

# The Earliest Electric Washing Machine: Help Wanted

By: Lee Maxwell

Asking the question, “Who invented the electric washing machine?” is tantamount to asking, “Who first connected an electric motor to a washing machine?” Electric motors have been around since the 1830s and so have washing machines. We will never discover who it was that made the connection.

Included in this open-ended article is (and will be) authentic evidence of early electric washing machines. Until a more extensive search has been conducted these data are not listed in chronological order. If the reader has any verifiable evidence to add to this list please send an email to [lee@oldewash.com](mailto:lee@oldewash.com) . Your contribution will be highly appreciated and you will be credited with the addition.

1907:

The best evidence is a picture like the one following. It appears in an article by B. D. Flower in the December 1907 issue of The Arena, No. 217, page 593. The picture shows a lady reading a newspaper while her washing is done by an electric powered washing machine manufactured by the Nineteen Hundred (1900) Company.

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ELECTRICAL WASHING-MACHINE.

1906-1907:

The picture shown following is from an article by H. W. Hillman, "Electricity in the Home" in the November, 1906-April, 1907 issue of Cassier's Magazine, Volume XXXI. The picture shows a Nineteen Hundred Company washing machine belted to an electric motor. Note

how easily the motor could have been bolted to the board at the bottom of the washing machine tub.

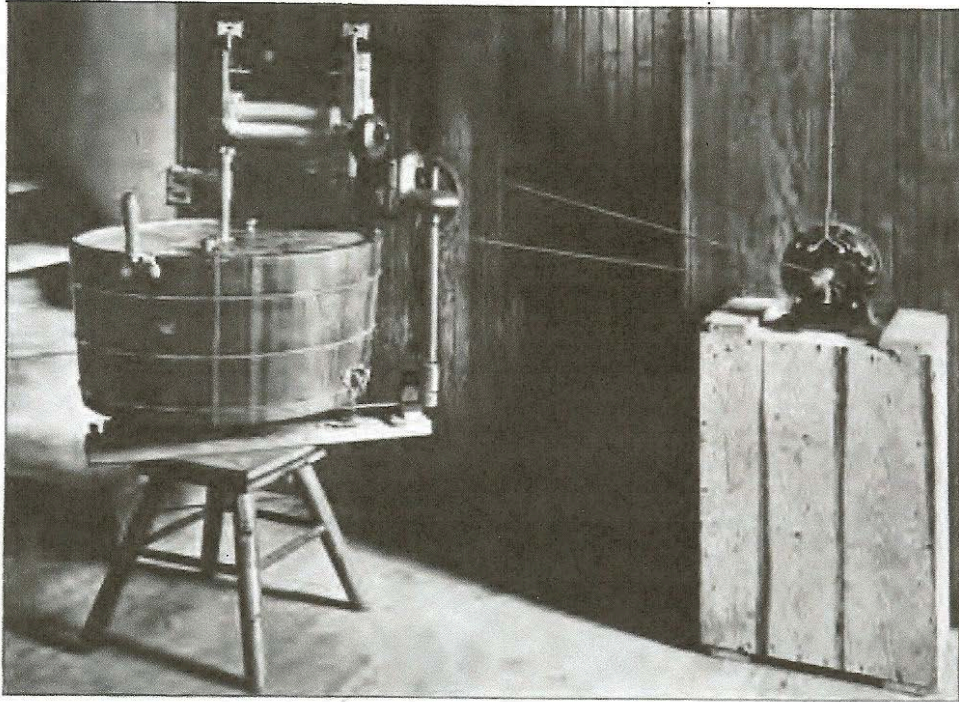


FIG. 9.—MOTOR DRIVING A WASHING MACHINE AND WRINGER IN MR. HILLMAN'S HOME

reflects its light at an angle of 45 degrees, giving the best illumination such that it has been possible to do very fine embroidery work for sev-

1894:

The following is a picture of a butter churn belted to an electric motor. In the era of 1894 devices were manufactured which could be used either as a butter churn or a washing machine. Unfortunately for the purpose here, the caption of the picture is "Electric Churn." The

appetite is only whetted to find a picture labeled "Electric Washing Machine" of this vintage.

