

The Stetson Hat.

I know a few people who have Stetsons. In fact, when my brother was visiting a few months ago, he bought himself a couple. They are good quality, and last for a long time. Where he lives is very sunny, so they are a charming, and unusual way to get shade in New Zealand. Stetson is an icon of American society. It's typically American, like baseball, and Elvis Presley. Close to the end of the 19th century, the Stetson Hat Company was the biggest in the world, producing over three million hats a year. Even in our little, downtown museum, we have a glass case that is dedicated to the Stetson company. I had no idea that women's hats were also made. John B. Stetson started his company in 1865. Initially, only men's hats were made. It wasn't until the 1930's that ladies hats were also made. The company is based in Garland, Texas, and is now one of the largest in the country. This success story is said to have started when John Stetson went to Colorado to prospect for gold. While he was there, the story goes, he made a hat out of the untreated leather taken from furs that he had collected on his journey. Because his father was a hatter, he had experience with materials and design. He wanted to show off what he could do to his friends. The resulting hat was soft, and protected him from the elements. What started out as a joke, proved to be the first stepping stone to a business. This hat had a wide brim, a large crown (or head piece), and could even be used to carry water. Apparently, later on, John's group met a cowboy who paid him five dollars in gold for the hat. It was this experience that encouraged him to create his signature hat, 'The Boss of the Plains'. He replicated the fashionable hats, but when he launched his own design, it was then that he became successful. The original company was sold in the 1970's to another company, but it, to this day, retains the Stetson logo for those particular hats. I have noticed around town, that some men, especially of Hispanic origin, or older Caucasian men, will wear a Stetson for an elegant occasion. When it's time to dress up, the Stetson hat comes out of its box, to put the finishing touches in a formal situation.

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary and expressions: a couple, initially, ...is said to , proved to be.

1. The eclairs in the bakery looked amazing, so I bought a couple.
2. Initially, sales were slow at the beginning of the season, but then things improved.
3. She is said to have been seven feet tall and covered in hair.
4. The cheapest wine proved to be the very best.

