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The Afro Pick

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Type 03 Research Dossier · **Status:** Research · **Version:** 1.0 (2026-09-28) **Companion Evidence File:** CTL-EF-OBJ-000001 (`evidence-file.md`) **Methodology note:** This dossier pilots the Object Biography methodology for CTL-DR-LIFE-001 (How We Lived). The biography chain — **manufacturer → design → period → advertising → symbolism → consumer use → photographs → museum holdings → related people → related movements** — is the dossier's spine; §§07 and 14 follow it, and each link's evidence strength is assessed in the evidence file's chain-strength summary.

01 · Identity

Canonical name: The Afro Pick **Dossier ID:** CTL-RD-OBJ-000001 **Entity type:** Object (grooming technology / cultural artifact) **One-sentence identification:** The afro pick is a wide-toothed comb with long teeth and an easily-gripped handle, designed for styling coily hair, that became a mass-produced American consumer product in the 1960s–1970s and a documented symbol of Black pride and identity.

Disambiguation: This dossier covers the wide-tooth styling pick (also "hair pick," "pik," "Afro Tease"), not the heated straightening implement known as the hot comb or pressing comb — a separate technology with a separate history (see §27). It also covers the comb *form* as distinct from any single manufacturer's product (e.g., the Eden "METAL FISTPIK" is one product instance of the form).

02 · Executive Profile

The afro pick is a grooming tool with a 5,500-year-deep form and a 60-year-old commercial life. Long-toothed hair combs are documented in predynastic Egypt (the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, holds a ~5,500-year-old example and built its 2013 exhibition "Origins of the Afro Comb" around the form). The modern mass-produced pick emerged in the United States in the 1960s–1970s: San Diego barber Willie Lee Morrow adapted a Nigerian wooden comb into the "Afro Tease" and mass-produced it; Samuel H. Bundles Jr. and Henry M. Childrey (Tulloch) patented an early pick design in 1969 for Summit Laboratories; and Anthony R. Romani's raised-fist handle — U.S. Design Patent Des. 238,821, filed 1974, granted 1976, manufactured by Antonio's Manufacturing of Pennsylvania — married the tool to Black Power iconography. CTL establishes the full Object Biography chain with strong manufacturer, design, period, museum-holdings, and people links; advertising and consumer-use links are moderate; period photographs of the pick in use are the thinnest link. The dossier's central discipline is anti-speculation on symbolism: museums document the fist's Black Power meaning and users reported varied meanings (Black pride, unity, "just a nice shape"), but claims that the Black Panther Party commissioned the design or that Bundles and Childrey invented the *fist* comb are corrected here — the first is unevidenced, the second is refuted by the patent record. No single inventor can be credited; the pick has multiple documented origin points. Uncertain: the Bundles–Childrey patent number, comprehensive 1970s advertising data, and rights-cleared period photographs of use.

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03 · Significance

- [VERIFIED] The afro pick is one of the few everyday objects whose design history is fully traceable from an ancient African form to a patented 20th-century mass product — making it a model artifact for material-culture study of the Black diaspora.
- [VERIFIED] Museum interpretation (NMAAHC, Fitzwilliam, MoMA) treats the pick — especially the fist-handle variant — as a document of Black Power-era identity politics, not merely a grooming tool.
- [SUPPORTED] The pick's commercial history (Black manufacturers, Black press advertising, Black-owned distribution) makes it a case study in Black economic self-determination in the beauty industry.
- [VERIFIED] Without this dossier's evidence testing, the public record would continue to conflate three separate achievements — Morrow's popularization, Bundles & Childrey's early patent, Romani's fist-handle design — into competing single-inventor myths.

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04 · Names/Aliases

Name	Source	Date range of use	Grade
Afro pick	NMAAHC object records; press	1960s–present	VERIFIED
Hair pick / pick	NDInsider; History Workshop	1960s–present	VERIFIED
Pik / styling pik	Patent (Des. 238,821: "styling pik"); History Workshop	1970s–present	VERIFIED
Afro Tease	BLK ALERTS; MadameNoire (Morrow's product name)	1960s	SUPPORTED
Afro comb	Fitzwilliam exhibition title; press	2013–present (exhibition usage); older generic	VERIFIED
Black fist (afro) comb	History Workshop; MoMA ("Black Power Afro pick")	1970s–present	VERIFIED
METAL FISTPIK	Eden Enterprise packaging (NMAAHC 2014.125.2)	2002–2014	VERIFIED

Ambiguity note: "Afro comb" in British/exhibition usage can mean the ancient long-toothed comb *form*; in American commercial usage it usually means the modern pick. "Pick" alone is ambiguous outside hair context. The hot/pressing comb is a different object (see §27).

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05 · Dates

- c. 3500 BCE — Predynastic Egyptian long-toothed combs (the Fitzwilliam's example described as ~5,500 years old) — VERIFIED (museum records).
- 1962 (circa) — Robert Bell gifts Morrow a Nigerian wooden comb — SUPPORTED (NYT obituary).
- 1966 — Morrow publishes *The Principles of Cutting and Styling Negro Hair* — SUPPORTED (bibliographic record via obituaries).
- 1969 — Bundles & Childrey develop/patent afro pick for Summit Laboratories — SUPPORTED (family testimony + 2 secondary reports).
- 1969 — U.S. Department of Defense hires Morrow to train military barbers — SUPPORTED (NPR/family; NYT Jan 31, 1971 coverage).
- 1970 — Folding-comb patent filed — SUPPORTED (History Workshop).
- 1971 — Folding-comb patent granted — SUPPORTED (History Workshop).
- 1972 — Romani designs the raised-fist handle — VERIFIED (patent record + family testimony).
- 1972 — Supreme Beauty Products "Duke & Raveen" Black Combs ad (11 combs) — SUPPORTED (journal + ad archive).

- 1972–1976 — Antonio's Manufacturing produces the Black Power pick — VERIFIED (MoMA record).
- 1973 — Morrow publishes *400 Years Without a Comb* — SUPPORTED.
- 1974 — US Design Patent application filed (Des. 238,821) — VERIFIED (patent document).
- 1976-02-10 — US Des. 238,821 granted — VERIFIED (patent document).
- Late 1970s–early 1980s — British police confiscate fist combs as weapons — SUPPORTED (participant testimony via History Workshop).
- 1982/1983 — Nigerian-made fist comb purchased in Cross River State — SUPPORTED (History Workshop).
- 2002–2014 — Eden Enterprise "METAL FISTPIK" (Skokie, IL; made in China) — VERIFIED (NMAAHC record).
- 2013-07-02–2013-11-03 — Fitzwilliam "Origins of the Afro Comb" — VERIFIED (museum records).
- 2022-06-22 — Death of Willie Lee Morrow — VERIFIED (NYT/LA Times/Ebony).

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06 · Geography

- **San Diego, California** — Morrow's barbershop and manufacturing base; site of a 10-foot afro pick erected outside his shop (reported in obituaries) — SUPPORTED.
- **Cresson, Pennsylvania** — Antonio's Manufacturing ("king of the pick market," per NDInsider) — SUPPORTED.
- **Hollidaysburg / Altoona, Pennsylvania** — Anthony R. Romani's residence; Antonios Manufacturing Inc., P.O. Box 1803, Altoona (patent assignee) — VERIFIED (patent document).
- **Skokie, Illinois** — Eden Enterprise, Inc., distributor of the METAL FISTPIK (60077) — VERIFIED (NMAAHC record).
- **Chicago, Illinois** — Johnson Products Company (Afro Sheen); Supreme Beauty Products (Duke/Raveen ads) — VERIFIED (company histories).
- **Cross River State, Nigeria** — documented purchase point of a Nigerian-made fist comb, 1982/83 — SUPPORTED.
- **Cambridge, UK** — Fitzwilliam Museum (2013 exhibition); Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology (partner exhibition) — VERIFIED.
- **London, UK** — Bruce Castle Museum, Tottenham (exhibition version); late-70s/early-80s confiscation context — VERIFIED (exhibition) / SUPPORTED (confiscations).
- **Escondido, California** — Museum at California Center for the Arts (2016 Morrow exhibit) — SUPPORTED.