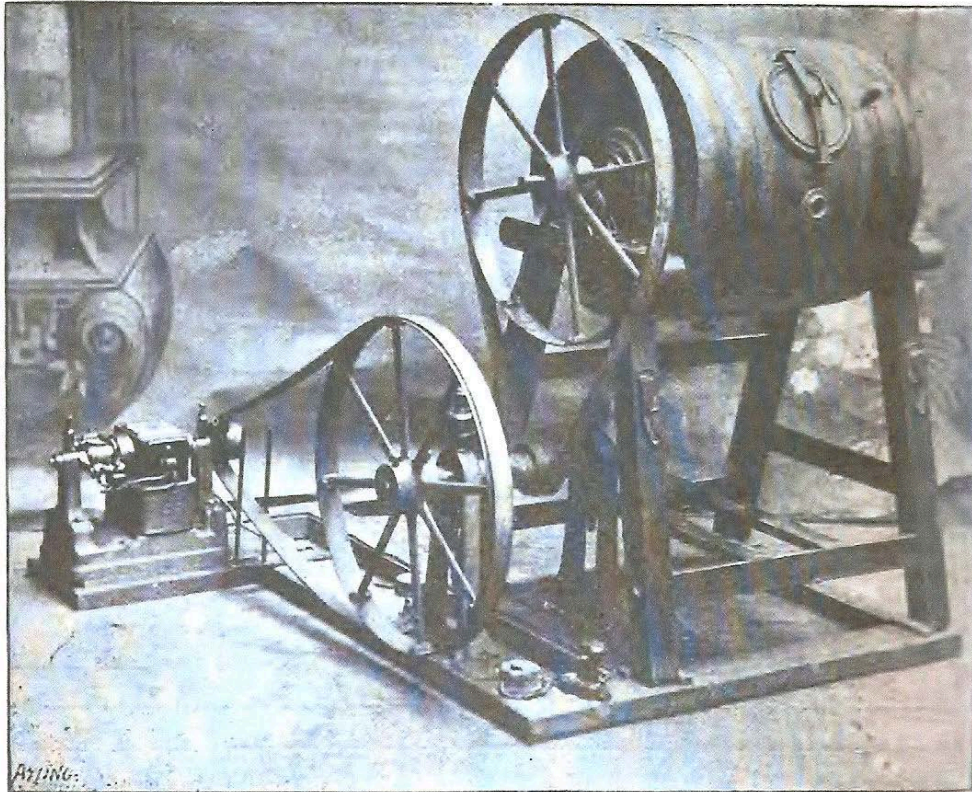


Fig. 283.—Electric Churn.

duced, such a switch becomes absolutely necessary, since in most cases there is no means of turning the current

1873: The following two pages illustrate only a text reference to an  
“electric washing machine” but the 1873 date is an early one.

*exhibitions*  
**REPORT**

OF

**GUIDO KUSTEL,**

COMMISSIONER TO THE

**VIENNA EXPOSITION**

OF 1873,

APPOINTED BY THE

**MECHANICS' INSTITUTE**

OF

**SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.**

**SAN FRANCISCO:**

**B. F. STRETT, STEAM BOOK AND JOB PRINTER**

No. 533 Clay Street, opposite Leidesdorf.

—  
1874.

## CLASS No. 29-10.—LAUNDRY MACHINERY.

The committee on the above division respectfully report that they have examined the following exhibits :

251. THE AMERICAN MACHINE CO. Crown Clothes Wringer. Find that the wringer is well adapted to its use, and fully performs all that the exhibitors claim for it, viz., it can, without alteration, be attached to a tub of any diameter, and by an arrangement of springs and levers peculiar to it, pass the thickest or thinnest articles of clothing through it and effectually wring them, and by the judicious proportioning of the roller shafts and elastic covering there is no risk of the covering becoming detached. *Bronze medal.*

537. JAS. BING. R. A. Stratton's Mangle or Calender. For compactness, efficiency, cheapness and convenience of use, *Bronze medal.*

CHAS. E. RONALDSON, M.E.,  
S. LLOYD WIEGAND,  
C. CHABOT,

*Committee.*

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 SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT.

368. R. H. FARLEY. Champion Steam Washer. The machine producing a rapid and effective circulation, *Bronze medal.*

1202. J. D. BRICK. Electric Washing Machine. *Certificate of Honorable mention.*

CHAS. E. RONALDSON,  
S. LLOYD WIEGAND.

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 CLASS No. 29-11.—PAPER MACHINERY.

11. CHAS. J. COHEN. Machine for gumming and folding Envelopes. We have examined the machine for gumming and folding envelopes, and consider it to be a well-arranged machine and admirably adapted to the purpose, the work done being of the very best

More evidence to be added. (Last entry May 12, 2008)