

# Antique Knitters Circular

*A Publication for Antique and Vintage Knitting Machine Hobbyists*

*Volume 1, Issue 5    September-October, 2002*

## Spinning at Wildflower Farm

The fiber is a mixture of llama and Corriedale sheep wool in it's natural color. The wheel is a Jensen double treadle.

*Pat Lees*



## Upcoming Events; Y2K+2

**September 22-23, 2002** 8th Annual Finger Lakes Fiber Arts Festival  
Hemlock Fairgrounds, Hemlock, NY. fest@gvhg.org or jskberner@eznet.net)

**September 25-28, 2002** Natural Colored Wool Growers Association, National Show, Tulsa State Fair, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Jan McMahon, PO Box 748, Beavercreek, OR 97004

**October 19-20, 2002** NYS Sheep and Wool Festival at the Dutchess County Fairgrounds in Rhinebeck, NY Catherine Snook, 3306 State Rt. 52, Stormville, New York 12582

**October 12-13 2002** Spin In Wisconsin, Park Plaza Hotel & Convention Center, Oshkosh, WI. Hosted by the Fox Valley Spinning Guild. For more information, email **Mary Kersten** or call her at (920) 722-1621.

**Oct. 5th & 6th, 2002** 14th Annual Vermont Sheep and Wool Festival, Essex Junction, Vermont; Kat Smith, Advertising Chairperson  
136 Jack Perry Rd. Wallingford, VT 05773  
802-446-3325

katsmith@vermontel.net

**June 27, 28, and 29, 2003** 2003 CSMSA Conference; Portland, Oregon.

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## Antique Knitters Circular

### Publisher

Frederic D. Hauck  
2428 English Road  
Rochester, NY 14616  
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Lamb Tuttle  
Family  
Knitting  
Machine



### Cover Photo by Pat Lees

Pat does her spinning next to a stone fireplace. Roving is neatly arranged on a drop leaf table so it will feed into her left hand without interrupting the process. Natural lighting from a nearby window passes over her left shoulder. What a well thought out arrangement for a session of spinning.





## Spinning Wheel in Action

I asked Pat Lees to take action shots of her spinning at Wildflower Farm and to explain what the pictures show. I received these outstanding pictures and am very pleased to present them in this publication.

In Pat's words, "Both are actually demonstrating pretty much the same thing, one in motion and one still. My feet are treadling (you can see in the motion picture) to turn the wheel, which turns the flyer by the drive band. This is what puts the twist in the fiber to make it into yarn. My right hand is pinching the twist to keep it from traveling into the undrafted fiber. My left hand is drafting the fiber. I pull back on the fiber to draft it and slide the right hand (still pinching it so the twist doesn't get away) toward the left to allow the twist to spin the fiber into yarn. Then I move both hands forward to allow the yarn to enter the



The picture on the front page and above were taken while the wheel was turning. Notice the blur of the spokes and a slight shadow of the flyer. Also, notice that Pat wears gray socks of the same yarn on the cone in the background. The cone is at the base of a Gearhart Knitting Machine. In the picture below, her husband is wearing white socks, visible at the very bottom of the picture.



This picture was taken with the wheel stationary to show the construction of the flyer and the route of the yarn as it passes through the eye (or orifice) and on a guide hook before winding on the bobbin.

If you have followed Pat's articles in issues 2 and 4 of *Antique Knitters Circular*, you will know that the yarn she has just spun came from her sheep in February this spring.

orifice and wind onto the bobbin.

It sounds a little confusing, but after some practice it becomes a nice relaxing rhythm. I love to spin, and love having all the fiber I can use and more from the animals here at the farm."

Pat Lees  
Wildflower Farm  
3013 Deer Road  
Rosholt, WI 54473  
sheeplady@voyager.net  
<http://my.voyager.net/~sheeplady>

## Searching For A Creative Medium

While scanning the Internet for variety in the treatment of spinning, I discovered the Web site of Tulasi Kilgore, <http://www.joyofhandspinning.com>. Formerly residing in New Jersey, Tulasi had recently moved to Montana. She posted an article about how she started with knitting, and soon moved on to raising her own fibers and learning to spin to create her own yarns. The purchase of angora rabbits led to the establishment of "The Woolly Wabbit Farm".

Tulasi's story about searching for a creative medium brings out the joy she speaks of and communicates that joy to the reader. True to life, knitting and spinning were not achieved with immediate success.

However, persistence and challenge led to the "ultimate **Joy of Handspinning**".

Thank you, Tulasi, for sharing your story on the Internet and permitting its use in *Antique Knitters Circular*.

