

Milton Then and Now

More about those barber shops

By Mel Robinson
As a boy I can remember going to three different barber shops in town. One of them was run by Alexander (Sandy) Duff. It was located at 160 Main St. As I remember it the building had sheet metal siding on frame construction. It was painted gray, or off white. As the registered owner of Lot 15 from 1905 to 1938 Sandy had his own shop and the location to the east of it as far as the alleyway beside the Presbyterian Church. Thus for some years The Canadian Champion printing office located next to the alleyway was a tenant of his.

There were many times when a barber shop was not very busy. Charlie Anderson recently reminded me of Sandy's habit of sitting at the front door of his shop, enjoying the fresh air and chatting with passersby. He had close cropped white hair, a pleasant, quizzical look, and he usually wore a wide brimmed black felt hat.

There was no bitter rivalry between barbers. A typical car load of sportsmen taking off for an afternoon at the races would include barbers Billy Anderson and Sandy Duff, along with Jim Kennedy of the Commercial Hotel and Charlie Jarvis. The shop was in good hands when Sandy was not there. For many years his assistant was Ivan Gould, a slender built man with a round face, black thinning hair and a quiet, courteous manner.

Sandy's was a typical barber shop. It had been built before the days of expansive plate glass windows. It was old-fashioned, but tidy. There was the inevitable spittoon, two barber chairs, I believe, and a row of plain chairs along the one wall for waiting customers and the occasional person who dropped in for a chat. There was a great deal of pleasant talk about horse races, other sporting events, and the latest news about townpeople.

A haircut for a boy was a very simple matter in those days. The barber used his clippers around the sides, and up to the top of the head from the back. From that peak to the forehead the hair was cut medium short with the scissors. For some reason I began to notice that by using the clippers on that back slope, the barber was exposing a short of a bump on the heads of many of my friends. By using a hand mirror in front of the larger mirror on a dresser I found that I, too, had one of those "bumps of knowledge" exposed. From that time I

became a little more fussy about what was being done with those clippers. I wanted more hair on that part of my head—a haircut more like that of grownups.

I think that happened when I was going to the shop of Frank Bescoby at 148 Main St. He was a frail man with a difficult breathing problem which I assumed was from asthma. He was a quiet man, but pleasant with youngsters. His shop was more modern looking and large plate glass windows were in the store front. I think it had two barber chairs and I do not remember Mr. Bescoby having an assistant.

It was often peaceful in his shop as he snipped away at my hair. There were usually fewer people in his shop. As he worked, I amused myself looking over the various clippers and scissors set out on the shelf for his work. Then there were the bottles of hair tonics, including one that I believe was called Danderoff. There were shaving mugs and leather razor straps.

Many men shaved at home, of course, so that in most households the shaving mug, a stick of shaving soap, a shaving brush, and a razor strap were in evidence. The strap was occasionally put to other use when a boy failed to live up to his parents' standards of behavior. Reaching for the strap and taking the boy firmly by the arm, the father proceeded to the woodshed and dealt out whatever treatment seemed appropriate to the occasion.

Cutting hair must have been a tiresome job in those days. There were no electric clippers in use then. It was years later that the first cumbersome machines were introduced. Cutting hair by the hour with hand clippers must have left barbers with their hands and arms tired. Customers who came in for shaves were fairly numerous, and must have provided some relief from the tedious clipping of hair.

The hours on Saturday were very long. Shops were usually open for business by 8 a.m. and they were kept open far into the evening. More than one-third of the business for the week was done on that day. The big rush did not start until the afternoon when workers from the brick works and other plants were through with their work for the week. By the time the barbers closed their shops on Saturday night their legs and arms must have been very tired indeed.

Between the Willows

Quite some padre

By Don Byers
Our first meeting with Rev. Stewart East occurred under rather bizarre circumstances.

At the time Rhea and I were on our knees—in a deep trench—laying weeping tiles around the base of our home on Meadowbank Road, Etobicoke. We were working by the fast-falling glow of a dying flashlight. Suddenly, our trench became illuminated by a strong beam from above. "Hi! I'm Stewart East, Islington United Church," a great voice boomed down from what seemed to be the clouds. "Are you Don and Rhea Byers?"

