

Barbershops have changed so much that the old time Saturday afternoon treat is more like the grooming room for a big wedding, or the hair curling parlor for a dog show. In the various outposts across the Shortgrass Country, a few of the old barbers still do bowl-and-straight slash cutting, but in the main part, sophisticated hair stylists are the fashion.

I depend on my sons to find my barbers. Anyone one of them starts bragging on a scissor artist in the south part of Angelo, I start watching for a bargain place on the north side. These young smooth cheeks will spend more coin in a chair than a night on the town once cost in San Antone or Ft. Worth. I have to go in every three moths for a trim. I like to stay near and sharp looking, but I also like something to rattle in my pockets besides the keys to the pickup and a good luck piece.

Regardless of where I have my hair cut, Child Who Sits in the Sun isn't pleased. Indians take hair so much more serious than we white eyes do. You can't trust even a young squaw to run her fingers through you locks. History blames us for teaching the tribes to scalp their enemies. I've given up arguing the point. One thing that's settled; if the pioneers did teach the Indians to lift hair, the palefaces were sure good hands at picking their students.

When lady barbers became so common, I had a terrible time allowing one to work on me. I could stand everything until they'd start to shave around my side burns. The only reason I have any hair to cut is from keeping an eye in such things as knives and women. Go ahead and sneer at my cowardice, but remember that the oldest single zoo keeper at the crocodile gardens in Florida doesn't credit his longevity to not smoking tobacco. He attributes his long life to letting veterinarians do the dental work at the zoo. To be clearer the reason the good Lord put such a short tail on a grizzly bear was to keep some darn fool from getting a handhold. White or red, women haven't any business owning a straight razor unless the blades are made of rubber.

I am becoming more accustomed to the changes. Until yesterday, I thought I had completely accepted the new era. Just as the lady put the apron (I was in a shop in San Angelo), two of her girl friends popped in the door, chattering and gyrating their arms like crazy quail act when you shoot part of the covey with a .22 rifle.

One named Vickie was going to be married and one named Pat was evidently working out for a gum chewing contest to be held after the wedding. The important thing to me was that in all this excitement, the sister of the gum chewer was the same person that was combing my hair up into a peak and cutting into that peak like those barber scissors were in automatic pilot, which I assure you they most certainly were not.

Finally, I got to shaking so bad that the trembling became noticeable. After the bride and the bridesmaid has left, I asked that mother sheep shearer not to sweep under the chair as I was going to need a sample to use in ordering a wig. She did get the edges straightened out, however, it's going to be at least three months before my side view doesn't look like that pop singer who wears his hair in a rooster's crown.

We used to have a lot of fun down at the barber shop at the old hotel. Shoe shine boys slipped cold beer in from the coffee shop and hombres that had done plenty of hard work for their pay enjoyed the scene.

Man's sanctuaries are passing by the side. It will be no surprise to find doilies on the chair arms the next time I go to town.