*Fred Hauck, Publisher*

## How I Started Handspinning

*by Tulasi Kilgore*

For the past five years, the computer has been my primary medium for creating art. Being a trained artist in traditional art tools (painting and drawing) my interest in art recently began to shift back to a more traditional form of creative expression.

After much introspection, I decided to try knitting. I chose this medium because I wanted to learn something I knew very little about (I needed a challenge), it was something I could begin easily with materials I already had, plus it was Y2K compliant. Several years ago, I was heavily involved in weaving and fiber arts so I still had an abundance of yarn left over. I tried learning to knit once before but for some reason I had difficulty understanding it, so I was a little uncertain about giving it another try.

I began with hand knitting. I sat for hours until my wrists got tired, trying to figure out the knit and purl stitches. After a few days, things started coming together and I became greatly encouraged to continue. Immediately I set a goal to knit a sweater, which is a pretty ambitious task for a beginner, but I was determined to do it. After working on my new sweater project for two days I realized that at the rate I was going it was going to take me a year to make my first sweater. This was totally unacceptable to me, so I started looking for alternatives to achieve my goal more quickly.

One day I was at the craft store buying more yarn and I noticed they had a product called "The Incredible Sweater Machine." It was on the top shelf so I had to do a little climbing to get to it. I sat down in the aisle of the store and opened the box to examine the contents. It was a simple manual knitting frame that claimed a sweater could be made in a matter of hours. The samples looked good so I decided to buy it and give it a try. At home I watched the instruction video that came with it, and set it up to start my first knitting project. It was so easy to use. I was able to knit on it what took me 2 days to do on 2 needles in less than 5 minutes! I made a knitted hat in one half-hour. I went ahead and purchased additional videos to learn the basics of sweater making with the machine. They were excellent, and I knitted a child's sweater in two days and my first adult sweater the next week. Six weeks later I decided to invest in a professional knitting machine (manual). It has greatly increased production plus it is capable of making several design textures and two-color patterns. Now I'm really hooked!

Up to this point I was knitting with inexpensive craft acrylic yarns, but as my skills increased my desire for using better fibers did also. The only problem was that designer yarns, and yarns made of natural fibers such as wool and mohair are very expensive, especially if you are buying them in large quantities for projects like sweaters. So again, I needed to find a solution.

What quickly came to mind was to make my own yarn with fleece and natural fibers. Only problem was where to get the materials. My first choice would be to raise sheep, but that's not a practical thing to do when you're living in the city. So I decided to raise angora rabbits ("urban sheep") instead. Once again I had no clue where to find them especially in New Jersey - I've never seen them in the pet stores. Therefore, I posted a message on the Internet stating I wanted to adopt angora rabbits for wool production. To my surprise I got responses from 10 people in the area who raised angora rabbits for sale. I also didn't know anything about raising

these rabbits so I downloaded all the information I could find from the Internet. Then I chose a lady in upstate NY, and northern New Jersey to buy the rabbits from. They were an enormous help in getting me started. I now own two different breeds of 4 angora rabbits. Here is my introduction to the rabbits known as "The Wooly Wabbit Farm".

Now I have a source for wool, but I still didn't know how to spin or even have a spinning wheel. Again I got onto the Internet and searched for information about handspinning and spinning wheels. I found a dealer about an hour away so I called to ask if I could see their spinning wheels. During the course of our conversation I found out that they also give spinning classes and there was one opening left for the next class coming up in 5 weeks. I signed up for the class. I was also told that they rent their wheels on a weekly basis, so people could try them out before buying one. The following week I went to rent a wheel (I was anxious to get started and the class didn't start for another

month yet). The store owner showed me the wheels available for rent. I decided to try the Louet wheel first. As I was leaving, she told me not to get discouraged because spinning takes a long time to learn. (I took a weaving class 10 years ago and a portion of the class included wool preparation and spinning. I tried the wheel for about a half-hour and didn't get it at all, I wasn't interested at the time. For some reason, I felt I could master it this time around - at least I told the store owner I was planning on sticking with it until I figured it out.)

My first day on the wheel was unsuccessful. I couldn't keep the flywheel turning with my foot the same time I was suppose to manipulate the fibers with my hands. (Spinning requires a lot of hand, eye, and foot coordination.) I had a few moments of almost getting it, but still not quite. The second day started out pretty much like the first, but an hour later something clicked and I was actually spinning. I couldn't believe it! I bought a video teaching the basics of spinning wool and followed along with it. By the end of the week I made my first skein of yarn.

