

A Glimpse Of The Mansfield That Was

By PAUL L WHITE

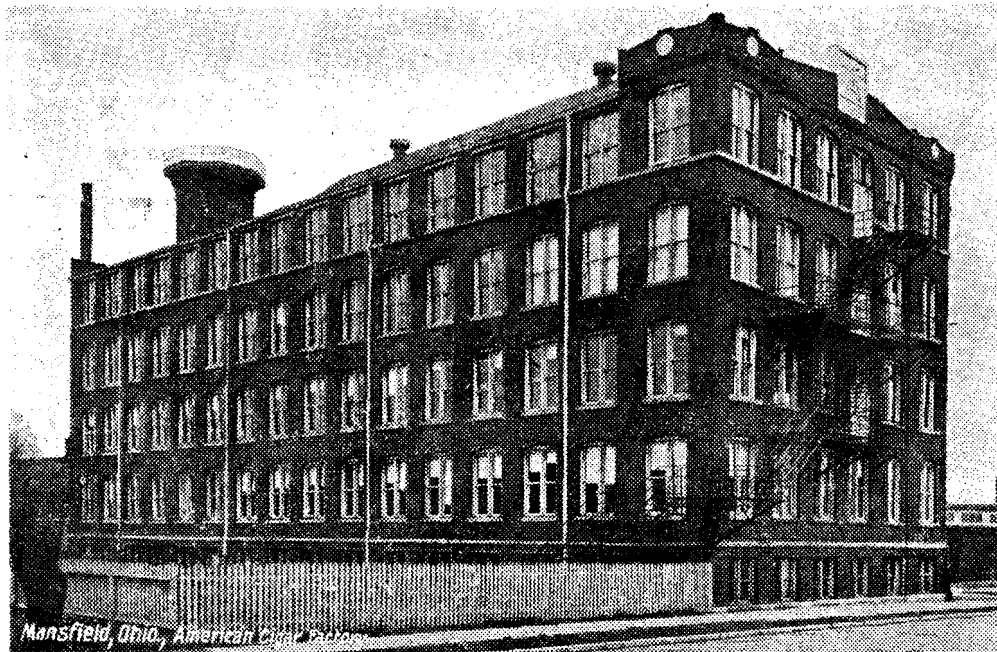
Cigar making was one of Mansfield's major industries around the turn of the century. Numerous cigar manufacturers sprang up in the city and by 1904 many were employed in the industry.

This high employment in the industry, in fact, created some school truancy along with illegal employment problems in the community. In the latter part of 1904, letters to the editor of The Mansfield News told how school children were skipping their studies to make a few dollars in the cigar factories since it was not heavy work. State school authorities investigated and corrected the situation during both 1904 and 1905.

On Nov. 21, 1905, the News noted a new cigar manufacturer had established his factory at 131 North Diamond St. and was looking for at least 100 girls to work. This was the American Cigar Co., famous for its "A" within a triangle brand insignia.

Rigby Cigar Co. had already been well established in the city and offered several well-known brand names. These cigars were later packaged in tin boxes with hinged lids. These boxes are now collectors' items at the antique shops. One of the well-known Rigby brands was the Dolly Dollar five cent cigar.

Hautzenroeder also was



The American Cigar Factory stood at the southwest corner of East Fifth and North Adams Sts. from 1907 until razed in 1940. This is a view of the Adams St. side of the building which fronted on East Fifth St.

one of the leading local manufacturers of cigars. Cigar factories seemed to move location rather often within the city on North Main St., North Diamond St. and in the North Park St. area.

The American Cigar Co. expanded rapidly within about two years after arriving in the city.

During the fall of 1906, the company engaged the construction firm of Schell & Baker to build a five-story red brick building with

water tower on a site at the southwest corner of East Fifth and Adams Sts.

Construction started rapidly but soon adverse weather conditions early in 1907 halted work after three of the walls had been erected.

By late spring of 1907 the building was completed and many men and women were employed. The newspapers of April 20, 1907, give a good clue as to the magnitude of the cigar making industry in Mans-

field in locating missing persons and criminals within their ranks. One of the men who robbed Phoebe Wise was finally apprehended in Port Clinton, Mich. at his cigar making bench, traced through his union card which, incidentally, carried an alias name.

Another Mansfielder, who was treasurer for his cigar makers union, embezzled funds, assumed an alias, and took off for Indianapolis. The union circularized all the cigar factories on mailing list and the culprit was found through his union card number. His fellow workers knew that once cigar making was in his blood, he couldn't break the pattern.

The five-story American Cigar Co. building faced East Fifth St. and carried a cement-embossed crest of the "A" within the triangle.

Cremo and Victory cigars for five cents were just two of many brand names manufactured.

After World War I, cigarettes became more popular because of the overseas shipments of cigarettes by the various service organizations. The cigar making business dropped off steadily until in the early 1930's the local factories were in financial trouble and most were forced to close.

The American Cigar Co. had weathered several adverse periods. The 1913

flood filled the lower part of the building with water destroying thousands of dollars worth of stock and equipment.

The company took pride in the fact it processed, cured and blended American grown tobacco with gigantic stemmers utilized in its processing.

For most of the 1930's the large brick building stood empty as a stark reminder of one of Mansfield's past industries. During the summer of 1940 the building was razed and on Dec. 11, 1940, the news stories announced that Dean W. Dickerson would construct a new building on the lots purchased for \$3,700 to house the Ohio Frosted Food Service locker plant and retail outlet.

The old American Cigar Co. brick building with its picturesque water tower still remains vivid in the memories of many Mansfielders who made cigars there.

(Photo from the archives of the Richland County Historical Society.)

CORRECTION

The 1909 basketball player standing in the center of last week's picture identified as Roger Au should have been identified as Harold Creveling, son of Mansfield educator H.L. Creveling, after whom Creveling School is named.