

Furriers

Fur may have been the very first form of clothing for Mankind, of course, but here in the U.S. and other Western countries we tend to equate furs with status symbols. Who was responsible for that? No, not movie stars. Wearing furs as indicators of wealth and position actually goes *waaaaay* back. Primitive societies have been doing it for millennia; leopard and lion skins were only worn by pharaohs and high priests; by the 11th century, in Western Europe, mink, ermine, sable, and chinchilla were reserved for the upper classes.

Somewhere along the line here [*I've been able to narrow it down to between 1 million BC and the late 1800s, thanks to Google!*], professional furriers appeared...and they were doing quite well, thank you very much, right up to the 1980s. Then came the anti-fur campaigns which reached their peak in the 1980s and 1990s.

Whether or not activist efforts are the cause, the governments of the United Kingdom and Austria have banned fur farming in their countries altogether, while The Netherlands has phased out fox and chinchilla farming. The U.S. has not taken any action against the industry, but the number of mink farms in the U.S. has plummeted from 1,027 in 1988 to less than 300 today, according to *Weekly International Fur News*. Animal right advocates may also condemn "alternatives" made from synthetic (oil-based) clothing as they promote fur for the sake of fashion. Protests also include objection to the use of leather in clothing, shoes and accessories. The invention of inexpensive synthetic textiles for insulating clothing led to fur clothing falling out of fashion. Also, more recently, "fake fur" alternatives have also had an impact.

Consequently, with all of the above, plus the anti-smoking campaigns, just about all the Furrier covers you're going to find are going to be older issues.