The next weekend I went to return the wheel to the store owner and to purchase my own wheel. She asked me how I did and I showed her my first skein of yarn. Her jaw literally dropped to the floor and she said, "I can't believe you are able to spin like this so soon", referring to how thin the yarn was. She continued to say, "No one spins like this on their first try". She then showed me her first skein of yarn, which was lumpy and as thick as a pencil. Somehow I managed to spin a yarn that was thin and consistent. After seeing her first skein I realized that I had indeed done something extraordinary. All I could say was "I must have done this in another lifetime" - there was no other explanation for it. The store owner told me "You should continue spinning because you definitely have a unique talent for it".

I now spin my own yarn and love it. I use the wool from the rabbits and blend it with other fibers such as wool, alpaca, and silk. I continued to buy all the spinning equipment I could afford, took a couple of classes, and I converted my graphics studio into a spinning studio.

I started the **Joy of Handspinning** as a way to bring the joy of spinning fiber into yarn to everyone. Spinning is fun, economical, easy to learn, and extremely relaxing. My mission for the Joy of Handspinning is to provide an open forum of learning and sharing, as well as, providing the very best spinning equipment and fibers to get beginners started and to supply the creative needs of advanced spinners, weavers and fiber artists. I also teach a free introductory class in handspinning, using the drop spindle, to anyone who wants to learn.

I continue to hand knit, but instead of making sweaters I am now knitting mittens and socks with the hand spun yarns that I create. I will get back to making sweaters, as soon as I am able to focus more on production.

My ultimate joy of handspinning comes from the process of taking a natural material that is so peacefully given to us by our fiber-bearing brothers and sisters. The fiber is then manipulated into a product that is useful to humanity, doesn't involve violence, and is hand made. I hope that you will also find joy in this beautiful craft. Happy Spinning!

*Tulasi*



William J. Giokas, V.P., Lamb Knitting Machine Corporation, provided the following information for publication in the Antique Knitters Circular.

## **John W. Giokas, President of Lamb Knitting Machine Corporation, died April 22, 2002**

John W. Giokas died on April 22 in the hospital and was survived by his wife of 56 years, Bessie "Bee" (Fanos) Giokas, three sons and two daughters-in-law, William J. and Virginia C. Giokas, Andrew J. Giokas, Dr. George J. and Marie A. Giokas and a daughter and son-in-law, Eugenia "Gini" G. and Robert L. LaPalme. He was also survived by 3 brothers and 8 grandchildren.

He graduated from Chicopee High in 1937 and except for his service in the U.S. army during WWII worked his entire life for the LAMB Knitting Machine Corp. He became the sole stockholder and president of the company in 1950.

During his career at LAMB, he developed the two, three and five color vertical stripe border machines, as well as a complete line of small diameter circular knitting machines. These machines were used and still used to make flat trimmings, drawstrings and shoelaces.

Under his direction, LAMB became a worldwide leader in narrow fabric knitting machinery. He was most proud of the fact that he directed a company that was established in 1867 through several decades of change in the U.S. textile industry and that he passed it on to his two sons with an enhanced reputation for quality, workmanship and dependability of all its products.



The Lamb Knitting Machine Corporation, under the direction of his sons, will continue manufacturing knitting machinery in the style fashioned by John W. Giokas in over 50 years of outstanding leadership.

It has been a pleasure and privilege to do business with the Giokas family, and I will long remember the hospitality shown by Mr. John W. Giokas, President, Lamb Knitting Machine Corporation.

## **My Introduction to John Giokas**

*by Fred Hauck*

In October of 1999, by invitation of John Giokas, I took my Lamb Flatbed Knitting Machine to the Lamb Knitting Machine Corporation factory in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts, for servicing. I left the factory with a working knitting machine, new needles, and operating instructions, thanks to the personal attention from the President of the company.

I introduced Mr. Giokas to subscribers of Antique Knitters Circular in the first Issue of that publication, January-February, 2002. Since that first visit, John has supplied me with new needles, numerous old documents, instruction manuals and catalogues.

October 1865 U.S. Patent #50,369 issued to Isaac W. Lamb

March 1867 Lamb Knitting Machine

Company established in Chicopee Falls

1890 300 employees

1867 to 1890 45,000 machines sold

1893 Merged with A. G. Spalding  
manufactured bicycles

1901-1931 Manufactured knitting machines

1931 Reincorporated as Lamb Knitting  
Machine Corporation

## A Blue Ribbon at the County Fair

p7

When Amelia Carlson said she was going to demonstrate her sock machine at the county fair, I asked her to take pictures and write a short article about her sock machine for this newsletter. This is the neat story she sent in for publication.

### Zero to Three in sixty days ...

... or thereabouts. Why did I get into sock machines?

