

Who invented the first sewing machine?

There are many arguments about who created one of the most important machines ever devised. Here are some of the founders:-

1755 – London – German immigrant, Charles Weisenthal applies for a patent for a needle to be used for mechanical sewing. There is no blue-print for a machine to go with it.

1790 – England – Cabinet maker Thomas Saint invented what is considered to be the first sewing machine. A simple machine that created a hole in leather.

1804 – France – Englishmen Thomas Stone and James Henderson create machine that emulates “hand-sewing”. Nothing further is known.

1804 – England – Scotland’s John Duncan creates an embroidery machine using a number of needles. Again, nothing is known of this machine.

1814 – Austria – Tailor Josef Madersperger received a patent and aid from the Austrian government. He failed to create one machine and died a pauper.

1818 – America – Vermont churchman John Adams Dodge and his partner John Knowles produce a machine that can only sew a very short length of material before it needed resetting.

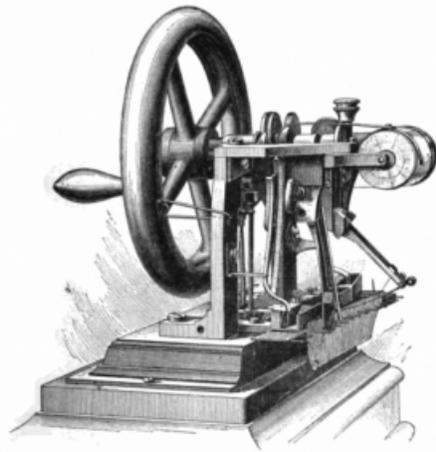
1830 – France – Barthelemy Thimomnier received a patent from the French government. His machine, mostly of wood, used a barbed needle. It was designed for embroidery but had the potential as a sewing machine. Perhaps the founder of the modern machine? In less than 10 years he built a factory of over 80 machines but ran into labor problems from local Parisian tailors. His factory was destroyed except for one machine, with which he fled to England. Sadly, he died in a poor house in 1857.

1833 – America – Quaker Walter Hunt developed the first machine that did not emulate hand-sewing. It made a lock-stitch using two spools of thread and used an eye-pointed needle, just like today. It was somewhat restricted as it could only make short, straight seams.

1842 – America – John Greenough produces a working machine where the needle passes entirely through the cloth. A model was made for raising capital but no offers were made.

1844 – England – John Fisher invented machine for lace. It was a working sewing machine. However this invention was overlooked during the long legal arguments between Singer and Howe as to the origin of the sewing machine

1844 – America – Massachusetts farmer, Elias Howe completed his first prototype machine. He set up a competition, which his machine won, against hand-sewers but in the end he still had no buyers for his invention. In debt he sent his brother, Amasa Howe to England to see if he could sell the machine. Only a corset maker, William Thomas bought the machine. His machine could make 250 stitches a minute due to his lockstitch mechanism built into the machine.



1850 – America – Actor and inventor, Isaac Singer worked on improving an existing sewing machine. The up-and-down motion mechanism let it feed the cloth and regulated the tension on the needle thread and at the same time lubricated the needle thread so that leather could be sewn.



It is from this time onwards that the machine developed. Many law suits developed as to who owned the machine patent but by 1850 the industry saw major changes.

The first mechanical sewing machines were used in factory production. It was not until 1905 that electric-powered machines were developed for home use.

Fabrics – we cannot live without them. Here are some of the most famous inventors and their products

Blue Jeans and Denim Fabric – The Bavarian immigrant, Levi Strauss invented both in 1850. His market being for the men of the California Gold Rush

FoxFibre® – In 1982 Sally Fox re-invented the naturally colored fabrics used in cotton fabrics today

GORE-TEX® – A registered trademark of W.L. Gore and Associates developed in 1989. A breathable water and wind-proof material “Guaranteed to keep you dry®”

The company was founded in Newark, Delaware by William L. and Genevieve Gore on January 1, 1958 and has been a family tradition ever since.

Kevlar – Invented by Stephanie Louise Kwolek of E.I. du Pont de Nemours (Dupont) in 1966 and first marketed in 1971. This material is advertised as “five times stronger than steel.”

Mackintosh – 1823 – Scottish chemist Charles Macintosh developed waterproof garments in 1823. He used wool cloth and painted one side with a dissolved rubber preparation and then another layer of wool cloth on top.

Polyester – the first fiber called Terylene was invented in 1941 by scientists Winfield, Dickson, Birthwhistle and Ritchie for ICI in England. The patent was later sold to E.I. du Pont de Nemours in the USA where it became known as Dacron®

Rayon – The first manufactured fiber developed. It was first made from wood or cotton pulp and known as artificial silk. It is said to be the creation of Swiss chemist Georges Audemars, crudely manufactured in 1855. In 1884 it was patented as an artificial silk by Hilaire de Charbonnet, Comte de Chardonnay, known as Chardonnay Silk but it was too flammable and removed from the market. In 1894 the product was made safe by three British inventors and became known as viscose rayon. It was first produced in America by 1910 and by 1924 it became simply known as “rayon.”

Nylon and Neoprene – another Dupont invention from 1928 to 1931 created by Wallace Hume Carothers – the father of man-made fabrics.

Spandex – This textile owes its origin to polyurethane rubber, founded in the late 1950's again by E.I. du Pont de Nemours & company, Inc. The first commercial production in America began in 1959.

Ultrasuede – In 1970 a Japanese scientist Dr. Miyoshi Okamoto invented the first microfiber while at Toray Industries. A few months later his colleague, Dr. Toyohiko Hikota succeeded in developing a process that transformed these microfibers into an amazing new fabric called Ultrasuede.

Velcro® came from Mother Nature. In 1948 a Swiss mountaineer came home covered in burrs after walking his dog. The sticky seeds gave him the idea for Velcro®. Developed in France it is made of nylon hooks sewn under infrared light.

Vinyl – Waldo L. Semon created polyvinyl chloride (PVC) in 1926 while working for B.F. Goodrich in America. Not a new invention, the first man-made plastic came in 1862 in London however it was the creation for today's fabric.