

The Overlooked #3 Featherweight Case of Margaret Linnea Matilda Stark

Magna Linnea Stark & Crawford Delmont Driskill

Margaret Linnea Stark or *Magna* as she was called by her family, was born April 3rd, 1904 in the Skon District of Sweden. Her parents Charles and Anna *Starck* emigrated with their two children Magna and her year and a half older brother *Fingal* to America arriving September 4th, 1904 just 5 months after her birth. They settled first in Chicago. By 1930 the family had moved to San Diego, California. Her mother passed away in 1931. The 1940 Census tells more about Magna and her family. Magna worked as a stenographer at that time and her father a building contractor. It shows that she, her two children, and her father all resided on Redondo St., San Diego. In 1940 Magna was employed as a stenographer for a painting contractor firm. Her father, a building contractor. Magna's husband Paul Worthington, a WWI veteran is found living at the VA Hospital of San Diego.

Crawford Delmont Driskill, Manager of the Singer Store in downtown San Diego sold this Singer 221 to Magna November 23rd, 1936 3 days prior to Thanksgiving.. Crawford was born in rural Todd County, Kentucky in 1883 to farmers Sylvester and Alice Driskell. His parents and siblings moved to the West coast before 1920. First to Los Angeles where Crawford worked as a wholesale grocery salesman and then in San Diego selling/ distributing Singer sewing machines, eventually becoming the Singer Distribution Center Manager.

The Featherweight and the #3 style Case

The Featherweight that Magna purchased **AD944867** as evidenced by the Warranty Card, was made during the 3rd production run of Featherweights assigned June 24, 1935 and was one of the last of the desirable so-called "school-bell" Featherweights mounted on the front of the machines bed. This style guide was replaced soon after by a front mounted but upward extended version that allowed the guide to be accessed above the level of the then new Singer model 308 card-table. (see photos)

Magna's Featherweight was housed in the often overlooked 3rd style case. The #3 case was very short-lived, appearing first in March of 1935 but phased out early the next year in the Spring of 1936. It was the first Featherweight case with a black interior and chrome/ aluminum hardware vs the green interior and brass hardware of styles 1 & 2. The frame and dimensions, remained the same as the #2 case and kept a feature often overlooked that all three of the early cases had, the 3/4" wide oil can cleat bar (toe bar) on the interior left side-bottom of the case. This toe bar was prone to loosening as it was attached to the bottom of the case by only two small brads. The shifting weight of the machine when carrying or by putting the machine away tended to loosen the bar over time. Because of this part failure Singer ordered a change and replaced the thin 3/4" bar with one that was 1 3/4" wide and that fit tightly against the left end panel of the case thus giving the case and the toe bar more rigidity. This new case which began appearing in early 1936 with the wider toe bar would become the Featherweights #4 Style case (referred to in various forums and on websites incorrectly as the #3).

Check your 1935-1936 case...3/4" bar w/ black interior = #3 case or wide bar w/ black interior = #4 case?

Now, just a word of caution based solely on our experience with the early #1, 2, & 3 cases: Handle them with care; do not carry by the original leather handles most which have deteriorated in time; support the case by the bottom with a strap, an additional cloth case, or your arm when going to your quilt club meetings! The fabric, glue, and wood dries & shrinks over the years. We've had two machines fall out through the bottoms. Don't let it happen to yours!

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Margaret didn't suffer our misfortune. Her Featherweight remains in excellent condition today! In the pictures of the interior note the black fabric and pattern design, the narrow toe/oil cleat bar not butted up against the end of the case, the tray fabric, color and style.

In the pictures of the exterior note the style and color of the hardware, the leather handle and its attaching "D" style linkage. Knowing these features will help you easily determine the differences and ensure your case is correct for the machine's vintage. Pictured below are the first four style cases.

#1 Style case late '33 - mid '34 Green interior, brass hardware, narrow toe/cleat bar left side



#2

Style Mid '34 - Early '35 Green interior, brass hardware, narrow toe/ cleat bar left side



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#3 Style case w/ black interior, aluminum hardware and narrow toe/ cleat bar



#4 Style case w/ black interior, aluminum hardware and wide toe/ cleat bar

