

Many Changes in Men's Styles Career of Local Haberdasher

In the 34 years Art Nickerson has dealt in haberdashery he has seen many changes in the styles of men's clothes—from plain colored hosiery in cotton and wool to every kind of color and textile mixture; from narrow bottom and well-bottom trousers to flared bottoms; from the "hard hat" to the present-day soft snap brims.

The most outstanding change, says Mr. Nickerson, is the change in the way men today choose their clothes.

Fifteen years ago, when a man came in to buy a suit and a pair of trousers, that was all that fitted—well, that was all that fitted. He bought it.

A different story today, says Mr. Nickerson, and especially the men—very style conscious. They follow Esquire and want the type of clothes that are the latest in style of color.

The trend, says Mr. Nickerson, has had a great influence on merchandizing. It has demanded larger stocks, greater variety and very close attention to buying.

The clothing came from Clark's and Truro, Nova Scotia, and the lure of the west, and landed in Prince Rupert in 1918. He entered the service of the late Martin O'Reilly, then one of the main men's clothing stores in the city.

Mr. Nickerson recalls the early days with some nostalgia. "They were a different bunch of those days—hale and hearty and well-met sort of fellows. Today, the clothing traveller is mostly all business." And he tells the story of a well-known traveller through Central B.C. in the earlier days who began with a few dollars.

The outstanding salesman of that day was fired when his company discovered he carried an

other line. Immediately, he continued with the second line—woolen goods—and became so successful that today he heads the company for which he sold, and is president of one of the largest wool knitting mills in Western Canada.

MODERN TRENDS

The biggest change that has come into men's clothing styles generally is the influence of sportswear, says the manager-partner of Watts & Nickerson.

Sport shirts, for example, came to Canada from the U.S. about 10 years ago but actually only became predominant after the Second World War.

And sportswear is not just a fad. "Men want to dress more casually—that's why the stiff collar is gone. The sports shirt is here to stay and I think this year will be bigger than ever for sales in that line."

Daring patterns have even invaded the dress shirt field. One of the most popular is the "Harry Truman" type which features pastel shades and figured designs.

THE STAFF

To serve the customer at Watts & Nickerson are three other men outstanding in their knowledge and appreciation of style and material of clothing:

Bonny Sprinkle was stationed here with the American Army during the Second World War and won a bride, locally born

Leona Whiffin. After the war, the couple took a trip to Virginia—Bonny's home state, but returned to Prince Rupert two and a half years ago.

Wally Dell is a local high school graduate who joined the company in October, 1946, and has shown a keen interest in dressing today's man for a modern world.

A man with wide experience in many departments and clothing stores in Western Canada is Garnet Hull. Garnet's pleasant demeanor is backed by a storehouse of knowledge about men's clothing today, and yesterday. He's been serving customers at Watts & Nickerson's since 1945.

Keeping the company books in line is Mike Nickerson, Art's brother. Mike has made his home on the West Coast since 1911, and in 1942 settled here permanently to add his knowledge and experience to the clothing business of his brother's firm.

EARLY BEGINNINGS

The present firm of Watts & Nickerson had its foundations back in the early days. About 1910 J. J. Sloan founded a men's furnishing store on Sixth Street which was soon taken over by George Bryant. A few years later a young railroadman, Joe Greer, became interested.

The business of Bryant & Greer continued for years until Greer left the city. Bryant and his sons, Jimmy and Wigner, later joined the business. The store was moved from Sixth Street to the

present Watts & Nickerson location.

Meantime, William M. Watts, another Prince Rupert boy, who had been in the grocery business, and Art Nickerson, who had been for a time employed by Bryant, in 1937 started a men's furnishings business on Third Avenue in the premises now occupied by Vogue Footwear. During the war Watts & Nickerson bought out George Bryant's business and the two stores were joined up at the present site.

Watts & Nickerson were for a time also in the men's furnishings and hardware business at Smithers but a couple of years ago they left that town. A short time later Watts & Nickerson bought out the men's furnishing business of H. G. Noel at Nanaimo which they renovated and re-stocked, making it one of the most modern and up-to-date stores in the Vancouver Island city.

Mr. Watts, an ex-mayor and long prominent in many lines of local public service, left Prince Rupert to take over the management and now makes his home at Nanaimo.

"We have had a pleasant and workable partnership," says partner Art Nickerson.

"We like to do business in a smaller city because we do a personal business. Service and personality count much more in a small community than in a large city where selling is nearly always strictly impersonal."

Know Your Rupert Firms



ART NICKERSON AND CUSTOMER

Partners Bought Out Bryant Co. Ltd. In 1940

Art Nickerson, manager and partner of Watts and Nickerson, entered into the clothing business in Truro, Nova Scotia at the age of 16.

Men preferred plain colors in those days, says Art, mostly greys, browns and black. This applied to hats, hosiery, suits and coats. In hats, Homburgs and Derbies were the favorites. The Homburg is still sold today among many other styles, but the Derby now is for dress wear only.

At that time, around the early 1920's, suits were similar in style, and the trouser bottoms were narrow the same as the young men prefer them today. Again dark colors were the style.

In shirts there were just two kinds, the dress shirt and the work shirt. In 1952, as contrasted to the 1920's, the Sport shirt is put to many uses.

