

# CURLS FOR THE GURLS

*Black girl hairstyles and how they came to be*

Column by Arianna Waller

**H**air has been used as a symbol of identity in many African cultures around the globe, rooted in the 1960's when the "Natural Hair Movement" came to be. Supported by activists Marcus Garvey and Angela Davis, this movement was used to try and normalize black hair.

With the rise of social media, including the image-sharing app, Pinterest, many Black girls have taken the opportunity to share their hairstyles. Here are three popular Black girl hairstyles and their origin.

## CORNROWS

During slavery, cornrows helped enslaved Africans have a bit of rebellion while still undergoing this harsh time in history. Not only did it keep their heritage close, but cornrows also became a way for slaves to communicate with each other. Although it originated from a Black man named Benkos Biohó, it is mostly seen on women today.

## BRAIDS

The origin of braids can be traced back 5,000 years in African culture, including a popular braiding style called box braids.

Box braids can take up to eight hours to finish, and usually hurt for the first day. Although many other cultures, including white people, have tried to claim box braids as their own, box braids should only be used with Black hair since it is so thick and can cause damage to thinner hair.

## NATURAL

Natural hair has become a common style for Black women all around the world, including myself. The Black Panther Party popularized the afro along with many celebrities including the group TLC, followed by Destiny's Child and other Black-representing bands.

All three of these hairstyles hold a symbol of freedom and identity to many Black women who choose to have them. Hair means something different to every culture, but ours has a meaningful history of survival, resistance and celebration.

