

Ashlee Reed

The Hot Comb

The hot comb is a common hair tool in the African American culture. Many people rely on perms and other chemical processes to get their hair pressed straight. I can remember when I was a young girl growing up I had heard older people talk about perms but it was something a young black girl rarely got. My mom would always tell me that I wasn't old enough yet. She would always press my hair straight with a hot comb. Typically you didn't get a perm or start using chemicals on your until you got grown. My mom said "I was like 21 or 22 before I started getting perms."

A hot comb is a metal comb that is heated on either a range top or burner to a temperature between 300 and 500 degrees Fahrenheit. When you pull the heated hot comb through the hair, the pressure applied during the combing presses the hair straight. It was common for black men and women to use it. African Americans have very course hair. Unlike many other races, such as Caucasians our hair does not flow freely with body in it. Our hair texture is very kinky; meaning tangled, drawled up, confirmed to your scalp. Black people's hair will stand straight up and stay without any chemical or tool used. It's a very stiff texture and is not easily manageable. Through use of a hot comb not only does it make your hair more manageable but it allows it to be styled in more ways. Here is a before and after picture of hair that has been hot combed.



Normally your hair will stay straight for about a week or two or until it comes in contact with moisture or humidity. If your hair does come in contact with moisture or humidity then it will kink back up and become coarse again. Many people refer to this as being “nappy”.



This is the hot

comb that I own and it has been in my family for many years. It was passed down from my great great grandmother and now it belongs to me. The first actual inventor of the hot comb is unknown but it's been around since the early 1800s. Madame CJ Walker is responsible for the hot comb's widespread use in the black community.

The first thing you want to do when hot combing your hair is make sure that it is well combed out and then apply some type of grease or oil sheen to it. This will allow your hair to have moisture through the heating process. If your hair does not have any moisture in it then it is at risk of damage, possibly breaking the hair off. Next you want to apply the metal end of the comb to the stovetop burner and allow it to sit there and heat for about five minutes. Once the comb has heated you pick it up and blow it, just to cool some of the steam down on it. Slowly run the comb up through your hair.



Think of it as a comb, but you want to avoid it touching your scalp or skin, it's very hot! Don't let the comb stay in one position for too long, keep the motion going. If you leave it in one place too long you risk burning the hair. Continue to slowly run the comb through your hair until it starts to become straight and easier for the comb to be ran through. After you straighten a section of your hair, comb through it. If needed apply the hot comb again. Repeat this process through each section of your hair. You have to make sure while using this comb you remember to softly run it through your hair because with the moisture you put in your hair and the heat, it is easy to get a scalp burn.



Once your hair becomes easy to comb through you it is working. Then you will eventually wind up with straight hair.

The hot comb is still around now days but most people refer to it as a straightening comb and they actually come with little ovens to heat the comb in. The hot comb is was a prominent hair tool in African American culture.

Work Cited

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The Permanent Wave Machine

A permanent wave machine was an electrical machine used to put in curls or soften women's hair. This machine curled (permed) women's hair for a relatively lengthy period of time. The machine was used by black women as well as white women. It gave them longer lasting wavy hair styles.

This permanent wave machine came from McCoy's Beauty Shop. It is local mother daughter shop located in Cave City, Kentucky. The beauty shop opened in 1926 by Maxine Ford and her mother. Only a few years after the shop had opened they were one of the first local beauty shops to have a permanent wave machine. They were well known for having this new form of technology.

The permanent wave machine was very dangerous because it actually sent electrical currents through your hair. Many women got their scalps and hair burned. It didn't stop them from coming back though. The machine was very successful. You would get your hair rolled straight back down the middle and on the right and left side it would be rolled straight down. The rollers used were metal and then metal clips hooked to cords were placed in each roller. Once this was done, the machine was turned on and electrical currents would be sent through the hair.