I was having a lot of fun hand knitting socks, toe-up, top-down, on two circulars, playing with short row heels and toes, cast-ons, cast-offs, bind-offs on the toe. Then my folks visited. They picked out yarn, and I promised. Did my mother's pair first. I worked up to 120 stitches on the ankle, and for various reasons and her specs, needed to do 12 inches of K2P2 rib.

To hold off insanity, I would do an inch, put it down for a week or so, do another inch, and so on. Six months later, in the spring, it was done. Thank goodness! I had heard of CSMs from the spindler's list on Yahoo Groups and so promptly found who sold refurbished ones near me -- Pat Fly, in Chehalis. No way were my Dad's pair going to take 6 months!

Needless to say, I left that month's crank-in with Putterfly, a gorgeous Legare 400. Then I got a 27 slot ribber to do 1/1 rib with the 54 slot cylinder, but really wanted another ribber part to put it in, so as not to be trading out parts all over the place.

So, on to eBay it was. I ended up with a Legare 47 that did give me the ribber top, primarily because the only cylinder that fit in it was the 84 it came with (not the 72 and thus the 36 cylinder ribber wasn't that useful...). But, 84 stitches are good for baby hats, so I had my two ribber tops for "Putterfly" and "Twiggy" had a role too.

Back on to eBay, focusing on Legare 400's for certain this time. Lovely machine arrived. I finally cleaned it (slightly longer than 60 days after buying Putterfly) and put it together. It isn't yarn tested yet, but it looks marvelous and I'm expecting great things from it. Perhaps its name shall be 'Great Expectations'?

That's enough said for now. I won't mention the arms I'm twisting for more machines or the other parts I've picked up to play with as well. It's like potato chips. If I can avoid changing a cylinder, I will. Although, I must say, the CSMs have sparked my 'mechanical mind' and made me a fixture at the local auto parts store (I think they sold me the degreaser that wouldn't open just so I would come in again!)

And oh yes -- Dad's pair was #10 on Putterfly, and got a blue ribbon in the county fair. They will be sent to him next week, after the fair is over.

What I tell people is that yes, they (CSMs) take some care and visits to auto parts stores, but that unless your auto parts store sells nail polish, you'll be visiting the cosmetics counter in your drug store, too! Just some CSM humor...

*Amelia Carlson*

Happy cranking,

Amelia, from sunny Sequim, WA

<http://sssocks.com/>

**Amelia with  
"Putterfly"**



**Amelia's  
CSM Dis-  
play at the  
Fair**



**p8** *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.**

**(Fifth of Several Columns)**

A change in operating policy marked the incorporation and new management of the Gearhart Knitting Machine Company of Clearfield in 1920 and may have been a major contributor to its failure and bankruptcy in 1926. That was the introduction of the "home work" system under which the company agreed to buy stockings knit in the homes of its customers on the machines they had purchased.

Prior to that time, the company had sold probably thousands of machines along with spare or replacement parts and yarn in this country and many foreign countries to customers who then knit socks or stockings for members of their families or for sale. All of the business, from its beginning in 1889-90 by inventor Joseph E. Gearhart, was done by mail or express orders and the company had prospered for some 40 years or more.

Robert Gearhart of Colorado Springs, Colorado, a son of Leonard A. Gearhart and grandson of Joseph, reports that Gearhart Knitting Machine Co. memorabilia in his possession indicates that competition may have forced the Gearhart company into buying back socks knit by its customers. By that time there were at least two other companies manufacturing home knitting machines and their brochures, in Mr. Gearhart's possession, contain "buy back" offers.

The "home work" system operated this way: The company sold the knitting machine and yarn to a customer and then purchased hosiery that was knit to the satisfaction of the company from the machine purchaser. In 1925 or '26 the rate for yarn was \$2.50 per pound and one billing at that time charged the customer \$12.50 for five pounds of yarn and credited him with \$2.63 in hosiery wages, apparently for the sample pair or pairs of socks he submitted.

The home knitters apparently outdid the demand for knit hosiery, however, and along with a changing mode in hosiery manufacture and tastes the company found itself overwhelmed by hosiery by the mid-twenties. It appears too that the company was not well versed in good merchandising of their hosiery product, by then trademarked "Allwear Woolen Hosiery," and therefore found itself with an oversupply.

One Clearfielder whose memory goes back to the twenties recalls that when the company went into receivership it had "thousands" of pairs of hosiery in warehouses "between Clearfield and Lock Haven" that were eventually purchased by a Clearfield merchant and resold to a national distributor.

Correspondence dealing with the company's operations and its receivership in 1926 in possession of Robert Gearhart discloses that the company had some 11,000 dozen pairs of socks on hand when it went bankrupt. One letter from Charles T. Kurtz Sr., one of the court-appointed receivers for the firm, reported that the receivers had an offer for 1,000 pairs, but complained that the offer was so selective as to size and color that it would make it impossible to sell the remainder of the stock.

