

THEN *and* NOW!

Company That Invented Blue Jeans Turns 150

(NAPSA)—THEN: Levi Strauss came to San Francisco in 1853 determined to start a successful dry goods business.

But it wasn't blankets and linens that would make him famous. It was "those pants of Levi's," first worn by the California gold miners. Over the next several generations, Levi's pants became the most popular and widely recognized clothing product in the world: blue jeans.

Twenty years after Levi Strauss landed in San Francisco, a Nevada tailor named Jacob Davis added rivets to the points of strain on pants after a customer's wife asked him to make the pants stronger. The idea worked, and Davis knew he had an exceptional product.

Davis couldn't afford the \$68 patent fee, so he asked Levi Strauss—an astute businessman with a solid reputation—to become his partner and help him produce the new creation. In 1873, the two received the patent, and copper-riveted "waist overalls"—what we know today as blue jeans—were born.

Within a short time, workingmen were buying the innovative pants and spreading the word about their unequaled durability. And the rest, as they say, is history.

"Levi's jeans have been worn by virtually everyone, from the cowboys of the American West to the young people who tore down the Berlin Wall," said Phil Marineau, Levi Strauss & Co.'s chief executive officer. "Generations have worn Levi's jeans as a symbol of freedom, individuality and fun."

Hollywood actors, personifying cowboys and bad boy rebels during the 1930s, '40s and '50s, helped transform Levi's from everyday work wear to a fashion trend. The trend of jeans as a defining cultural statement continued during the era of "flower power" in the 1960s and '70s.

Levi's jeans were so ubiquitous by the end of the century, *Time* magazine's millennium issue named



The document that led to the invention of blue jeans—the 150-year-old copper-riveted "waist overalls" patent, granted to Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis in 1873.

Levi's 501 jeans the best fashion of the 20th century—beating out both the little black dress and the miniskirt. Since their inception, more than 3.5 billion pairs of Levi's jeans have been sold throughout the world.

NOW: Levi Strauss unknowingly left his signature on the world of fashion. That signature continues today as the company that bears his name has introduced a new casual clothing brand called Levi Strauss Signature during its 150th anniversary year.

The new brand, which provides quality jeanswear for value-conscious consumers, is a return to its roots for the company that first invented durable riveted pants for the workingman. Each season, the Levi Strauss Signature brand will offer distinct new fabrics, finishes and styles for families who shop at mass-market retail stores such as Wal-Mart.