



DREAMS

OF GOLD AND SILVER

Mike holds up the jeans. In the glow of the light they see a small, rusty-red dust cloud dissipate into the air. The pants are contorted and closely resemble something like a thick, underground root. They straighten out with some difficulty, like an old man stretching his rheumatic legs.

Viktor, Russ and Cory gather around Mike. They begin to examine the crumpled jeans as the dust particles settle on the ground.

The pants are certainly well worn, like most garments of the day. The indigo color is faded out on the front thighs, and there are white specks from melted candle wax. Both legs have large holes at the knees. The left leg is cut off at the knee, and the right leg is missing a large piece of fabric from just below the knee to halfway down the shin.

There is a button fly – a standard for pants from this era. The ubiquitous zipper didn't appear until the late 1950s.

The backside of the jeans has a large hole in the right leg, while the left leg is completely missing. The remaining vestiges of denim are threadbare, providing anyone who would wear them with only partial covering, especially on their bottom. Not surprisingly, the denim is considerably worn out on the backside.

But there are more interesting details.

The pockets on the front have a wave-shaped double seam under the edges, a so-called arcuate stitch. A similar arcuate stitch is found on the small pocketwatch pocket. While the arcuate stitches provided no function, they are strikingly decorative.

The specimen Mike has discovered bears the mark of Meyerstein & Lowenberg, a San Francisco denim manufacturer owned by Prussian immigrants Lewis Meyerstein and Isidor Lowenberg.

Isidor came to America in 1853 and Lewis immigrated around the same time. They both married wives from Alabama who were born to Prussian and Bavarian parents. In 1861, Isidor and Lewis opened the doors to their first business in San Francisco – a clothing distribution company. It wasn't until 1877 that they began producing clothing themselves. Two years later, Isidor was awarded a patent for an improvement in work apparel, and the company began to produce