We agreed we were and suggested he had found us in a rather appropriate position.

He stayed and chatted, holding his healthy flashlight, enabling us to see what we were doing.

Later on, inside our partially-finished house, over coffee, we got a good look at our visitor from the night.

He was a tall (6'7"), powerful-looking man with a kind but determined face.

We learned he had come to ask me to take over a young boys' Sunday School Class. Apparently, they were little hellions who, according to Stewart, required a stronger hand on the helm.

Of course, I agreed. It was most difficult to say no to Stewart East. And I taught that class for four years—which is another column, another time.

As the years passed, the padre spent many hours at our home. He would have to stoop to get through the front

door, and always did so with a hearty laugh.

We, in turn, spent many hours in his home, his church, working in a variety of groups. And we remember with pride, standing before this giant of a man, as he lovingly and gently christened each of our children.

Through our friendship, we learned of his early days as a young pastor in the dreadful, despairing dust-bowl on the Prairies of the desperate '30's.

From other sources, we heard of his exploits as a padre in the Canadian Army in World War II, bringing what comfort and strength he could to the beleaguered front-line troops in many battles. He became known to the men as the "Marching Padre". He could outwalk any of them and they loved him for it.

For years after the war Stewart East, in full uniform, proudly wearing his medals, presided over the November 11th services at the cenotaph, before Old City Hall in Toronto.

A special "Book of Remembrance" for his church, became an important project for this always-on-the-go padre. And I was honored when he asked me to prepare a little booklet which would be used during a special service, when the beautiful book was unveiled. One padre's dream was fulfilled.

After retiring from the pulpit, Stewart successfully entered local politics, where, to the best of my knowledge, he continues to serve the people he so sincerely loves.

Some kind of padre. Some kind of man.

Ryckman Sheridan chairman

Audrey Ryckman of Burlington was unanimously re-elected chairman of the Sheridan College Board of Governors at its inaugural meeting Wednesday.

George Farrow of Oakville was also unanimously re-elected vice-

chairman of the board. They are re-elected for one year terms.

Mrs. Ryckman was appointed to the Board of Governors in 1975 by the provincial Council of Regents. A medical technician by profession, she is a graduate of Mc-

Master University. She is actively involved in various community organizations in Burlington.

Mr. Farrow was also appointed to the board in 1975 by the Council of Regents.

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Cosy sleeper with contrast trim on cuffs, neck; front stripe. Full-length zipper. Cotton/nylon. Pink, yellow or blue. S.M.L.

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Heavy-weight stretch textured terry. Dome fastenings. Zellers "Bouncing Baby" brand. Cotton/nylon. White, pink, maize. S.M.L.XL.