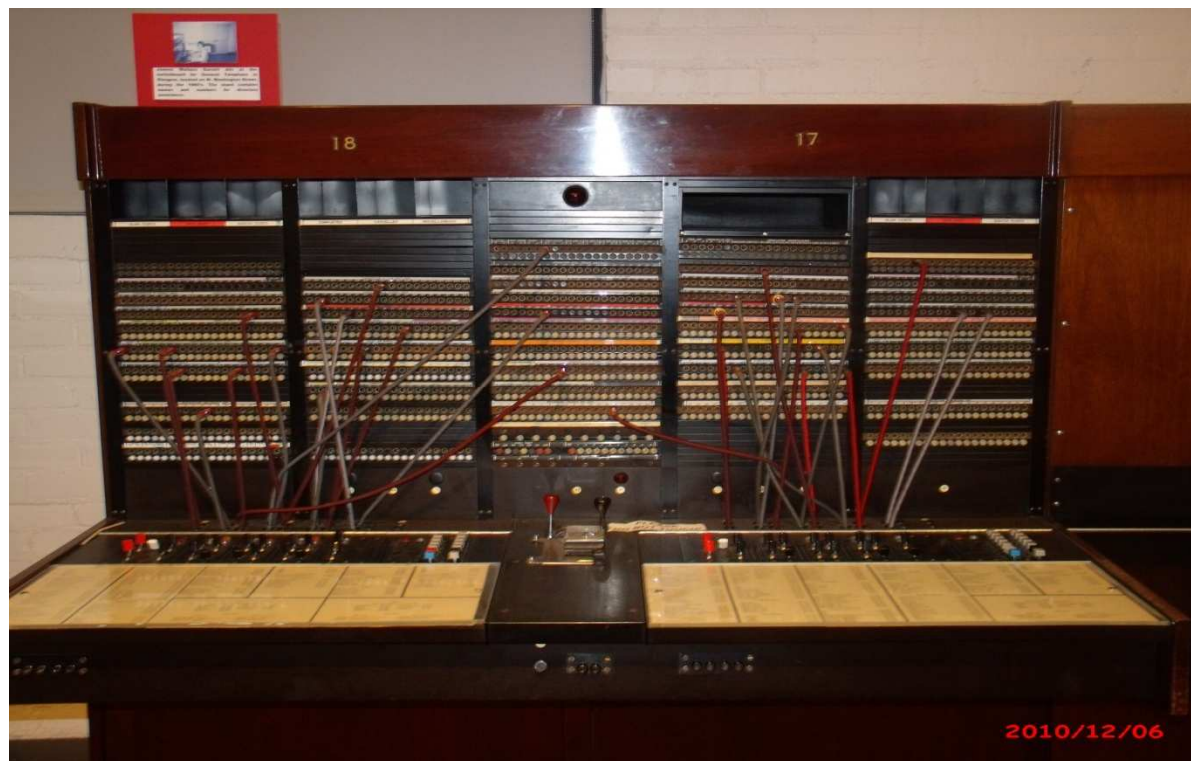
Marjorie Joyner is the woman known for inventing the permanent wave machine. She was the first black graduate of A.B. Molar School. Marjorie was employed by Madame CJ Walker's empire. She took her inspiration for an easier way to straighten African American women's hair. Her idea came from a pot roast. She would put pot roast rods in the hair and then hook them to a machine, which would basically cook them. The permanent wave machine would curl as well as straighten hair. This machine allowed hair to stay in several days rather than one or two. Marjorie became a prominent figure in Madame Walker's Industry. She never profited directly from this machine.

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The Telephone Switch Board

A telephone switchboard, also called a manual exchange was a device used to connect a group of telephones manually to an outside connection. The person that was in charge of the switchboard was known as the operator. Most public manual exchanges disappeared during the last half of the 20th century. The automatic telephone exchange was invented by Almon Strower in 1888, was gradually replaced manual switchboards in central telephone exchanges.

The switchboard is usually designed so that the operator can sit facing it. It has a high back panel which consists of rows of jacks. Each jack is designated and wired as a local extension of the switchboard which serves as an individual subscriber or as an incoming or outgoing trunk line. The jack is also associated with a lamp. On the desk area in front of the operator are columns of keys, lamps, and cords. Each column consists of a front and rear key, a front lamp and rear lamp, followed by a front cord and rear cord, making on circuit together. The front key is the talk key allowing the operator to speak with that cord pair. The rear key is used to physically ring a telephone. The switchboard has a three wire connector for testing, ringing, and voice.



The telephone switchboard in this in this picture is one of the first ones used here in Barren County. The item next to it is a phone book. All of the numbers that the operator needs in order to connect a call to a different person or place are listed in this book. The switchboard and

telephone book came from the hill on West Washington Street in Glasgow, Kentucky. This hill is known as "Telephone Hill". The building on this hill has always provided some type of phone service and still does today. Now inside of the building on the hill there is a Verizon.

When a call is received a jack lamp lights up on the back panel and the operator responds by placing the rear cord into the jack and throwing the front key forward. The operator now talks with the caller and finds out where the caller would like to be connected to. If it's another extension the operator places the front cord in the associated jack and pulls the front key backwards to ring the called party. Once they've been connected the operator leaves both cords up with the keys in normal position so the parties can talk. The supervision lamp lights up to alert the operator when the parties finish their conversation. There's a weight behind the switchboard that helps keep the wires from tangling up.