Another letter in Mr. Gearhart's collection indicates that in 1926 wool socks were being sold for \$5.50 to \$7 for a dozen pairs. Thomas Lincoln Wall, in his 1925 History of Clearfield County, reported that "there are upward of 5,000 knitters who in this way (knitting hosiery at home and returning them to the company for marketing) have employment. The amount of hosiery thus received and disposed of has become enormous.

By 1925, the Gearhart knitter had been improved to the point that it could be operated with six different cylinders, each of which provided a different knit. The No. 112 cylinder provided a very fine weave of cotton or silk hosiery and the last machine manufactured was declared capable of 8,000 to 10,000 stitches a minute.

None of the other competing knitting machines on the market by that time offered such versatility.

**(To Be Continued)**

**Below** Keystone Vacuum Cleaner manufactured by Gearhart Knitting Machine Company





## Mystery Machine

Can anyone identify this machine? The only marking is "Patent Applied For" on the casting. The cylinder is 3 inches in diameter.

Also, if you have a Franz and Pope machine, please send the serial number and markings to Dr. Candee.

Send responses to:

Richard M. Candee  
6 Scituate Road  
York, Maine 03909



## Creelman Bros.

I am indebted to W. Murray Clark for the loan of Creelman Catalogue No 101 and his encouragement to publish information from it for the enlightenment of the sock machine hobbyist.

There has been a flood of interest in Creelman machines lately, and this catalogue contains a wealth of historical information. From the cover pages alone it is shown that they were established in 1872 in Georgetown, Ontario, Canada, had 6 models, and were in business for 44 years. (Someone had rubber stamped the front cover Jun 19 1916, which agrees with the mathematics.) The line drawing of the factory on this page (page 1 in the catalogue) claims a capacity to make "3000 machines per year".

