

Beehives to bangs: Hair through the ages

By Hannah Combs
Reader Contributor

Have you found yourself lately standing in front of the mirror, hoping that quarantine will last the three months it takes to flesh out a proper handlebar mustache? Have you gone crazy wrangling squirmy children while giving them lopsided haircuts? Have you taken the midnight plunge into the fraught world of bangs? We've been seeing a lot of creative home haircuts in the past weeks. In an effort to distract you from the agonizing mustache wait or your fidgety children — and to give you one last chance to rethink the bang situation — we're sharing the surprising history behind some decades, it was a no brainer. of the most iconic hairstyles of Hairspray had become ubiquitous after it was inge-

The beehive was one of the niously paired with the aerosol most dramatic and accessible can in 1948, and backcombing, looks of the 1960s and is still though destructive on split favored as a showstopper by ends, was a fast way to achieve the likes of Beyoncé. *Mod-volume.*

ern Beauty Shop magazine in Another look known for 1960 commissioned Chicago dramatic volume was the facial celebrity hairstylist Margaret hair popularized by Ambrose Vinci Heldt to bring life back Burnside, a Union general who to the stale world of hair. Heldt led several battles of the Civil designed the style to fit under a War as commander of the Army particular fez she adored. When of the Potomac. Thanks to developed the towering look was assem-opments in the art of photographed for the magazine, Margaret phy, his other legacy is not soon took the hatpin from her fez to be forgotten: epic sideburns. — shaped like a bee — and Though not the first to sport the adorned the hairdo with it. With distinguished look, Burnside was that, the beehive was born.incredibly proud of his facial

Expected to be a passing hair, and as a prominent figure fad, Heldt was shocked by the in society, the look was named longevity of the hairstyle's after him.

appeal. But for millions of Legend tells that as a young women around the world, she cadet at West Point (and a bit had hit upon an idea that made of a trickster), Burnside first a statement and was actually donned the distinctive look to quite easy to construct. skirt a rule against long beards.

The beehive relies on two By shaving his chin, he was simple techniques: backcomb-able to sidestep the rules, and ing and lots of hairspray. For he never looked back. women who had spent hours As many of us have discovered curling their hair for the intri-ered, there's another common cate hairdos of the previous hairstyle you can't easily go



Left: Actress Brigitte Bardot flaunts a beehive in 1962. Right: Portrait of General Ambrose Burnside by Mathew Brady, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

back on: the bangs. Love them or hate them, they have ridden the waves of hair history for more than a millenium. Though often thought to have originated with ancient Egyptians, thanks to depictions of Cleopatra in film, surviving Egyptian wigs merely show longer strands or braids of hair placed low across the forehead. True bangs, cut in a fringe, were first popularized by a Persian musician and polymath known as Ziryab. He was invited as a cultural diplomat to the Cordoba court of early Spain in 822 CE and started one of the first music schools that was open to both male and female students. He took his role seriously; and, aside from influencing popular hairstyles and fashions, he also promoted hygiene practices like dental care, regular bathing and treating hair with fragrant oils.

Bangs reappear in many forms throughout history and, by the 1920s, they were cemented in our hairstyle vocabulary by fashionable flappers like Louise Brooks.

Whether you want to extravagantly style your facial hair,

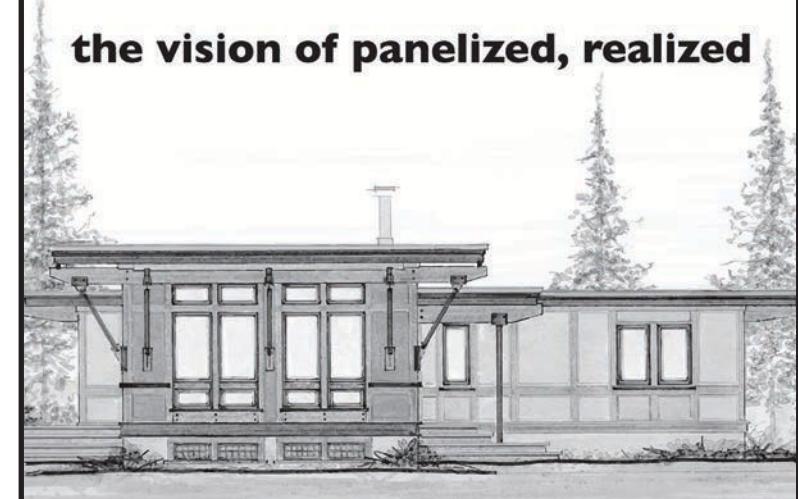
dye your hair with food coloring or bravely take the scissors to your locks, there's no time like the present to experiment.

History provides thousands of do's and don'ts for your entertainment and inspiration. Or maybe it seems wiser to wait until the salon reopens and hand your hair over to the professionals. However it turns out, don't split too many hairs

over it — just have fun.

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