

CANADIAN WOOL SPINNING WHEELS\*\*\*\*\*

by Bill Ralph

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries Canadian, primarily in Quebec Province, enjoyed an active cottage industry, the handspinning of wool.

To meet the needs of the handspinners, factories were established throughout Quebec which turned out thousands of specialized wool spinning wheels designed for heavy use and high production. As the industry declined early in this century, fewer and fewer wheels were produced, many of them of inferior quality. Suddenly it was all over. Thousands of spinning wheels became instantly obsolete. Some were discarded, many were stuffed into attics, and some were sold to antique dealers in the United States who, knowing nothing about spinning wheels, sold them as early American flax wheels. Because only a little more than a half century separates us from the Canadian hand-spinning era, many of those sturdy production wheels are still around. Properly restroed, these wheels make excellent machines for today's handspinners. The huge 30-inch diameter flywheels, the massive cast iron mother-of-all, the chunky flyer with a large spindle orifice, make them ideal wheels but only for the experienced spinner. Beginners find them frustrating because they seem to pull wool right out of their fingers.

The most important thing to watch for when considering a Canadian wheel is that the wheels runs true and does not wobble. See also that the wheel crank is tight in the wheel hub and that the flyer matches the space between the maidens. Often the people who import these wheels, disassemble them for convenient shipment, putting all the flyers in one box, the flywheels into another, etc., stacking the bases in the truck for later re-assembly, not realizing that the parts from different manufacturers are not interchangeable. The right parts don't always get put back together again. Sometimes this is no problem. Other times, the parts simply can't be made to fit. But spinners usually know what is needed to make the wheel work.

If you can find one of these Canadian wool wheels at the right price, you may find them on of the best spinning machines you have ever owned.

NEW YORK STATE FAIR \*\*\*\*\*

ENTRIES \*\*\*\*\* This is for everyone, beginners and experienced spinners alike. The handspun division includes skeins as well as finished projects. It's fun to enter, you'll receive a free pass to the fair for one day, and if you win, there are cash prizes and your entry will be displayed for the days of the fair. It's important to have entries in order to keep the handspun class a part of the fair. Forms are due by August 1, with items due by August 13. If you need a booklet, there will be some at the next meeting, or call Debbie 347-6631.

DEMONSTRATING \*\*\*\*\* Every year the Guild demonstrates at the Wool Booth at the fair for one day. This year that day is FRIDAY, AUGUST 26. We need you to participate. This year the wool being spun is Cheviot. Whatever you spin during your stint, you make take home. Also there are many wheels to try. There is also a need for people to demonstrate dyeing, drum carding and weaving. Most people know very little about any of these things, so we all have much to offer. Call Nancy Morey (656-4737) to sign up and arrange for your free pass for the day. Also, if you can help out at the Lamb Booth, contact Nancy.

SUMMER WORKSHOPS \*\*\*\*\* The Woolery in Genoa, NY, run by guild member, Marianne Horchler, is offering several workshops this year:

Beginning Rigid Heddle Loom Weaving with Daisy Kirkpatrick, July 23

Indigo Dyeing with Jean Warholic, Aug 13

Beginning Natural Dyeing with Marianne, Aug 21

Beginning 4-Harness Loom Weaving with Mary Ann Sumner, Sept 11 & 18

Beginning Handspinning with Marianne, Sept 24 & Oct 1

Beginning Bobbin Lacemaking, Oct 9

For more info, send SASE to The Woolery, RD 1, Genoa, NY 13071 or call 315/497-1542.

ITHACA FESTIVAL \*\*\*\*\* Debbie Benzer, Jeanne Lawless and I demonstrated on the Commons during the festival. There was a lot of interest. Many people stopped to watch and feel, some to try their hands and feet at spinning. While many people were amazed and enthralled, none showed as much amazement as one man who watched us for quite a long time, asking many questions and then finally called his friend over. "Will you look at this," he exclaimed. "A 1988 model spinning wheel, if that don't beat all!"

