

His and Hers

The **His** part of the story is more practical than women's corsets (although men did wear corsets to cinch in waists too in the time period of the corset). The Long John has two possible derivatives – one being the French "*longue jambes*" for "long legs". Lea Mills in Derbyshire England which is over 225 years old, may be the originator of the garment and it is said that a heavyweight boxer John L Sullivan wore a garment similar to this in that time period.

The underwear today is generally made of cotton or wool or a blend of polyesters with layers to trap heat. The wool-based garment has natural properties such as fire retardance, and maintenance of heat even when wet. Long Johns can be two pieces (shirt and pants) or single piece. While introduced in the 17th century they became popular as sleepwear in the 18th century

One of the most famous producers in Canada is Stanfield's. Frank Stanfield along with his brother patented the **Unshrinkable Underwear** in 1915 but had been making the underwear since the turn of the century.

The **His** section focuses on the corner cards of several companies and other related items that were in Canada from the late 1800s through the present times with a focus in the early 1900's.

This exhibit shows by the use of letter corner card advertising, some of the interesting garments that were made for men and women in the later Victorian Edwardian and King George V period. These covers tend to be highly sought after and hard to come by. Further down this vein, the corset material is harder to come by than the long john advertising. This collection has been accumulated over 20 years. The exhibit is essentially divided into the **His** section on the first frame, while the **Hers** portion covers the second frame of the exhibit. Hard to come by items are surrounded by a coloured **matte**.

The corset first appeared in Europe in the 15th century and peaked in their use in the Victorian era. It was a period where people went from wearing clothes that fit the body to making the body fit the clothes. The etymology for the word corset from Wikipedia is:

"The English word corset is derived from the Old French word corps and the diminutive of body, which itself derives from corpus—Latin for body. The term "corset" was in use in the late 14th century, from the French "corset" which meant "a kind of laced bodice." The meaning of it as a "stiff supporting so constricting undergarment for the waist, worn chiefly by women to shape the figure," dates from 1795. The term "stays" was frequently used in English circa 1600 until the early twentieth century and was used interchangeably with corset in the Renaissance."

The corset evolved over the years and was mainly used through to the Edwardian period but declined through the 1950's, It gave way to the girdle and basically lost use in the 1960's. In Canada there were multiple manufacturers of corsets starting in the late 1800's.

The **Hers** portion of the exhibit various cover corner cards and calling cards from the 1890's through the 1930's from companies such as Crompton, Brush, ET, and other miscellaneous companies.

Plan	
His – Frame 1	Hers – Frame 2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title Page • Stanfield's • Atlantic, Penman's • Miscellaneous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.T. Corsets • Dominion Corsets • Crompton Corsets • Miscellaneous

Stanfield's factory is located in Truro, Nova Scotia and the cover is dated Feb 13, 1902 and advertises the Unshrinkable Underwear. The cover is backstamped on 14 Feb in Mahone Bay, NS



Trade card in the shape of a corset. Back of card at 50%

