Hustle to Make Work Easy:
Levi Strauss and the Invention of the Jean

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1873 Levi Strauss invented the riveted jeans. Levi Strauss was a fashion designer. His birth date was February 26, 1829 in Buttenheim, Bavaria, Germany. Levi Strauss was born into a large Jewish family. Levi's parents had two children together from his father's second marriage. Levi Strauss did not attend College when he was younger. He attended high school at Williamsport. He passed on September 26, 1902 in San Francisco, California at the age of 73. He died because of natural causes. Levi’s birth name was Loeb Strauss. Levi’s partner Jacob Davis, was born in 1831, in Riga, Latvia. He passed in 1902, in San Francisco, California. Jacob Davis trained and worked as a tailor in Riga, Latvia, but then he immigrated to the United States and opened a tailor shop in New York in 1854. Jacob’s shop offered tents, horse blankets and wagon covers. Jacob Davis wanted to be someone bigger so that’s when Jacob decided to send Levi his letter. San Francisco had the building for the Levi Strauss Company for their first building. The Levi Strauss & Company was found in 1853. Jacob Davis was Levi’s partner in his clothing career. Jacob’s idea for adding rivets, gave them success in their work. Levi came from Germany to the United States in 1848 and to San Francisco in 1873. It was the time of the California Gold Rush, thousands of people were lured westward in the search of the new fortune. Levi Strauss created the riveted jean and the jean was used by U.S. workers to stand behind and honor them for working hard. Early 1905 Levi also made khakis. Khakis was western fashion standard color for smart casual dress.

Levi’s inspiration was his father because before Levi had his own company his father had a clothing company and dry goods company like Levis Jean Company. Also another person he got inspired into making clothes was by his partner, Jacob Davis.
How it all started was by the people in his life. Levi wanted to follow in his father’s footsteps. He started off with a dry goods company. Once Levi and Jacob invented the riveted jean they made Levis first building, the dry goods business into the clothing store. Then had an idea of clothing, but also he did small things like charity and benefits for people and events. (Regan) The President sent Levi a letter saying how the invention of his riveted jeans were a success and very useful. Regan used Levis jeans on his ranch on the weekends. He also got another letter from Jacob Davis before they became partners. Jacob said how he had an idea about clothing and jeans. Jacob wanted them to come together and be a team to start a company. Jacob Davis suggested to Strauss that they should rivet denim pants. Levi accepted Jacob’s offer and became a team. Then from there they were off with a good start to a successful business. The first thing they created together was the riveted blue jean in 1873. (Newspapers) Newspapers, ads and signs had an ad of Levis jeans. It showed miners and farmers working in them in the fields. Orders began to flow in and Levi and Jacob made 200 pairs of jeans in the next 18 months.

People in the late 1800s and early 1900s helped Levi with his success because of their work. Miners and Farmers had jeans that tore easily and were not thick enough for working. Miners wanted Levis so they had good material while doing work and so they could stay warm. Also Levis helped miners so they didn’t get hurt as badly from rocks because the jeans were thick and had good protection. Farmers wanted Levis for weather reasons and so when they were working in the fields they didn’t puncture their
skin from hay. Thicker jeans were needed for farmers while dealing with the crops and fields.

Levi’s symbol at the top right corner of the jean of the Two Horses patch didn’t come until 1886. The first pair of riveted jeans were called waist overalls but as they became more popular they made more and other people started to make them so later on they just called all jeans, jeans. The overall jean was also known as the “501” jean, but that name did not come until 1890. The 5 in front of the number “501” was created by Levi so people could indicate that the product is of the brand’s highest quality. There was also an xx after the 501 on the jean. It stood for the strength of the denim. Levi’s riveted jeans were the first jean to introduce belt loops in 1922.

Levi’s started off just as a riveted jeans with no back pockets and no belt loops like today. He added two back pockets, belt loops and added a patch of stitching to let people know that they were his brand of jeans. Also on the right back pocket on the left was a red flag like tab that had Levis name on it. Levis riveted jeans were made just for men and their work. But not until 1934, was when they finally started selling women’s jeans. While men were around the campfire, the rivet near the crotch would heat up. So in 1941 Levi and Jacob decided to remove the rivet and replace it with stitching. In 1984 Levi’s also offered lighter wash of the jean. 2001 Levi was forced to recall jeans with a polyurethane finish. Wearers got a rash before Levi’s were finished with polyurethane.

