**Levi Strauss & Co.** is an American clothing company known worldwide for its **Levi's** brand of denim jeans. It was founded in May 1853when German immigrant Levi Strauss moved from Bavaria, Germany, to San Francisco, California, to open a west coast branch of his brothers' New York “dry goods” (textile trade) business.

[**Jacob Davis**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_Davis_%28inventor%29), a [Latvian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latvians) immigrant, was a tailor who bought bolts of denim cloth from Levi Strauss & Co.'s wholesale house.

After one of Davis's customers kept buying cloth to reinforce torn pants, he had an idea to use copper rivets to reinforce the points of strain, such as on the pocket corners and at the base of the [button fly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Button_up_flies).

Davis did not have the money needed to purchase a patent, so he wrote to Strauss suggesting that they go into business together. After Strauss accepted Davis's offer, on May 20th, 1873, they received U.S. patent from the [United States Patent and Trademark Office](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Patent_and_Trademark_Office).

The patented rivet was later incorporated into the company's jean design and advertisements. In 1890, when the rivet patent went into public domain, lot numbers were assigned the products that were being manufactured, and "501" was used to designate the famous copper-riveted waist overalls.

Contrary to an advertising campaign suggesting that Levi Strauss sold his first jeans to gold miners during the [California Gold Rush](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_Gold_Rush) (which peaked in 1849), the manufacturing of denim overalls only began only in the 1870s.

Modern jeans began to appear in the 1920s, but sales were largely confined to the working people of the western United States, such as cowboys, lumberjacks, and railroad workers.

Levi's jeans were first introduced to the East during the “[dude ranch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dude_ranch)” craze of the 1930s, when vacationing Easterners returned home with tales and examples of the hard-wearing pants with rivets. Another boost came in World War II when blue jeans were sold only to people engaged in defense work.

From the early 1960s through the mid-1970s, Levi Strauss experienced significant growth in its business as the more casual look of the 1960s and 1970s ushered in the "blue jeans craze" and served as a catalyst for the brand.

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