

Lesson 5  
READ THIS STORY #1, Basic

## Levi's

Jacob Davis was a tailor in Nevada in 1870. A distressed customer complained that her husband's work pants tore apart at the seams before they wore out, and her man needed pants that were extremely durable and inexpensive. So Jacob experimented. Eventually, he perfected an innovative way to reinforce pockets and seams with copper rivets. His pants outlasted all other pants available at the time.

When tailors began to imitate his invention, Jacob started to worry. He wrote to Levi Strauss, his cloth supplier. Jacob sent samples of the pants and proposed a partnership. In exchange for providing the \$68 needed to secure a patent for his invention, Levi would receive half of the sales proceeds. Levi agreed, and the patent was granted in 1873.

Levi and Jacob became partners in the venture. The first pants were made of a stiff cotton fabric called duck, but soon that fabric was replaced with more comfortable blue denim.

Initially, the partners had insufficient funds to erect a factory. So Jacob supervised the cutting of the fabric, packaged it with buttons and thread, and every morning, the packages were distributed to individual seamstresses at their homes. The completed pants were picked up each evening.

When demand for the product increased, Mr. Strauss opened a "Levi's" factory in San Francisco. Jacob Davis worked there as supervisor until his death in 1908.