

With rugged origins from the pioneers, Stetson has earned the title “the hat that won the west”

While a Stetson runs a bit more than a \$5 gold piece these days, be proud knowing you’re wearing a legendary piece of Americana whenever you tip your hat

Commented [1]: This isn't true. A \$5 gold piece today would be worth \$435. Stetsons run between \$105 - \$5,500.

Stetson and his companions obtained many animal skins but had no method of tanning them.

He showed the pioneers the process of making felt from animal fur that would be durable and water proof. He helped his fellow travelers make felt tents that would last and protect them from the rain.

Stetson made his first wide-brimmed felt hat to amuse his friends. It met some ridicule but, because of its aesthetic appeal and its ability to protect the wearer from the elements, it became the envy of many of his acquaintances, including his first patron—a bull whacker who paid him a substantial five dollar gold piece for it. This was the first Stetson hat ever sold.

Fortunately, this took a favorable turn when he created a light felt hat made out of a very fine fur. While showing a store owner his product, a customer became interested and bought the hat on the spot. The owner took an interest and ordered a dozen hats from Stetson.

Instead of trying to make the next hit in hat fashion, he figured he would make hats for the working man of the West. Stetson would make the style that he invented during his journey to Pikes Peak. With its wide flat brim and high, straight- sided crown, it was great for protecting the wearer from the rain and harsh sun. Likewise, the hat was ideal for working outdoors. He believed this style of hat would be well received by ranchers, bull whackers, miners, and other western frontiersmen. He called his creation “The Boss of the Plains.” To promote his product, he took a gamble and sent a sample hat to clothing vendors in every city in the Southwest with a letter asking them to order a dozen more. Shortly Stetson started receiving orders from all over the region.

Stetson made three versions of the Boss of the Plains hat. The first one, made out of regular felt, sold for five dollars retail; the second one, made out of a very fine felt sold for 10 dollars; and the third one, made out of extra fine beaver or nutria felt, sold for 30 dollars. He never sacrificed quality to engage in price competition.

Stetson once said, “There is no advertisement equal to a well pleased customer.”

Stetson was a craftsman and businessman, but also a man of integrity and kindness. He believed in investing in his employees and treating them well. He paid his employees a good

Deleted: A hat maker or hatter was not a well respected profession at the time. Hatters were seen as unreliable, lazy drunks, but John's determination and good business practices would help change that stereotype.

wage, had an apprentice system that encouraged long term employment, and set up a Christmas bonus system where the employees would be paid a bonus if they worked continuously throughout the year. Stetson's methods of management led to a factory of hardworking and skilled individuals. His efforts changed the perception of the hatter as a lazy, unreliable tramp to a trustworthy, hardworking, artisan.

He created the Stetson Building and Loan Association to help his employees achieve this goal.

Stetson provided healthcare for his employees at a time when that was unheard of.

Stetson hats were not just worn by cowboys and ranchers; they were worn by men of every background and social standing. The Stetson hat was adopted by the U.S. military and it is still worn by cavalry troopers for ceremonial purposes. The iconic hat has also been used by British, Canadian, and South African military.

The Stetson has been called "the finest hat made in America" by the Springfield Daily Republican newspaper, and the Stetson website proudly proclaims, "Stetson, it's not just a hat, it's the hat," – a statement given credibility by the Stetson's history as an icon.

Before Wister's novel, reports Ben Macintyre for The Times, "cowboys were usually depicted as murderers and hoodlums, and until the late 1880s "cowboy" was an insult, synonymous with "drunkard."

In westerns, the hero would traditionally wear a white Stetson and the villain would wear a black one.

Simple or not, the image stuck. Wearing a white Stetson hat (as many U.S. presidents have done) was meant to indicate allegiance to a certain moral code, which is still associated with the hat.

A Stetson hat signifies not only a hero and a leader, but also a cowboy with class. All of these traits are enhanced by the way the hat is worn... Take off your Stetson hat as etiquette dictates. It is improper to wear a hat indoors and downright disrespectful to fail to take off the hat briefly to salute a lady."

