

V. Chronological List of U.S. Sewing-Machine Patent Models in the Smithsonian Collections

There are more than seven hundred sewing-machine patent models and a similar number of attachment models in the Smithsonian collections. Most of these machines were received in 1926 when the Patent Office disposed of its collection of hundreds of thousands of models. Prior to 1880, models had been required with the patent application; although the requirement was discontinued that year, patentees continued to furnish models for another decade or so. All models prior to 1836 were lost in a Patent Office fire of that year, but since the sewing-machine patent history dates from the 1840s, most of the historically important ones of this subject have been preserved.

These models form a valuable part of the record of the invention, supplementing the drawings and the text of the written specifications. The early sewing-machine models were made to order, either by the inventor or a commissioned model maker. As soon as sewing machines were produced commercially, it was less expensive for the patentee to use a commercial machine of the period, to which he added his change or improvement, than to have a complete model constructed to order. Some of the commercial machines used in this way are the only examples known to be in existence and, as such, are of more interest in establishing the history of the manufactured machine than for the minor patented changes.

During the period of the "Sewing-Machine Combination," many patentees attempted to invent and patent "the different machine." This was either a radical change in style or an attempt to produce a far less-expensive type of machine. These machines were not always put into commercial production, but the patent models give an indication of the extent to which some inventors went to simplify or vary the mechanics of machine sewing.

The following is a list of those sewing-machine patent models in the Smithsonian Institution collections:

<i>Patentee</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Patent Number</i>
Greenough, John J.	Feb. 21, 1842	2,466
Bean, Benjamin W.	March 4, 1843	2,982
Corliss, George H.	Dec. 27, 1843	3,389
Howe, Elias, Jr.	Sept. 10, 1846	4,750
Bachelor, John	May 8, 1849	6,439
Wilson, Allen B.	Nov. 12, 1850	7,776
Robinson, Frederick R.	Dec. 10, 1850	7,824
Grover & Baker	Feb. 11, 1851	7,931
Singer, Isaac M.	Aug. 12, 1851	8,294
Wilson, Allen B.	Aug. 12, 1851	8,296
Wilson, Allen B.	June 15, 1852	9,041
Miller, Charles	July 20, 1852	9,139
Avery, Otis	Oct. 19, 1852	9,338
Hodgkins, C.	Nov. 2, 1852	9,365
Bradeen, J. G.	Nov. 2, 1852	9,380
Bates, W. G.	Feb. 22, 1853	9,592
Thompson, T. C.	March 29, 1853	9,641
Wickersham, W.	April 19, 1853	9,679
Johnson, W. H.	March 7, 1854	10,597
Harrison, J., Jr.	April 11, 1854	10,763
Avery, Otis	May 9, 1854	10,880
Singer, Isaac	May 30, 1854	10,975
Hunt, Walter	June 27, 1854	11,161
Roper, S. H.	Aug. 15, 1854	11,531
Shaw, P.	Sept. 12, 1854	11,680
Ambler, D. C.	Nov. 1, 1854	11,884
Robertson, T. J. W.	Nov. 28, 1854	12,015
Lyon, W.	Dec. 12, 1854	12,066
Stedman, G. W.	Dec. 12, 1854	12,074
Ward, D. T.	Jan. 2, 1855	12,146
Conant, J. S.	Jan. 16, 1855	12,233
Smith, H. B.	Jan. 16, 1855	12,247
Singer, I. M.	Feb. 6, 1855	12,364
Stedman, G. W.	March 20, 1855	12,573
Stedman, G. W.	May 1, 1855	12,798