

## Men's Suit

07-23-2015 by Harry Zirkelbach  
Stars and un date 24134

The home town was dominated by two local Department Stores. One was on the west side of Main Street, the other on the east, a block apart. The city was equally divided in loyalty to these small giants for everything-under-the-sun. Still, there was competition for segments of their wares, supposedly the least expensive, anywhere.

So it came to pass that P.A. Meyer and Sons thrived in providing mens clothing. And they too had price competition, not in quality, service. They remained the "little giant clothier" throughout the the seemingly endless 1930 depression.

Only a few may recall that a suit of clothes then came with a dress coat, vest, two pair of pants. And that pant legs ended with a cuff, the length chosen by the customer, popular one inch. During WWII, military pants were cuff-less, and as all fashion changes through the years, the returning GI began eliminating cuffs on their trousers. They are a rarity now. After the tailor completed the customers measurements, the material chosen, the tailors' seamstresses and he were onto alteration for final fitting. Of course the suit had to generally fit initially. Here it was a blessing to be young and trim, for the result was nearly a Tailored made suit for the ages.

The all-boy Catholic High School had no dress code, unless someone mentioned casual. The two hundred students, capacity, the desks in the Cathedral's basement Study Hall determined this, were indistinguishable for other of the community, especially in their adherence to casual, every day of the year. Excluding, dance, graduation exercises, and that once-in-a-year when the Bishop announced he would be available for a photo session with the Senior class. Each event a recognized command performance.

The school was called Prep., an abbreviation for Preparatory. It was understood the Bishop expected some vocations to the Priesthood, but equally important, to develop minds that some day might understand a great deal more than right from wrong, the nuances between. In effect leadership. Like all such investments, money is spent, the seed planted, the result not fully appreciated in the instigators' lifetime. His continuous application of the principal determines success. In general, Bishop John M Gannon can be credited a success, for his city retains a large Catholic population, and Prep's enrollment now five times larger, is still a "free" high school education.

Two boys, Senior class of 1939, were neighbors, friend for years. Their fathers,  
working to support a family with little reserve.

Someone in both families determines their Senior should have a new suit. And  
P.A. Meyers had a sale. Independently, mothers take their pride-and-joy to see the  
tailor, were instrumental in selecting the material, approve the fitting.

Neither boy had worn their new treasure before the Bishop's appearance.  
They are surprised to see the others' garb; it matched theirs.  
Each thought the other looked great in his new suit.

The Bishop arrives, chats with each. He knows the twelve or so academic leaders,  
for he has given this select group a gift every three months,  
fifteen events so far.

Mgsr. Wherle, founder and school dean, placed his Seniors  
for the photo, three equal rows, the Bishop front center.

And on either side of Bishop Gannon,  
the two new matching suits from P.A. Meyer & Sons.  
At the photographer command,"no smiles", only the Bishop does.