

History (1800 - 1860)

- 1800 - 1860
- 1861 - 1900
- 1901 - 1960
- 1961 - 2000
- 2001 - Up to now

1811

Issac Merritt Singer was born in Schaghticoke, New York.

1850

Orson C. Phelps of Boston was manufacturing sewing machines under license from John A. Lerow. The Lerow and Blodgett machine was not very practical. The circular movement of the shuttle took a twist out of the thread at every revolution.

Isaac Merritt Singer, after examining the machine, noted "instead of the shuttle going around in a circle, I would have it move to and fro in a straight line. In place of the needle bar pushing a curved needle horizontally, I would have a straight needle and make it work up and down."

After 11 days and forty dollars in cost, Singer completed his invention: the world's first practical sewing machine. This machine had a straight eye-pointed needle and transverse shuttle, an overhanging arm, a table to support the cloth, a presser foot to hold the material against the upward stroke of the needle, and a roughened feed wheel extending through

a slot in the table. Motion was communicated to the needle arm and shuttle by means of gears.

Singer also conceived the idea of using a treadle similar to that of a spinning wheel; all other machines at the time used a hand crank to generate power.

1851

Isaac Merritt Singer formed I.M. Singer & Company with New York lawyer Edward C. Clark, following Singer's first lockstitch sewing machine patent. The Singer Sewing Machine is offered for sale all over the United States. Within two years Singer is the leading manufacturer and marketer of sewing machines in the United States.

1852

Singer patented a tension device.

1853

I. M. Singer & Co. sets-up corporate offices and a manufacturing facility in New York City. Company is renamed Singer Manufacturing Company.

The first Singer sewing machines, manufactured in New York, sell for \$100 each.

1855

Singer becomes the world's largest sewing company. Singer begins overseas expansion, starting in Paris, France, making Singer the world's first international company.

A Singer sewing machine was awarded a first prize at the World's Fair in Paris.

1856

Edward Clark originated the hire-purchase plan, the prototype for all installment selling or time payment purchases. As a result, individuals with even meager income could own a Singer sewing machine. Even better, they could increase their productivity, earn more money and improve their position in life.

The "Turtleback" sewing machine was introduced.

Singer patented a ruffler, tucker and binder.

Branch office opened in Glasgow, Scotland.

1857

First Singer showroom and headquarters located at 458 Broadway, New York City.

1858

The first lightweight domestic machine, the "Grasshopper," was introduced.

Unit sales topped 3,000 a year.

Singer opened three manufacturing plants in New York City.

Singer opens an operation in Brazil.

1859

Singer received first of three patents for lock-stitch vibrating shuttle machines.