1873 was when the first riveted jean was created. Farmers and miners used them. These jeans were made with rivets. They were the first jean to be made with rivets.
Rivets were used as a method of pocket reinforcement for jeans and for garment decoration. The traditional jeans were plain blue jeans for workers. They were called denim jeans. Denim is a sturdy cotton. Levi made some denim jeans still, but thicker. Then as success went on and Levis became more popular, Levi started to dye the jeans for different colors. Color also made people want to buy the jeans even more for events. The traditional jeans did not have rivets. They were not as good as Levis because they were thinner and tore easily.

(Grant) Grant received a letter saying how his pants lasted a long time and they also resisted from ripping apart when he works in the fields. From all the letters Levi got from different people inspired him big time. After that day Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis became famous for creating the jean and look where it got us today. They had companies all over the world and made millions and also made millions of happy people. They sued more than 100 of its competitors for copying its arcuate design. But in the late 90s, the Levi Company lost a billion dollars in profits because it failed to cater to the hip-hop audience. But otherwise good reaction was a success to him and others. People’s reactions were all good about the riveted jeans. They loved the jeans because of work wise. The workers started to make comments on the jeans about how useful, good material and comfortable they were to wear. The miners and farmers were the first people to wear Levis. You couldn’t wear jeans as an everyday thing until more and more people started to buy the jeans. Then by the late 1960s jeans became an everyday fashion. Levi gave the world another unique clothing fashion for everyday use. By 1947 Levis jeans took its modern day shape in 1947. To become more popular, Levi’s
company collaborated with many different shoe companies so the jean would go with the shoe.

As years went on, the Levi Company started to get more creative with the jeans. Later on in the early 60s late 50s, Levis became more popular. Marlon Brando helped popularize the rebel image of Levis riveted jean. Bruce Springsteen also helped boost Levi’s sales in 1984 by wearing Levi’s on his album cover. Levi’s weren’t sold on the East Coast until the 1950s. The first pair of riveted jeans were called waist overalls but as they became more popular they made more and other people started to make them so later on they just called all jeans, jeans.

The jean also became an everyday use. People now use Levis as work and everyday fashion. You can find Levis in almost any clothing store. They went from having their own company to having their clothing in other stores. The invention of riveted jeans fits every situation and anyone can wear them. Rich, poor, young and old.

Levi Strauss created the riveted jean and the jean was used by U.S. workers to stand behind and honor them for working hard. Strauss and Davis had a success in their invention because they invented the riveted jean that made today’s world different. His company is all over the United States. This is what Levi Strauss supported hardworking Americans with.
Primary Sources


This source gave me good information because it showed pictures of miners, farmers and lumberjacks working while using Levis for the good quality. This is primary because it shows a photograph of an ad from the 1900s.


This source talked about how they sold their jeans and made them more popular. It’s primary because it’s an advertisement to sell things.


This source talked about the ad and showed how Levi and Jacob sold their jeans.


This source explained about other famous people, talking about Levis. This is a Primary source because Grant, one of the people who had Levi’s, had the jeans and wrote about it, then sent it to Levi’s company.


This source is good because it give another primary source about someone who wore Levi’s. This source gives good information because it shows another person wanting the jean for its quality.
Secondary Sources


I used this website to learn background information about how Levi and Jacob started making the riveted jean and how the idea started. This was a secondary source because it was giving background.


It talked about the success in the Levi Strauss Company. This was secondary because it was just telling me how they became a successful in their work.


I found a timeline and it showed when things happened in Levi’s career. Secondary because it’s a timeline.


This article explained about some of his background and his partners.


This source helped me to see how the birth of riveted jeans started and mainly facts about Jacob Davis, Levi’s partner.


It talked about background on the blue jean. Also the birth and death of Jacob Davis.

This article gave information about the Levi Strauss Company buildings and its success today. It was useful to see how things ended up.


It talked about the first pair of riveted jeans. Secondary because it’s just giving information, not from a primary source.


This source was helpful when we were trying to learn more about the first pair of riveted jeans and what the jean looks like and has on it.


From this source I found out facts about the new blue jeans Levi and Jacob created and the original blue jean.


This article provides me with good quality about the riveted jean.


It provided me with a lot of information about history and more background of the blue jean.

This source gave me information about what the commercial for Levis looked like and what information it gives about the jeans.


It made background information about Jacob Davis more clear to me.


This source gave me good quality for information and dates about Jacob Davis. This source was secondary because it was just facts about Davis.


This source showed me how Levi’s company stayed a success and how they managed to do it. This was secondary because it just explains some details about the company.


From this source I found out an important person who wore the jean, which was the president. This made jeans more popular.


This source helped me to see that people could finally start to wear the riveted jeans because of the ads on the photographs. Primary because it was an ad in the 1900s.