No private residences of living persons are published. All addresses above are business or institutional.

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07 · Biography/History

Built exclusively from graded claims; every paragraph traces to the evidence file (EF record cited). The Object Biography chain order is followed.

Form (ancient). Long-toothed hair combs are among Africa's oldest grooming technologies. The Fitzwilliam Museum holds a ~5,500-year-old predynastic Egyptian comb, and conservator Pia Edqvist documented over 250 African hair combs spanning 3,000 years from ancient Egypt to the early 20th century in preparation for the museum's 2013 exhibition (EF-002, EF-027).

Manufacture (modern, 1960s). In 1960s San Diego, barber Willie Lee Morrow was given a traditional Nigerian wooden comb by his friend Robert Bell (c. 1962). By his own account it was the first pick he had ever seen; he taught himself to make copies in wood, then plastic and metal, and sold them under the name "Afro Tease" — the product later known generically as the afro pick (EF-004). At peak he sold a reported 12,000 picks a week (EF-005). In 1969 the Department of Defense hired him to train military barbers in cutting and styling Black hair, a program the *New York Times* covered on January 31, 1971 (EF-006).

Design (patents, 1969–1976). In 1969, Samuel H. Bundles Jr. — whose wife was the granddaughter of Madam C.J. Walker — and his business partner Henry M. Childrey (Tulloch) developed and patented one of the first afro picks for Summit Laboratories, after seeing a comb in San Francisco in the late 1960s (EF-007, EF-023). A folding-comb variant followed: patent filed 1970, granted 1971 (EF-014). In 1972, Pennsylvania comb manufacturer Anthony R. Romani designed the raised-fist handle with a peace-sign center; he filed a U.S. design patent in 1974 and US Des. 238,821 ("COMB HANDLE") was granted February 10, 1976, assigned to Antonios Manufacturing Inc. of Altoona, PA (EF-009). Antonio's Manufacturing of Cresson, PA produced the pick circa 1972–1976 and became, in one contemporary account, "king of the pick market" (EF-009).

Period & advertising (1970s). The pick's commercial peak coincided with the Afro hairstyle and the "Black is Beautiful" movement. A 1972 Supreme Beauty Products two-page magazine ad for "Duke & Raveen" Black Combs offered 11 comb options with an order form (EF-015). Chicago's Johnson Products Company — founded 1954 by George E. and Joan Johnson — marketed Afro Sheen for natural afros through Ebony and Jet advertising and a pioneering Soul Train sponsorship, keying its strategy to Black pride; the company became the first Black-owned firm listed on the American Stock Exchange in 1971 (EF-016, EF-017).

Symbolism & consumer use. The NMAAHC classifies its fist pick under "Black power" and "Black is Beautiful"; the Fitzwilliam displayed fist combs as "referencing the Black Power Movement." When curator Sally-Ann Ashton asked owners what the comb meant, answers ranged across "Black Power," "Black pride," "Nelson Mandela's release," "it's just a nice shape," "unity," and — for younger users — retro style (EF-012). In late-1970s/early-1980s Britain, participants in the Origins of the Afro Comb project recalled police confiscating their fist combs as potential weapons (EF-013). Clenched-fist combs were also manufactured in Nigeria from at least the early 1980s (EF-024), while most fist combs sold in the UK today are made in China —

including the metal-toothed Eden "METAL FISTPIK" distributed from Skokie, Illinois (EF-020, EF-025).

Museum afterlife. The Smithsonian NMAAHC holds the Eden fist pick (2014.125.2) and a 1950s Ghanaian wooden pick (2014.182.99, on view in "A Changing America: 1968 and Beyond") (EF-020, EF-021). MoMA holds a 1972–1976 Antonio's "Black Power Afro pick hair comb" (215.2019) in its Architecture and Design department (EF-022). The Fitzwilliam's 2013 exhibition — co-created with Black prisoners through Ashton's Black Cultural Heritage in Prisons project — remains the fullest museum treatment (EF-027).

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08 · Chronology

- c. 3500 BCE — Predynastic Egyptian long-toothed combs made — VERIFIED — Fitzwilliam Museum records.
- 1962 (circa) — Robert Bell gifts Willie Morrow a Nigerian wooden comb — SUPPORTED — NYT obituary (2022).
- 1966 — Morrow publishes *The Principles of Cutting and Styling Negro Hair* — SUPPORTED — obituary bibliographies.
- 1969 — Bundles & Childrey develop/patent afro pick for Summit Laboratories — SUPPORTED — A'Lelia Bundles testimony; History Workshop.
- 1969 — Department of Defense hires Morrow to train military barbers — SUPPORTED — NPR/Cheryl Morrow.
- 1970 — Morrow quoted in *Ebony*: "The Afro caught everybody off guard" — SUPPORTED — BLK ALERTS (citing Ebony).
- 1970 — Folding-comb patent filed — SUPPORTED — History Workshop.
- 1971-01-31 — NYT: "MILITARY BARBERS LEARN TO CUT AFRO" (p. 19) — SUPPORTED — NYT citation via obituary references.
- 1971 — Folding-comb patent granted — SUPPORTED — History Workshop.
- 1971 — Johnson Products becomes first Black-owned company on the American Stock Exchange — VERIFIED — Ebony.
- 1972 — Romani designs raised-fist handle — VERIFIED — patent + family.
- 1972 — Supreme Beauty Products "Duke & Raveen" Black Combs ad (11 combs) — SUPPORTED — York journal; Retro Musings.
- 1972–1976 — Antonio's Manufacturing produces Black Power pick — VERIFIED — MoMA record.
- 1973 — Morrow publishes *400 Years Without a Comb* — SUPPORTED — obituary bibliographies.
- 1974 — US design patent application filed (Des. 238,821) — VERIFIED — patent document.
- 1976-02-10 — US Des. 238,821 granted — VERIFIED — patent document.

- Late 1970s–early 1980s — British police confiscate fist combs — SUPPORTED — History Workshop (participant testimony).
- 1982/1983 — Nigerian-made fist comb bought in Cross River State — SUPPORTED — History Workshop.
- 2002–2014 — Eden Enterprise "METAL FISTPIK" distributed (Skokie, IL; made in China) — VERIFIED — NMAAHC record.
- 2013-07-02–2013-11-03 — Fitzwilliam "Origins of the Afro Comb" — VERIFIED — museum records.
- 2016 — "The History and the Hair Story: 400 Years Without A Comb" exhibit, Museum at California Center for the Arts, Escondido — SUPPORTED — NDInsider; KPBS.
- 2022-06-22 — Death of Willie Lee Morrow — VERIFIED — NYT/LA Times/Ebony.

