

Girls: Check out the history of the buttonhole or boutonniere. How do the first 2 sentences link it to a comedy of manners poking fun at the British upper class. What reference to sophistication used in our play is mentioned in the last line of the info on the 19th century.

The History of the Boutonniere



By Alice Genes,

A boutonniere is a symbol of masculine elegance.

A boutonniere represents the quintessence of masculine luxury, and it makes a positive statement of personal flair and sophistication. The boutonniere has a more than five-century history as an accessory for men's suits. Despite its long history, boutonniere is still part of the male costume, though mainly for special occasions such as weddings.

- **Origin**

- The history of the boutonniere dates to the 16th century, and "boutonniere" is the French word for "buttonhole flower." Initially, the purpose of wearing a boutonniere was to ward off bad luck or evil. The boutonniere was the male equivalent of the bridal bouquet, having the same significance and purpose of protection against odors and diseases.

18th Century

- In the 18th century, the male costume changed significantly. Fashionable wear became acceptable in almost all parts of Europe, and the ensemble of the English gentleman--frock coat, breeches and boots--was adopted by the French, too. In this period, large flowers began to be worn at the top buttonhole of frock coats. It soon became fashionable to leave the top buttons of the frock coats unfastened, falling back and forming the lapel, on which men fastened boutonnieres.

19th Century

- The 19th century brought with it the enthusiasm for nature, specifically in the Romantic Movement, and the boutonniere became a very fashionable accessory as a splash of color for a sober outfit. Toward the end of the 19th century, the boutonniere was largely accepted as the mark of a man who was very careful in his dress. The choice of a fresh boutonniere was as important as choosing a pair of well-polished shoes. The flower on the lapel was on the list of men's accessories of the day, which also included watch

chains, cigar cases and jeweled pins.

20th Century

- The idea of wearing a flower on the lapel survived the tumultuous times of World Wars I and II as a sign of remembering La Belle Époque. The movies of the first decades of the 20th century portrayed a style in which the boutonniere was omnipresent as a mark of elegance and masculinity. Cary Grant and Clark Gable became masculine prototypes, with their black suit always accompanied by a discreet boutonniere.

Present Day

- Nowadays, boutonnieres are mainly part of the male wedding costume, and they often match the style of the bridal flowers. The groom can choose from a large variety of boutonniere types, from classic to bold. The groom, the groom's men and the father of the bride all wear a boutonniere, adding a touch of elegance to the important event.

Resources

- Brides.com: Bold Boutonnieres

Mrs. Frederick found info on http://www.ehow.com/print/about_6768843_history-boutonniere.html