

## Singer Featherweight 221 – Serial Number Corrections

The Singer Model 221 known as the Featherweight was initially assigned its first range of 10,000 serial numbers October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1933. The serial numbers that were to be stamped on the machines were to fall between AD541546 – AD551545 inclusive.

Singer had used this practice since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. As new machines were developed or when existing production was selling out Singer would assign a new batch/ production run of numbers. In addition design changes happened as engineers developed improvements to the machines both for efficiency and cost savings.

The Model 221 had a total of 60 production runs in the US dating from October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1933 until the final run assigned September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1957. There was a total possible production of American Singer Featherweights of 1,750,041. Scottish & Canadian production would add an additional 339,000 221K & 221Js and 108,900 222K's Grand Total Featherweight serial numbers assigned = 2,197,941.

While there may be some that were destroyed or flawed during production or a few unfinished or used as test samplings – this number is a pretty good ballpark figure.

Given that Singer like most manufacturers was focused on cost and not wasting parts due to error, especially if that error can be corrected. Little did they realize they had a costly chore ahead of them.

In 1934 the workers involved in producing the Featherweight made one such error – a pretty good-sized one. But, first let me give you the numbers for the entire “AD” production runs of Featherweights, the earliest of the Featherweights.

Note: the dates vs. the number assigned

1<sup>st</sup> Production run Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1933 AD541546-AD551545 = 10,000 @ 41 per day  
2<sup>nd</sup> Production run Sept 10<sup>th</sup>, 1934 AD720746-AD730745 = 10,000 @ 182 per day  
3<sup>rd</sup> Production run Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>, 1934 AD781846-AD791845 = 10,000 @ 119 per day  
4<sup>th</sup> Production run Mar. 18<sup>th</sup>, 1935 AD880156-AD890155 = 10,000 @ 141 per day  
5<sup>th</sup> Production run Jun 24<sup>th</sup>, 1935 AD937406-AD947405 = 10,000 @ 156 per day  
6<sup>th</sup> Production run Sept 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1935 AD996956-AE007000 = 10,044 @ 141 per day

Accounting for holidays or weekends, Singer employees working on Featherweights turned out roughly 140-150 machines a day. You'll notice that the first 3 runs don't reflect that. In that time period Singer's daily production was limited to just 114 per day. Someone, somehow, somewhere an error was made in the serial numbering process.

Featherweights in those days were stamped with the same serial number in “two” places 1) on the bottom of the machine where it is visible to owners and repairmen and 2) between the arm and the bed of the machine. There it would be hidden when

## Singer Featherweight 221 – Serial Number Corrections

assembled and only revealed if the machine were totally dismantled. This was done as an aid in the manufacturing/ assembly process.

Singer knew they had a winner and kept the production lines running, but they over-looked the obvious: they didn't stop when they should have for some reason. They over-extended themselves by creating and serial number stamping approximately an additional 2,500 machines. A full one-quarter of a production run that had to have their serial numbers ground off and then be re-stamped by hand with the correct second production run serial numbers as these error numbers were already stamped on Singer industrial models 81 & 95. These error/ correction machines thus becoming the first 2,500 of the second production run beginning with AD720746. Oddities in the history of the Featherweight.

The pictured machine is one of those error machines having its original number ground off and then hand stamped with its new serial number **AD720747 on the visible serial number boss/ escutcheon**. This was the second number assigned to the second production run of 10,000. Its original/ first serial number was verified by "pulling the arm" is **AD551619**, 74<sup>th</sup> over-run 221 made the first day of the error. (see pictures below of both serial numbers)

Looking at the number of days between Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1933 and Sept 9, 1934 is about 243 days minus weekends. All other "AD" production runs of 10,000 machines had an average day spread of about 73-74 days. (Excluding the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> production runs, which shared, it's responsibilities with the 1<sup>st</sup> run.)

Singer obviously used those extra days in the 1<sup>st</sup> Production run to correct a sizable and costly error. Timing of the start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> production was necessarily delayed until they could get caught up. The machines were very well accepted and selling, so it was money that needed to be spent! On top of that, this was the 221 Featherweights' debut year at the Chicago World's Fair 1934!

PS: Of the 33 known "Century of Progress – Chicago World's Fair 1934" 221 machines at this time, 12 are known to have the "corrected" hand stamped serial numbers! Does this make them more collectible? The owners might say so?

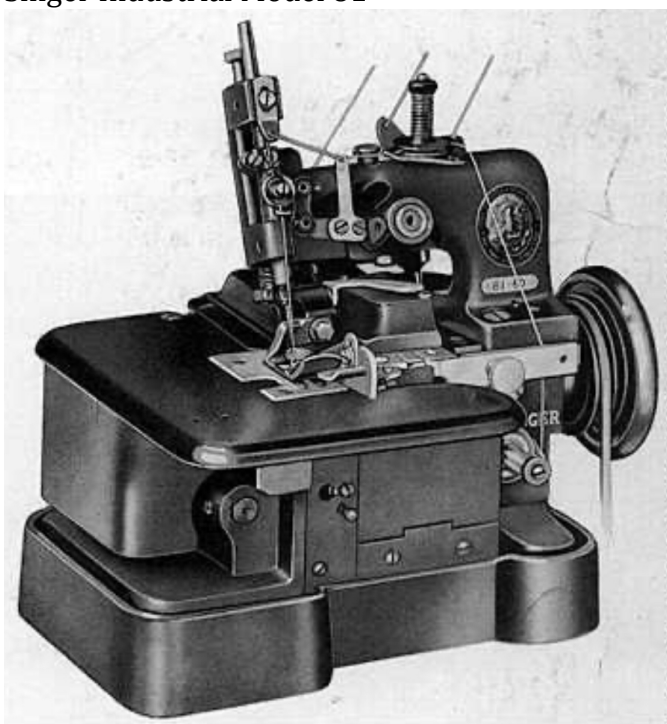
PS #2: Singer machine stamped the serial number of a machine in two places on the bed, one on the bottom of the machine and visible and 2) under the machines main vertical arm – not visible. When completely breaking down a machine and removing the arm the second serial becomes visible on the early machines. When this process stopped might be determined by a "re-painter." In our "Error" machine the numbers as you can see are very different!

## Singer Featherweight 221 – Serial Number Corrections

Singer Industrial Model 95



Singer Industrial Model 81





## Singer Featherweight 221 – Serial Number Corrections

Singer Featherweight 221 corrected Serial Number AD720747



Singer Featherweight 221 "Original" Serial Number now ground off the exterior boss/ escutcheon but still intact & visible when the arm is removed.





## Singer Featherweight 221 – Serial Number Corrections

