Thaddeus S. Henry
Lancaster’s Premiere Tonsorial Artist

Thaddeus S. Henry (1815–1897)
“Henry was born in Philadelphia and moved to Lancaster when a lad of ten years. He learned his trade with Benjamin Simons, and afterwards entered the tonsorial business in his own interests. In the pursuit of this vocation he was eminently successful...”
By 1873 his barber shop occupied the first floor of a three-story brick building at 15 East King Street, highlighted on the map as “Coal Offices” and present site of the Fulton Bank.
Map detail from Sanborn Insurance Map of Lancaster City, 1873.

The sign of the barber...
In Henry’s day, barbers employed elaborate striped poles to identify their businesses. The photo shows another Lancaster barber shop at this time on nearby West King Street, between Prince and Market Street.
Photo courtesy, LancasterHistory.org, Lancaster, PA

‘His services were sought by the most prominent men of the day, among them President Buchanan and Hon. Thaddeus Stevens.’

Additional research by Kathleen Anderson of Lancaster, PA, Great-great granddaughter of Thaddeus S. Henry, Sr. and a member, African American Historical Society of South Central PA. Provided here as a supplement to information included on an historical marker installed at 15 East King Street, Lancaster, PA, May 2018.

Research by Kathleen Anderson of Lancaster, PA, Great-great granddaughter of Thaddeus Henry, Sr. & Member, African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania—May 2018
Thaddeus S. Henry, Jr., (1847-1924), date of photograph unknown. Son of the notable barber and the image employed by Artist Michael Able to draw the sketch portrait of the Mr. Henry, Sr. shown on the historical marker at 15 East King Street, Lancaster, PA.

Collection of Catherine J. Tucker, Marietta, PA, the Great granddaughter of Thaddeus S. Henry, Jr.

Research by Kathleen Anderson of Lancaster, PA, Great-great granddaughter of Thaddeus Henry, Sr. & Member, African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania—May 2018
North Street, Lancaster, PA, photographer unknown, circa 1890. Henry Family’s neighborhood.

From Clyde Brown Collection, courtesy, Kathleen Anderson

Research by Kathleen Anderson of Lancaster, PA, Great-great granddaughter of Thaddeus Henry, Sr. & Member, African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania—May 2018
The life and times of Thaddeus S. Henry, Jr.

Some of the many places he operated his barber shops in the City of Lancaster

Lancaster, PA, 1855

Research by Kathleen Anderson of Lancaster, PA, Great-great granddaughter of Thaddeus Henry, Sr. & Member, African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania—May 2018
Gunsmiths.
Drepperd John, W King c Mulberry
Fordney Jacob, N Prince n Orange
Gibbs Abraham, 22 Prince

Hair Dressers.
Boston Elijah, W King n Market square
Boston Robert, 34½ E King
Cross James, 5 North Queen
Draper William, E King ab Queen
Harris George J., Centre square
Hart John, Miller's row Chestnut
Heckler Charles, Rising Sun Hotel
Henry Thadeus S., S Queen n Centre square
Hoffman Augustus F., 6½ N Duke
Le Bar Joseph, 30 N Queen
Liller Christopher, N Queen ab Chestnut
Martain D., southwest c Centre square
Rusch Mathias, N Queen ab Chestnut
Williams C. B., 34 N Queen
Williams John, 76 N Queen
Williams Samuel, 18 W King
Research by Kathleen Anderson of Lancaster, PA, Great-great-granddaughter of Thaddeus Henry, Sr. & Member, African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania—May 2018
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Mr. Henry operated a shop on the lower level of The Fountain Inn and Hotel, 32 South Queen Street, current location of the building that housed the printing presses of Lancaster Newspapers, beginning in 1980. It is believed this is the location that Mr. Henry was the barber of former President James Buchanan and US Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, probably in the 1860s.

Stevens lived and conducted his law practice from 45-47 South Queen Street, from the mid- to late 1840s until he died in 1868, before this map was published. At the time of this map, the property was owned by Lydia Hamilton Smith (1815-1884), who was Stevens’ property manager and confidant, beginning this role in about 1847.

Research by Kathleen Anderson of Lancaster, PA, Great-great granddaughter of Thaddeus Henry, Sr. & Member, African American Historical Society of South Central Pennsylvania—May 2018
An Old Lancaster Barber—Some Interesting Points in the history of Thaddeus S. Henry

Lancaster Intelligencer
Recovered by Tim Niesen March, 2014—Photography & design, Randolph Harris, Lancaster, PA, April 2014

January 19, 1885

A New Story of Thad Stevens.