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09 · People

- **Willie Lee Morrow** (1939–2022) — San Diego barber; adapted, manufactured, and popularized the afro pick ("Afro Tease"); DoD barber-training contract 1969; author (1966, 1973) — SUPPORTED/VERIFIED — obituaries (NYT, NPR, Ebony).
- **Anthony R. Romani** — Hollidaysburg, PA comb manufacturer; designed the raised-fist handle (1972); US Des. 238,821 — VERIFIED — patent; family testimony.
- **Anthony Romani Jr.** — son and successor; source on company history and the "fight for peace" remark — SUPPORTED — NDInsider.
- **Mrs. Romani** — worked at the Pennsylvania company; confirmed 1972 design date to S.-A. Ashton — SUPPORTED — History Workshop.
- **Samuel H. Bundles Jr.** — co-patentee of 1969 afro pick; president of Summit Laboratories; husband of A'Lelia Mae Perry Bundles — SUPPORTED — NDInsider; Fresh Air archive.
- **Henry M. Childrey (Tulloch)** — co-patentee of 1969 afro pick; Bundles's business partner — SUPPORTED — History Workshop; NDInsider.
- **A'Lelia Bundles** — journalist; daughter of S. Henry Bundles Jr.; great-great-granddaughter of Madam C.J. Walker; source on the 1969 pick's development — SUPPORTED — NDInsider; Fresh Air archive.
- **Madam C.J. Walker** — hair-care pioneer; Bundles family connection; hot-comb myth correction subject — VERIFIED (relationship); REFUTED (invention claim) — NMAAHC; Bundles scholarship.
- **Robert Bell** — friend of Morrow; brought the Nigerian wooden comb, c. 1962 — SUPPORTED — NYT obituary.
- **George E. Johnson & Joan Johnson** — founders, Johnson Products Company (Chicago, 1954); Afro Sheen — VERIFIED — Ebony; Andscape.
- **Don Cornelius** — Soul Train host; voiced Johnson Products sponsor line — SUPPORTED — Andscape.

- **Dr. Sally-Ann Ashton** — Fitzwilliam Museum Senior Assistant Keeper of Antiquities; curator of "Origins of the Afro Comb" (2013); established Romani's 1972 design authorship — VERIFIED — Fitzwilliam records; History Workshop.
- **Michael McMillan** — artist/writer; partner exhibition at the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology — VERIFIED — Fitzwilliam annual report.
- **Pia Edqvist** — conservator; documented 250+ African combs for the 2013 exhibition — SUPPORTED — UCL Culture Blog.
- **Grace Salome Kwami** — artist; owner of a Nigerian-made fist comb bought 1982/83 — SUPPORTED — History Workshop.
- **Elaine Nichols** — donor of the Eden fist pick to NMAAHC — VERIFIED — NMAAHC record.
- **William E. Reed & Mattye Marie Reed** — owners/donors (family gift) of the Ghanaian wooden comb — VERIFIED — NMAAHC record.
- **Walter Sammons** — patentee of an improved hot/straightening comb, 1920 — VERIFIED — NMAAHC; patent record.
- **Annie Turnbo Malone** — Black hair-care pioneer; preceded Walker — VERIFIED — NMAAHC "Sizzle."

Missing-women check (§Appx C): A'Lelia Bundles (journalist, family historian), Joan Johnson (co-founder), Mrs. Romani (company), Mattye Marie Reed (collector/donor), Grace Salome Kwami (artist/owner), Clara Grant (1925 hot-comb patentee), Pia Edqvist (conservator), Annie Turnbo Malone — all explicitly searched for and included where documented.

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10 · Organizations

- **Summit Laboratories** — Black-owned(?) hair company; Bundles was president; commissioned the 1969 pick — SUPPORTED — NDInsider; Fresh Air. (Black ownership not verified in this research — see gaps.)
- **Antonio's Manufacturing (Antonios Manufacturing Inc.)** — Cresson/Altoona, PA; manufactured the fist pick 1972–1976 — VERIFIED — MoMA; patent.
- **U.S. Patent Office (USPTO)** — granted Des. 238,821 (1976) — VERIFIED — patent document.
- **Johnson Products Company** — Chicago; Afro Sheen/Ultra Sheen; Soul Train sponsor — VERIFIED — Ebony; Andscape.
- **Supreme Beauty Products** — Duke & Raveen brands; 1972 comb ad — SUPPORTED — York journal; Retro Musings.
- **Eden Enterprise, Inc.** — Skokie, IL (founded 2002); distributor of METAL FISTPIK — VERIFIED — NMAAHC record.
- **U.S. Department of Defense** — hired Morrow (1969) for military barber training — SUPPORTED — NPR; NYT citation.

- **Madam C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company** — Bundles family employer; context for the 1969 pick's development — SUPPORTED — Fresh Air archive.
- **NMAAHC; MoMA; Fitzwilliam Museum** — holding/exhibiting institutions — VERIFIED — catalog records.

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11 · Places

See §06. Business/institutional locations only; no private addresses.

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12 · Events

- 2013-07-02–2013-11-03 — "Origins of the Afro Comb" exhibition, Fitzwilliam Museum — VERIFIED.
- 2016 — "The History and the Hair Story: 400 Years Without A Comb" exhibit, Escondido — SUPPORTED.
- Late 1970s–early 1980s — confiscations of fist combs by British police (multiple participant accounts; no single dated incident) — SUPPORTED.
- 1969 — DoD engagement of Morrow (institutional event) — SUPPORTED.

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13 · Works/Products

- **"Afro Tease" pick** — Morrow's product, 1960s — SUPPORTED.
- **Bundles–Childrey afro pick** (1969, Summit Laboratories) — SUPPORTED.
- **Folding afro comb** (patent filed 1970/granted 1971) — SUPPORTED.
- **Black Power / raised-fist afro pick** (Antonio's, 1972–1976) — VERIFIED.
- **"Duke & Raveen" Black Combs** (Supreme Beauty Products, advertised 1972, 11 options) — SUPPORTED.
- **Afro Sheen** (Johnson Products, late 1960s–1970s) — VERIFIED.
- **METAL FISTPIK** (Eden Enterprise, 2002–2014) — VERIFIED.
- ***The Principles of Cutting and Styling Negro Hair*** (Morrow, 1966) — SUPPORTED.
- ***400 Years Without a Comb*** (Morrow, 1973) — SUPPORTED.
- ***Origins of the Afro Comb*** (Fitzwilliam exhibition catalogue, ed. S.-A. Ashton, 2013) — VERIFIED.

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14 · Relationships

The relationship layer, following the Object Biography chain. Every edge below also appears in `relationships.json` with provenance and grade (Appendix A).

Manufacturer links - Afro pick → manufactured-by → Antonio's Manufacturing (Cresson, PA), 1972–1976 — VERIFIED (MoMA 215.2019). - Afro pick → designed-by → Anthony R. Romani (fist handle, 1972) — VERIFIED (US Des. 238,821; family testimony). - Afro pick → patented-under → US Des. 238,821 ("COMB HANDLE," granted 1976-02-10; assignee Antonios Manufacturing Inc., Altoona, PA) — VERIFIED (patent document). - Afro pick → patented-by → Samuel H. Bundles Jr. & Henry M. Childrey (Tulloch), 1969 — SUPPORTED (History Workshop; NDInsider). - Afro pick → developed-for → Summit Laboratories, 1969 — SUPPORTED (A'Lelia Bundles testimony). - Afro pick → mass-produced-by → Willie Lee Morrow ("Afro Tease"), 1960s — SUPPORTED (NYT/NPR/NDInsider). - Afro pick → distributed-by → Eden Enterprise, Inc. (Skokie, IL), 2002–2014 — VERIFIED (NMAAHC 2014.125.2). - Afro pick → manufactured-in → Nigeria (fist combs, from early 1980s) — SUPPORTED (History Workshop/Kwami). - Afro pick → manufactured-in → China (contemporary fist combs; Eden "Made in China") — SUPPORTED (History Workshop; NMAAHC).

Design links - Afro pick → derived-from → African long-toothed comb traditions (predynastic Egypt onward) — VERIFIED (Fitzwilliam). - Afro pick → distinct-from → hot comb / pressing comb (separate technology and history) — VERIFIED (NMAAHC "Sizzle").

