

Taking a trip to the barber shop remembered

Before the days of radio and television, a trip to the barber shop was a major social event where the daily news was exchanged. Male patrons each had their own shaving cup with their name on it that was kept on the barber's shelf. The barber shops also offered shaving equipment for sale and often carried tobacco products.

Branford had several longtime barbers in the center of town. Fred O'Tell ran a Tonsorial Parlor in 1895 and advertised "Give me a trial and I will try to please." Tonsorial was a term used for a barber, often humorously. Fred O'Tell moved his shop to 5 South Main St. and was a barber in town for 40 years until his death in 1930. Other tonsorial artists were Charles and Andrew Coyle with a shop in the Post Office Block that was taken over by Michael



PICTURES
OF THE PAST

Jane P. Bouley

Desiderio in 1930.

The Desiderio family (brothers Michael and Sabatino) had two uptown barber shops later called The Branford Barber and Model Barber Shop. In 1934 Michael Desiderio advertised haircuts for men, women and children for 25 cents, shaves 15 cents, shampoos 25 cents and massages 25 cents. The family operated shops in Branford for more than 50 years.

Other longtime barbers were John F. Reilly (1890-1956), the Palumbo family at 1241 Main St. (1912-1970) and Luigi Sansone at 98 Meadow St. (1904-1968). The Weted barber shop at 596 Main St. was started by Sied Weted in 1902 and is still operated by the family today.



Photo courtesy Branford Historical Society

An unknown Branford barber. Note the shaving cups on the wall.