

yielding presser resting on the cloth (Bachelder patent), the spring or curved arm to hold the cloth by a yielding pressure (Morey and Johnson patent), the heart-shaped cam as applied to moving the needle bar (Singer patent); all these patents, held by the Singer Company.<sup>66</sup>

The Grover and Baker company contributed several patents of relative importance, but its most important claim for admission was the fact that Potter had promoted the idea.

The consent of all four member-parties was required before any license could be granted, and all were required to have a license—even the member companies. The fee was \$15 per machine. A portion of this money was set aside to pay the cost of prosecuting infringers, Howe received his initial fee, and the rest was divided between the four parties. The advantage to the licensee was that he was required to pay only one fee. Most license applications were granted; only those manufacturing a machine specifically imitating the product of a licensed manufacturer were refused.

The "Combination's" three company members each continued to manufacture, improve, and perfect

<sup>66</sup> Singer has sometimes been credited as the inventor of the various improvements covered by the patents that the Singer company purchased and later contributed to the efforts of the "Combination."

its own machine. Other than the joint control of the patents, there was no pooling of interests, and each company competed to attract purchasers to buy its particular type of machine, as did the companies who were licensed by them.

In 1860, the year Howe's patent was renewed, the general license fee was reduced from \$15 to \$7, and Howe's special royalty was reduced to \$1 per machine. Howe remained a member until his patent ran out in 1867. The other members continued the "Combination" until 1877, when the Bachelder patent, which had been extended twice, finally expired. By that time the fundamental features of the sewing machine were no longer controlled by anyone. Open competition by the smaller manufacturers was possible, and a slight reduction in price followed. Many new companies came into being—some destined to be very short-lived.

From the beginning to the end of the "Combination" there was an army of independents, including infringers and imitators, who kept up a constant complaint against it, maintaining that its existence tended to retard the improvement of the sewing machine and that the public suffered thereby. In the period immediately following the termination of the "Combination," however, only a few improvements of any importance were made, and most of these were by the member companies.