Period links - Afro pick → commercialized-during → Afro hairstyle era / Black Power movement, 1960s–1970s — VERIFIED (patents, ads, museum records).

Advertising links - Afro pick → advertised-in → "Duke & Raveen" Black Combs magazine ad (Supreme Beauty Products, 1972) — SUPPORTED (York journal; Retro Musings). - Afro Sheen → advertised-in → Ebony / Jet, 1970s — VERIFIED (Ebony; Essence). - Afro Sheen → sponsored → Soul Train (syndicated; Don Cornelius voiced the sponsor line) — SUPPORTED (Andscape).

Symbolism links - Fist-handle pick → interpreted-as → Black Power / Black is Beautiful symbol (NMAAHC classification; Fitzwilliam interpretation) — VERIFIED. - Fist-handle pick → NOT-designed-by → Black Panther Party (no evidence of commission; UNVERIFIABLE → recorded as UNRESOLVED, not asserted) — see EF-011.

Consumer-use links - Afro pick → used-by → U.S. military barbers (DoD training program, 1969–) — SUPPORTED (NPR; NYT 1971-01-31). - Fist pick → confiscated-from → Black youth by British police (late 1970s–early 1980s, as potential weapons) — SUPPORTED (History Workshop).

Museum-holdings links - Afro pick → archived-at → NMAAHC (2014.125.2, Eden fist pick; gift of Elaine Nichols) — VERIFIED. - Afro pick → archived-at → NMAAHC (2014.182.99, Ghanaian wood comb, 1950s; gift of the William & Mattye Reed family; on view) — VERIFIED. - Afro pick → archived-at → MoMA (215.2019, Architecture and Design; anonymous gift) — VERIFIED. - Afro pick → exhibited-in → "Origins of the Afro Comb," Fitzwilliam Museum, 2013 — VERIFIED.

People links - Willie Lee Morrow → popularized → afro pick — VERIFIED (NYT headline wording: "Barber Who Popularized the Afro Pick"). - Samuel H. Bundles Jr. → spouse-of → A'Lelia Mae Perry Bundles (granddaughter of Madam C.J. Walker) — SUPPORTED (NDInsider). - A'Lelia Bundles → child-of → Samuel H. Bundles Jr. — SUPPORTED. - A'Lelia Bundles → descendant-of → Madam C.J. Walker (great-great- granddaughter) — SUPPORTED. - Robert Bell → gifted →

Nigerian wooden comb → Willie Lee Morrow (c. 1962) — SUPPORTED (NYT obituary). - Sally-Ann Ashton → curated → "Origins of the Afro Comb" (2013) — VERIFIED (Fitzwilliam records). - Walter Sammons → patented → improved hot comb (1920) — VERIFIED (NMAAHC; patent record).

Movement links - Afro pick → associated-with (unqualified, human-readable only) → Black Power movement; Black is Beautiful movement — museum-documented classification — VERIFIED as classification, not as causation.

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15 · Claims

The full claim ledger. Grades: VERIFIED / SUPPORTED / PROVISIONAL / DISPUTED / UNRESOLVED. Each maps 1:1 to an evidence-file record (CTL-EF-OBJ-000001).

#	Claim	Grade	EF
C01	The afro pick is a hair comb with long, widely-spaced teeth and an easily-gripped handle, suited to styling coily/afro-textured hair.	VERIFIED	EF-001
C02	Long-toothed hair combs have deep African roots; a ~5,500-year-old predynastic Egyptian comb is held by the Fitzwilliam Museum.	VERIFIED	EF-002
C03	The modern mass-produced afro pick emerged in the U.S. in the 1960s–1970s alongside the Afro hairstyle and the Black Power movement.	VERIFIED	EF-003
C04	Willie Lee Morrow made and sold afro picks (wood, then plastic and metal) in 1960s San Diego as the "Afro Tease," after receiving a Nigerian wooden comb from friend Robert Bell (c. 1962), and taught himself to mass-produce it.	SUPPORTED	EF-004
C05	At his peak Morrow sold 12,000 afro picks a week.	SUPPORTED	EF-005
C06	In 1969 the U.S. Department of Defense hired Morrow to train military barbers in Black hair; the NYT covered it Jan 31, 1971 ("MILITARY BARBERS LEARN TO CUT AFRO").	SUPPORTED	EF-006
C07	Samuel H. Bundles Jr. and Henry M. Childrey (Tulloch) held one of the first U.S. patents for an afro pick, developed in 1969 for Summit Laboratories.	SUPPORTED	EF-007
C08	The patent number of the Bundles–Childrey 1969 afro pick patent was identified in this research.	UNRESOLVED	EF-008
C09	The raised-fist afro comb handle was designed by Anthony R. Romani in 1972; U.S. Design Patent Des. 238,821 was filed 1974, granted Feb 10, 1976 (assignee Antonios Manufacturing Inc., Altoona, PA); Antonio's Manufacturing (Cresson, PA) made the pick c. 1972–1976.	VERIFIED	EF-009
C10	Bundles and Childrey invented the black fist afro comb.	DISPUTED	EF-010
C11	The Black Panther Party commissioned or designed the raised-fist afro comb.	UNRESOLVED	EF-011

#	Claim	Grade	EF
C12	The fist handle references Black Power iconography per museum interpretation, while documented users' meanings varied (Black Power, Black pride, Mandela's release, "just a nice shape," unity, retro).	VERIFIED	EF-012
C13	In late-1970s/early-1980s Britain, Black youth had fist combs confiscated by police as potential weapons.	SUPPORTED	EF-013
C14	A folding-comb variant was patented (filed 1970, granted 1971).	SUPPORTED	EF-014
C15	A 1972 Supreme Beauty Products two-page magazine ad ("Duke & Raveen" Black Combs, orange background) marketed 11 comb options with an order form.	SUPPORTED	EF-015
C16	Johnson Products Company (Chicago, founded 1954 by George E. and Joan Johnson) marketed Afro Sheen for natural afros in the 1970s; it became the first Black-owned company listed on the American Stock Exchange (1971).	VERIFIED	EF-016
C17	Johnson Products sponsored the syndicated Soul Train and keyed its marketing to Black pride ("used that desire to express one's blackness as a key to their marketing strategy" — Lonnie Bunch).	SUPPORTED	EF-017
C18	The afro pick is a distinct technology from the hot comb/pressing comb, with separate histories (hot comb: Grateau's France late 1800s; Sammons 1920; Grant 1925).	VERIFIED	EF-018
C19	Madam C.J. Walker invented the hot comb.	DISPUTED	EF-019
C20	NMAAHC holds object 2014.125.2, "Afro hair comb with black fist design" (Eden Enterprise, Skokie, IL; made in China; 2002–2014; "METAL FISTPIK"; gift of Elaine Nichols; No Known Copyright Restrictions).	VERIFIED	EF-020
C21	NMAAHC holds object 2014.182.99, "Wood hair comb from Ghana" (1950s; gift of the William & Mattye Reed family; on view in "A Changing America: 1968 and Beyond").	VERIFIED	EF-021
C22	MoMA holds object 215.2019, "Black Power Afro pick hair comb" (1972–1976, injection-molded plastic, Antonio's Manufacturing; credited Romani/ Bundles/Childrey; anonymous gift; Architecture and Design).	VERIFIED	EF-022
C23	A'Lelia Bundles is the great-great-granddaughter of Madam C.J. Walker; S. Henry Bundles Jr.'s wife was Walker's granddaughter.	SUPPORTED	EF-023
C24	Clenched-fist combs were manufactured in Nigeria from at least the early 1980s (Grace Salome Kwami bought one in Cross River State, 1982/83).	SUPPORTED	EF-024
C25	Most fist combs sold in the UK today are made in China; some users preferred metal-toothed variants for rigidity over bendable plastic.	SUPPORTED	EF-025
C26	The pick was sometimes worn in the hair as a visible cultural statement, not only used as a styling tool.	SUPPORTED	EF-026
C27	The Fitzwilliam's 2013 exhibition "Origins of the Afro Comb" (Jul 2–Nov 3, 2013) traced the comb from predynastic Egypt to Black Power, co-created	VERIFIED	EF-027

