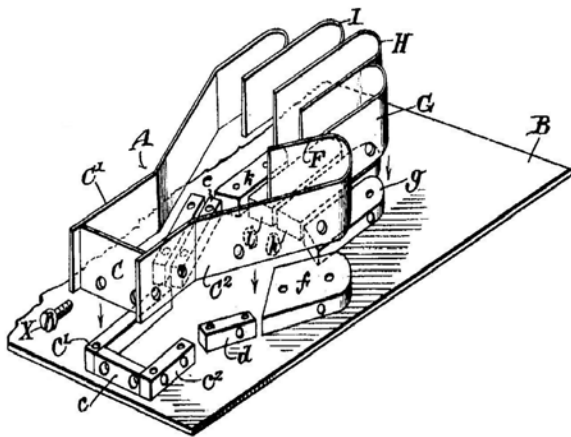


Ackshand Knitting Company, Ballston Spa Manufacturing Gloves

In 1915, the industrial outlook of Ballston Spa was bleak. The former paper mills of George West, purchased by Union Bag & Paper in 1899, were closing down after decades of operation. The Ballston Axe & Scythe Works had been destroyed years earlier, while steam or electric-powered factories located in large cities made it increasingly difficult for the water-powered industries of Ballston to compete. The village was facing the prospect of high unemployment and rapid depopulation.

Fortunately, two individuals relocated to Ballston Spa around this time and went on to establish large textile businesses that provided employment to hundreds of people throughout much of the 1900s. One was Floyd Shutts, who established the Ballston-Stillwater Knitting Company, manufacturers of knit socks. The other was a Gloversville businessman and inventor named Albert Ackerman. In 1918 he established the Ballston Knit Glove Company in a small building on the corner of South Street and Milton Avenue and began producing women's plain gloves and men's seamless knit gloves. With a combination of frugality and wise investing, the business quickly expanded into the Union store property, the Sweet Furniture store, and the old Temperance Hall on South Street. Ackerman then established branch facilities in Schuylerville and Oneonta, New York, while many private residences throughout Ballston Spa served as miniature "branch locations," as the fingering work was done by employees working from their own homes.

Ackerman submitted his first patent for the business in 1925, titled "Method of Making Gloves." Two identical glove blanks were cut from suitable material and secured together with one continuous line of stitching to form an ambidextrous glove. These gloves were simple to manufacture, inexpensive, and lasted longer than other gloves on the market, since they could be worn on either hand and therefore did not wear down as quickly as gloves that were made to be worn only one way. That same year he patented a die for making the glove blanks for his first invention.



For several years the company continued to expand and flourish. Then in 1930 Ackerman was struck by an illness that briefly left him incapacitated. This came at a time when the company was experiencing severe financial difficulties, and with Ackerman out of commission, there was no one with enough experience and authority to take charge of the situation. A receiver was finally appointed to manage the finances, and Ackerman's partners reorganized the business under the name Ackshand Knitting Company (derived from combining the three partners' names together).

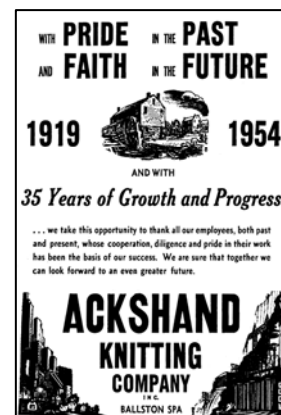


The Ballston Knit Glove Company on South Street and Milton Avenue, before being renamed the Ackshand Knitting Company. Saratoga County historian.

The company survived and Ackerman recovered from his illness to lead it to even greater success. In 1931 he submitted his next patent for a glove that in his words was “devoid of the usual finger fourchettes, which may be cheaply made, which will properly fit the hand, and which will retain its shape when used.” He next invented a gang die for cutting glove blanks, and in 1948 submitted his last patent, another seamless knit ambidextrous glove. This was made primarily for use by the United States Army and Navy, which he supplied with gloves and knit caps during World War II.

Meanwhile, a man named William Bucholz was submitting similar patents and assigning them to Ackshand Knitting. His first was a knitted mitten, filed in 1936. The object was to provide an improved seamless tubular knit mitten with a better fit and neater appearance. His second patent a year later, also assigned to Ackshand, was an article with an improved, angled edge which was, in his words, “easy and economical to produce and which is neat and of a pleasing appearance as well as capable of holding its shape.”

Ackerman’s 1948 patent for the ambidextrous glove was the last one for the benefit of the knitting mill. By that time, the business employed 700 men and women and had a monthly payroll of \$50,000. When Ackerman retired in 1956 it was the second-largest knit-glove maker in the country. A year later, the new directors attempted to merge with the Zwicker Knitting Mill of Wisconsin, but the action was blocked by anti-trust laws. Frustrated, the owners sold the mill’s equipment to the Gloversville Knitting Company, and Ackshand Knitting closed its doors for good. The Ballston-Knitting Company survived until 1998, but today the textile industry is extinct in the Village of Ballston Spa.



May 19, 1925.

1,538,263

A. C. ACKERMAN
METHOD OF MAKING GLOVES

Filed Oct. 17, 1924

3 Sheets-Sheet 1

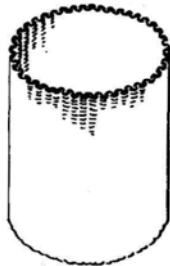
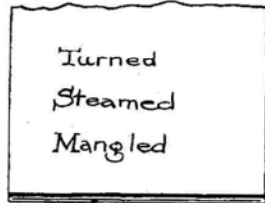
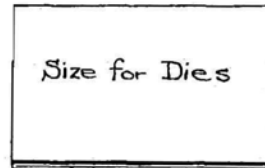


Fig. 1.