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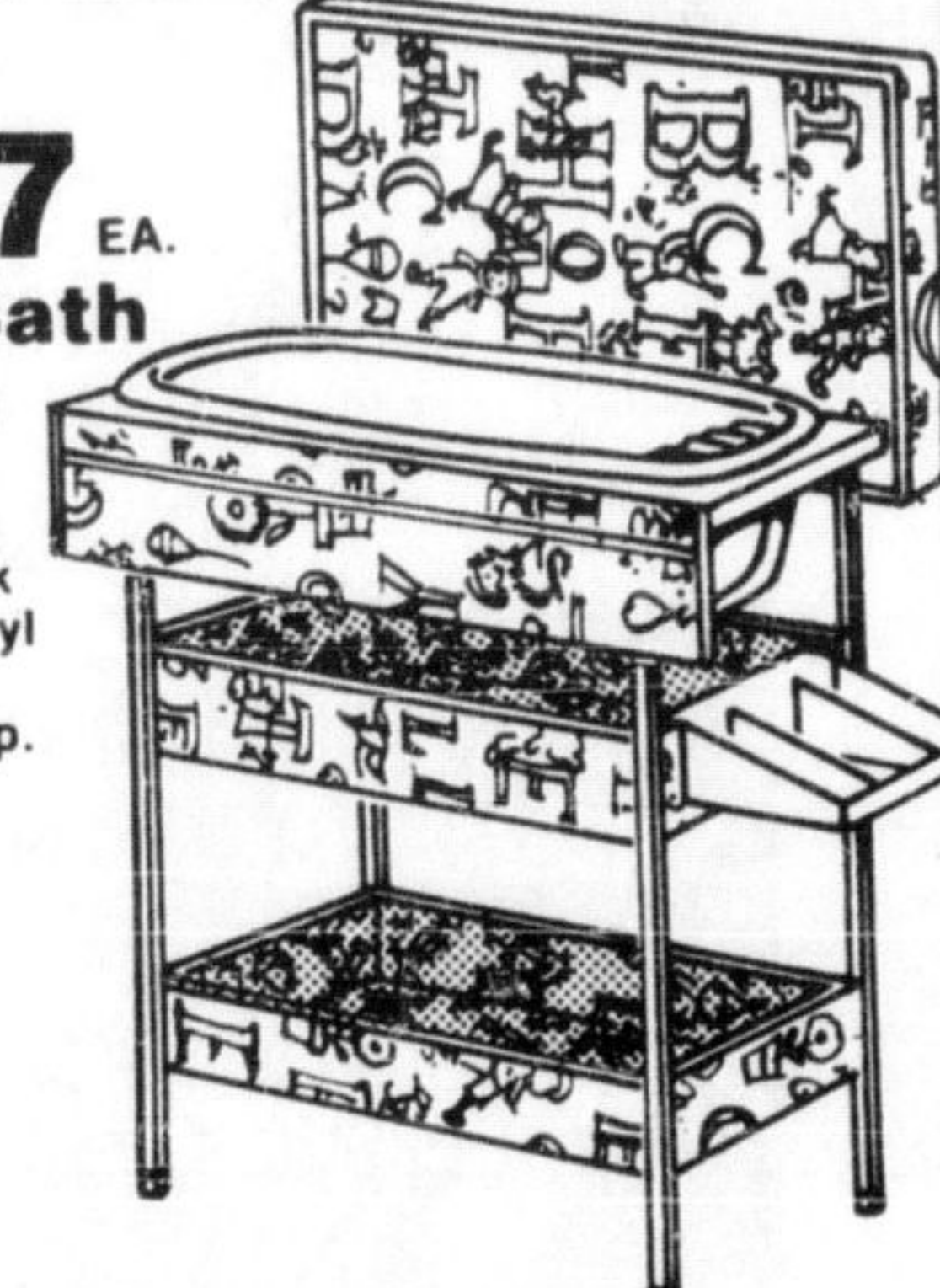
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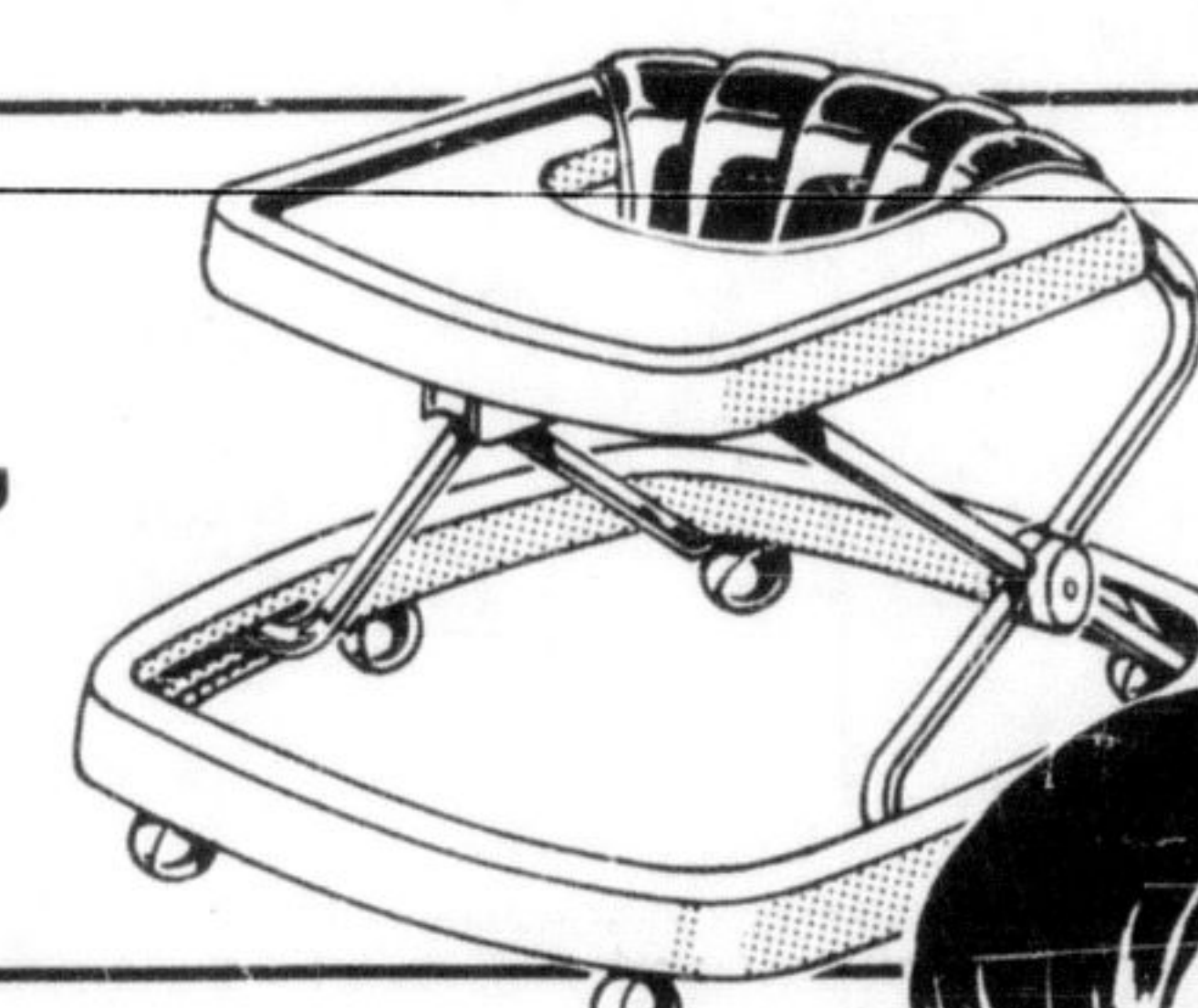
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1.97 EA.
