

Before the business was acquired by the Sheelens, the store was conducted by the estate of James Baker, formerly of the Baker and Mead firm, the Fanwood store being established as a branch to the original Baker and Mead store in Scotch Plains.

The store was built on the corner of South Avenue and Russell Road (now Sheelen Crossing) in 1893. Charles Richardson of Fanwood was the builder and William D. Johnston of Scotch Plains the mason. Augustus Sheelen was associated with the parent concern for about four years in the triple capacity of clerk, wagon driver and store sweeper, while Charles Sheelen received his education in the grocery business in the Baker and Mead Scotch Plains store and in a Brooklyn store.

The "Sheelen boys," as they were called by some of the old inhabitants, were the sons of the late Fred Sheelen, who lived to be ninety years old and who was one of the pioneers in Fanwood and Scotch Plains. Their homestead was near the Shady Rest Golf Club. Both attended the old Scotch Plains Parish House School.

The Sheelen establishment was a modern country store, with one of the largest assortments of goods of any retail grocery establishment in the Plainfield area. The store was known by many bicyclists and was a favorite "wheelmen's rest." Its location atop Fanwood Hill made it an ideal spot for weary wheelmen to dismount, refresh themselves with ice-cold sodas and sandwiches, and then rest on the grass beneath the trees.

The store also served as the center of attraction for the men of Fanwood as well as for the farmers from the Willow Grove section. In 1896 a blacksmith shop was constructed next to Sheelen Store and was operated by Charles Tryanor. The shop was torn down in 1920 and the timber was used to construct a house on nearby Third Street.

Hand Lumber and Coal Company on South Avenue was an active business and was also involved in building houses in

Fanwood on Stewart Place off Terrill Road. They were served by a railroad siding that crossed South Avenue just west of Martine Avenue. Hand Lumber was owned and operated by the Hand family until the late 1960s.

Another old landmark was the home on the corner of North Avenue, across from the Post Office. It was both the office and home of the local doctor, Dr. Frank Wescott. He was a typical country physician who made his rounds in a horse and buggy through the farming sections of Willow Grove in the south and north to Berkeley Heights. The doctor charged \$1.00 for an office visit and \$1.50 for a home visit. Dr. Wescott also served as president of the local school board and was one of the owners of Fanwood Lumber and Supply Company on South Avenue.

One entrepreneur was John "Honus" Albert, the depot taxi driver. He purchased his business when it was just a livery stable on Westfield Avenue in Scotch Plains, about 1895. In those days a horse and buggy could be hired for \$3 in the afternoon or \$5 for the entire day. Honus developed a brisk business, eventually hiring other drivers. During the summer many city folks migrated to the beautiful country by train, and since they had no access to automobiles here, they required cabs for transportation thus increasing Honus's business.

Honus always wore a smile and was more than willing to do a favor or help to cheer up a fellow with the blues. Honus parted with his last horse around 1915. "It hurt to part with old Doblin," he said, "but I have to keep up with the times." So in keeping with the times, he acquired five taxies and a truck. According to Honus, a single taxi could do the business of six horses. He remained active in the company until the late 1930s.

Most of Fanwood's social life during this era revolved around three churches in Scotch Plains: the Baptist and the All Saints Episcopal, both on Park Avenue, and the Methodist Church on Mountain Avenue.