



Figure 20.—BLODGETT & LEROW SEWING MACHINE, 1850, as manufactured by A. Bartholf, New York; the serial number of the machine is 19. The brass plate, serial number 119, at right, is from a later style of the same type of machine. (Smithsonian photo 48440-D; brass plate: 48440-K.)

his application for his patent extension,⁴¹ that he made only one machine in 1850–51. In 1852 he advertised⁴² territorial rights and machines, but apparently did not realize any financial success until he sold a half interest in his patent to George Bliss in November 1852.⁴³ Bliss later began manufacturing machines that he initially sold as “Howe’s Patent”; however, these machines were substantially different from the basic Howe machine.

On May 18, 1853, Elias Howe granted his first royalty license to Wheeler, Wilson, Company. Within a few months licenses were also granted to Grover & Baker; A. Bartholf; Nichols & Bliss; J. A. Lerow; Woolridge, Keene, and Moore; and A. B. Howe, the brother of Elias. These licenses granted the manufacturer the right to use any part of the Howe patent,⁴⁴ but it did not mean that the machines

were Elias Howe machines. When a royalty license was paid, the patent date and sometimes the name was stamped onto the machine. For this reason, these machines are sometimes mistakenly thought to be Elias Howe machines. They are not.

Howe was also prevented from manufacturing a practical machine unless he paid a royalty to other inventors. Three of the major manufacturers and Howe resolved their differences by forming the “Sewing Machine Combination.” Although Howe did not enter the manufacturing competition for many years, he profited substantially from the royalty terms of the combination. In 1860, he applied for and received a seven-year extension on his patent.

There were Howe family machines for sale during this period, but these were the ones that Amasa Howe had been manufacturing since 1853. The machine was an excellent one and received the highest medal for sewing machines, together with many flattering testimonials, at the London International Exhibition in 1862. After the publication of this award the demand for (Amasa) Howe sewing

⁴¹ Op. cit. (footnote 34).

⁴² *New York Daily Tribune*, Jan. 15, 1852, p. 2.

⁴³ See Howe’s biographical sketch, pp. 218–221.

⁴⁴ Op. cit. (footnote 34). Attachments A and B are copies of Judge Sprague’s decisions.