



# Levi Strauss: The Man Who Gave Blue Jeans to the World

*Lynn Downey*

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Blue jeans are globally beloved and quintessentially American. They symbolize everything from the Old West to the hippie counter-culture; everyone from car mechanics to high-fashion models wears jeans. And no name is more associated with blue jeans than Levi Strauss & Co., the creator of this classic American garment.

As a young man Levi Strauss left his home in Germany and immigrated to America. He made his way to San Francisco and by 1853 had started his company. Soon he was a leading businessman in a growing commercial city that was beginning to influence the rest of the nation. Family-centered and deeply rooted in his Jewish faith, Strauss was the hub of a wheel whose spokes reached into nearly every aspect of American culture: business, philanthropy, politics, immigration, transportation, education, and fashion.

But despite creating an American icon, Levi Strauss is a mystery. Little is known about the man, and the widely circulated "facts" about his life are steeped in mythology. In this first full-length biography, Lynn Downey sets the record straight about this brilliant businessman. Strauss's life was the classic American success story, filled with lessons about craft and integrity, leadership and innovation.

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