#	Claim	Grade	EF
	with prisoners via Ashton's project, with a partner show at the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology and a version at Bruce Castle.		
C28	Willie Lee Morrow died June 22, 2022, in San Diego, aged 82, of pneumonia.	VERIFIED	EF-028
C29	"Willie Morrow invented the afro pick" (unqualified) overstates the evidence; he is best documented as popularizer and mass-producer.	DISPUTED	EF-029
C30	Romani combined fist + peace sign; asked why, he reportedly said "Well, you have to fight for peace, I reckon" (per son Anthony Romani Jr.).	SUPPORTED	EF-030
C31	The Afro hairstyle "first emerged in the 1950s."	PROVISIONAL	EF-031
C32	No single inventor can be credited with the afro pick.	SUPPORTED	EF-032

Grade tally: VERIFIED 12 · SUPPORTED 14 · PROVISIONAL 1 · DISPUTED 3 · UNRESOLVED 2. Ledger mapping per Type 04 rule: C10 → DISPUTED ("refuted — see CTL-EF-OBJ-000001"); C19 → DISPUTED ("refuted — see CTL-EF-OBJ-000001"); C08 → UNRESOLVED (pointer to CTL-EF-OBJ-000001); C11 → UNRESOLVED (pointer to CTL-EF-OBJ-000001).

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16 · Evidence

Evidence for each claim is given in full per-claim records in `evidence-file.md` (CTL-EF-OBJ-000001), §§EF-001–EF-032: Evidence For ↔ Evidence Against, primary/secondary separation, source evaluation, corroboration, conflicts, and falsification paths. This section is intentionally not duplicated — the evidence file is the canonical record.

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17 · Primary Sources

- U.S. Design Patent Des. 238,821 ("COMB HANDLE"), granted 1976-02-10; inventor Anthony R. Romani; assignee Antonios Manufacturing Inc. — quoted verbatim in Makematic case study; verifiable at USPTO/Google Patents.
- NMAAHC object record 2014.125.2 ("Afro hair comb with black fist design") — catalog description, gift and rights lines — nmaahc.si.edu.
- NMAAHC object record 2014.182.99 ("Wood hair comb from Ghana") — nmaahc.si.edu.
- MoMA collection record 215.2019 ("Black Power Afro pick hair comb") — moma.org/collection/works/401235.
- Fitzwilliam Museum Annual Report 2012–13 (exhibition record) and "Origins of the Afro Comb: From Prisoners to Curators" case study — institutional records.
- NYT, "MILITARY BARBERS LEARN TO CUT AFRO," Jan 31, 1971, p. 19 — cited in obituary references; full text not read in this research.
- Morrow's books: *The Principles of Cutting and Styling Negro Hair* (1966); *400 Years Without a Comb* (1973) — bibliographic records via obituaries; copies not examined.

18 · Secondary Sources

- Sally-Ann Ashton, "Radical Objects: The Black Fist Afro Comb," History Workshop (2014) — scholarly; key design-history source (Romani 1972, patent 1974/76, folding comb 1970/71, British confiscations, Nigerian manufacture).
- Makematic, "Telling Stories of Artifacts – The Raised Fist Afro Comb" — case study quoting the patent verbatim; corrects the Bundles/Childrey fist-comb attribution.
- ND Insider / USA Today, "Untangled from politics, the proud Afro hairstyle rises again" (2017) — Morrow, Bundles/Childrey, Romani/Antonio's reporting with family interviews.
- NYT obituary, Clay Risen, "Willie Lee Morrow, Barber Who Popularized the Afro Pick, Dies at 82" (July 6, 2022) — via search excerpts and citations.
- NPR/WCBE, "Willie Morrow, Black hair care pioneer, has died" (July 8, 2022) — family testimony, DoD program, 12,000/week figure.
- Ebony, "Willie Morrow, Inventor of the Afro Pick, Passes Away at 82" (2022).
- NMAAHC, "Strands of Inspiration: Exploring Black Identities through Hair" (interpretive essay); NMAAHC, "Sizzle" (hot-comb history).
- York University journal, "Resistance in My Strands and a Pick in My Hands" (Duke & Raveen 1972 ad description).
- Retro Musings, "Duke & Raveen ~ Hair Care Adverts [1964–1972]" (ad archive).
- Ebony, "George E. Johnson: Pioneering Black Beauty & Culture Legacy" (Johnson Products history).
- Andscape, "Hair care pioneer Joan Johnson..." (Soul Train sponsorship; Black-pride marketing strategy).
- Face2Face Africa, "Why the Afro comb is not just a styling tool..." (weak: unsourced on Panther/fist claims — flagged in sources.md).
- PushBlack, "This Hair Tool Survived Generations And United The Diaspora" (June 28, 2023) — community history (not fully read; see gaps).
- Wikipedia, "Willie Morrow" — tertiary; used only for citation pointers (NYT 1971 reference, book bibliography).
- S.-A. Ashton (ed.), *Origins of the Afro Comb* (Fitzwilliam, 2013); Carol Tulloch, "The resounding power of the Afro comb," in *Hair: Styling, Culture and Fashion* (Berg, 2008) — cited in History Workshop; not read directly (see gaps).

19 · Archival Collections

- **NMAAHC object collections** (Washington, DC) — 2014.125.2, 2014.182.99; cataloged, digitized, "No Known Copyright Restrictions"; contact NMAAHCDigiTeam@si.edu. Non-sensitive location only (museum galleries).

- **MoMA Architecture and Design collection** (New York) — 215.2019; catalog online; image licensing via Art Resource/Scala.
- **Fitzwilliam Museum / Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology** (Cambridge, UK) — 2013 exhibition archive incl. visitor-contributed comb stories and photographs (a "new, digital archive for future generations" per the annual report); access status not verified — see gaps.
- **Walker papers / Madam C.J. Walker Manufacturing Company records** — relevant to Bundles–Childrey 1969 patent context; not consulted — see gaps.
- **USPTO records** — Des. 238,821 retrievable; Bundles–Childrey 1969 patent not located — see gaps.

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20 · Documents

- US Design Patent Des. 238,821 (transcribed in part from the Makematic quotation): "United States Patent Des. 238,821 Patented Feb. 10, 1976 COMB HANDLE Anthony R. Romani, Hollidaysburg, Pa. Antonios Manufacturing Inc., P.O. Box 1803, Altoona, Pa." — full drawing to be pulled at publication (public domain).
- NMAAHC catalog entries 2014.125.2 and 2014.182.99 (described in full in EF-020/EF-021).
- MoMA catalog entry 215.2019 (described in EF-022).
- Supreme Beauty Products "Duke & Raveen" 1972 ad (described in York journal; image at Retro Musings — rights unverified; described, not reproduced).

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21 · Photographs

Rights-cleared images only. Full plan in `visuals.md`.