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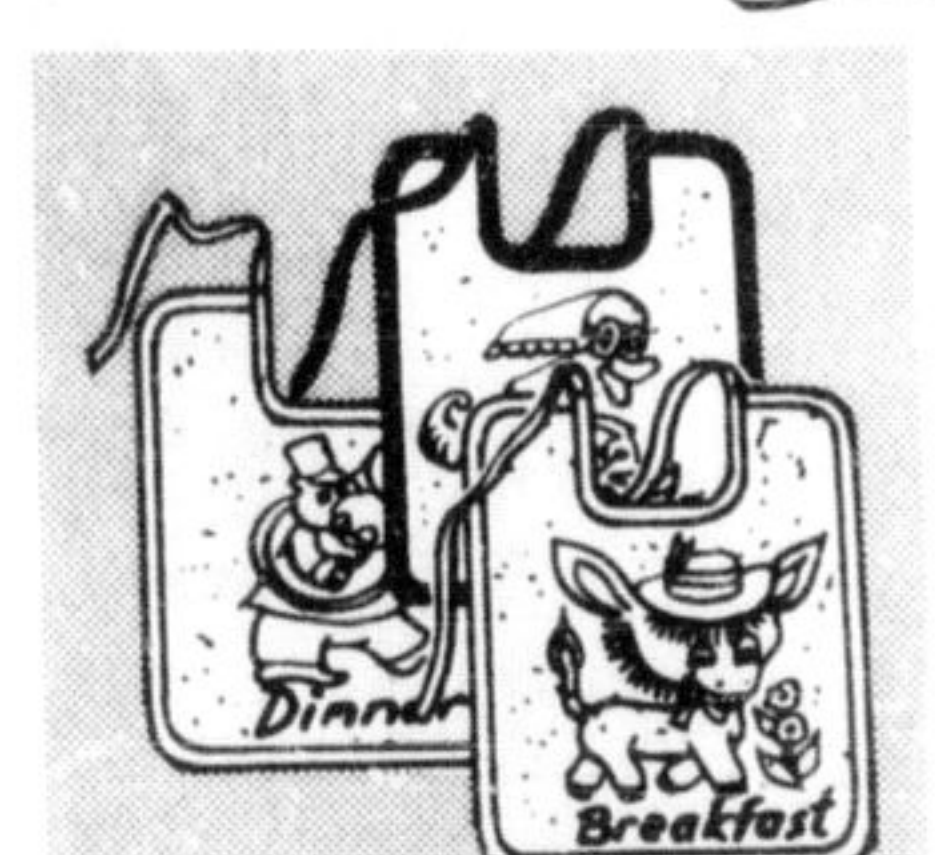
Short sleeves, left shoulder dome-fastening. Polyester/cotton. Assorted solids, prints, and stripes. 12, 18 and 24 months.

