

On the Verge of War Years – 1938-1941
Our Collection – Singer 221 Featherweights
Pam & J.C. Elliott

The War had begun in Europe and would soon come to America. Concern about shortages and rationing was driving the market. In efforts to meet demand Singer was manufacturing more sewing machines and appliances than ever and scrambling to keep up. During an almost 4 year span 1938 – early 1941 Singer introduced & produced many new variations, accessories, a few new finishes to attract the hesitant buyer, and along the way they made a few mistakes. Below find a few examples of these new twists from our collection.

Produced by Singer as an accessory and installed by your local Singer Rep/ Salesman are two unique **“Corduroy Tool-Holder Lid Liners”** referred to as Type #1 being rare and Type #2. Note the varying layout of the tools & angle of the Singercraft Guide to differentiate the two.



An anomaly known as the **“Top of the Arm”** decal produced in early 1939 Featherweights. The reason why is anybody's guess; mine is that a new production line employee charged with decal installation was told, “Put the SINGER decal on the top” assuming the supervisor meant “top of the machine vs top of the lamp shade?” The Featherweight listed came to us with “two” anomalies ie, the “Top of the Arm” decal and a Type #2 “Corduroy Tool Organizer” Again, we’ll never know; but they are unique and thus collectable as few are found.



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A seemingly insignificant item found on a few Featherweights of this time period is a specific Inspection/ inspector's mark – the "V", stamped on the underside of the machine. This mark found in 221s made in the 21st production run with a birthdate of Jan 7, 1941 in and of itself separates these machines when found from the others. Singer assemblers and inspectors sporadically used their personal stamp. I like to think Churchill saw it and copied its use a few months later to symbolize European resistance! I apologize, I tend to get carried away but still?



"Made in U.S.A." decal pictured below on this April 1st, 1941 Featherweight was intended for export to meet demand in war-ravaged Europe as Great Britain was already at War with Germany. The decal is rarely seen and only found on a few machines. Keep your eyes peeled for this one – early 1941 Featherweights ONLY!



"Speckled" Tension disc. On certain machines of this era you'll find a speckled Tension knob disc vs the standard black used from 1933 through 1957. In this case our "Crinkle" has it.



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The “**Unlisted**” Featherweights. On May 14, 1941 Singer assigned a block of 35,000 serial numbers AF907451 to AF942450, to the Model 15, a very popular home sewing machine. Mistakes were made in stamping or recording the serial numbers stamped and a number of model 221s were stamped with serial numbers in this production run. Singer records continue to maintain that machines with numbers within this range are “Model 15s!” Below find an example of one from our collection that while it is black and has a needle it is definitely not a Model 15! Remember that during this early 1941 time period, pressure was on the assembly line at Singer to produce, regardless.



Two other major changes/ additions to the Singer Model 221 Featherweight line came about in this time period. I'll feature ours in a follow-up article. The **Crinkles** (Wrinkles) and the **Blacksides**! Standby.....

