A Brief History of New York City Clothing Manufacturing, Part 2 by Forest Uniforms

In the early-20th century, clothing manufacturing began to change in New York City. Social pressures pushed businesses north and west of downtown, and customers would not mingle with those of the working class.

These pressures also influenced the design of facilities. Materials and laborers entered from rear or side doors. Showrooms faced main thoroughfares, with customers browsing at window displays and entering through front doors.

The completion of the subway in 1918 that linked the burgeoning [Garment District](http://www.garment-district.com/) with parts on the Upper West Side provided factory owners a link between work and their wealthier neighborhoods. The district’s proximity to Penn Station was instrumental in bringing buyers in from other parts of the country.

It was not until after World War II that the industry began to decline. The Garment District saw factories move to Chinatown and the Lower East Side, where, ironically, the industry was located earlier.

While manufacturing in all industries has declined steadily, the decline in the mass production of clothing specifically suffered from the expansion of access and infrastructure to areas in the country where labor was cheaper. Today, primary producers are more commonly located in Asia.

Forest Uniforms is a garment manufacturer that supplies as much as 75 percent of the uniform needs of New York City and proudly maintains its facilities and offices in the Flatiron District.