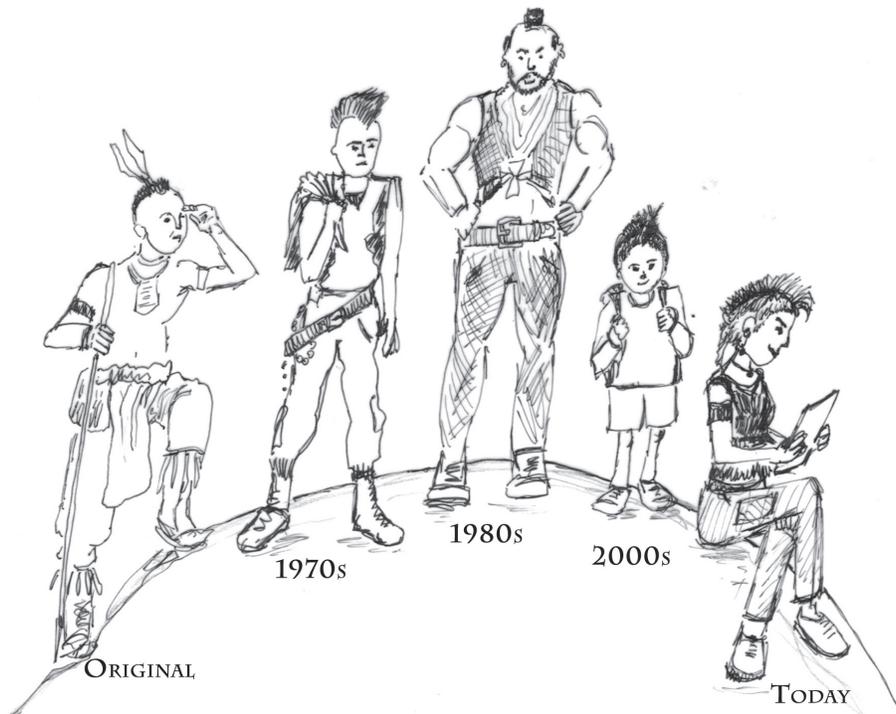


Mohawk Culture

The History Behind the Hairdo

by Simone T. Ribke



These days, lots of kids have mohawks. But did you know there’s a history behind the hairdo?

The mohawk hairstyle is named after the Native American tribe. Before battle, Mohawk warriors shaved the sides of their heads. They left a thin strip of hair down the middle.

“Mohawk” is what their enemies called them. It meant

“man-eaters.” This does not mean that they ate people. It means they were fierce warriors. The Mohawk have a different name for themselves. It means “people of the flint.”

Mohawks were part of the Iroquois Confederacy. This nation formed in the 1600s. It

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was made up of five tribes. A sixth tribe joined in 1722. Each tribe lived in one region. The regions spanned Pennsylvania, New York, and Canada.

In the book *Eagle Song*, Danny Bigtree's family was probably Mohawk. Danny misses his old home in Akwesasne. This is a town in New York. It is located in Mohawk territory.

A Fierce Reputation



Punks and punk rock began in the 1970s. Many punks had mohawks. They rebelled against “normal” ways of dressing and behaving. Punks wore their hair, clothes, and makeup in shocking new ways.

Punk music was shocking, too. It was also fierce.

By the 1980s, a lot more people had mohawks. People with mohawks were considered fierce.

Why was a person with a mohawk considered fierce? Was it the way that punks acted? Or is it because of the origin of the hairstyle? The answer is: probably both.

From Punk to Funk

The mohawk hairstyle disappeared for about 25 years. It popped up again in the early 2000s. Suddenly everyone wanted a mohawk. Mohawks are still fierce. Lots of different types of people wear mohawks today. But these days, fierce has a new meaning. It means well-dressed and good looking. Not bad for a hairdo that dates back more than 500 years!