Napped

Fig. 2.



Napped

Fig. 3.

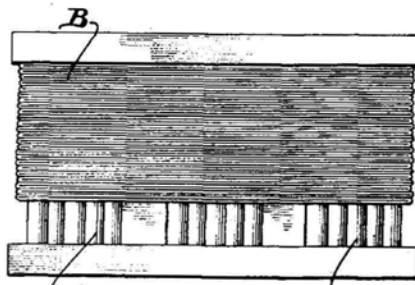


Fig. 4.

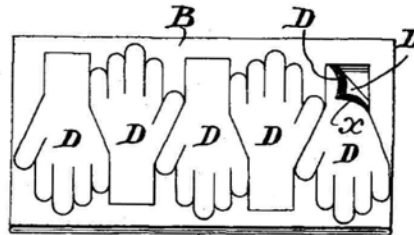


Fig. 5.

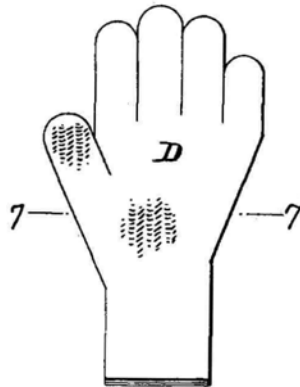


Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.

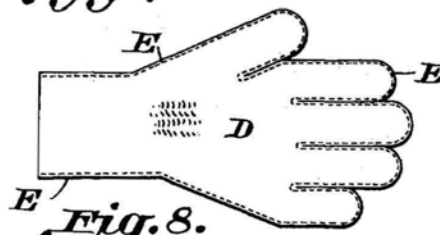


Fig. 8.

Inventor
Albert C. Ackerman
by his Attorneys
Paulson & Nisbet

June 23, 1931.

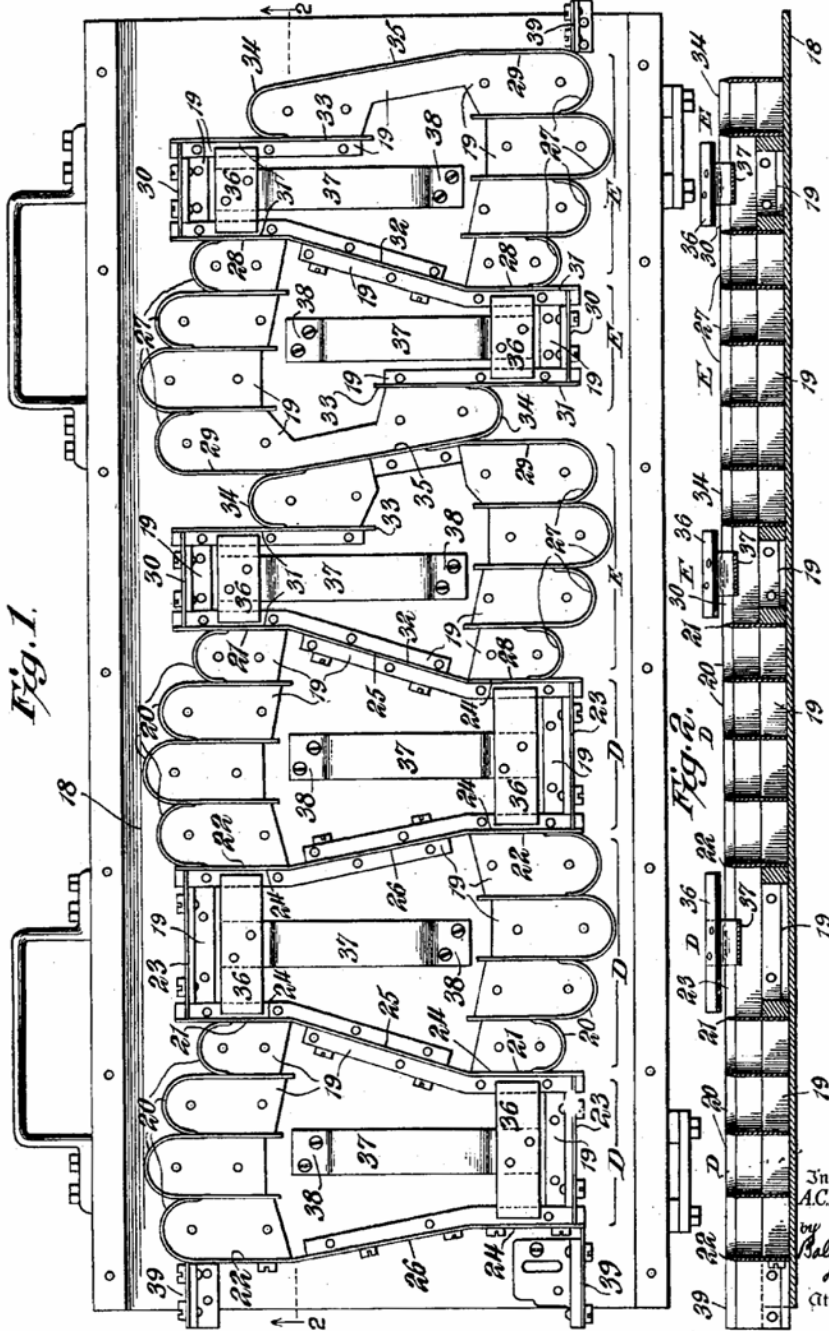
A. C. ACKERMAN

1,811,571

GANG DIE FOR CUTTING GLOVE BLANKS

Filed June 25, 1930

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



Inventor
A. C. Ackerman,
by
Baldwin &
Knight
Attorneys.