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## **Drum Carding at Wildflower Farm**

Drum carding is much like hand carding, only on a larger scale. The wool is picked and then put in the in feed tray where it is drawn into the carder. The machine does all the work here. My card was a hand crank model, but my husband added a pulley and motor to save my cranking arm. It works great. You just keep adding wool to the in feed tray until the larger drum is full of carded wool. Then the wool is removed from the drum with a long spike tool and you have a batt that can be spun as is or rolled into a jumbo rolag.

*Pat Lees, Wildflower Farm*



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## Antique Knitters Circular

### Publisher

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Lamb Tuttle  
Family  
Knitting  
Machine



### Cover Photo by Pat Lees

Pat's motor driven drum carder was originally a hand cranked model. Her husband converted it to run on electric power.





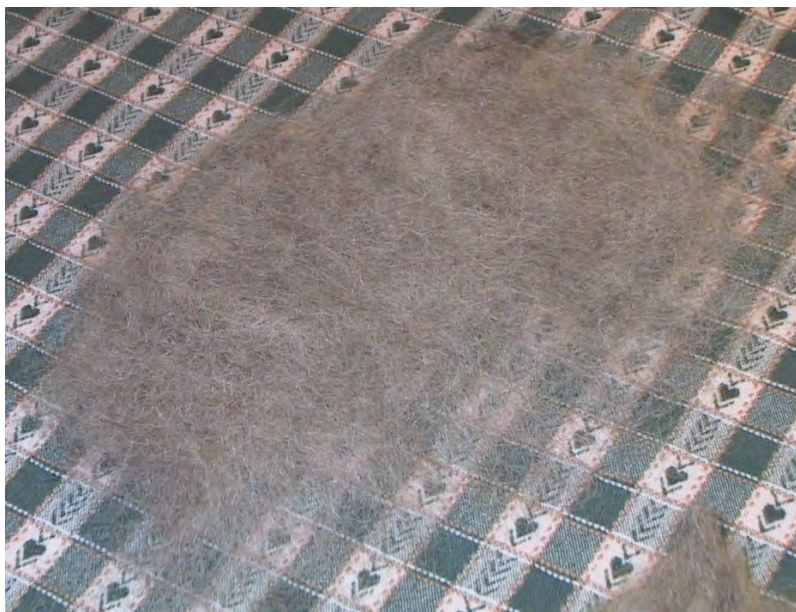


Pat Lees provided photographs of her hand carders to illustrate the method of holding the left and right cards while carding wool. The carding process removes tangles from the wool and aligns the fibers. The fleece is combed from one card to the other a few times until the fibers are lined in one direction.

In the upper left photo, Pat is loading fleece on the left card. Fleece will be applied across the width of the card. The upper right photo shows the carded fleece after a few transfers from card to card. If the carded fleece is removed from a card without rolling it, it will have the form shown in the bottom left picture. If the fleece is rolled off the card, it forms a rolag as pictured at the lower right. A rolag can be used to spin yarn. Fleece of different color or staple length can be blended by adding them to the card in the desired proportions. The type of yarn is affected by the direction in which the fleece is rolled from the card, side to side or front to back.

While the carding of fleece appears to be rather basic and uncomplicated, it is in fact a means by which yarns take on the wide range of characteristics so skillfully crafted into them by the artisans.

In later issues of this publication, we will see that the spinning wheel adds its own special dimensions to the crafting of yarns.







Carding fleece on hand cards or on a hand cranked drum carder is hard work. A motor driven drum carder increases productivity many times over. Either method is considered a batch process. The hand cards can be loaded with a limited amount of fleece and the rolag becomes a unit of work. A large number of rolags will be made before beginning to spin yarn.

Above, fleece is on the infeed tray ready to be pulled onto the drum carder. Upper right, the rotating drum is collecting a batch of carded wool. To the right, a drum loaded to capacity is being stripped of the carded fibers. The sizable batt pictured below illustrates the increase in productivity as compared to the small rolag taken from the hand carders.



## Glimpses of CSMSA 2002

*by Fred Hauck*

Lea and I were among the sock machine hobbyists that met in 1999 at Freeport, Illinois. We are pleased to be listed as founding members and appreciate being recognized along with the other founding members at the 2002 CSMSA Conference. I captured a few informal pictures of the conference activities to include in the Antique Knitters Circular.

A formal coverage of the CSMSA Conferences and Society business is provided in *SockMachine Knitting*, published by Bonnie Smola, Yellow River Station, 304 Scott Hollow Road, Monona, Iowa 52159.

If you are not currently a member of CSMSA, please consider becoming a member by sending Bonnie Smola a check for \$16.00. That covers Dues and the *SockMachine Knitting* newsletter for one year.

