



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Robbie Fanning Sewing Arts Collection

NMAH.AC.1139

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Robbie Fanning Sewing Arts Collection
Date:	1903-2002 (bulk 1993-2002)
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.1139
Creator:	Fanning, Robbie
Extent:	5 Cubic feet (13 boxes)
Language:	English .
Summary:	The collection documents materials gathered by Robbie Fanning, publisher of sewing related books and newsletters and includes the history of major sewing machine brands, machine accessories, machine embroidery, machine needles, thread, binding, interfacing, and other sewing notions.

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Donated to the Archives Center in 2008 by Robbie Fanning.

Related Materials

Smithsonian Institution Libraries

Books related to sewing and books authored by Robbie Fanning.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Andrea Bishop, intern, and Eric Ross, intern, 2018.

Preferred Citation

Robbie Fanning Sewing Arts Collection, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research but is stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to work with it. Contact the Archives Center for information at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270.

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Biographical / Historical

Robbie Fanning (b. 1947-) of Menlo Park, California, a former journalism teacher, she started a publishing company called Open Chain Publishing, specializing in sewing books. She published a quarterly newsletter called *The Creative Machine* aimed at helping the sewing hobbyist learn new sewing techniques, review sewing equipment and products, and pose questions to the sewing industry. The newsletter ceased publication in 2002. The collection as a whole depicts the shift from sewing as a necessity to clothe a family or save money to sewing as a creative outlet for women and men with leisure time.

Scope and Contents

Archival materials on the subject of sewing and sewing machines, including correspondence, Fanning's subject files, photographs, newsletters, product manuals, catalogs, trade literature, articles, reprints, sewing periodicals, and VHS videos.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Clothing and dress
- Machine quilting
- Quilting
- Sewing
- Sewing machines

Types of Materials:

- Correspondence -- 2000-2010
- Correspondence -- 20th century
- Manuals
- Newsletters
- Pamphlets
- Periodicals
- Photographs -- 1980-2000
- Photographs -- 2000-2010
- Publications
- Trade catalogs
- Videocassettes

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Box 12, Item 2	PFAFF PC Designer Software, Volume 2, 1996 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
Box 12, Item 3	PFAFF Creative 7570, Volume 1, 1996 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
Box 12, Item 4	PFAFF Creative 7570, Volume 2, 1996

1 Videocassettes (VHS)

Box 12, Item 5	The Myra Coles hands-on guide to Sewing Machine Feet and Techniques, undated 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
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Box 12, Item 6	Elna 945 Serger, undated 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
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Box 12, Item 7	How to Service Your Own Sewing Machine Featherweight H-1, undated 1 Videocassettes (VHS)
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