3.97 PAIR
Infants' Corduroy Pants

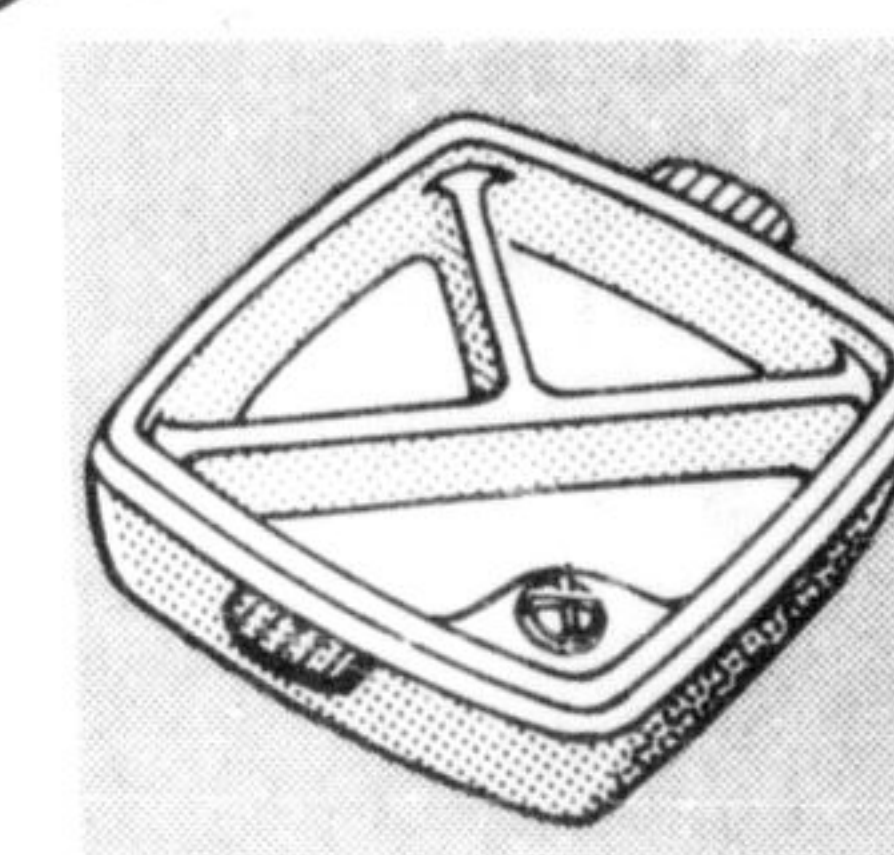
Shoulder straps, dome fastenings on waist and legs. 100% cotton. Red, navy or brown. 12, 18 and 24 months.