It was in this shop that Thad Stevens, the barber, first met Thaddeus, the statesman. It was about the year 1834, ’35 or ’36. Mr. Stevens, who lives in Gettysburg, had a man come over to Lancaster to make an abolition or anti-slavery speech. Thaddeus went to hear him. They wished to keep the same old barbershop, which was in the old one. Thaddeus gave up the idea of continuing business. A number of customers were “waiting their turn” to have the same operations performed. Stevens would not wait for his turn, but said, “Give me a razor—I’ll shave myself!” The razor, cup and brush were furnished and the shave was soon finished. As Stevens laid down the razor and looked at himself in the mirror, Uncle Simon said to him, “Thaddeus, Thaddeus! What are you standing out for? You talk about negro rights, but you don’t live by them.” Mr. Stevens, who supposed these remarks were addressed to himself, glanced at Old Simon as though he would crush him; young Thad meanwhile hurrying up with towel, soap and hairbrush, for the unknown customer. Stevens washed his face and touched his hair and walked out of the shop as majestically as his club foot would admit. As he slammed the door behind him, one of the gentlemen present asked Simon if he knew the customer who had just left. Simon said he had never seen him before, whereupon the gentleman told him, it was Thaddeus Stevens, the great anti-slave and friend of negro rights, and that he had no doubt intended it. The idea was sufficiently interesting to the hearers of Uncle Simon’s innocent words was made known to him as well.

After reaching in Lancaster a few years Stevens soon out to Thaddeus, and returned to Philadelphia, where there were only three barber shops in Lancaster, one of which was James C. Smith, another by Samuel Cohen, another by Israel Williams, colored, and the third by himself. He then not only came to barber but an unlicensed barber, of genteel address, secured a customer, and many of two of the other barbers. He had an eye and became indispensable as a waiter when banks were given or weddings took place in the new facilities. Even at the late date, Thad works with remarkable pride in the distinguished barbershop, on Centre Square where his competitors can look down on. As the old-time杠—Gov. George B. Porter, James Buchanan, James Hopkins, John R. Mongomery, Edw. Parker, Burt Coleman, Wager Religart, Judge Walter Franklin, Dr. F. A. Mullenberg, Capt. John K. Finlay, Dr. Humes, Judge Lewis, Thaddeus Stevens, Col. George Mason, Judge Champneys, Judge Haines and others of local note were his customers. He was held writer at the weddings of Mr. Thad, E. Franklin, John F. Love, Col. John W. Forney, Charles Boulter and many other notable people. The barber was an actor, before his marriage, and took leading parts in the plays that were put upon the stages of the old theatre on Chestnut street, he always had Thaddeus supervised his “take-off,” and did many other amateur Thalians of that day.

Thad was a great favorite also of the old Lancaster Funeralists, and whenever they went out on a military journey he was taken along. They were with him when they made their grand tour to Baltimore, Washington and Mount Vernon, and recalls many incidents of that pleasant journey, which took place forty years ago.

An Almanac and a Church Member.

Thad’s life has been a rather checkered one; in his younger days he was rather wild; like many a great deal better than he was. Thaddeus, though he would do as much as the “next man” if he had a mind to; he was a judge of good things and had frequent occasions to sample them at the houses of his wealthy patrons, and once in a while would wish upon his father and given a canter. But all over now. For the past five years he has not been a drop of intoxicating liquor. Thaddeus is a member of the Strawberry street church. On the 12th of February, 1856, he was married to Miss Annie Caudle, the marriage ceremony being performed by Rev. Jeffrey Golden, a noted colored clergyman. He has eight children and a number of grandchildren. He was never in a fight, though he was too clever and too quick to avoid any. Thaddeus was a man of his word and never knew how to make a promise. His wife is as hearty as he is and as gentle as a girl, and they live in peace and comfort. Little has changed about the old “take-off” to the right, except that the last ten years he has given up the barber business. He is pious, has five children, and are members of the church. His wife is as hearty as he is and as gentle as a girl. They have been married fifteen years and are members of the church. His wife is as hearty as he is and as gentle as a girl. They have been married fifteen years and are members of the church. His wife is as hearty as he is and as gentle as a girl. They have been married fifteen years and are members of the church.

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