

Are Today's Hair Styles Really New?

By TERESA SIMMONS
Post Managing Editor

Take a good look at the gentlemen in the pictures above. The haircuts are remarkably similar. Yet the young Gerson Stroud's haircut was trimmed in 1948 while 28-year-old John Carothers' hair was cut in 1985.

This 'new' style is the way many black young men have chosen to wear their hair. But the question is "Is this hair style really 'new'?"

Men like Nathaniel Edward (who has been professionally barbering since 1958 but who has been cutting hair since he was nine years old) know better. This new hair style called the "Fade" was also popularly known as the "High English or Low English" haircut back in the '40's.

"The High English" was cut closer to the higher crown of the head," Edward explained, "while the 'Low English' was cut low near the ears. Today we have more of the 'High English' style."

I first noticed the resemblance between the 'new' 'Fade' of 1984 and the 1948 "High English" style while looking at an oldie but goodie movie. And I'm talking old.

I noticed the blacks in the movie had the same haircuts that I had seen my teenage neighbors sporting.

"Well," I thought, "this new haircut isn't 'new' after all." When I discussed this with Edward, owner of Edward's Barber Shop on Beatties Ford Rd. and Gerson Stroud, a retired Charlotte Mecklenburg educator my assumptions were confirmed.

Stroud was principal of West Cabarrus Senior High School from 1969 until 1974. If you remember this was the era of the large afros or bushes. Before the bush the Yul Brenner (bald heads) and the Julius Caesar (haircut close and shaped around the head front and back) were the two dominate hair styles for black men.

"But around 1967 the bush became prominent and in 1970 it was in full swing," Stroud remembers.

Unlike many authority figures who scarfed at the long length (remember the hippies and yuppies) Stroud sported the Afro. "I liked the bushes and I had to be in line with my students."

Another style that has come back from the grave is the old process, Edwards commented. Today its called the curl. There is even one artist in Charlotte who specializes in finger waving men's hair.

"Styles for black men's hair usually come and go, and then come in again," Edward noted. "The trend of hair is just like clothing. Those double breasted suits were worn when I was in junior high school. Those small bottomed pants were being worn when I was 13 years old. The trends are just repeating themselves."

When the styles grew longer it was time for some barber shops' eulogy. According to "The Long and Short of It: Five Thousand Years of Fun and Fury over Hair," "Barbers gloomily predicted long hair would doom the barber shop ... By one estimate, shops across America were being forced to close at the rate of 100 a month."

Food Lion, Inc. Announces Signing Of New Leases

Food Lion, Inc. today announced the signing of leases for several new Food Lion stores to be located in the following locations:

•A new 21,000 square foot store to be built on N.C. Highway 24-27, to be located in a shopping center to be known as Stanley Plaza, in Locust, North Carolina.

•A new 25,000 square foot store to be built on Peach Orchard Road, to be located in a shopping center known as Orchard Square, in Augusta, Georgia.

•A new 25,000 square foot store to be located on Victory Drive and Suddaway Road, to be located in a shopping center known as Victory Square, in Savannah, Georgia.

Food Lion presently operates 280 stores in North and South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee, and Maryland with new stores under construction in Dunn, Charlotte, Havelock, Hendersonville, Elkin, Brevard, Burlington, and Lumberton, North Carolina; Aiken, Charleston, Little River, Socastee, and Barnwell, South Carolina; Harrisonburg, Richmond, Roanoke, and Farmville, Virginia; Rogersville, Bristol, and Kingsport, Tennessee.



Gerson Stroud
... '48 "High English"



John Carothers
... '85 "Fade"

But others who modernized their methods and surroundings found business and income booming," the book continues. "Instead of the traditional quick trim, they offered consultation in the styling and care of the new long coiffure and turned their establishments into masculine beauty shops."

"Barber shops do have to change with the times," Edward continued.

In the 1960's and '70's long hair was given much attention. Beatlemania, the Broadway smash "Hair" and even television commercials were presenting a hairier USA. The fury over hair reached such boiling proportions that police would sometimes arrest and shave long haired men; billboards such as this one: "Students of Norwalk Beauty America ... Get a haircut" were erected because of controversy, according to Bill Severn author of "The Long and Short of It..."

In contrast Ancient Greek men wore their hair so long they had to braid it into knots on the crowns of their heads and hold it in place with hairpins. "With that tradition, it seemed nothing less than a denial of the hairy virility of the heroic past when young men began to shave their beards and cut their hair short," wrote Severn.

At the start of the 19th century the "young Americans with short 'frightened owl' haircuts enraged the long hairs of the older generation."

When the men who had started the 19th century by cutting their hair short became the older generation, younger men began to let their hair grow long," Severn continued. Sounds familiar doesn't it?



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