salvà, actually livestock wholesaler. It was about the export of shoes to Cuba, where other companies from the Balearic Islands, especially from Menorca, already had good business connections established.

From the last third of the 19th century, a flourishing branch of

industry developed with an increase in workshops that were mainly dedicated to the manufacture of shoes for export to the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Cuba with large numbers of skilled workers or laborers rotating between factory and farm work. More and more manufactories or factories emerged, employing between 10 and 70 workers, some introduced mechanized equipment, which was a first step towards industrialization. These factories were known by the nicknames of their owners: Cas Mestre Calons, Can Reus, Can Tomassetes, Cas Carreter o Can Pruneta to name a few.

The period between 1910 and 1925 was a period of growth thanks to the orders to supply shoes to the French troops during the First World War and the opening of the Lluçmajor railway station in 1916, which greatly facilitated the transport and export of goods.

These events mark the beginning of the large shoe factories in Lluçmajor. Gradually, some production processes are mechanized and finally the Can Reus factory is the first fully mechanized, followed by Can Pola.

1926-1937. From the union revolts to the Franco repression.

In those years, large factories coexisted with small and medium-sized workshops that did not compete with each other, but maintained a good relationship of mutual cooperation in times of increasing orders.

Simultaneously with demand on the island, demand on the mainland increased, as well as in North America and Iceland.

The labor movement associated with the shoemakers' union assumed a more radical character between 1930 and 1935 than in the past. This union was founded in 1901 and was called La Recompensa del Trabajo (Remuneration for Labour).

The eight-hour day, in force in labor legislation since 1921, was breached in the municipality's shoe sector after an agreement between employers and employees agreed eight and a half hours. Eventually, in 1929, the union decided to terminate this agreement and, due to a lack of agreement between the parties, the "eight-hour strike" was called. Employers had to accept the new schedule, but the situation eventually led to a deterioration in relations with workers. In the same year, the owners of factories and workshops tried to enforce the uninterrupted

working day without the right to break or to smoke. As a result, a walkout known as the "smoking strike" was called again to protest the dismissal of workers who flouted the ban. In 1930, the dismissed workers decided to set up their own cooperative, the La Hormiga (The Ant) shoe factory. Also worth mentioning is the conflict in 1933 at the Can Binimelis factory, when its owner fired some workers. This decision led to another strike being called. As a result, the employer in question hired new workers. There were attacks on the scabs and finally the mayor intervened to get an agreement between the workers and management.

In the first days after the 1936 coup d'état, workers in the shoe factories went on strike again; there was more repression. Almost all members of the La Hormiga cooperative suffered the consequences. Their goods were confiscated and the machines distributed among the remaining factories. Its president, Joan Garau Fullana, was shot dead, as was its manager, Miquel Monserrat Parets. In February 1937, six workers from the cooperative were also killed.



1937-2009. From the post-war boom to the complete decline of the shoe industry.

From 1937, Lluçmajor's shoe industry experienced renewed economic growth as it turned into a militarized industry supplying shoes to the national army. So production and profits multiplied, the only difficulty being the war-related shortage of raw materials and young workers.

During the post-war period, the Franco regime maintained an interventionist system of industry. A leather quota plan, recommended by the National Leather Syndicate, was drawn up, which fixed the factories' production and thus encouraged smuggling. This system was completely abolished in 1952.

As demand increased, so did the mechanization of production, but also the construction or expansion of factory buildings. At the same time, small workshops continued to exist, mostly only equipped with a cutting table and several sewing machines. The creation of a branch in Spain by the United Shoe Machinery Company, USMC, the most important American shoe machine company, eliminated many problems of mechanization. In addition to the financing, the supply of spare parts and accessories, the dissemination of new machines and technical assistance were now secured, since the possibility of renting