



Neckwear

AMERICAN neckwear traces its ancestry back to the Civil War. Before 1865, when manufacturing got underway, almost all neckwear was imported. In 1890 all neckwear was machine-made and sold for \$2.25, \$4.50 and \$7.50 per dozen. Besides today's four-in-hands and bow-tecks, men were given more individuality in their choice by a variety of ascots, puff scarfs, and flat scarfs. Since pre-tied band-tecks, shield-tecks and band bows were prepared for the masses, only the extremely clothes-conscious knew how to tie four-in-hands. The Windsor tie had many admirers in 1893, and looked well with shirts like the one opposite. By 1899 the wine color four-in-hand was most popular with the "smart set."

After World War I, several innovations made the United States the world's leading neckwear producer. One of the most important of these was Jesse Langsdorf's resilient construction. Under this system the tie and lining are cut on the bias, which allows the tie to spring back to shape after knotting. Until it passed into the public domain, this patent was leased to manufacturers by Franc-Strohmenger & Cowan. Better wool linings substituted for flannel in 1921 now have a similar effect on tie construction.

Wool and rayon acetate ties gained in popularity during World War II primarily because of the shortage of silk and also because of their adaptability for printing and hand screening. The panel tie originated in America when hand-blocked print imports were cut off. The elimination of the vest by WPB and the repopularization of the Windsor knot contributed to the popularity of panels. Manufacturing was complicated by the need for planned patterns and precision cutting.

Bow ties now account for about 5 percent of total tie production; band tecks, pre-tied four-in-hands, less than 1/2 of 1 percent. In 1948 160,000,000 ties were sold at an average price of \$1.50 (or \$191,000,000), a 300 percent increase since 1937 when the average price was 60¢. Of these, 65 percent were rayon, 25 percent silk, and 10 percent nylon, wool and blends.

(image added)

Men's Wear

February 10, 1950



NECKWEAR in the 1890's, above, showing the prevailing styles including: short end four-in-hands, various types of ascots, Windsor bow, etc. Arrow collar of 1908 is shown at top of page. Reprinted from MEN'S WEAR.