Lea and I made the 950 mile drive from Rochester, NY, to Des Moines with a one-night stop. We stopped on the way to visit the Amana Woolen Mill at Amana, Iowa, and bought some coned yarn that they use on the looms. They don't stock the yarn for resale, but will sell small quantities of coned yarn for \$8.00 a pound. The size is just right for my 72 slot Gearhart.

Amana is one of seven historic villages in the Amana Colonies. If you travel to Iowa, it is a wonderful place to visit. The food alone is worth the trip. The Amana Woolen Mill produces a wide variety of blankets. Visitors can tour the mill and watch the looms operating. The mill store is full of items that would interest admirers of fiber arts. The mill manager is Cindy Slaymaker. For more information, write to Amana Woolen Mill, 800 48th Ave. , P.O. Box 189, Amana, IA 52203.

See page 6 for glimpses of Amana Woolen Mill.

A nice thing about the CSMSA Conference is meeting friends from previous conferences and from the Socks List. While checking in at the Savery Hotel, Lea and I were given a message to call the Mowrers room. Ten seconds later Dick and Marion Mowrer walked up to us. We had met at the 1999 conference and have been friends ever since.

I felt as though I knew almost everyone there because I made the name tags for all who pre-registered, and many of the people had been to the Conference at Clearfield, PA, last year.

It was a delight to have a vendors table next to John Loeffelholz and Pat Fly, two individuals who give generously to help the CSM community.

There was something going on everywhere. The elevators in the three-story Iowa Historical Society Building were kept busy as people went from floor to floor visiting, learning, and yearning for instruction on the operation of antique knitting machines.

Peter Oswald set up a place to work on machines just outside the main entrance to the museum. The location was shaded from the sun and provided the ventilation needed for cleaning materials.

The museum had a Gearhart sock machine and a Lamb Flatbed Class One Knitting machine in storage. Those machines were brought out of storage for the occasion. I cleaned up and lubricated the Gearhart machine and set it up to knit. It had very little wear and knitted tubing on the first try. Peter cleaned up the Lamb Flatbed and removed the rusty needles from the slots. A set of needles would be required to make it operational. Hopefully, the museum will place the machines on display for the public. I furnished the Historical Society with re-printed instruction manuals for both machines. Hopefully someone in the area will adopt the machines and operate them for the public on special occasions.

Sock machines were on display or in use just about everywhere in the museum. Members brought their machines so they would have a machine to learn on at the classes that were in session both days. Supplies of yarn were plentiful. Several yarn retailers had flyers in the goodie bags that members received at registration.

The CSMSA Conferences elevate the stature of the Society by bringing the machines and owners in contact with the public. Each conference builds enthusiasm of the members and motivates members to develop their skills and extend their knowledge about the history of sock machines.

I hope you enjoy seeing a few of the unofficial snapshots I took at the CSMSA Conference 2002. The pictures represent a small portion of the Conference and do not give the full impact of all the excitement or the extent of hard work that went into planning and conducting the conference.

I add my thank you to Deb Oswald, Bonnie Smola, Donna Story, Lu Kelce and all others who helped make this conference one of the best yet.

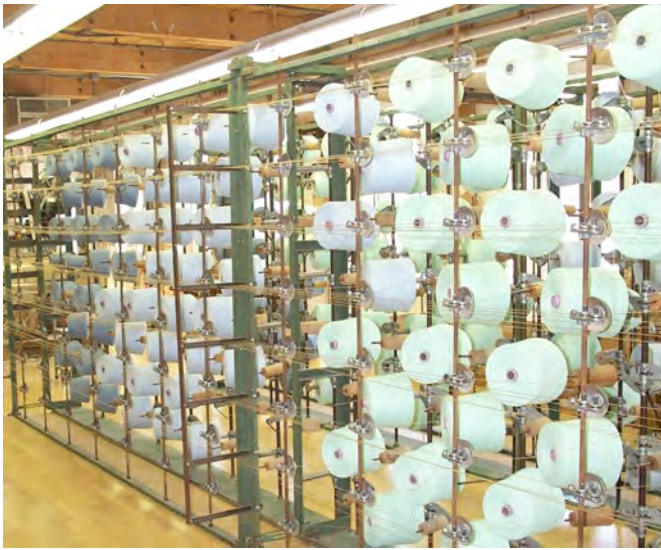
May next year bring a successful CSMSA 2003 to Riverside, California, or where ever Lu Kelce chooses to have it. Southern California is full of tourist attractions and exciting places to visit. I can hardly wait.



