

## GANT: HISTORY AND HERITAGE

The story of GANT begins with a young man who dreamed the American dream. Berl Gantmacher was a miller's son from Miropol, Ukraine, who made his way to Rotterdam and took a steamship to New York City. Archives at Ellis Island record him arriving on November 12, 1907. He was 17 years old.

He set to work, building a better life for himself. He changed his name to Bernard, studied at night and worked in the garment industry during the days. After fighting for the US Army in the First World War he went into business for himself and set up the Par-Ex Shirt Company in Brooklyn, which made shirts for other labels.

In 1927 Par-Ex relocated to New Haven, Connecticut. Business grew – and so did the family. Bernard's sons Marty and Elliot would later have a profound influence on the direction of the company. After the Second World War they recognized that America was entering a period of rapid and profound change and convinced their father to make shirts under their own label. In April 1949, GANT Inc. was born.

The company still made shirts for other retailers, but the attention to detail won admiration. People knew that the GANT symbol – a G in a diamond stamped on the shirt tail – guaranteed quality. Soon the company began producing shirts under its own label and forever changed the direction of American menswear.

GANT perfectly suited a new style – the Ivy League Look – that was emerging on the campus of nearby Yale University. At the university store, the Yale Co-op, GANT shirts flew off the shelves. In 1954 (the same year that *LIFE* magazine declared New Haven the home of the Ivy League Look) the company changed its name to Gant of New Haven.

GANT's success was built on unprecedented use of color, form, and fabric, plus unrivalled attention to detail. No other brand could match the perfect roll of a GANT collar. Other refinements included the box pleat for extra comfort, the back collar button to keep the tie in place, the locker loop on the back and the button tab that made the tie and the shirt match perfectly. A GANT shirt wasn't just a fashion essential, it was a staple of the wardrobe for men across America. To reflect this, from the 1960s the company was known simply as Gant Shirtmakers.

GANT's growth continued with a collection of American Sportswear in 1971 and, three years later, the sub-brand GANT Rugger was launched. The company's range continued to expand in the following decades, and established headquarters in Sweden, adding a European sensibility to this quintessentially all-American brand.

Today GANT offers menswear, womenswear, children's clothing, home products accessories and fragrances. It is a brand built on the values of authenticity, quality, sport and timeless good taste, and it continues to develop and define comfortable, style-conscious clothing. Despite this, the company hasn't forgotten the origins. In 2010 Gant opened a new store back where it all began – in New Haven, Connecticut.