

## **HERITAGE HUB FACT SHEET**

### **OCCUPATIONS IN THE BORDERS TEXTILE INDUSTRY**

Local census returns feature a range of occupations in the Borders woollen industry – both in the tweed trade (signified by the term “loom worker”) and hosiery trade (signified by the term “frameworker”). Explanations of some occupations are given below.

#### **Tweed Trade**

- o *Woollen power loom worker:* Power looms were usually worked by women and were introduced into Dicksons and Laings, Wilton Mills, Hawick in the late 1820s, powered by water wheels. The great expansion came with the introduction of steam power.
- o *Woollen pattern weaver:* Pattern weavers were usually men and they produced sample cloth. This term could also be used to illustrate that he worked a pattern loom against a plain loom. This was generally reckoned to be the top position in the tweed trade.
- o *Woollen piecer:* The ends of the wool coming off the carding machines had to be joined (pieced) together to be spun into yarn – a dangerous task often done by children before factory legislation forbade it.
- o *Wool cloth picker:* After the cloth was finished the “picker” carefully examined the cloth and mended any faults that may have occurred during the production process.

#### **Hosiery Trade**

- o *Stocking framework knitter:* The hand stocking framework knitters thought themselves the crème de la crème, and were the highest paid and most skilled workers in the hosiery trade. The initials FWK (frameworker) appears on many census records.

A stocking frame was a mechanical knitting machine. Its use, known traditionally as framework knitting, was the first major stage in the mechanisation of the textile industry. In 1771 Baillie John Hardie introduced into Hawick four narrow 16 ½ stocking frames to manufacture full hose – stockings. By the mid 1840's, 76% of stocking frames in Scotland were located in Border towns, producing over a million pairs of stockings per year. The old hand stocking frames were sometimes known “as the four posts of misery”.

- o *Woollen framework knitter:* This role illustrates the result of the shift away from stockings to underwear, though the machine would be the same, except wider. Around the 1860s you will find a new term “Rotary Power Frameworkers” which signalled the introduction of Power Frames when one machine could knit several garments at one time.
- o *Woollen hosiery dresser:* After the garment was washed, when still damp, the *dresser placed* it on a wooden board which corresponded to its finished shape, and size. It was then placed in a heating or drying chamber - known as the boarding house - and this drying process stabilised the finished garment.
- o *Woollen hosiery seamstress:* In the early days each separate part of the garment was hand seamed or linked together. The same term applies today where you can see job advertisements for Seamers and Linkers, but the seaming and linking process is carried out on machines.

The Heritage Hub Collection on the Textile Industry includes the following:

**Archive Collection Records:**

Aimers McLean & Co. Galashiels, 1865-1983  
Arrol Young, millwrights, Netherdale 1935-1972  
Botany Mill Weaving Co. Galashiels, 1945-1958  
Galashiels Manufacturers Association, 1843-1946  
J Hyslop Bathgate Galashiels, 1934-1985  
Sanderson & Murray Galashiels, 1854-1945  
Victoria Works. Galashiels . 1934-1985  
Wilderbank Mills, Galashiels . 1895-1975  
William Brown Sons & Co., Galashiels 1895-1975  
Hendwick Underwear, Hawick - brief history, c. 1900  
Peter Scott, Hawick \*\*  
Gibson & Lumgair , Selkirk, 1884-1968  
Mill Lade Committee, Selkirk 1943-1973  
Weavers Corporation Selkirk, 1650-1875  
Henry Ballantyne, Walkerburn, 1914-1980 \*\*  
Woollen trade papers on Borders mills, 1936-1947

*\*\* Major collections which have not yet been fully catalogued. Items may be made available on request to the archivist.*

**Book Collection:**

Barty-King, H. . Pringle of Scotland & the Hawick Knitwear Story  
Bennet, G.P. Wool from the Tweed  
Dunlop, James. Dangerfield Mills  
Gauldie, Enid. Spinning and weaving  
Gulvin, C. The Border hosiery and knitwear industry, 1770 -197  
Gulvin, C. The Scottish hosiery and knitwear industry 1680-1980  
Gulvin, C. The Tweedmakers  
Historic Scotland. Hawick and its place among the Border mill towns  
Jackson, I. Gardiner's Tweed Adventures - the story of a Tweed Mill  
Johnston, Alwyn Peter Anderson of Scotland  
Little Guide to Selkirk Mills  
Lyle & Scott The Lyle & Scott Achievement  
Mackechnie, K. A Border Woollen town in the Industrial Revolution  
Maclaren, Moray Sanderson and Murray: fellmongers & merchants  
Murray, Norman The Scottish Hand Loom Weavers 1790-1850  
Scottish History Society Journal of Henry Brown, woollen manufacturer, Galashiels  
Society of Dyers & Colourists A centenary history of the....industry



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