

...more on the origins

(continued from Page 1) under her new roof. "We sell a lot of them, and I know they're good, but I didn't know the history of them," she said.

At Baker's cafe, we were told that Harry Druck of Marietta knew a lot about shifter history, and might, in fact, be the chef who

built the first one.

Harry, it turned out, was not the creator, but he did take credit for introducing the sandwich to Marietta back in 1949.

"In Marietta, I was the first to make it," Harry said. "Where I learned about it was at the height of the depression in Columbia."

"I first got mine at 'Babs' Leitheiser's" he added. "That was in '29 around the time of the crash. The first one I got was 20c or 25c"

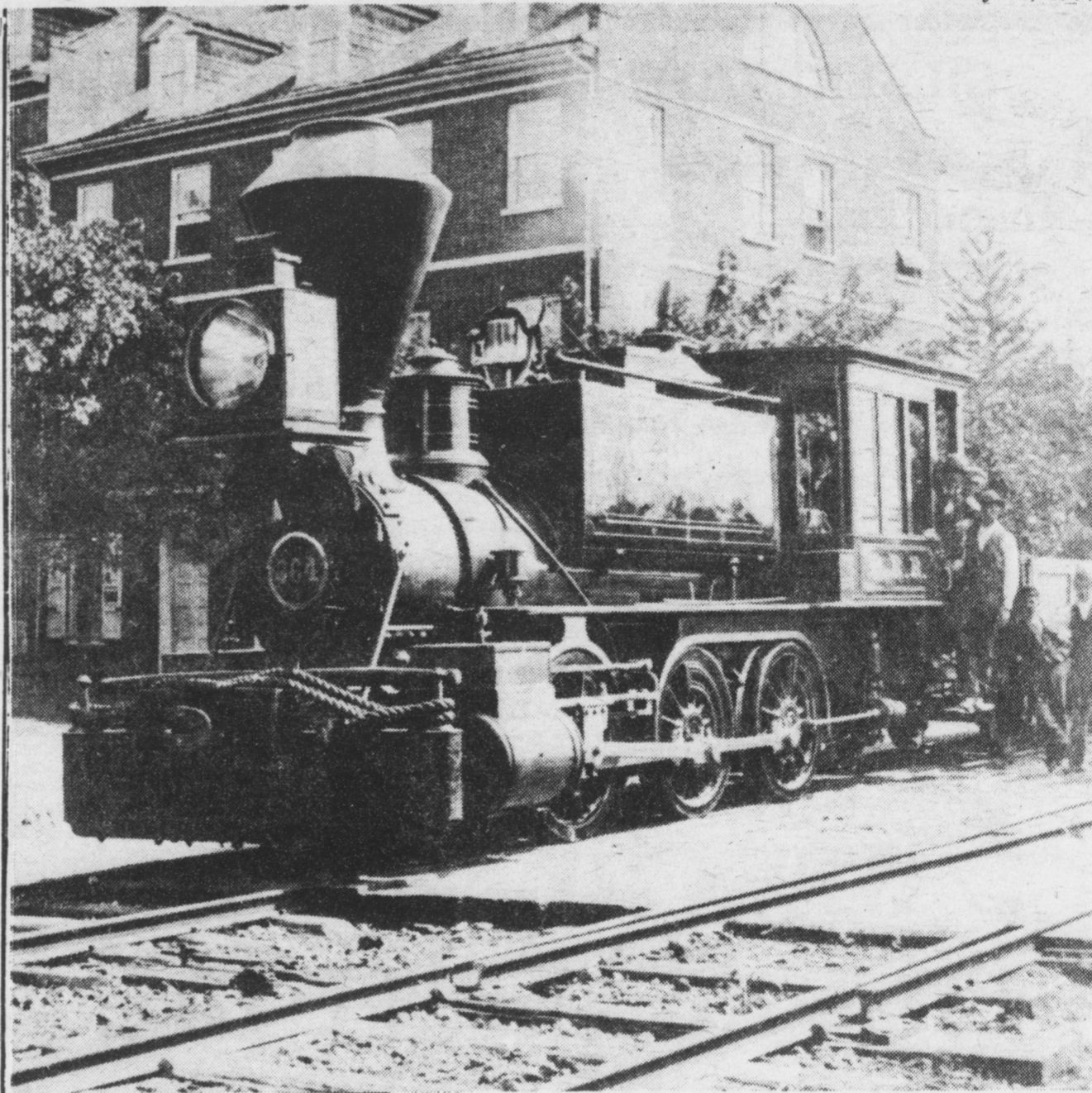
Raymond "Babs" Leitheiser, a Locust Street restaurateur, might be the creator of the sandwich, Harry thought. He put us in touch with Babs' widow, Mary Leitheiser.

No, Mrs. Leitheiser said. Her husband did not invent the shifter. Babs bought his restaurant in '36 or '37. The previous owner, Lee Crouse, was already making the sandwiches at that time. Did Crouse claim credit for inventing the sandwich, or did he learn to make them from Tuffie Olena?

"I heard people talking about it, but I guess I didn't listen very hard," Mary Leitheiser says. "I must have sold thousands of them. Of course, they only cost a dime back then."

George Brenner invented his own shifter at the Sugar Bowl in Millersville. "I thought I had made it up," George says. One day a professor told George that his "original" sandwich was just an ordinary shifter.

"After the I sold it under the name of the shifter," George says.



This 0-6-0 wood-burning PRR switcher was photographed at the foot of Locust and Front Streets in Columbia in the 1870's. Engines like these were called "shifters." The sandwich is named after the engines. (See story.)

photo courtesy of Dick Geesey of Columbia. Our thanks to Joe Balt and Tom King for helping in locating the photo.

The evidence we have gathered to date seems to indicate that Tuffie Olena was probably the man who created and named the shifter. If any of our readers know some facts which have escaped our attention, we would appreciate hearing from you.

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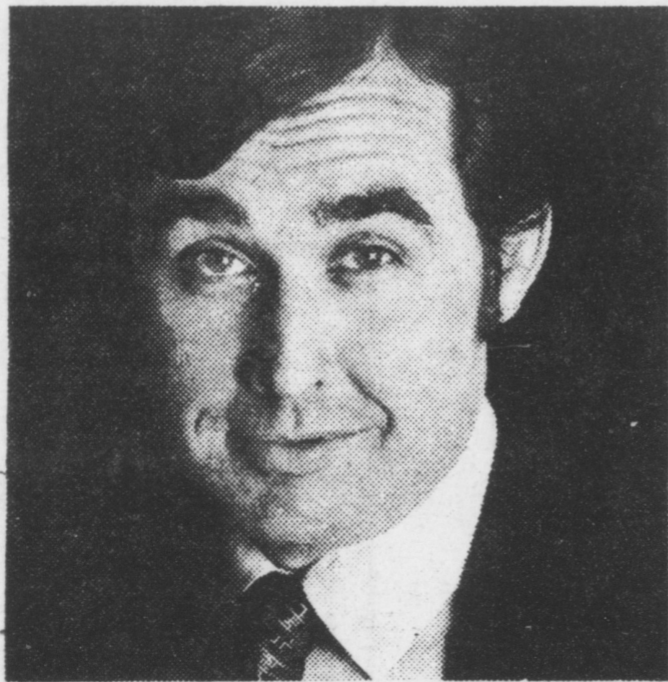
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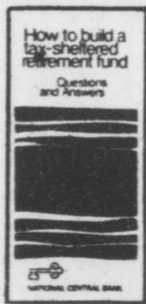


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