

(25 January 18) Zazou and Pachuco styles

When I was a kid in 53-54 Pacific Beach (n.b., the place and time of Tom Wolfe's Pump House Gang), first freshman class at the brand new Mission Bay High School, Pachucos was the common name for the tough Chicano gangs from Chula Vista, La Mesa, El Cajon, etc., with local branches in PB and other beachtowns south of La Jolla.

They were not known for any fancy dress (though were associated with chopped and channeled Hudsons and Mercuries), but generally dressed like most of us non-military kids: pegged pants, wide-sleeved shirts and orlon sweaters in school, levis with no belts and t-shirts after school and on weekends. Unlike most of us Anglos, who had well-barbered carefully parted short haircuts, the Pachucos often had longer hair done up into ducksasses or similar coifs (a style some of us, myself included, started to copy shortly after: see Rebel without a Cause for typical styles).

The Pachucos weren't to be messed with. They carried, and displayed, switchblades and, presumably, other weaponry (though I don't remember hearing about razors in the shoe, which was said to be a favorite among Black toughs back in Toledo). I do very clearly remember being "recruited", with intimidating suggestions about potential downsides of not complying, by a small group (including PB students at Mission Bay and about an equal number from somewhere else) to join in their nighttime routine of roaming the streets in PB and LJ rifling glove compartments and stealing hubcaps (real chrome plate in those days) from residents' cars, which every few days we would trade for cash to higher-ups we understood would then deliver the goods to fences and other gangs in LA (notably, The Turtles as we thought, but this may have been just a confusion with (and libeling of) southern Cal car clubs that, I've been told, may have had no connection to the theft networks).

Alcohol being out of reach for my age group and pot something, for all my hanging out with the bad boys both in PB and later in high school back in Toledo, I never heard of until college and never tried until 1965, back in California in grad school at UCLA), the pittance we made from our roving (and we really did think of what we were doing as something of a buccaneer adventure) was mostly spent on burgers and thick chocolate shakes at Oscar's Drive-in, at the corner of Garnet and Mission, a few blocks down from the apartment at Mission and Balboa where my mother and I lived.

<https://youtu.be/7-qEZ9zeIJw?feature=shared>

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zazou#:~:text=The%20zazous%20were%20a%20subculture,dancing%20wildly%20to%20swing%20jazz.>

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pachuco>