Outstanding change in men's clothing, according to Mr. Nickerson, is color. If you wore a yellow shirt in those earlier days "they would put you in jail." Now if you wear a yellow shirt you are right in the swim.

To illustrate this point, clothing men predict the "Harry Truman Shirt" to be the biggest seller of 1952 in Canada. Already a best seller in the U.S.A. last year largely because the president appeared in so many news cuts arrayed in a "flowery print shirt."

Men have not only gone over to color but multi-colored shirts are becoming very popular.

Underwear and work clothing have also undergone marked changes. In the first post-war period the only underwear available was combinations for summer and winter wear.

Now the two-piece brief or jockey has taken their place.

Work shirts then consisted of one or two plain types, the shirts being of a very rough cut. Today the work shirt is cut along dress shirt lines, well finished and in a variety of colors.



WALLY DELL AND BONNY SPRINKLE

Returning to the activities of Mr. Nickerson, he came to Prince Rupert in 1920 and worked for a pioneer men's clothing merchant, Martin O'Reilly, for two years. From 1922 to 1929 Mr. Nickerson was in the employ of the company store at Anyox, B.C., under Granby Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company. During his stay he received a promotion to Manager of the Men's Clothing Department there.

Back in Prince Rupert in 1929 Art worked for Bryant Co. Ltd., in the clothing business and until 1937 worked at various jobs in the city.

In 1937 W. M. Watts and Mr. Nickerson formed a partnership and located their clothing store at the present site of the Vogue Shoe Store.

Mr. Watts is a very active partner. A resident of Prince Rupert from 1920 to 1940, he moved to Nanaimo to open another Watts and Nickerson store in that city. He was mayor of Prince Rupert in 1943 and always took part in civic work. He is a past president of the Chamber of Commerce and the Gyro Club. His contribution to the community was outstanding.

The partners bought out Bryant Co. Ltd. in 1940, which is the present site of the Watts and Nickerson Store.

Interior premises of the store have been renovated, the clothing and hat sections in particular have been streamlined.

Clothing lines carried by Watts and Nickerson are the finest. Such names as Fashion-Craft and Shiffer-Hillman for suits, Stetson hats, Arrow shirts, Daks slacks, and QWG work clothing can mean only the best in men's clothing.

MANAGEMENT AND STAFF is as follows:

W. M. WATTS—Partner and manager of store in Nanaimo.
A. S. (ART) NICKERSON—Partner and manager of store in Prince Rupert.
H. S. (MIKE) NICKERSON, Bookkeeper
G. R. (GARNET) HULL, Salesman
W. E. (WALLY) DELL, Salesman
B. S. (BONNY) SPRINKLE, Salesman



ART NICKERSON AND GARNET HULL

Modern workmen prefer to wear coveralls, and waist overalls have taken the place of bib overalls.

Mr. Nickerson emphasized the fact that all changes in men's clothing are minor compared to color. The introduction of color to men's clothing is the big change.

WATTS & NICKERSON

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BLACKWOOD on Bridge

By FASLEY BLACKWOOD

Here's Valuable Tip on Defensive Play

There's a point of play in this hand which comes up fairly often and which you would do well to add to your bag of tricks.

Occurs in the situation where you, as a defender, have a pretty good trump holding, including one sure winner in the trump suit. You have a side suit with which you can force declarer. The point is to take your trump trick at a time when dummy is out of trumps because your "forcing" suit can be trumped on the board, obviously that does not reduce declarer's trump holding.

OPPORTUNITY
Look how Mr. Muzzy threw away a golden opportunity in this deal. He opened the king of hearts and Mr. Dale won with the ace. The king of trumps was led and Mr. Muzzy stepped right in with the ace. He cashed the queen of hearts, taking the last one off the board, and looked around for new worlds to conquer.

Finally he switched to the suit of diamonds. Mr. Champion won with the ace and returned a diamond, whereupon Mr. Dale claimed the balance of the tricks and his contract.

"What's your hurry about taking the ace of trumps?" roared Mr. Champion. "Just take the third round to trumps and lead the queen and another heart. You would have to trump in his hand. Then, when I was in with the ace of diamonds, I'd lead another heart. When he ruffed that, he'd be out of trumps and you'd still have one left—for the setting trick."

"Wait a minute," said Mr. Muzzy desperately. "If Dale won the first two trump tricks, he wouldn't lead a third round. He'd switch to diamonds right there."

Mr. Champion gave him a withering look. "All right, he

North dealer
Neither side vulnerable

North (Mr. Muzzy)
S—A 4 3 2
H—K Q 10 3
D—8 2
C—J 1 3

East (Mr. Champion)
S—3
H—9 7 4 2
D—A 7 4
C—10 7 6 2

South (Mr. Dale)
S—K Q J 10 6
H—A 6
D—10 5 3
C—Q 9 8

The bidding:
North 1D
East 1S
South 2D
West 4S
All pass

switches to diamonds. You start an echo by playing the eight first. I lay off the first diamond, win the second and lead a third round which you trump for the setting trick."

Mr. Muzzy could think of no good argument so he fell back on an old favorite of his. "Well, you may be right," he said, "but the play you're suggesting is double-dummy."

Mr. Champion grinned wickedly. "You certainly are," he said.

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