

MEN'S BARBER SHOPS, 1928- : Frequenting a barber shop was always an adventure when I was young. Some men went daily to be shaved, which usually cost about 15 cents. I really don't remember the shelf or shelves of individually owned shaving mugs, often with the owner's name and an attractive picture thereon, in which the barber would mix up his customer's lather to spread over the shaving areas of the man's face and neck. In my time, the barber would simply mix up some brushless cream with his hands and apply it to the area to be shaved. My father always shaved himself (at least in my time), and by 1950, shops had almost given up the service of daily shaves.

Yorklyn had two barber shops, possibly not at the same time. Edward J. McGovern had a makeshift store built on pilings in the meadow on the Hockessin side of the Yorklyn bridge and a rickety boardwalk around this little building led to a barber shop. I was taken there once or twice before I was six years old. This store and the building in which it was located barely survived the covered bridge that was replaced by the current bridge at the end of Yorklyn Road in 1929. My second remembrance was in the clubhouse building on Snuff Mill property, still standing. Built by the George W. Helme Company and National Fibre as a community center about 1921, this building contained an auditorium with a projection booth, a bowling alley and several tiny stores, one of which was the barber shop. Again I was taken here, but I don't remember much about the haircut or the experience. Hockessin had a barber shop next to the firehouse, which closed sometime after World War II.

At the seashore where we spent several weeks each summer, Rehoboth had a building with an arcade on the south side of Rehoboth Avenue about ½ block from the boardwalk. Postmaster Dan Conant had the post office at the far end of the arcade and going to and from pedestrians passed several small stores, one of which was a barber shop (another was a souvenir shop that sold Uncle Wiggily books for 35 cents). In the 1930s, a haircut here cost a quarter, but children my age were 15 cents. At the other end of the spectrum, places like railroad stations and big hotels in large cities would have a shop with 10 or more barbers chairs in a line, each attended by a busy barber. Many customers also took advantage of a shoe shine for 10 to 15 cents. I once used the shop in the basement of the Statler Hotel in Boston, which was especially busy on Saturdays during World War II, when servicemen from all over New England came to Boston for a day or two "on the town."

From our home at Auburn Heights, I was taken to many shops in Kennett Square and Wilmington over the years. John Dettori had a small shop on North Union Street in Kennett with an assistant barber named Tom. Tom commuted from Wilmington and when gasoline rationing began in 1942, he switched to a shop closer to home. Usually after school, I would be taken to one of two Wilmington shops. The first was Mike's barber shop on Pennsylvania Avenue just west of Du Pont Street, where Mike and his brother, Tony, were excellent barbers. My father liked a men's tailor named Arthur Josefsen whose shop was on the 3rd floor of the Morris Plan Bank Building on Shipley Street between 9th and 10th. Allegretta and Fye had a barber shop on the second floor, and we started frequenting this shop. Charlie Allegretta was Frank du Pont's "man" in Delaware's General Assembly and was a very good barber, for which he was probably overqualified. Harry Fye, unfortunately, was old and going blind and could not see well enough to provide a good haircut. Charlie kept him on, however, as he had no other means of support. The shop was later moved to Tatnall Street between 10th and 11th, opposite an entrance to the Nemours Building.

Three generations of Burtons have operated a barber shop on West State Street in Kennett, although my times there have been few. It is still going strong and is an important sports center as well as a barbershop. Back to John Dettori: After World War II, he had a modern shop with two other barbers across from Burtons' in one of Jake Noznesky's buildings, and in the 1950s, John moved the shop to the rear of the American Legion Building on South Broad Street. It was a humorous adventure to frequent this shop. George Rudolph, a bachelor who took his meals at the Kennett Kandy Kitchen, complemented John as barber #2. A little Greek fellow named Alexander worked the counter and made sandwiches at the Kandy Kitchen. He was known as "Little Alec" and visited John's barber shop daily, mostly to read the paper. John and George would innocently start a conversation: "Did you hear about the woman who was poisoned at the Kandy Kitchen last night? I hear she

almost died, etc. etc.” Little Alec would fidget in his chair. Finally, he would throw down the paper and walk out in disgust. Something like this was a daily routine in John’s shop, with most customers finding it highly amusing. One day when Little Alec needed a haircut, John cut off his necktie “by mistake.”