But an advertising campaign by Marlboro reminded the American public of Stetson-wearing cowboy's former bad-boy status. Marlboro was having difficulty selling its filtered cigarettes, which were initially aimed at women. They decided the problem was that they were telling the American public that their cigarettes were for "sissies," reported Kathleen Schalch for NPR. Marlboro then hired Leo Burnett, an advertising legend of the time, to turn their image around. "I said, 'What's the most masculine symbol you can think of?'" recalled Burnett in the radio broadcast. "And right off the top of his head one of these writers spoke up and said a cowboy. And I said, 'That's for sure.'" And so the Marlboro Man was born.

Marlboro used a variety of models for their ads, some of whom were real-life cowboys, but one thing was always the same: the white Stetson hat pulled low over the man's face as he smoked his cigarette. Phillip Landry, the Marlboro brand owner at Phillip Morris in the 1960s, told NPR, "In a world that was becoming increasingly complex and frustrating for the ordinary man, the cowboy represented an antithesis — a man whose environment was simplistic and relatively pressure free. He was his own man in a world he owned." Many of Marlboro's TV ads during the 1960s featured cowboys in Stetsons leading their cattle around to the theme song from the *Magnificent Seven*, inviting viewers to come join them in "Marlboro Country," where they too could put their Stetsons on and be assured that they were still in control of the world they lived in.

This mythic figure has undergone countless shifts over the years, moving from drunkard to good guy to macho man to politician. But the Stetson hat, whatever it may mean at the time, is always in the picture.

a lot of truth to the old cowboy saying: Your hat is the last thing you take off and the first thing that gets noticed.

From quintessential screen cowboys such as Tom Mix and John Wayne to leaders like Theodore Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan to country singers like Hank Williams and Garth Brooks, a Stetson has long been the go-to hat for both the natty celebrity and the true cowboy.

And it's been that way practically since John B. Stetson handcrafted his first hat in the early 1860s in a battle with the wilderness. What originally began as an attempt to weatherproof himself with a big brimmed hat on the Western plains has become a great American success story and a potent symbol of Americana. One hundred fifty years later, it's like Coke or Kleenex — a name known around the world that's come to mean not just the brand but the thing itself. Stetson equals cowboy hat.

"Stetson is also great because they've been made in America continuously for the last 150 years following the same principles laid out all that time ago. We still follow them today."

On the Pikes Peak expedition, instead of using untanned, often putrid, animal skins for warmth and shelter like the other gold seekers did, Stetson made himself blankets, a tent, and a broad-brimmed hat from felted fur shavings.

Stetson would become well-known as a hatmaking magnate whose name was synonymous with not just quality but also durability and beauty. The company itself was as innovative as the hats and won many an award.

1880s in William "Buffalo Bill" Cody's Wild West show. Cody, who liked to look the snazzy part, usually wore a broad-brimmed Stetson, both while performing and in his private life. Annie Oakley wore one, too. In Wild West publicity, they're always pictured in their hats.

Harrison Ford (who, by the way, wears a Stetson fedora in the Indiana Jones series),

It's such an institution, on-screen and off, that a black Tyler-style Stetson worn by Garth Brooks is actually in the Smithsonian Institution.

John Wayne once proclaimed Stetson "the hat that won the West."

FIRST PASS

- The hand-crafted quality of Stetson hats exudes a rugged, timeless charm that will make you feel like a true cowboy or cowgirl
- The smooth, soft texture of the fur felt material used in Stetson hats will wrap you in luxury, making you feel like a true American icon
- The durability of Stetson hats is unmatched, making them a true investment piece that will stand the test of time
- The rich history and heritage of Stetson hats adds a sense of nostalgia and romance to the piece, making it a truly special accessory
- The classic, iconic design of Stetson hats is sure to turn heads and make a statement, making you feel confident and stylish