

# FROM FOOD FOR THE BODY TO FOOD FOR THE SOUL

*The Aduanilla de Paiba branch of the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas is one more chapter in the history of the old District Slaughterhouse, one of the first architectural works of the development of the industry in downtown Bogotá.*



Por: Daniel Felipe Patiño Gúzman

**T**he district slaughterhouse was inaugurated in 1929 so that people would have a place to behead, clean, produce and pack the cattle that were traded in Bogotá. Housewives and middle class people often went to the surroundings to grocery shop, because there were also sales of vegetables, grains, and legumes outside the slaughterhouse. All kinds of people came to shop there, but also to sleep (there were hotels of bad reputation) or to spend some leisure time with friends. The sale of liquor prevailed in the stores nearby.

It functioned as a supply point for the biggest meat buyers who would sell said foods at their butcher shops, also called “famas” all through the neighborhoods in the city. The slaughterhouse itself would only partake in wholesales and this led to the establishment of new butcher shops that saw an opportunity and went with retail sales of meat for the minority who didn't want to buy in wholesale. They worked from Monday to Saturday to Saturday and

work would never cease; it was also used to store cattle that arrived from other regions.

The land was useful once again. It was clear to the university that it would now be a library. What once housed cattle and blood, would now have books and students willing to fulfill their hunger for knowledge. See the stars when the observatory was built there.

The municipal slaughterhouse became a place where not only animals died, but also things the city no longer needed were discarded. It was overrun by weeds and was in oblivion for more than 20 years.

“The smell was detestable and the people who would often frequent the place were recyclers, consumers and thieves” says Jorge Bernal. Due to the bad use of hygiene, the slaughterhouse began to take on a rotten like smell caused by the decomposition of the meat. This led to the district slaughterhouse to be closed for its unhealthy conditions.

According to the research conducted by Carlos Arturo Reina Rodríguez, PhD in History, with the support of the researchers of the Library System of the Universidad Distrital for the book “El matadero municipal y la plaza de ferias de Bogotá 1924-1934: Resignificación de espacios y memoria”, in the early 90's the first transformation took place. After the abandonment and definitive

closure of the public establishment, this site went from housing people who slaughtered and distributed cattle to being home to the homeless population who came from ‘El Cartucho’; a street name from an old neighborhood called ‘Santa Inés’. Therefore it also became a safe haven for other homeless individuals living in the surrounding area, which for two decades served as the largest drug trafficking hotspot in Colombia. After its demolition ‘Santa Inés’ was relocated and it's been known since as the Bronx, which was later intervened by the police and the national army in 2016.

In 2009, the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas decided to recover it. The land had a useful life again. It was clear to the institution of higher education that it would be a library. What once housed blood and cattle would have books and students willing to feed their knowledge. Construction took four years. The slaughterhouse structure saw the light again and the fairgrounds began to see the stars with the astronomical observatory built there. 🌌

Foto: Universidad Distrital

THE MUNICIPAL SLAUGHTERHOUSE BECAME A PLACE WHERE NOT ONLY ANIMALS DIED ANYMORE, BUT ALSO THINGS THAT THE CITY NO LONGER NEEDED.





*Combustible infinito,*  
**HASTA QUE TE CANSES**

**USA LA BICICLETA**

*Somos* **CACHACOS**