



BROOKE SHANNON ANTIQUE SEWING MACHINE EXHIBIT ROOM

The Mill Museum has a collection of more than 75 antique sewing machines, many of which are on display in the Brooke Shannon Room. The room was dedicated in 2011 to the late Brooke Shannon, a former Executive Director of the Mill Museum. The exhibit also includes toy sewing machines, thimbles, and other sewing paraphernalia. To learn more about the history of early Connecticut sewing machines, see the article [Sewing Revolution](#) in our History section.

Connecting to the Mill Museum's Archives

To see a mid-1900s Casige toy sewing machine up close, [click here](#). To see a darning egg, [click here](#). To see an instruction manual for a 19th-century, Connecticut-made Wheeler and Wilson No. 8 sewing machine, [click here](#). To see an 1867 Wheeler and Wilson No. 3 sewing machine, made in Bridgeport, CT, [click here](#). To see a 19th-century Willimantic Linen Company wooden thread display chest for retailers, [click here](#). To see a pair of snips used to cut thread by a worker at the American Thread Company, [click here](#). To see a Stichwell toy sewing machine, [click here](#). (Connecting to the Museum's Archives made possible in part by a grant from Connecticut Humanities.)

CThumanities

Video of 19th-Century Wilcox and Gibbs Treadle Sewing Machine



Other Things to See in This Exhibit



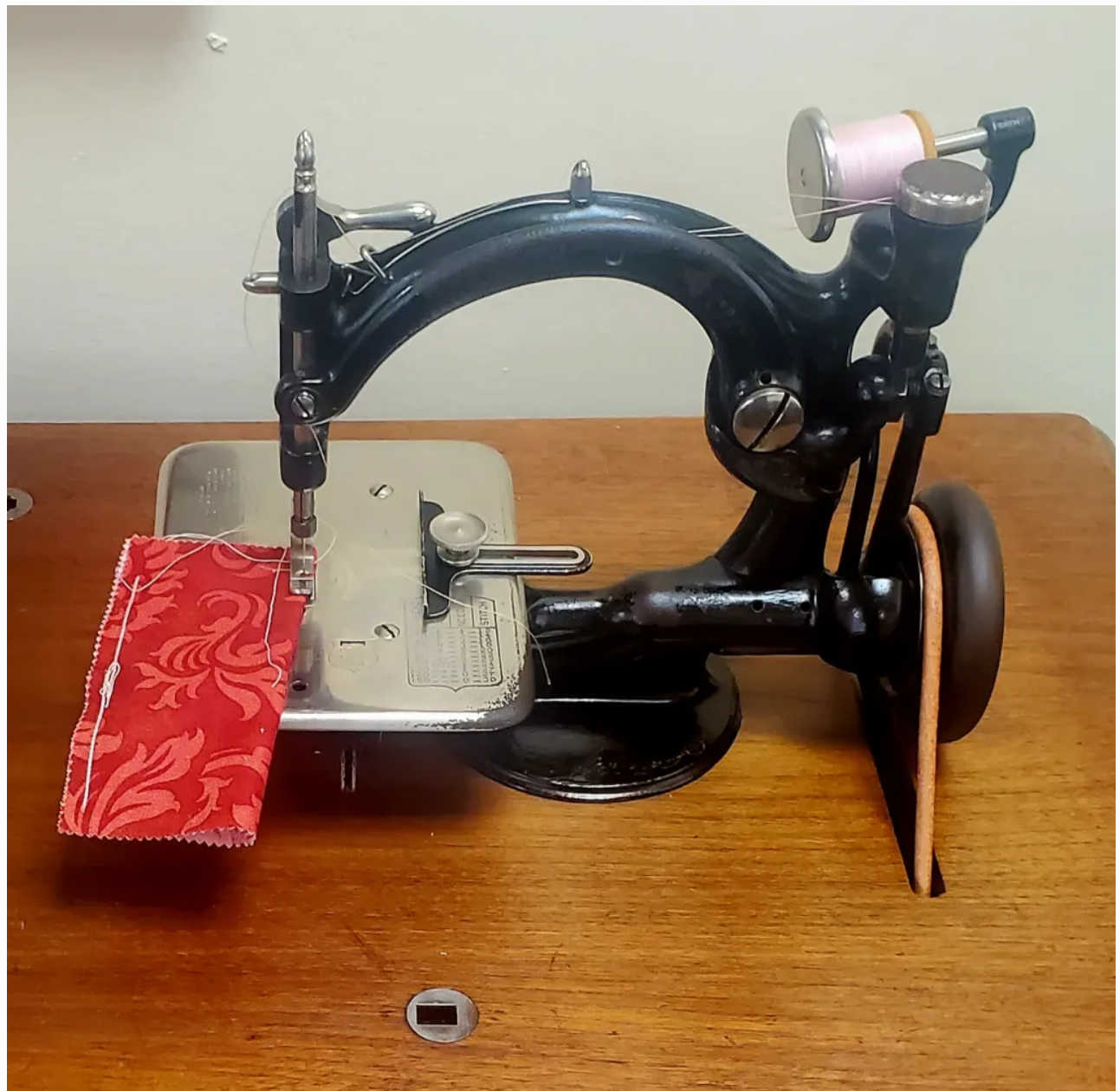
A portion of the Museum's extensive thimble collection adorns one of the walls in our Antique Sewing Machine Exhibit. How many different kinds of thimbles will you see? Toy sewing machines and other sewing paraphernalia are on the shelf above the thimble display.



Wheeler and Wilson treadle sewing machine and cabinet, 1872. Manufactured in Bridgeport, CT.



Wheeler and Wilson treadle sewing machine, 1875. Wheeler and Wilson was a 19th-century manufacturer, located in Bridgeport, CT. In the 19th century, Wheeler and Wilson was the United States' second-largest sewing machine manufacturer, trailing only Singer. It was Connecticut's largest sewing machine manufacturer, and the company's technology was superior to Singer's. Singer bought out Wheeler and Wilson in the early 20th century.



19th-century Wilcox and Gibbs sewing machine.



Trade card for Singer sewing machines. In the 19th century, manufacturers printed trade cards -- typically about the size of baseball cards -- to advertise their products. At the time, men (who controlled the finances in most middle-class families) believed that intricate machines were too difficult for women to operate, so a large part of Singer's marketing strategy was to portray their sewing machines as easy to use. The Singer company also devised the installment plan, which made their machines easier to buy. They also used mass production to lower the price.



Finkle & Lyon sewing machine, 1871. Boston and Middletown, CT.



Howe treadle sewing machine, 1869. Bridgeport, CT.



Weed treadle sewing machine, 1867. Hartford, CT. The Weed Company's slogan was, "A Weed that cannot be weeded out."



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1* Remember the Number, 271.



