

MEET NOTIONS SPONSOR: Coats & Clark

For nearly two centuries, generations of needlecrafters around the world have looked to Coats for its signature quality and inspiration.

Coats & Clark is part of the world's largest textile/thread manufacturing company. With products sold in over 150 countries for industrial and home use, Coats has 30,000 employees in 68 countries. Every four hours, Coats makes enough thread to reach the moon and back.

The Coats & Clark product range includes threads, zippers, needlework accessories, hand knitting and craft yarns, crochet threads, and embroidery floss. Their family of brands includes Coats Dual Duty XP, Star, Red Heart, TLC, Anchor, J & P Coats, South Maid, Susan Bates, Aunt Lydia, and J. & P. Coats Royale.

Coats has a long history. In 1806, a revolution in the history of thread took place in Paisley, Scotland with the unwitting help of Napoleon. The Clark brothers, James and Patrick, were spinning silk for shawl weavers at that time, but when Napoleon was victorious and blockaded Britain, the supply of silk stopped abruptly. Patrick Clark solved this problem by twisting cotton yarn for weaving, and it was soon discovered that this thread was strong enough for sewing. The first factory for making cotton sewing thread was opened by the Clark brothers in 1812. A few years later, James Coats followed suit. This means, of course, that in 2012, Coats & Clark will celebrate its 200th anniversary!

By 1840, both Coats and Clark had selling agents in the U.S. In fact, Thomas Edison used a Coats cord as the filament in his famous light bulb experiment. When the sewing machine was invented in the 1860s, there was no suitable thread for it. George Clark perfected one and called it "Our New Thread," the beginning of the famous trademark,

"O.N.T."

In 1896, the Coats' and the Clarks' interests were consolidated. Although the two companies retained their separate identities, The Spool Cotton Company became the sole selling agent for both of them. This continued until 1952 when J & P Coats and the Clark Thread Co. merged to become Coats & Clark.

Coats & Clark has always maintained ongoing research in product development. For example, Coats introduced another revolutionary development in thread, the creation of a cotton-covered polyester core thread in the 1960s—Dual Duty Plus.

Coats world-wide continues to innovate. Through ongoing research and product development, Coats explores new fibers, fabric, finishes, and their application for consumer and industrial uses. In 2008, this led to the introduction of the next generation of Dual Duty—XP, a polyester-wrapped, core-spun thread. The result is a smooth, strong thread that delivers consistent sewing results, especially on today's high tech computerized sewing machines.

Coats produces threads for many uses you may not associate with sewing. For example, one of their manufacturing facilities has a "clean room" environment staffed by specially-trained employees to produce string used in feminine hygiene products. Just across the plant, Coats employees are producing the red thread for baseballs. Coats even sent thread into outer space when they produced the thread used to make the airbags for Mars exploration missions.

Sewing education is very important to Coats & Clark. Student kits and Stitch In Time leaflets are produced as a classroom resource for Family & Consumer Science (Home Economics) educators. The 4-H Clothing and Textile program has counted Coats & Clark as a sponsor for over 70 years.

For the past two years, Coats & Clark has sponsored a Design Challenge for students from the Kent State University Shannon Rogers and Jerry Silverman School of Fashion.

They also recently sponsored a Pink & Red On-line Challenge to benefit the American Heart Association and The American Cancer Society. The challenge culminated in a fashion show at the 2010 Sewing & Stitchery Expo in Puyallup, Wash.



Winners of the Coats & Clark Pink & Red Challenge included an ASG member: Patty Robison from the Seattle, Wash. Chapter (top row center).

In addition, Coats & Clark has supported ASG since its inception and has been one of the longest-running sponsors of *Notions*.