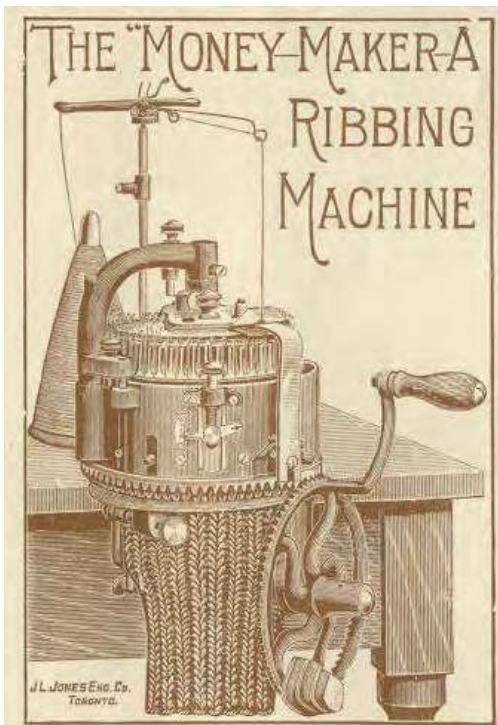
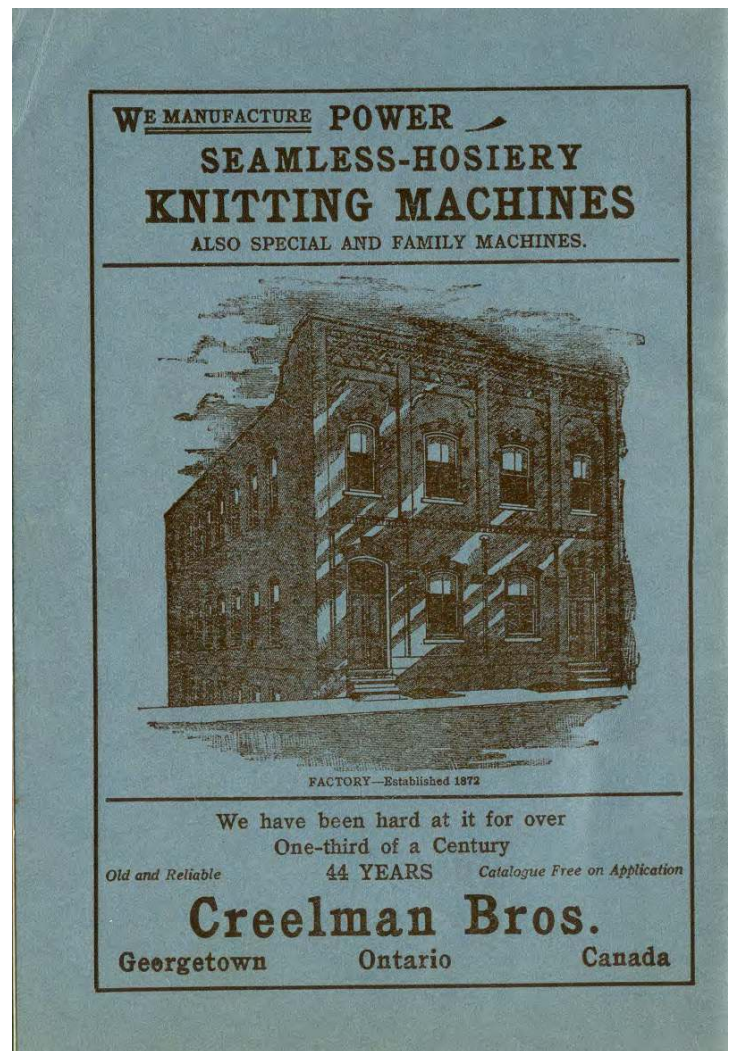
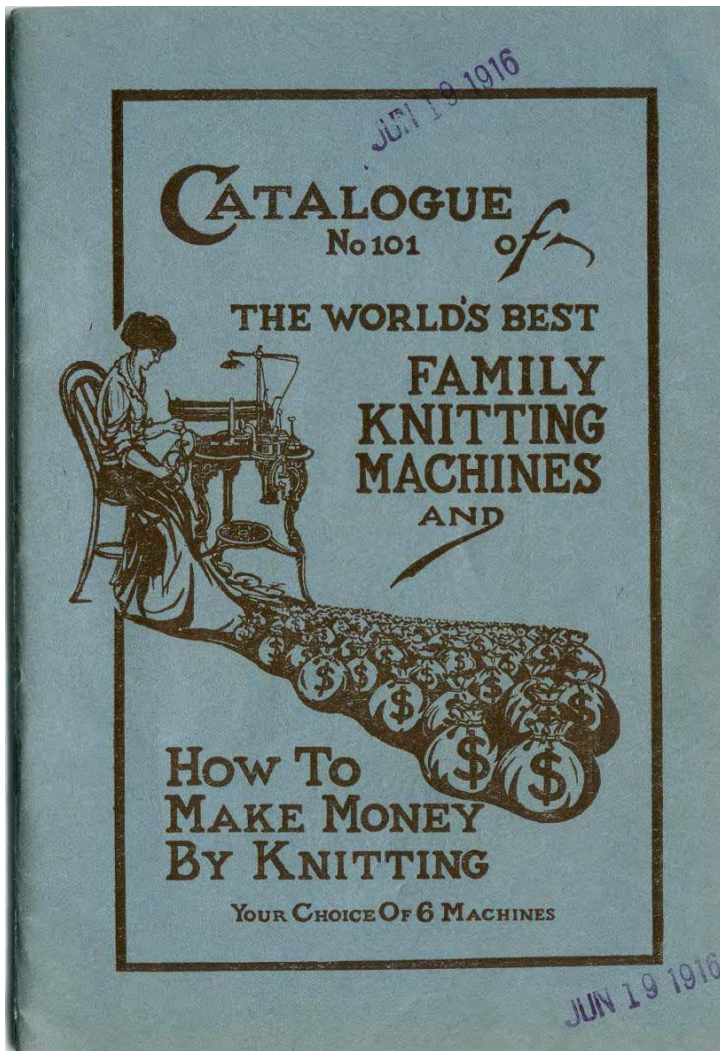
According to their introductory remarks, they had "out-lived more than 10 competitors" and had "over 30,000 satisfied users".

The six main machines illustrated in the catalogue were: MONEY-MAKER, BANNER, WORLD'S-STAR, DOLLAR-MAKER, MONEY-MAKER-A, and IMPROVED-MONEY-MAKER. They also listed an IMPROVED MONEY-MAKER MITT-MACHINE and a POWER LOOPER-SEAMER. In the way of accessories they had a BANNER STAND NO. 1 and 2, and the IDEAL CABINET NO. 1.

