

Barber Shops!

The barber's trade has a long history; razors have been found among relics of the Bronze Age (circa 3500 BC) in Egypt. In ancient Egyptian culture, barbers were highly respected individuals. Priests and men of medicine are the earliest recorded examples of barbers. In early tribes, a barber was one of the most important members, as it was believed that certain evil spirits were able to enter a person's body through their hair, and that cutting it was a way to drive them out. Due to their spiritual and religious beliefs, barbers even performed religious ceremonies, such as marriages and baptizing children. During these ceremonies, they would leave the person/people's hair hanging down until after dancing; they would then cut the hair and tie it back tightly so that no evil spirits could enter and no good spirits could escape.

Men in Ancient Greece would have their beards, hair, and fingernails trimmed and styled in an agora, which also served as a social gathering for debates and gossip.

Barbering was introduced to Rome by the Greek colonies in Sicily in 296 B.C., and barber shops quickly became very popular centers for daily news and gossip. A morning visit to the tonsor became a part of the daily routine, as important as the visit to the public baths, and a young man's first shave (tonsura) was considered an essential part of his coming of age ceremony.

A few Roman tonsores became wealthy and influential, running shops that were favorite public locations of high society; however, most were simple tradesmen, who owned small storefronts or worked in the streets for low prices.

Starting from the Middle Ages, barbers often served as surgeons and dentists. In addition to



haircutting, hairdressing, and shaving, barbers performed surgery, bloodletting and leeching, fire cupping, enemas, and the extraction of teeth; earning them the name "barber surgeons". The barber pole, featuring red and white spiraling stripes, indicated the two crafts (surgery in red and barbering in white). Barbers received higher pay than surgeons until surgeons entered British war ships during naval wars. Some of the duties of the barber included neck manipulation, cleansing of ears and scalp, draining of boils, fistula and lancing of cysts with wicks.

1893, A. B. Moler of Chicago, established a school for barbers. This was the first institution of its kind in the world, and its success was apparent from its very start. It stood for higher education in the ranks, and the parent school was rapidly followed by branches in nearly every principal city of the United States. In the beginning, simply the practical work of shaving, hair-cutting, facial treatments, etc., was taught, as neither the public nor the profession were ready to accept scientific treatments of hair, skin and scalp. Not until about 1920 was much effort made to professionalize the work.

In the 1960s-1980s, things declined somewhat due to longer hair styles, and the 'neat, clean-cut' look seemed a thing of the past.

Despite the economic recession in 2008, the barber shop industry has seen continued positive growth. In the United States, the market is mainly concentrated in Texas, with a market size in excess of \$100 million.

[<http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barber>]