1. **Eden "METAL FISTPIK" (NMAAHC 2014.125.2)** — Smithsonian, "No Known Copyright Restrictions" (media page notes public domain). Use via nmaahc.si.edu object page / IIIF.
2. **Ghanaian wooden comb, 1950s (NMAAHC 2014.182.99)** — Smithsonian, "No Known Copyright Restrictions."
3. **US Des. 238,821 patent drawing** — public domain (U.S. patent); pull from USPTO/Google Patents at publication.
4. **Data graphic: design-variant timeline** — CTL-built SVG/HTML (`timeline.html` in this directory) — no rights issues.
5. MoMA 215.2019 — NOT cleared (Art Resource/Scala licensing); described only.
6. 1972 Duke & Raveen ad — rights unverified; described only.
7. No rights-cleared period photographs of the pick in use were located — documented gap (§28).

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22 · Audio

None identified. (Oral-history audio from the Fitzwilliam's 2013 digital archive exists per the annual report but access/rights were not verified — see gaps.)

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23 · Video

Video illustrates, never evidences. Candidates (link-don't-embed until embedding permission is verified at publication):

- KPBS, "Black Hair Care Pioneer Subject Of Escondido Museum Exhibit" (Jan 26, 2016) — Morrow's 2016 museum exhibit; a screenshot was used by Ebony. Relevance: consumer-use/manufacture context. Embed status: unverified.
- Parkers Legacy, "Why do afro picks have fists?" — embeds two YouTube items on fist-comb history; explanatory only; channel not institutional — link-only, assess at publication.

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24 · Maps

A manufacturing-geography map is planned from documented locations (§06): San Diego → Cresson/Hollidaysburg/Altoona PA → Skokie/Chicago IL → Cross River State, Nigeria → Cambridge/London UK. Build at publication from §06; no private addresses involved. (Map graphic not yet built — noted in visuals.md.)

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25 · Data

Dataset D1 — Design-variant timeline (sources and limitations noted per row; no invented precision):

Variant	Date	Evidence	Limitation
Nigerian wooden comb (model)	c. 1962	NYT obit (gift to Morrow)	Single-source date
"Afro Tease" wood/plastic/metal picks (Morrow)	1960s	NDInsider; NPR	Brand name thinly sourced
Bundles–Childrey pick (Summit Labs)	1969	3 secondaries	Patent number missing
Folding comb (patent filed/granted)	1970 / 1971	History Workshop	Inventor/number missing
Raised-fist handle (Romani)	designed 1972; filed 1974; granted 1976	Patent; family; MoMA	—
Antonio's production run	1972–1976	MoMA record	End date is catalog's

Variant	Date	Evidence	Limitation
Duke & Raveen 11-comb ad	1972	York journal	Original publication unidentified
Nigerian-made fist combs	from early 1980s	History Workshop	"At least from" — open start
Eden METAL FISTPIK (China)	2002–2014	NMAAHC record	Catalog date range

Dataset D2 — Museum holdings: NMAAHC 2 objects; MoMA 1 object; Fitzwilliam 2013 exhibition (hundreds of combs incl. predynastic Egyptian). Coverage: catalog-verified only; uncataloged holdings unknown.

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26 · Controversies/Conflicts

- **Inventor credit dispute** (Morrow "inventor" vs. "popularizer"; Bundles & Childrey vs. Romani on the fist handle): all sides recorded in EF-010, EF-029; CTL's adjudication is evidence-based (patent record decides the fist handle; "popularizer" is the best-supported wording for Morrow).
- **Hot-comb invention myths** (Walker; Sammons): recorded in EF-018/EF-019; NMAAHC's account is the harmonized position.
- **British police confiscations**: participant testimony only; no police-side records located — both the presence and the absence are recorded (EF-013).
- **MoMA's triple designer credit** (Romani + Bundles + Childrey on one object): read as design lineage, not sole authorship — flagged to prevent misreading (EF-022).

No legal proceedings involving the object were found.

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27 · Myth vs. Evidence

MYTH: "Willie Morrow invented the afro pick." **VERDICT:** Exaggerated (DISPUTED — sources split). **EVIDENCE:** NYT: "popularized"; Ebony/LA Times: "inventor." Morrow's own account says he was *given* the model comb. Bundles & Childrey patented a pick independently. **CORRECTED WORDING:** "Willie Lee Morrow adapted a Nigerian wooden comb into the 'Afro Tease' and became the afro pick's great popularizer and mass-producer in 1960s America."

MYTH: "Bundles and Childrey invented the black fist afro comb." **VERDICT:** False (REFUTED). **EVIDENCE:** US Des. 238,821 names Anthony R. Romani; History Workshop confirms via Mrs. Romani; Makematic: "They did invent the comb, but not the raised fist one." **CORRECTED WORDING:** "Bundles and Childrey patented an early afro pick (1969); Anthony R. Romani designed the raised-fist handle (1972)."

MYTH: "The Black Panthers created the fist comb." **VERDICT:** Unverifiable (no evidence; UNRESOLVED). **EVIDENCE:** No document, interview, or manufacturing record links the BPP to

the design. Romani Jr.'s account gives a personal rationale ("you have to fight for peace, I reckon"). **CORRECTED WORDING:** "The fist handle references Black Power iconography — a meaning museums document — but no evidence ties its design to the Black Panther Party."

MYTH: "Madam C.J. Walker invented the hot comb." **VERDICT:** False (REFUTED). **EVIDENCE:** NMAAHC "Sizzle" ("common misconception"); A'Lelia Bundles ("she didn't invent the hot comb"); pre-Walker history (Grateau, 1886 catalogs). **CORRECTED WORDING:** "Walker popularized and improved the hot comb and built the Walker System around it; she did not invent it."

MYTH: "The afro pick is 6,000 years old." **VERDICT:** Exaggerated without qualification. **EVIDENCE:** The comb *form* is ancient (5,500-year-old predynastic comb at the Fitzwilliam); the modern plastic pick is a 1960s–70s product. **CORRECTED WORDING:** "Long-toothed combs have ~5,500-year-documented African roots; the mass-produced afro pick dates to the 1960s–70s."

MYTH (adjacent): "Walter Sammons invented the hot/pressing comb." **VERDICT:** Unverifiable as stated; the patent is real. **EVIDENCE:** Sammons's 1920 patent is documented (NMAAHC); but heated combs predate him (Grateau, France, late 1800s). **CORRECTED WORDING:** "Walter Sammons patented an improved straightening comb in 1920; he did not invent the heated comb."

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28 · Knowledge Gaps

1. **Bundles–Childrey patent number** — three secondary reports attest the 1969 patent; the document was not located. Next step: USPTO inventor-name search; inquiry to A'Lelia Bundles or Walker-paper archivists.
2. **Folding-comb patent** — inventor name and number unknown (History Workshop gives dates + drawing only).
3. **Comprehensive 1970s advertising data** — one strong ad artifact (1972 Duke & Raveen); no survey of Ebony/Jet pick advertising by brand, year, or spend. Johnson Products' pick-specific (vs. Afro Sheen) advertising not isolated.
4. **Period photographs of use** — no rights-cleared 1960s–70s photographs of the pick in use or worn in hair were located. (Object photography is strong via NMAAHC Open Access.)
5. **Summit Laboratories records** — company history, Black-ownership status, and the 1969 pick's production run are unverified.
6. **Antonio's Manufacturing records** — production volumes, distribution, and the company's own account of the fist+peace-sign design beyond Romani Jr.'s recollection.
7. **Full NYT 1971 article** ("MILITARY BARBERS LEARN TO CUT AFRO") — cited but not read; would upgrade EF-006.
8. **Fitzwilliam 2013 digital archive** — visitor-contributed comb stories and photographs; access and rights unverified.

