

the list is incomplete. Many of the companies remained in business a very short time or kept their activities a secret to avoid payment of royalties to patent holders. Evidence of these companies may be extant, but it lies submerged in local histories or family records. Some new information came to light in response to the first edition of this history; it is hoped that this edition will surface even more. Many of the companies and their machines bore the same name. Although new styles were introduced and the machines were improved, the name remained the same reflecting the strength of the company and the product.

The companies of the late 19th century, who did not have the first twenty or thirty years to back their product's name, introduced an ever-increasing number of colorful names—American Beauty, Bastedor O'Damode, Cherokee, Full Dinner Pail, Golden Rule, and thousands more. Even when there were fewer than twenty-five companies in active production in the early twentieth century, one company alone produced sewing machines sold under hundreds of different names. In general, the machines were not very different from each other except for the name. Style characteristics of the company usually enables one to identify the manufacturer; many of these machines were sold through distributors with their choice of name. Over three thousand of these names are listed in this edition. As in furniture, sewing-machine tables and cabinets changed too, dutifully reflecting the era, new manufacturing techniques, and fickle fashion—in cabinet detail, ironwork, and mechanical innovation.

Old sewing machines are collectible. The machines were well-built, mechanically precise, durable, and beautifully finished. With reasonable care they still look good after seventy-five or a hundred years. With not-so-good care, they can be put into good condition with mechanical skill, patience, and careful refinishing. There are varying reasons to collect these machines. For a museum, it might be the history of a company or industry, the significance of the invention, the effect on the developing ready-made clothing industry, as a popular 19th-century household appliance, or the far-reaching effect on all types of manufactures of stitched textiles. For the private collector, it might be the appeal of the small hand-turned machines that can be attractively shelved as mechanical curiosities, the decorative appeal of the ironwork or the beauty of the woodwork of the cabinet machines. For the individual, it might be a prized family heirloom or the appeal of a single, isolated, eye-catching example.

The current antique value of the sewing machines is not included in this study. Museum staffs do not make monetary appraisals. The prices quoted in this work are the prices as advertised when the machines were new.