When John Dettori retired, he sold the shop to a young barber from Drexel Hill, who was a very nice fellow but a terrible barber. Within two years the shop closed. George went to work in a small shop on South Union Street run by a man named Jim. This shop is now run by the Fragale brothers, and I still go there. Haircuts are now \$15, a bargain compared to rates in the cities but about 30 times what they were before World War II.

Work Report: On Tuesday, October 14, 15 volunteers attended the work session, with seven more at the Events Committee meeting Ted Kamen (in charge), John Bacino, Steve Bryce, Dan Citron, Dennis Dragon, Robert Hopkins, Dave Leon, Bill Schwoebel, Jerry Lucas, Lou Mandich, Brent McDougall, Tim Ward, Eugene Maute,., Gerhard Maute, and Tom Marshall. At “Events” were Anne Cleary, Rose Ann Hoover, Jerry Novak, Susan Randolph, Laura Lee, Richard Bernard, and Art Sybell (Steve Bryce and Brent McDougall attended both).

Locomotive 401 was thoroughly cleaned, and the left side running board and cylinder jacket detached for valve work. Dave Leon, Bill Schwoebel and Brent McDougall worked on this. Ted Kamen reported that he had found the problem of the leaking engine case on the Model 607, it was corrected. On this car, the speedometer now works with no binding in the drive or the cable. Several cars were prepped for the upcoming October 19 year-end run, with Tim Ward, Robert Hopkins, Jerry Lucas, Steve Bryce, Dan Citron, and John Bacino working on various cars. Bill Schwoebel and Lou Mandich replaced a right door striker plate on our Motel T Ford with one purchased at Hershey. The Maute boys continued their work in the library.

On Thursday, October 16, the following 11 volunteers were on hand: Bill Schwoebel (in charge), Steve Bryce, Jared Schoenly, Jim Personti, Geoff Fallows, Mark Russell, Ted Kamen, Bob Jordan, Tim Ward, Kelly Williams, and Tom Marshall. In preparing several of the Stanleys for the upcoming year-end run on 10/19, the following was done. On the Model 740, Tim Ward and Mark Russell replaced the oily sock in the water tank. It is obvious that this car is pumping too much oil. The battery was put on charge. On the 735, Jared Schoenly, Tom Marshall and Steve Bryce reworked the leaking branch forks, and by cleaning threads and carefully fitting annealed copper washers, the forks took up well on the end of the vaporizer, and all looks good for 10/19. Mark Russell filled tanks and put the battery on charge. Jerry Lucas and John Bacino “prepped” the Model 71. Kelly Williams, Bob Jordan and Ted Kamen went over the 607 and made sure all is “go.”

Locomotive 401 was examined by Jim Personti, Bill Schwoebel, and Geoff Fallows. It was soon discovered that set screws that fasten the driving mechanism to the left-side valve gear had worked loose, and the valve on that side of the engine was hardly moving at all. The screws were tightened, the valve re-set and all was put back together and made ready for the next run on 10/26. On the Model T Ford, the bracket for one of the top bows was secured to the body by Lou Mandich and Bill Schwoebel and upholstery was fastened back in place where the strike plate alongside the door had been installed. New tie-down straps with ratchet hardware, purchased at Hershey by Bill Schwoebel, were assembled and put in our blue trailer.

On Friday, Tom Marshall “mudded up” behind the branch forks on the Model 735 and prepared the Model K a round-trip run on Saturday 10/18 to London Grove. Bill Rule delivered new piston rings for the Model H-5 engine we are rebuilding, compliments of Dave Reed. Work continues toward completion of this engine for installation in our “Gentleman’s Speedy Roadster.”

On Saturday, Tom had a successful trip to London Grove and back. The year-end run on Sunday (10/19) had seven Stanleys and the ’37 Packard taking part in the 58-mile run to Chesapeake City and back. Four non-condensers, the Models 71, 87, 76, and 607 plus three condensers, the Models 725, 735, and 740 made the trip, and all returned home safely except the 87, which had boiler trouble at Elkton on the return. About 40 FAHP members enjoyed the cool, crisp day, their experiences with Ed Lee’s collection of early operating bicycles (at least half the group had rides), and lunch at Baker’s Restaurant on the return.