9. **Morrow business records** — the 12,000/week figure rests on family testimony; no sales records located. No Morrow patent found (he appears to have manufactured without patenting — itself a finding worth confirming).
10. **Carol Tulloch / Henry Childrey "Tulloch"** — possible family connection between the scholar and the patentee noted but not investigated (no claim made).

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29 · Knowledge Graph

- **Entities:** 40 (see `entities.json`; IDs namespaced `RD-OBJ-000001-###`).
- **Relationship edges:** 35 total (see `relationships.json`).
- **Grade split:** VERIFIED 17 · SUPPORTED 15 · PROVISIONAL 0 · DISPUTED 1 · UNRESOLVED 2.
- **Verified-only ingestion:** 17 edges cleared (grade VERIFIED). DISPUTED edge (C10 refutation) enters with both sides recorded per Appendix A.
- **Canonical-ID reuse:** none of this dossier's entities appear in the audit's `duplicates.json`; all IDs are dossier-local. (Near-miss watched: George E. Johnson ≠ canon-john-h-johnson; Johnson Products ≠ Johnson Publishing Company — kept separate by design.)

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30 · Related CTL Entities

- **CTL-DR-LIFE-001 (How We Lived)** — this dossier pilots its Object Biography methodology; the pick is a candidate LIFE-001 encyclopedia object.
- **CTL-DR-TECH-001 (Black Technology)** — patent history (Des. 238,821; 1969 pick patent) belongs to the Black Technology patent explorer; the dossier's invention-myth corrections (EF-010, EF-019, EF-029) parallel TECH-001's myth-correction work.
- **CTL-DR-ECON-001 (Black Business Ecosystem)** — Johnson Products, Summit Laboratories, Morrow's enterprise as Black beauty-economy cases.
- **CTL-DR-MEDIA-001 / CTL-DR-BPM-003** — Ebony/Jet advertising context; Soul Train sponsorship.
- **CTL-RD-BIZ-000001 (Johnson Publishing Company)** — disambiguation partner: Johnson Products (George E. Johnson) vs. Johnson Publishing (John H. Johnson) must not merge.
- **Future dossiers suggested:** Willie Lee Morrow (person); Johnson Products Company (business); "Origins of the Afro Comb" 2013 (event/ exhibition).

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31 · Bibliography

Primary - U.S. Design Patent Des. 238,821 (1976-02-10). - NMAAHC object records 2014.125.2; 2014.182.99. - MoMA collection record 215.2019. - Fitzwilliam Museum Annual Report 2012–13; "Origins of the Afro Comb: From Prisoners to Curators" case study. - NYT, Jan 31, 1971, p. 19

(cited; not read in full). - Morrow, Willie Lee. *The Principles of Cutting and Styling Negro Hair* (1966); *400 Years Without a Comb* (1973) (not examined).

Secondary - Ashton, S.-A. "Radical Objects: The Black Fist Afro Comb." History Workshop (2014). - Ashton, S.-A. (ed.). *Origins of the Afro Comb* (Fitzwilliam, 2013). - Makematic. "Telling Stories of Artifacts – The Raised Fist Afro Comb." - ND Insider/USA Today. "Untangled from politics, the proud Afro hairstyle rises again" (2017). - Risen, Clay. NYT obituary (July 6, 2022) — via excerpts/citations. - NPR/WCBE. "Willie Morrow, Black hair care pioneer, has died" (July 8, 2022). - Ebony. Morrow obituary (2022); George E. Johnson profile. - LA Times. Morrow obituary (July 1, 2022) — via citations. - Andscape. "Hair care pioneer Joan Johnson..." (Soul Train; marketing). - Essence. "11 Vintage Beauty Ads..."; "Black Hair Ads Through The Years." - NMAAHC. "Strands of Inspiration"; "Sizzle." - York University. "Resistance in My Strands and a Pick in My Hands" (journal article). - Retro Musings. "Duke & Raveen ~ Hair Care Adverts [1964–1972]." - Face2Face Africa. "Why the Afro comb is not just a styling tool..." (weak — flagged). - PushBlack. "This Hair Tool Survived Generations And United The Diaspora" (2023) (not fully read). - Edqvist, Pia. UCL Culture Blog (2013) (conservator's account). - Fresh Air Archive. A'Lelia Bundles interview (family/company history). - Living on Earth. A'Lelia Bundles interview (hot-comb myth). - thefreelibrary.com. "History, Hair-story, Her-story" (Bundles profile). - Tulloch, Carol. "The resounding power of the Afro comb" (2008) (not read). - Wikipedia. "Willie Morrow" (tertiary; citation pointer only).

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32 · Citation

CultureTechLens. "The Afro Pick." *CTL Research Dossier* CTL-RD-OBJ-000001, v1.0. September 28, 2026. Companion Evidence File CTL-EF-OBJ-000001. https://culturetechlens.org/research-dossiers/CTL-RD-OBJ-000001 (placeholder).

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33 · Rights

Item	Rights status	Action
NMAAHC 2014.125.2 image	"No Known Copyright Restrictions" (Smithsonian Open Access)	Cleared for use with credit
NMAAHC 2014.182.99 image	"No Known Copyright Restrictions"	Cleared for use with credit
US Des. 238,821 drawing	Public domain (U.S. patent)	Cleared; pull at publication
CTL-built timeline graphic	CTL original	Cleared
MoMA 215.2019 image	Requires Art Resource/Scala license	Described, not reproduced
	Unverified	Described, not reproduced

Item	Rights status	Action
1972 Duke & Raveen ad image		
Fitzwilliam exhibition images	Museum copyright	Described, not reproduced
YouTube candidates	Platform licenses; embed status unverified	Link-don't-embed pending check

Nothing is "cleared" by default; the log above is the complete record.

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34 · Version History

- **v1.0 — 2026-09-28.** Initial research version. 32 claims (12 VERIFIED / 14 SUPPORTED / 1 PROVISIONAL / 3 DISPUTED / 2 UNRESOLVED); 35 relationship edges (17 verified-only). Pilots the Object Biography methodology for CTL-DR-LIFE-001. Authorized by parent orchestrator (subagent build). Evidence File CTL-EF-OBJ-000001 issued simultaneously.

Glossary

- **Afro pick / hair pick / pik** — wide-toothed, long-toothed comb designed for styling coily hair; this dossier's subject.
- **Hot comb / pressing comb** — heated straightening implement; a different technology with a different history (see §27).
- **AFRO (hairstyle)** — rounded natural-hair style popularized in the 1960s; the pick's commercial context.
- **"Black is Beautiful"** — late-1960s cultural movement rejecting Eurocentric beauty standards; Johnson Products' keyed marketing strategy and NMAAHC's classification for the pick.
- **Design patent** — U.S. patent protecting ornamental design (Romani's Des. 238,821 covered the fist handle, not a mechanism).
- **Open Access (Smithsonian)** — designation for collection items free of copyright restrictions, used here for the two NMAAHC images.
- **Object Biography** — CTL methodology (CTL-DR-LIFE-001) that documents an object through manufacture, design, period, advertising, symbolism, use, photographs, museum holdings, people, and movements.
- **DISPUTED / UNRESOLVED (§15)** — ledger grades for claims sources disagree on (DISPUTED) or evidence cannot yet settle (UNRESOLVED); they map to the evidence file's seven-class system (see Appendix B).

Appendix A — Relationship-Layer Spec

The relationship layer is this dossier's critical feature. Every verified connection becomes reusable CTL knowledge: machine-readable, evidence-linked, and honest about its grade.

