

partment stores, catalog houses, and other retail outlets, furnishing them with any name selected by the retailer. Sewing machines were even offered as premiums with newspaper subscriptions, and the name of the newspaper would be applied to the machine. Disappearing was the tradition that the machine must bear the inventor's or manufacturer's name. By the early 20th century, literally thousands of different-named machines were manufactured by less than a dozen sewing-machine companies in business at the time. Two companies did not follow this fashion, Singer and Willcox and Gibbs. The Willcox and Gibbs family machine continued to be the simple chairstitch. The "Singer" name reigned supreme, and it was the only one under which that company's machines were sold. Both the style of the Singer machine and the design of the trademark were widely copied by many companies both at home and abroad. Other companies also sold under their own name, but also added to the vast array of new names. Although sewing machines were not as decorative as they had been in the earlier period, verbally they were more colorful.

A brief history of each of the companies producing the sewing machines that were involved in this commercial name-calling will be given to help establish the dates of these machines. Company records were not kept as to which names were furnished to whom. Some helpful records exist, since sewing machines were built to last for years, and "parts suppliers" for these machines grew to be a respectable business in itself. To offer the correct parts, the parts companies had to inform the potential customer, and themselves, with the name of the manufacturer of the machine; the name stenciled on the machine was not sufficient for a part replacement. Two of the most prominent of these parts companies printed catalogs that have been very helpful. One is the *Sewing Machine Supplies and Parts*, catalog of the A. G. Brewer Sewing Machine & Supply Company, Chicago, Illinois, whose first edition was published in 1926. In the introduction, the manager of the company writes: "In getting this book out we endeavored to list the items now in demand by the Sewing Machine dealer, both old as well as the latest." The second is *Bryson's Verified Complete List of All Interchangeable Parts and Needles*, catalog of the C. M. Bryson Company of Cleveland, Ohio, which was copyrighted in 1933. The C. M. Bryson Company had been a sewing-machine sales agency in the late 19th century and became a parts supplier in the 20th century. The company slogan was, "If

Bryson does not keep it, you can't get it."

#### BRIEF COMPANY HISTORIES

*Davis Sewing Machine Company.* First established in Watertown, New York, this company moved to Dayton, Ohio, in 1889-1890. The reasons given for the move were "first, the pressing necessity of increasing the manufacturing facilities of the company to meet the growing demand for their machines, and next, the great advantages offered for manufacturing in the West. . . ." Large factory buildings were constructed in Dayton and business flourished for more than thirty years. Although the name Davis Sewing Machine Company was retained, the actual manufacture of machines was taken over, at some time before 1924, by the H. M. Huffman Mfg. Co. On December 24, 1924, the Dayton operation ceased as the "National Sewing Machine Co., Belvidere, Ill. purchased good will, trade names and right to manufacture sewing machines under name Davis and all other names previously owned by Davis S. M. Co."

*Domestic Sewing Machine Company.* The Domestic machines were first manufactured in Norwalk, Ohio. The manufacturing rights were sold to a company in Newark, New Jersey, about 1871; the company was under contract to sell all the machines that they produced to the Domestic Sewing Machine Company in Ohio. In 1896 the two companies in New Jersey and Ohio were consolidated, although the factories continued to be located in New Jersey until about 1906. Between that date and 1914, Domestic machines were built in Buffalo, New York. In 1922 a New York City office for the Domestic Sewing Machine Company was opened. In 1924 the Domestic company became a wholly owned subsidiary of the White Sewing Machine Company and was located in Cleveland, Ohio. Domestic electric machines for home use were still being manufactured in the Cleveland factory in 1974.

*A. G. Mason Manufacturing Company.* A. G. Mason had been a general agent in Cleveland for the Davis Sewing Machine Company until 1903 when he began to manufacture sewing machines under his own name. He concentrated on building up sewing-machine departments in large retail stores. He gave particular attention in his manufacture of sewing machines to producing medium-priced, high-quality machines sold under special names chosen by the retail dealer. A. G. Mason died in 1916, and the company became a subsidiary of the Domestic Sewing Machine Company.