

cult

a visual history of jeanswear
american originals

by **William Gilchrist** and **Roberto Manzotti**

SPORTSWEAR
INTERNATIONAL

ISBN 3-9520361-0-2

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printing **Nava Web**, Milano



Eric,
Happy Xmas x New Year



Grazie per il tuo indispensabile
aiuto
Roberto

[Handwritten signature]

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introduction

Jeans are the most influential garments of this century; *Cult – A Visual History of Jeanswear* is the most objective documentary of their history.

Spotlighting the three key original American jeans makers—Levi Strauss & Co., H.D. Lee Inc. and Wrangler—*Cult* chronicles the evolution of denim workwear. A concise text places the stylistic changes made to workwear in the social and economic context of their time. Wherever possible, original documents have been examined to confirm the details and dates given in the book.

Unique in its approach, *Cult* uses startling photographs to reveal the essential details in actual vintage garments. Unlike previous jeans histories sponsored by large jeans companies or produced by collectors eager to create a false market in vintage jeans, *Cult* is a completely independent and objective production, compiled by professionals.

P-R-E-P-A-R-E-D-!

FOR COMFORT CONVENIENCE ECONOMY

Wear Union-Alls
for Work or
for Play —
Everybody's
Doing It



Lee Union-Alls

are made of khaki, heavy blue denim, express stripe, pin check or white twill. Children's sizes are from 2 years to 12 years and are made "just like Dad's". Ask your dealer to show you LEE UNION-ALLS. If he does not supply you, send your order direct to any of our factories, enclosing money order and stating size and material desired. Sent prepaid to any address in the United States.

Men's ^{34 to 50} Chest... \$3.00
Youths ^{12 to 17} Years... 2.25
Boys ^{7 to 11} Years... 1.75
Child's ^{2 to 6} Years... 1.50



UNION **Lee** MADE
Union-Alls
TRADE MARK | REG.

Shirt and Pants All In One

"Preparedness"—that's it. LEE UNION-ALLS are daily preparing hundreds of thousands of men for greater working efficiency. The big, new idea has taken the country by storm. Binding, superfluous clothing is being discarded by workers everywhere. Convenient, comfort-giving, economical LEE UNION-ALLS have come to stay. Good-bye to useless belts, suspender straps, work shirts, separate jackets, etc. The new suit which assures healthful ease and freedom for the body, which slips on and off so quickly, and which is so sturdily made has superseded old fashioned, unsanitary work clothing forever.

But remember there is but one UNION-ALL—that's the Lee

Look for the name on the button. Look for the triple stitched seams, the reinforced strain points, the riveted steel buttons. UNION-ALL is a trade-mark name. Accept no substitute. There is none "just as good".

MOTHERS: Slip a suit of LEE UNION-ALLS on your kiddie. He'll be delighted with a suit "just like Dad's". What a saving there'll be in stockings, trousers and shirt waists; what a reduction in the high cost of living. It's the ideal summer play suit.

The H. D. Lee Mercantile Company

Factories and Branches at: Kansas City, Mo., Kansas City, Kas., Salina, Kas., Waterbury, Conn., South Bend, Ind.



pre-1920s

The 19th century was the era in which America's identity of self-sufficiency and individuality was defined. Between 1790 and 1890 the population of what many regarded as the Promised Land soared from under four million to 63 million.

Typical of the newcomers' dreams of riches and success was the California Gold Rush of 1849. The prospecting '49ers created a demand for strong, durable and inexpensive workpants, a demand that continued as the miners explored the mountain ranges up to the Black Hills of Dakota, which had its own Gold Rush in 1875.

Before the Civil War (1861-65), economic development and population growth in America was concentrated east of the Mississippi in the semi-industrial North and the agricultural South, where King Cotton reigned as the most valuable crop. After the South's defeat, more significant

was the division between East and West, when the huge grasslands of the interior were conquered as the agricultural frontier moving from the East met the mining frontier coming from the West. At first, cattle replaced cotton as the most important “crop” in the new lands. By 1880 there were 1.5 million cattle in Kansas alone; in 1860 there had been only 93,000. The huge herds helped form the legend of the cowboy, but it is not widely known that many cowboys were blacks and Mexicans. By the 1870s, rail links, improved slaughtering and cold storage techniques enabled these herds to supply all the East and much of Europe with meat.

After cattle came grain production, and the Great Plains became the bread basket of the world. Despite the growth of major cities, in 1880 five-sixths of the American population lived in rural conditions—and dressed accordingly.

Alongside agricultural expansion went industrial development. From 1830, a railroad framework was constructed across America. In 1869 the coast-to-coast link was made and by 1891 the Iron Horse traveled on 270,000 km of track. The decades of railroad building stimulated a chain of supply which ran from mines to steel mills to engineering works.

Technical and social innovations were transforming the growing nation. Petroleum was first produced commercially in Pennsylvania in 1859. By 1861, a telegraph wire ran coast-to-coast. In a few years, Thomas Edison invented the telephone, the phonograph, the electrical battery and the electric light bulb. In 1903 the Wright brothers took to the air.

Until the 1910s, immigration and the drift westward continued. In just half a century America had become self-dependent and individualistic, its strength achieved through adventure and hard work. Even the character of President Theodore Roosevelt (1901-1908), “the Rough Rider,” reflected the nation’s adventurous spirit. And from as early as 1903, the American public was watching movies about the myths of the Wild West.

But among the advances, some things remained as in the past, and as usual dress reflected the prevailing mores. Social manners decreed, for example, that workwear was for work only. On the day of rest, respectable citizens wore their Sunday best. But America’s short involvement in World War I (1917-18) affected men’s attitudes toward dress—they became used to the relaxed comfort of their everyday uniforms.