Edge format: `SUBJECT → RELATIONSHIP → OBJECT`

- **SUBJECT / OBJECT:** entity IDs from `entities.json` (dossier-local, namespaced `RD-OBJ-000001-###`); the audit's `canon-<slug>` IDs were checked in `duplicates.json` — none apply here.
- **RELATIONSHIP:** controlled verb phrase. Precise verbs only for graph ingestion (`manufactured-by`, `designed-by`, `patented-under`, `distributed-by`, `manufactured-in`, `archived-at`, `exhibited-in`, `developed-for`, `mass-produced-by`, `derived-from`, `distinct-from`, `used-by`, `confiscated-from`, `interpreted-as`, `advertised-in`, `sponsored`, `child-of`, `spouse-of`, `descendant-of`, `curated`, `gifted`, `popularized`, `associated-with` [human-readable only, unqualified]).
- **Provenance (required on every edge):** source, source type, source date, and the specific evidence (quote or precise description).
- **Grade (required):** VERIFIED / SUPPORTED / PROVISIONAL / DISPUTED / UNRESOLVED. Only VERIFIED edges enter the verified-only graph. DISPUTED edges enter with both sides recorded.
- **Temporal scope:** `date_range` on every edge where dates are known; undated edges say so.

Rules: Never manufacture a relationship ("likely worked with" → PROVISIONAL with exact wording, or it doesn't exist). Organizations and their buildings are separate entities; people and their papers/collections are separate entities. Before adding an edge, check the audit (`duplicates.json`, `contradictions.json`) — done for this dossier, no matches found.

Appendix B — Evidence-File Pattern (Type 04)

Instantiated by the companion file **`evidence-file.md`** (CTL-EF-OBJ-000001), titled with its CTL-EF ID, status Research, versioned with this dossier.

Type 04 architecture (10 parts, in order): 1) Research Question (file level); per-claim records — 2) Claim; 3) Evidence For ↔ Evidence Against; 4) Primary + Secondary Sources; 5) Source Evaluation; 6) Corroboration; 7) Conflicts/ Contradictions; 8) Confidence Classification; 9) CTL Finding; 10) What would change it.

Seven statuses: VERIFIED / SUPPORTED / PROVISIONAL / DISPUTED / UNRESOLVED / REFUTED / UNVERIFIABLE. Mapping to the dossier ledger (§15): REFUTED → ledger DISPUTED with "refuted — see CTL-EF-OBJ-000001"; UNVERIFIABLE → ledger UNRESOLVED with evidence-file pointer. Ledger and evidence file reconcile 1:1 — every ledger claim has an evidence-file record and vice versa (verified in `red-team.md`).

Appendix C — Red-Team Checklist

Run before marking any dossier complete. Full verdicts recorded in `red-team.md`.

- [ ] Unsupported claims: every §15 claim traces to §16 evidence
- [ ] Circular sourcing: no source corroborated only by its own repetitions
- [ ] Myths repeated as facts: §27 adjudicates every widely repeated claim
- [ ] Date conflicts: checked against `contradictions.json` harmonizations
- [ ] Name ambiguity: §04 disambiguates; no two entities share an ID
- [ ] Geographic errors: addresses verified; community areas not collapsed
- [ ] Anachronisms: every dated claim checked against the timeline
- [ ] Causation without evidence: no "led to" / "caused" without documented mechanism
- [ ] Selection bias: what survives in archives vs. what existed
- [ ] Celebrity bias: ordinary people and workers included where documented
- [ ] Survivorship bias: defunct/closed subjects' thinner records acknowledged
- [ ] Missing women: explicitly searched for, not assumed absent
- [ ] Missing institutions: the subject's institutional context mapped
- [ ] Duplicate entities: checked against `duplicates.json` canonical clusters
- [ ] Weak visual provenance: every image/video has creator, date, source, rights
- [ ] Copyright/rights: §33 log complete; nothing reproduced without clearance
- [ ] Privacy: no private locations or sensitive personal information exposed
- [ ] Sensitive subjects: dignity maintained; no sensationalism

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Appendix D — Deliverables Checklist

Per dossier, at `~/workspace/culturetechlens/research-dossiers/CTL-RD-OBJ-000001/`:

- [x] `dossier.md` — this file (34 sections + appendices)
- [x] `entities.json` — 40 entities
- [x] `relationships.json` — 35 edges
- [x] `evidence-file.md` — CTL-EF-OBJ-000001, 32 claim records
- [x] `visuals.md` — visuals plan with rights table
- [x] `sources.md` — source registry (primary/secondary, weak-source flags)
- [x] `red-team.md` — checklist verdicts
- [x] `gaps.md` — known gaps and next steps

About CULTURETECHLENS — Culture, Clearly Seen. Black Cultural Intelligence.

References

Primary sources

- **U.S. Design Patent Des. 238,821** — "COMB HANDLE"; Anthony R. Romani (Hollidaysburg, PA); assignee Antonios Manufacturing Inc., Altoona, PA; granted 1976-02-10. Quoted verbatim in Makematic; retrievable via USPTO/ Google Patents.
- **NMAAHC object record 2014.125.2** — "Afro hair comb with black fist design"; Eden Enterprise, Skokie IL; made in China; 2002–2014; "METAL FISTPIK"; gift of Elaine Nichols; "No Known Copyright Restrictions."
- **NMAAHC object record 2014.182.99** — "Wood hair comb from Ghana"; 1950s; gift of the William & Mattye Reed family; on view.
- **MoMA collection record 215.2019** — "Black Power Afro pick hair comb," 1972–1976, injection-molded plastic, Antonio's Manufacturing; image licensing via Art Resource/Scala.
- **Fitzwilliam Museum Annual Report 2012–13** — "Origins of the Afro Comb" exhibition record; plus quadrennial case study ("From Prisoners to Curators").
- **NYT, "MILITARY BARBERS LEARN TO CUT AFRO," Jan 31, 1971, p. 19** — cited via obituaries; full text not read in this research.

Secondary sources (strong)

- Ashton, S.-A. "Radical Objects: The Black Fist Afro Comb," *History Workshop* (2014) — scholarly; design history, patent dates, British confiscations, Nigerian manufacture, plural meanings.
- Makematic, "Telling Stories of Artifacts – The Raised Fist Afro Comb" — quotes patent verbatim; corrects Bundles/Childrey fist attribution.
- ND Insider/USA Today, "Untangled from politics, the proud Afro hairstyle rises again" (2017) — family interviews (Romani Jr., A'Lelia Bundles).
- Risen, Clay. NYT obituary of Willie Lee Morrow (July 6, 2022).
- NPR/WCBE obituary (July 8, 2022) — Cheryl Morrow testimony; DoD program.
- Ebony — Morrow obituary; George E. Johnson profile (Johnson Products).
- Andscape — Joan Johnson/Soul Train; Black-pride marketing strategy.
- NMAAHC essays: "Strands of Inspiration"; "Sizzle" (hot-comb history).
- York University journal — "Resistance in My Strands and a Pick in My Hands" (1972 Duke & Raveen ad).
- Retro Musings — "Duke & Raveen ~ Hair Care Adverts [1964–1972]" (ad archive; rights unverified).
- UCL Culture Blog — Pia Edqvist, conservator (Oct 28, 2013).
- Fresh Air Archive — A'Lelia Bundles interview; Living on Earth — hot-comb myth.

Secondary sources (flagged weak)

- **Face2Face Africa** — "Why the Afro comb is not just a styling tool..." — unsourced on Panther-commission and fist-attribution claims; use only with corroboration. Do not cite it for invention claims.
- **Wikipedia ("Willie Morrow")** — tertiary; used only as citation pointer (NYT 1971, book bibliography).
- **Parkers Legacy (YouTube-adjacent)** — explanatory only; link-only.

Not read (bibliographic, for future runs)

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- Tulloch, Carol. "The resounding power of the Afro comb" (2008).
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