

Use History to Save Money and Dress with Confidence

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All right, gentlemen. Today, we're going to talk about why history in style menswear, why does it matter.

There's a guy named George Santayana who died awhile back. He was actually a Spanish-American. He was born in Spain, came over and immigrated to the United States, went to Harvard and a number of other smart schools. He was a philosopher, but the big thing that he said -- and he actually moved back to Spain. He lived there until his death in 1952, but the point was he said those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it, something to that respect.

The point is that if you don't know your history, especially your menswear, you're going to make a lot of mistakes. You're going to buy a lot of clothing you don't need. You're going to try to wear things that just don't look great, and to understand that there have been millions and millions, billions of men before you who have all worn clothing and you better learn from their lessons.

There are many opinions out there, mine included. If you understand history, if you understand the function, if you understand where clothing comes from, you're going to be able to make your way through all those opinions. You're going to be able to look at my advice. You're going to be able to say, "I'm going to take this from you, Antonio. I'm going to take this from you. I'm going to go over to your friend, Aaron. I'm going to go over to your friend, Baron. I'm going to go over to your friend, Andy, or your friend, Brett. I'm going to take little bits here, but I'm going to make my own decision." That's my goal, is to empower you to be able to make your own decisions when there's all these opinions out there.

In fashion, it's difficult to ignore. I was just reading a research about primates. One primate started wearing -- I think it was like a feather or a leaf right behind its ear, and then all of the other monkeys around it started wearing leaves in the back of their ear. This is something that's built into us. When we see other people wearing Crocs, wearing t-shirts, wearing -- I think the big thing right now is athletic gear -- wearing athletic gear, we want to do it. We have a natural urge. We have this feeling to do this. That's real.

When understand the history of clothing, you all of a sudden can break from that mold because you realize just because everyone is wearing Crocs and things come in and out, I'm going to continue to wear my nice double monk strap because I like them. They've got a nice history. I feel great in them and I'm strong enough to resist fashion.

Also, true style -- and this is where true style emerges because you build the strength. It takes time and effort to develop this. So when you take that time and effort, when you understand

the history, when you understand the science, all these other details there, you really can start to have and to understand what is your true style. When people say, "Be yourself," you really will start to be yourself.

I'm going to give you the three things that's great about knowing history and how it's going to make you a stronger dresser. Number one is that classic clothing items all have a story. When you understand that story -- and I get into a lot more in the core wardrobe, but let's just take the trench coat, a pretty easy example there. Trench coat, where do you think it comes from? It comes out of trench warfare, but it actually goes back to South Africa.

I think it was during the World War when they were first made. They weren't called trench coats then, but they used a gabardine material. They were an officer's coat and they worked out really well in the sense that they could deal with the dust. They could deal with the rain. They could just deal with the climate of South Africa. It was something that they found, wow, these things work really well.

They forgot about them for a while until World War I. All of a sudden, we've got a coat that guys can literally wrap themselves up into, and at the time, officers have these because they were buying their own clothing. They were a bit more outfitted. They were able to get nicer things.

Nowadays, we've got all this performance gear, but there was a time when people didn't have access to that and it was actually a pretty nice thing for an army to actually be outfitted. Now, they weren't always outfitted the best. This cost quite a bit of money and officers would supplement that. They would go to the finer stores in London and they would have coats commission their uniforms made this way.

They would try to use better materials especially if they had the means because they realized that using a tighter weave fabric such as gabardine is going to do a better job of resisting the wind, resisting the water, keeping them warm. When everyone else was freezing their butt off, these guys, because they paid a little bit more money, actually are staying warm and they're feeling better about themselves.

That's where the trench coat developed. All of a sudden, all the parts of the trench coat, the length of the trench coat, the color of the trench coat actually still out of South Africa and the fabric that they had available at the time to make many of them, that all plays into why today the trench coat exists as it does.

Now, it's falling out of favor. We don't see it as much anymore, but because you know the history, because you know where it comes from, you know that this is what I want. I want it so it's got all the things historically, and we'll probably link over to the trench coat in the core wardrobe so you can look at all the details.

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That leads me to point number two, which is when you identify a trench coat and you know where all the latches are, all the pockets should be, the belt is at, all the things that doesn't really -- does a trench coat really need a belt nowadays? No, it doesn't, but if it doesn't have that belt -- and all Burberry trench coats do and higher quality made custom trench coats do. It's a sign of quality that they pay attention to those small details, that it has D-rings in the appropriate places, that it has the shoulder flap on the right side.

The women's trench coat is going to have it on the opposite side. Now, they used to say -- and I've heard different things that the butt of the rifle was made to go there so that it would actually have a little bit of a cushion. I've heard the real reason that's there is actually when you seal it up so it could seal up properly and that water wouldn't get inside of it, but I like the butt of the rifle example. That's a pretty good one, but you start to understand this stuff. So when someone sees that jacket and they're like, "Wow! That's a neat-looking jacket," you actually can start to tell them stories.

That leaves me to point number three, which is knowledge of menswear and knowing that something has been around for over a hundred years, guess what? You can afford to spend a little bit more money on it because you can rest assure that this isn't going to go out of style, that five years from now, it's not going to be out of fashion and you can't wear it.

You can't say the same thing for Crocs and some of these track suits coming out, some of the jackets out there with really skinny lapels. There are things that are very dated. You go look at an Armani suit for the 1980s and that was very fashionable at the time period when they lowered it all. It was a longer jacket, the buttoning, everything was low and they said it makes it more comfortable.

Well, that may be true. I think that's debatable, but the point is you can't wear them nowadays. That's the cool part about when you understand history and menswear and you go for classic fits, classic clothing. It comes down to fit, fabric, and function. If you nail those things, all of a sudden, you're going to walk in and people aren't going to say you're fashionable. They're going to say, "That guy looks good" and that is timeless.

All right, gentlemen, know your history. I'll see you in the next video.

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