

I Remember Old Tuscaloosa

By Fred Maxwell

DO YOU remember Tuscaloosa's cigar factory and its "Bushy Tail" cigar? It was located on University Blvd. just west of Johnny's Restaurant on 24th Ave.

It was a "one man" factory, and Gonzales, who was both proprietor and staff, seemed to be an indefatigable worker. His workbench was back of a front window of the shop so any passerby could get a good look at the process of rolling cigars.

The fine point in making cigars was in fabricating the wrapper around the filler in such a manner that one end (the end for the smoker's mouth) came to a sealed point which had to be cut, or bitten off, so that the cigar would draw when lit at the other

end.

Conazles, a Spaniard I believe, had a special way of finishing up the lighting end. Where all other cigars were cut off square at this end, he made a kind of brush out of the filler extending beyond the end of the wrapper. This facilitated the lighting of the cigar but created quite a hazard when bits of burning loose ends fell on the clothes or upholstery of the unwary user. The trade name of this type of cigar was "Bushy Tail."

Many a time when I was sent to the Atlanta Store (First National Bank corner) to get a spool of thread in a hurry I forgot my haste if I passed the cigar shop, for it was fascinating to see the skill and dexterity of the artisan who made them.