

patents held by the "Sewing-Machine Combination."

With the approach of the Civil War, Gibbs returned to Virginia. Poor health prevented him from taking an active part in the war, but he worked throughout the conflict in a factory processing saltpeter for gunpowder. Afterward, Gibbs returned to Philadelphia and found that Willcox had faithfully protected his sewing-machine interests during his long absence. The firm prospered, and Gibbs finally retired to Virginia a wealthy man. Interestingly, Gibbs named the Virginia village to which he returned in later life "Raphine"—derived, somewhat incorrectly, from the Greek word "to sew."

The Willcox & Gibbs Sewing Machine Company

is one of the few old companies still in existence. It discontinued making and selling family-style machines many years ago and directed its energies toward specialized commercial sewing machines, many of which are based on the original chainstitch principle.

There was also an ever-increasing number of other patentees and manufacturers who, in the late 1850s and 1860s, attempted to produce a sewing machine that would circumvent both the "Combination" and the high cost of manufacturing a more complicated type of machine. Some of the more interesting of these are pictured and described in figures 40 through 54.



Figure 41.—THE CHERUB sewing machine was another Robertson first which was adopted by Clark. Robertson's patent of October 20, 1857, once again makes no claim for the design; neither does Clark's patent of January 5, 1858, illustrated here. The machine is approximately the same size as the dolphin and is made in the same manner and of the same materials. Two cherubs form the main support, one also supporting the spool and leashing a dragonfly which backs the needle mechanism. (Smithsonian photo 45504-D.)