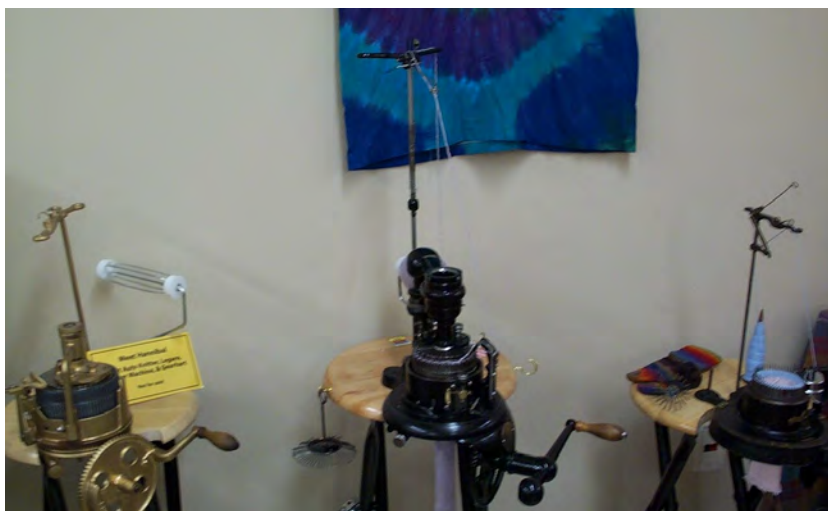
## Visiting the Amana Woolen Mill

Visitors are welcome at the Amana Woolen Mill. Photography is permitted, and the pictures on this page show one of the several Sulzer looms at work and the cones of yarn that supply the looms. Many of the blankets and other woven goods manufactured at the mill are on display in the mill store.

A visit to the Amana Colonies is a delight for anyone who would enjoy outstanding country cooking, friendly and industrious hosts, a lesson about the founding of the Amana Colonies, and an opportunity to shop for wool yarns and fabrics of the finest quality.







John Loeffelholz had several restored knitting machines for sale at the CSMSA Conference. While the machines were waiting for a buyer, they made a spectacular display and attracted many interested visitors. John also had video tapes that teach the process of knitting socks and mittens.

Pat Brown gave instruction on the dyeing of yarns. Hundreds of feet of yarn were strung up and arranged so the dye could be applied. A lot of space was needed to teach the class. The process looked to be labor intensive, and at the end of the second day Pat looked exhausted.

Pat has a lot of experience with and knowledge about dyeing yarns.



Deb Oswald was the Chairperson for the 2002 CSMSA Conference. From this podium, she ran the business meeting and introduced the guest speaker, Dr. Richard Candee.

Lea Hauck and Marion Mowrer watched the Fleece to Feet Contest together. The Haucks and Mowrers met at the 1999 Conference and now look forward to the times we can share at the future conferences.







Lu Kelce and her husband drove from Riverside, CA, to attend the conference. Lu is Chairperson for CSMsa 2003. They are proud owners of this Harmony Auto Knitter.



Lu's auto Knitter is in mint condition. It has the stand that was manufactured for the machine. Getting a close-up of this fine knitter was a must. It is set up with the ribber in operation.



Peter Oswald has been providing a much needed service to the CSMsa attendees. He brings tools and cleaning solvents to the conferences so owners can get help and perform servicing of their machines in a safe environment. This repair center become a place of industry at Des Moines, Iowa.

Many of the new members have machines that need repair before they can be used in the class room.



It has been the practice at the CSMSA Conferences to have a “fleece-to-feet” contest in which contestants make a complete pair of socks in as short a time as possible. At CSMSA 2002, the contest was held on the first floor of the Iowa Historical Society Building.

While socks were being made, a staff of spinners added to the fun by spinning fleece into yarn. This year, three spinners provided the spinning services for the contest.



Bonnie Smola, MC for Fleece to Feet Contest, Treasurer of CSMSA, and Publisher of SockMachine Knitting ©



The Fleece-to-Feet contest takes place on the afternoon of the second day of the conference. That gives contestants a day and a half to practice and have the adjustments set, yarns selected, and machines lubricated. Machines are lined up in the starting positions. Excitement builds to a peak.

Then the MC announces, “Ladies! Start cranking your machines!” Well, not really. But the contest is carefully timed, and when the winner holds up a pair of socks, the crowd cheers, “**keep cranking**”. Second place is yet to be determined.

What would a CSMSA Conference be without a sock making contest?



*The following article was extracted from the Clearfield Progress News papers dated October 20, 27 and November 3, 1978. The Editor Emeritus of the Progress was the late George A. Scott.*

## **The Gearhart Knitting Machine Co.**

**(Forth of Several Columns)**

For more than 30 years after moving to Clearfield in 1890, the Gearhart Knitting Machine Operations were located in a rather modest, by today's standards, barn behind the Gearhart home at the corner of Nichols and West Front Streets (where the Arco service station is now located). In addition to the knitting machine itself, the company also offered parts for sale and for some time during its history, possibly from the beginning, sold yarns to be used in the knitting operations. Indicative of the national and international sale of the Gearhart Family Knitter, Dr. J. H. Mohr, Clearfield optometrist, recalls that his father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Mohr, frequently were called upon to translate letters written in German or other languages with orders or, questions arriving at the Gearhart company. Mr. Mohr could speak and read German and had knowledge of other Baltic national languages and Mrs. Mohr could translate from the French language. A knitting instruction book issued by the Gearhart company now in the County Historical Museum collection is printed in Spanish.

