



## *SUSPENDED IN TIME*

by Morgan Dewill

Many years ago, as I was getting dressed for my junior year prom, I put on everything that came in the tuxedo kit. Including, as you might have guessed, the suspenders. As I was taking a last gander at my own awesomeness, I realized something was missing. And so, yes, I did put a belt right on. I'm fully documented in every picture wearing all three things; the suspenders, the belt, and the biggest dunce smile. A huge mistake that I learned quickly.

Suspenders, (or braces, as they're refereed to in the United Kingdom) have slowly become a curiosity in modern culture. Sadly, they've been relegated to truck stops and bowling alleys and presented all too commonly in that 4-inch wide rainbow pattern which we've all seen too many times. Then, of course, there are Larry King and Steve Urkel. We'll leave that at that.

Although it seems that the grand old days of beautifully braided leathers and luxuriously patterned silks are gone, we feel as a pair of well-crafted suspenders should be an essential in every man's wardrobe.

So let's delve into a bit of history. Gentlemen used to use any manner of device to hold their pants up. There were the giant satiny sashes that any self-respecting pirate wouldn't be seen looting and plundering without. Then, of course, the plain ole rope method a la Jethro Clampett. However, it was during the French Revolution in the late 1700's that the suspender first popped up. The first iterations were simple, leather strap and hook setups.

Soon after, our lowly suspender was discovered by the upper class, high society. Now having been the chosen article by the high-brow set, it was actually true that if a gentleman was to take a lady as his fiancée, the young lady would have to present the gentleman with a pair of suspenders which she would have embroidered herself.

Now let's move stateside and a bit ahead in time. Initially, suspenders were the choice of the affluent here as well. But, you see, as different wars came and went, and soldiers who were used to wearing uniform belts returned home, style began to shift towards the belt. A dark time for our hero the suspender. But it isn't all gloom and despair. For instance, did you know that one of the first people to apply for a U.S. patent for suspenders was a certain Mr. Samuel Clemens? That's correct, the man we all know as Mark Twain. So suspenders may not be for everyone, but they are for the right ones.

There are definite advantages to wearing suspenders. While a belt clinches a waistband tighter to the body, suspenders essentially provide a waist-shaped hanger that the pants can rest on. This alleviates any bunching of fabric that occurs when a waistband is cinched with a belt. Suspenders allow the fabric to fall in a nice, smooth plane rather than ballooning out.

If we can leave you with one tip, besides every man should have a pair of suspenders, it would be to never purchase a clip on pair. Always choose the buttons.