

Our Singer 301 Limited Editions

Pam's Birthdate - Anniversary 301's - the completed Collection

In the Spring of 2020, I was preparing an article for Nova's website about our Singer 221 "Centennial" Featherweight collection. I wanted to add a reference or two about other Singer models that also wore the special "*Century of Sewing Service 1851-1951*" badge. That led me to check out Ray Wyberski's website www.singer301.com. Ray tells the history of a newly produced special machine to be introduced in late 1951 as the "*Anniversary*" model to begin Singer's second century quietly during Singer's 100th Anniversary celebrations. The 301's grand introduction and advertising campaign geared toward the public wouldn't begin until the following year in late 1952. His research, thoroughness and web-design had me hooked. I knew I'd have to try and add at least one of these exclusive machines to our collection.

Singer assigned the initial 10,000 serial numbers known as the "*Anniversary Model Limited Edition*" models to begin production on July 25th my wife Pam's birthday and then to be first exhibited at the Singer's cabinet facility in South Bend, Indiana on November 17th, the date of our wedding! Two major incentives to keep me intrigued and searching, *Birthdate & Anniversary* machines all in one!

There were identifying features found on the early 301's with serial #s below 10,000; unique decals, motor identification clues, the design of the short folding bed, new trapezoid style cases and four particular but easily overlooked features that these first early machines had.

- 1) *a larger badge than other Singer models,*
- 2) *a border casting around the badge*
- 3) *the early machines were accompanied by a rare green covered manual*
- 4) *1,000 of the first black 10,000 made in 1951 had the Featherweight carryover Celtic decal on the backside of the vertical arm, all important clues in finding the machines for our newest collection.*

The very first 1,000 would be known as the "*Singer 301 Centennial Limited Edition*", 500 in each color. They would carry the special "*Century of Sewing Service 1851-1951*" badge. The following 9,000 301's referred to as the "*Anniversary Limited Edition*" model would wear the new black band badge, 4,500 in each color. Finding one of the first 10,000, let alone one of the initial *Centennial* badged 1,000, would be the combination birthday/ anniversary I hoped to gift Pam! Finding each of the Limited Editions, the "*Centennial*" and the "*Anniversary*" in both colors, would be impossible! Finding one of 500 *Black Anniversary Limited Edition* 301's with the Black band badge *and* with the *Celtic Scroll* decal on the arm would add to the challenge. I am goal-driven and not to be discouraged. I began my search!

I added 301 search criteria to eBay, Kijiji, & ShopGoodwill, and a few auction sites. I joined the Facebook groups "*301-301A Vintage Sewing Machine* & *Tre' Perry's Vintage Sewing Machine Collection*" I wanted to learn as much as possible and possibly see one of the early Singer 301s for sale.

At the current time in November 2021 only 166 (19 in beige and 147 in black) of the *Anniversary Limited Edition* machines and 40 of the *Centennial Limited Edition* machines (15 beige and 25 black) were known to exist and registered on Ray's website. Finding two *Anniversary Limited Edition* machines, one in each color, in addition to two *Centennial Anniversary Limited Edition 301s*, again in both colors, seemed an insurmountable goal with astronomical odds against it!

Following are the details of how my search played out.

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1) NA000932 “Centennial Limited Edition”

Birthdate - July 25, 1951

Color - Soft Beige Badge - “Century of Sewing Service 1851-1951” Manual - Green Cover
Traded with Colin Schroeder August 8th, 2020 Moorhead, Minnesota

In a previous story I’d told of finding Pam’s first *301 Centennial Limited Edition* birthday machine and trading for it in a Hardee’s parking lot. But the story thickens, as with most things, familiarity breeds appreciation, want, and then a need and this slant needle machine Colin Schroeder traded to me did just that. I was seeing variations of the 301 everywhere. Unfortunately, none were the specific 301s in my wishlist. Finding another on that list would prove very daunting.

2) NA006406 “Anniversary Limited Edition”

Birthdate - July 25, 1951

Color - Black Badge - Black Band Rear Arm Decal - Celtic Scroll
Purchased on EBay Nov 10, 2020

The second one found was advertised as a “*Vintage red-badged Singer 301.*” That caught my eye. I emailed the seller for additional pictures, particularly of the backside of the machine. There it was, the *Celtic Scroll* decal found sporadically on 500 of the 4,500 black *Anniversary* machines. The beige did not have decals on the bed or backside of the vertical arm. I’d found Pam’s second for the collection, the red-corroded, black banded badge, and with a serial number below 10,000!

3) NA000751 “Centennial Limited Edition”

Birthdate July 25, 1951

Color - Black Badge - “Century of Sewing Service 1851-1951” Manual - Green Cover
Purchased using “Buy it Now” on EBay June 18, 2021

While doing my daily website-browsing, I spotted a rough looking 301 in front of an even rougher looking grass-cloth trapezoid case. At first glance the serial number and color of the badge itself were hard to see but there it was displayed on the case, a green covered manual. I zoomed in on the manual and it stated 301. I then quickly glanced at the other pictures a second time. I knew I’d found a treasure and immediately hit the “Buy it Now” button. The machine had been part of an estate sale I’d swear was held in a barn but it cleaned up as did the “Centennial” badge! The third in this collection had arrived.

4) NA003129 “Anniversary Limited Edition”

Birthdate July 25, 1951

Color - Soft Beige Badge - Black Band Manual - Green Cover
Purchased from Jacinta Williams via Facebook October 14, 2021

Jacinta Williams, a fellow 301 enthusiast and member of the 301-301A Facebook group from New Hampshire, posted an *Anniversary Limited Edition* beige 301 for sale. Yes, with the *green covered manual*. I believe she received my message before her fingers left her keyboard. I waited for her reply. Seconds later (my internet is so slow.... we had a deal in the works! This final piece arrived October 21st, The fourth special Limited Edition 301 was found - collection complete!

Eighteen months, a few miles, a few \$s, a few new friends, and a story.

Birthdate and Anniversary machines, both Limited Editions, in both colors!

Pam now has a unique 50th wedding anniversary gift, personal and complete.

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5) **NA003129 “Anniversary Limited Edition”**

Birthdate July 25, 1951

Color - Soft Beige Badge - Black Band Manual -

Purchased from Suzi’s Antiques November 2nd - arrived November 11th

And then a Bonus “**Anniversary**” is delivered. Offered by Suzi’s Antiques of New Hampshire is now our 5th Limited Edition 301 to arrive. We usually do not collect duplicates but I’m so caught up in finding these early 301’s! It arrived November 11th with just 6 days to go! I’ll stop now...(wink,,wink)

This story and gift was only possible with the help of Darla Trenner, Leo Kujat & JJ Coble, Ray Wyberski, Tre’ Perry, Nova Montgomery, Bob & Debbie Chapel, Colin Schroeder, David Werther, Jacinta Williams, and Suzi’s Antiques and many others through their posts and encouragement. Thank you.

- * <http://www.singer301.com/limited/default.html>. (Ray Wyberski)
- * <http://thefeatherweight221factory.com/page1.php> (Leo Kujat & JJ Coble)
- * <https://turnedwritehandcraftedart.com/collections/all> (Colin Schroeder)
- * <https://www.novamontgomery.com/> (Nova Montgomery)
- * Facebook Groups
 - * Tre’ Perry’s Vintage Sewing Machine Collection
 - * Singer 301 - 301A Vintage Sewing Machines