*(Continued on page 10)*







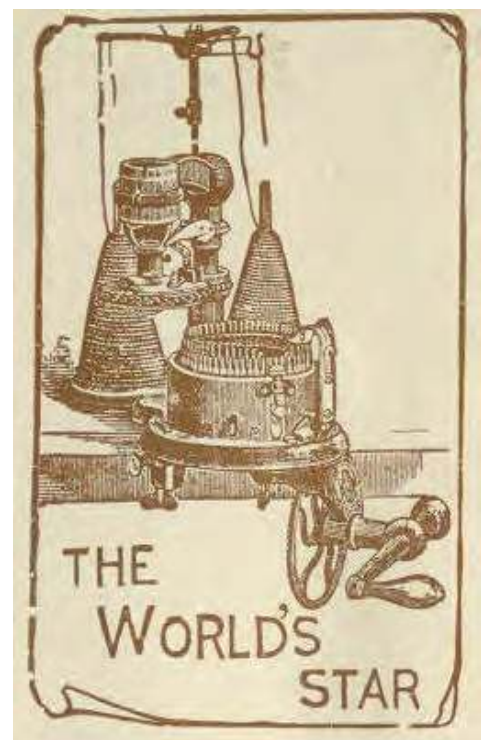
(Continued from page 9)

On this page, differences can be seen on the crank design of the MONEY MAKER A and the WORLD'S STAR. The crank on the WORLD'S STAR resembles the one on my Franz & Pope.

The catalogue is in unusually good condition for a 1916 document. The covers (above) contain a wide range of information about the Creelman Bros.

The machine on the BANNER STAND on page 11 is a MONEY MAKER-A and the one on the IDEAL CABINET IS THE IMPROVED MONEY MAKER. On this page is an

(Continued on page 12)





## Socks for Soldiers

An insert pasted inside the front cover made a plea to women to knit socks for the "Soldier Boys" who were already in battle. WW I had just begun when this catalogue was printed in 1916. Words like "*Fight for the Loved Ones, Home, Country and Liberty*" were used to motivate sales.

## Accessories

The stand and cabinet below are shown to illustrate the fancy iron work employed in the accessories. Can you imagine having relics like these tables in your knitting parlor? The IDEAL CABINET NO. 1 was actually a drop cabinet that enabled storage of the machine and accessories completely inside, leaving an attractive piece of furniture for playing cards, writing or serving tea.



War and Loyalty—The present is an *Opportunity of a Life-time* to unite Loyalty to High-ideals for Country, Home, Humanity and Self-interest by investing in a First-class Family-knitting-machine for:—

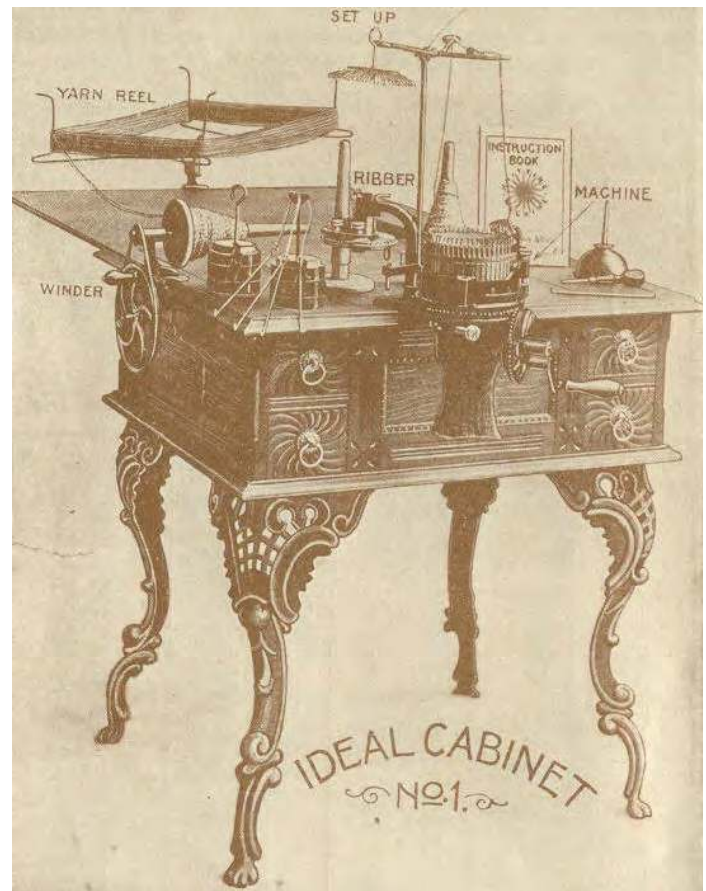
Red-cross Socks,  
Money-making,  
Home-work and  
Military-socks.

The demand for Military and Red-cross-socks is *Unprecedented* and will continue to the end, *which is not yet*, therefore, now is the time to order. Help yourself and help the Splendid-workers for the Red-cross-societies in the Great-work of Love for the Self-sacrificing Soldier-boys.