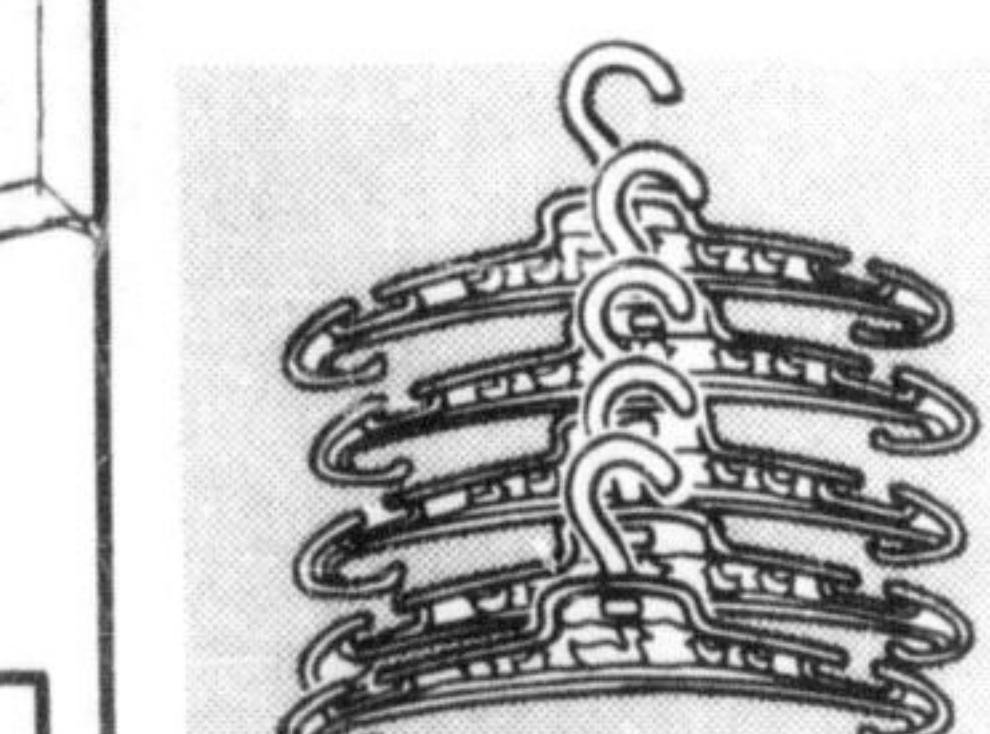
1.47 EA.
Bib Overall
Screen print cotton-terry front, vinyl back. White with trim.



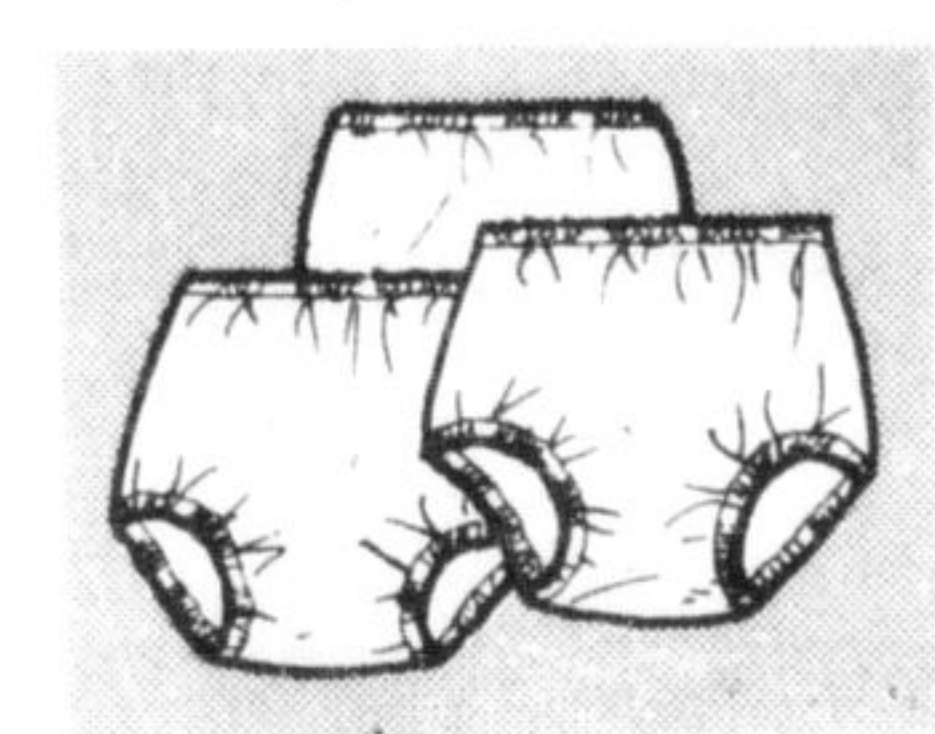
1.47 PACK
3-Pack Bibs
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3/1.47
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