BLACK SHEEP HAND SPINNERS GUILD LIBRARY 1988

BOOKS

- Black, Mary - Weaving for Beginners (2 copies)  
Bogdonoff, Nancy - Handwoven Textiles of Early New England  
Boyd, Margaret - The Mail-Order Crafts Catalogue  
British Sheep Fleece Samples  
Crochet, Candace - The complete Spinning Book  
Dunwell, Steve - The Run of the Mill  
Earle, Alice Morse - Home Life of Colonial Days  
Fannin, Allen - Handspinning: Art and Techniques  
Fasset, Kaffe - Glorious Knits (contact librarian to check out)  
Fennelly, Catherine - Textiles in New England  
Finger Lakes Directory of Art & Crafts  
Gates, Barbara - Seneca Shepherds Sheep Producers Directory  
Gehret, Ellen and Alan Keyser, Flax Processing in Pennsylvania from Seed to  
Fiber  
Gerber Frederick - Cochineal and Insect Dyes  
Gordon, Beverly - Feltmaking  
Grae, Ida - Natures Colors: Dyes from Plants  
Handweavers & Spinners guild of Victoria. Dye Making with Australian Flora  
Handweavers Guild of America - Suppliers Directory  
Hockberg, Bette - Fibre Facts  
Handspindles  
Spin, Span, Spun  
Horne, Beverly - Fleece in Your Hands  
Kahn, Deborah - Ed. - The Handspun Project Book  
Kiot, Jules and Kaethe Ruerri Himo - Techniques of Japanese Plaiting  
Kronenborg, Bud - Spinning Wheel Building  
Lambert, Patricia - Color & Fiber (contact librarian to checkout)  
Lesch, Alma - Vegetable Dying  
Linder, Olive and Harry - Handspinning cotton  
McLallen, Helen - Cochineal & Chemistry of Mordant Dying  
Oakly, Geraldine - Steps to a Tailored Jacket: An Illustrated Workbook  
One Hundred and One Questions for Spinners  
Outerbridge, David and Julie Thayer - The last Shepherds  
Pauli, Karen - The Care and Feeding of Spinning Wheels  
Pendelton, Mary - Navaho and Hopi weaving techniques  
Pennington, D. and M. Taylor - American Spinning Wheels: Pictorial Guide  
Pompilio, Loretta - Soft People, The Art of Doll Crafting  
Schorsch, Anita - Pastoral Dreams  
Seven Valley Weavers Guild - The revival of an Historical Craft: Our Linen  
Textile Heritage patterns  
Simmons, Paula - The Handspunners Guide to selling Spinning and Weaving with  
Wool  
Sterns, Martha Genung - Homespun Blue: Study of American Crewel Embroidery

Swan, Susan Burrows - Plain and Fancy - American Women and Their Needle Work,  
1700--1850  
Teal, Peter - Hand Woolcombing and Spinning  
U.S. Department of Agriculture - American Crafts of a Rich Heritage and Rich  
Future  
Vinroot, Sally and Tennie Chowder - The New Dyer  
Walker, Barbara - Knitting from the top  
Learn to Knit Afghan Book  
A Treasury of Knitting Patterns  
Weigle, Palury - Ancient Dyes for Modern Weavers  
Wilson, Jean - Weaving for Anyone  
Wool, Bureau of Canada - The Story of Wool  
Znamierowski, Neil - Step by Step Weaving

PERIODICALS

Artisan Crafts (1 copy)  
Craftspirit 75'-76' The American Revolution Bicentennial Celebration  
Llamas (2 copies)  
handwoven  
Prairie Wool Companion (Issue 8 only)  
Sheep (4 copies)  
Spinoff  
Shuttle, spindle and Dyepot  
Threads  
The Web (few copies)  
Exchange - Guild news letters - Notebook

EQUIPMENT

Ashford Spinning Wheel --\$5/ 4 weeks	Contact:Eleanor May
Drum Carder -- \$5/4 weeks (\$3 cleaning charge if needed)	1360 Slaterville Rd
Wool combs -- \$2.50/4 weeks	Ithaca, NY 14850
Cotton Carders -- \$2.50/ 4 weeks	272-8224
Drop Spindles (lots for demonstrations) -- no fee	