The Red-cross Societies' needs are increasing daily, Help is urgently needed and gladly accepted from all True and Loyal Canadians. Many have responded nobly, especially the Women's-Societies, Churches, and Individual-Women-workers and Hand-knitters, who through their Patriotic-devotion and Love have materially contributed to the Happiness and Comfort of the Boys who have been wounded in rendering the Highest-Service, Voluntary-Sacrifice in the *Fight-for the Loved Ones, Home, Country and Liberty*.

If you wish to work for and Show-your-Loyalty to this Splendid cause, place your order through the Red-cross-society and we will help you both by giving a *Special-price* for a Machine for Red-cross-work or you may order direct from us on our Cash-Coupon-Plan.

**One Knitting-Machine will knit as many socks as  
Twenty-Hand-Knitters.**

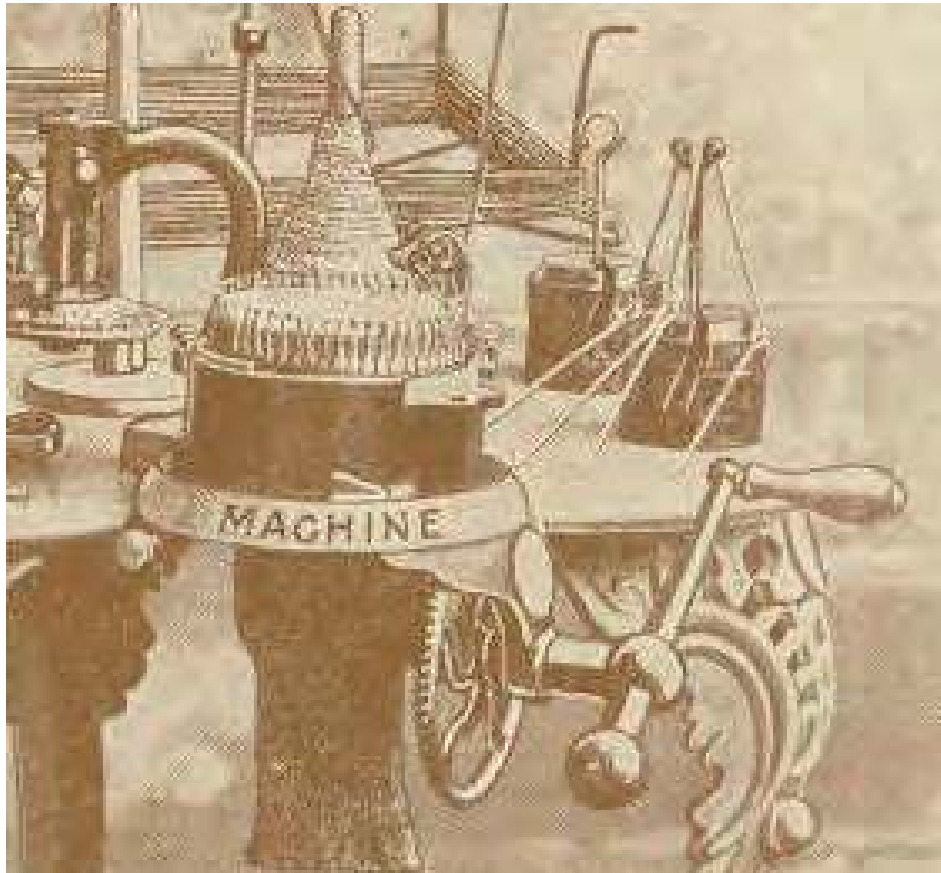




*(Continued from page 10)*

enlargement of a BANNER MACHINE that was mounted on a BANNER STAND. Its crank, like the WORLD'S STAR, resembles that of my Franz & Pope pictured in Issue 4. The crank on the Franz & Pope is perfectly balanced and when released does not move.

The catalogue consists of 46 pages of sales pitches and claims of money making opportunities. A variety of garments are illustrated and the phrase "YOU CAN DO IT" is frequently used. Each machine has a variety of cylinder sizes and a range of corresponding prices. The price of the IDEAL CABINET NO 1 was \$25, the BANNER STAND \$15. The IMPROVED MONEY MAKER KNITTING MACHINE complete with the IDEAL CABINET (on page 11) and all attachments was priced at \$50.



I want to thank W. Murray Clark for sharing Catalogue No. 101. Also, a big thanks to Pat Lees for pictures of her spinning wheel and her descriptions of spinning. Thank you, Tulasi Kilgore, for use of your article "How I Started Hand-pinning". Amelia Carlson deserves a round of applause for her blue ribbon socks and her winning smile.

I especially appreciate permission from the Giokas family to share a page about the passing of Mr. John W. Giokas.

I would have preferred that this Issue was delivered on schedule. Except for its tardiness, I hope my subscribers enjoy the contents of this Issue.

*Fred Hauck, Publisher*