In 1920, Joseph Gearhart's sons, Leonard A., John R., and Emery J., were actively engaged in the business with their father. Joseph Gearhart by then was 71 years old.

Records at the Clearfield County Courthouse show that incorporation of the Gearhart firm as the "Gearhart Knitting Machine Company" was approved Aug. 11, 1920.

The charter application said the company was being incorporated "for the purpose of manufacture and sale of knitting machines, yarns and knitting machine products".

The incorporators were J. E. (Joseph) Gearhart, John Gearhart and Emery J. Gearhart, each holding 100 shares of stock with the capital stock valued at \$30,000. The absence of Joseph's oldest son, Leonard A. Gearhart, from the list of incorporators is noticeable but he was employed elsewhere at the time. He is remembered by his daughter, Mrs. Surver, as advertising manager of the company later on and eventually took an active role in its management.

The Progress of June 25, 1921 reported a major move by the Gearhart company—from the Nichols-West Front Street location to a new building on West Fourth Avenue. Reported the Progress: "The Gearhart Knitting Machine Factory, finding present quarters entirely too small to accommodate their rapidly expanding business, have decided to branch out by the erection of a large, new factory over on the West Side."

"The site selected is on West Fourth Avenue, near Clearfield Street, where four lots were recently purchased and the excavation for the foundation began this week. The new factory will be of brick and concrete, the main building will be 36 by 100 feet in size and three stories high, with an L- shaped office building 30 by 30 feet in size."

"The Gearhart Knitting Machine Company was first erected by J. E. Gearhart, inventor of the machine that has made Clearfield known around the world, some 39 years ago. The original construction was a modest frame structure, two stories high, on Nichols Street."

"The Gearhart machine was practical and a money- maker from the start. Careful and judicious business methods and a first class article resulted in such business that it became necessary to greatly enlarge the original plant from time to time, until about every foot of space available was utilized and then when these quarters became cramped it was decided to further branch out."

"Sometime ago, Mr. J. E. Gearhart decided to relinquish many of his business cares and had the Gearhart Knitting Machine Factory incorporated and shifted more of the burden of operating the factory onto the shoulders of his sons, L. A., John and Emery Gearhart. These young men have grown up with the business and are thoroughly conversant with its every detail and are all careful, competent businessmen and propose to greatly enlarge and extend their operations when the new plant is completed."

Thomas Lincoln Wall, in his 1925 Clearfield County History, reported that "at this time, 1925, another large four-story building is being erected in order to carry on and take care of the business."

The Gearhart factory building is still in use. It became the headquarters of the then State Highway Department's (now PennDOT) District 2 office in 1928, later was used by Clearfield Sportswear and Clear-Don for manufacturing operations and now is occupied by the Clearfield Hardware Co.

**(To Be Continued)**



## Reprinted Manuals

Reprints of antique knitting machine manuals. Lamb Tuttle Knitting Machine, 17 pages; Lamb Flatbed, 29 pages; Gearhart's Knitting Machine, 24 pages; and Knitting Manual of Instruction & Sales by Clearfield Knitting Machine Company, (**a copy**) 69 pages. Last mentioned contains complete instructions for 65 knitting projects.

Prices including S&H:

Tuttle \$15.00

Flatbed \$20.00

Gearhart \$20.00

Clearfield \$25.00 (copy)

Fred Hauck

2428 English Road

Rochester, NY 14616

## Books For Sale





## How to Find a Sock Machine

*by Fred Hauck*

Here is a true story about how I found and bought a Franz & Pope Knitting Machine. You might like to try the method on your own.

Two years ago, I demonstrated my collection of knitting machines to a local antique car club. None of the people present had ever seen or heard of a circular sock machine. Last month, a person who saw my presentation called to tell me he saw a machine at a flea market that the vendor thought was for making lace. It looked like a knitting machine. When he said "Franz & Pope", I knew what it was, and immediately called the seller in Niagara Falls, 70 miles to the west. The next afternoon, I drove to his home and happily paid him the asking price of \$100.00.

Pictured below is the machine. There were two extra cylinders, two sets of badly worn needles, and all the essentials to operate the machine to make tubes. It appears there was no ribber made for this Franz & Pope. I was delighted to find the knitter and expect to have lots of enjoyment from it. If you tell enough people about sock machines, sooner or later one will turn up when you least expect it.



Franz & Pope Knitting Machine found at a local flea market