

Research And Development Significant Undertaking

One of the most significant undertakings of Adams-Millis Hosiery Company in recent years was the establishment of a Research and Development Department, which resulted in the development of the Speedmaster Knitting machine.

In earlier years, the Company at various times had individuals concentrating on developing new styles and experimenting to find better and faster methods of producing them. In 1974, however, the decision was made to commit the Company to an all-out effort to develop a machine that would be faster and more efficient than any knitting machines then on the market.

The projected goal of the research was to build a knitting machine with the capability of producing in excess of 100 dozen pairs of socks in 24 hours, compared to the some 25-dozen capability then possible in a 24-hour period. To attain this goal, the machine would have to operate at speeds of some 350 revolutions per minute, as compared to the then fastest machine which operated at some 175 rpm's.

Jon Wallner, Senior Vice President and Director of Operations for the Hosiery Company, and a consultant working with Adams-Millis were in charge of the new program. Gilbert Hine and Frank Rich, then Head fixers, both with a number of years' experience, were selected to work with them.

"We had outstanding Fixers throughout Adams-Millis Hosiery, as we do today," Mr. Wallner said. "The two men selected were, however, among the group of the most talented."

Both Gilbert and Frank had come to Adams-Millis soon after finishing high school, both starting to work as Knitters; Gilbert at Kernersville Plant 4, and Frank at Plant 7 in High Point. They recalled recently that they both were interested in machines from an early age, both had grown up on farms where they often repaired machinery. Gilbert had, from an early age, been interested in repairing and restoring engines. Both added that, also from an early age, they had become accustomed to long hours of hard work on the farm.

The consultant worked with

Reid Parrish Works With Special Projects

Reid Parrish, Machinist, has been assigned to work for the Research and Development Department for approximately the last four years.

Reid formerly worked for Adams-Millis in the late 1940's and early 1950's. He later operated his own hosiery company, employing 40 persons, for a number of years. When raw materials and other operating costs continued escalating, he closed his plant.

"Running your own plant gives you an opportunity to learn every aspect of hosiery production, and that experience has been valuable to me in performing the specialized work for the Research and Development Department at Adams-Millis," he stated.

Reid and his wife, who live near

Gilbert and Frank, in effect tutoring them in mechanical terms and language with which to communicate some of their knowledge to paper and design drawings.

Gilbert took a special Fixer's course during this time at Guilford Technical Institute at Jamestown, and both men were sent to the University of Colorado at Denver for an intensive course in computer programming.

Following this, they and the consultant, working with the machinists at the Machine Shop on English Road, began what was to become a year-long effort to develop a high speed knitting machine that would, in effect, revolutionize the hosiery industry.

"Often the consultant would come to the machine shop after working on a problem in his office, away from Adams-Millis," Frank recently recalled. "If we found we were nearing a solution, our hours continued long after our regular quitting time."

Much of the work of making precision parts for the machine under development was done in the Machine Shop. Other work, requiring machinery not available in the local shop, was done at other locations.

When completed, the machine contained approximately 1,000 parts. The day the prototype was assembled in final form, Gilbert and Frank, without calling anyone in, turned the switch and found it worked on the first try. "suppose we didn't call anyone," Frank recalled recently with a laugh, "because we wanted time to get out of town if it didn't work." The first piece knitted on the machine, a piece of jersey material, was sent to Mr. Wallner.

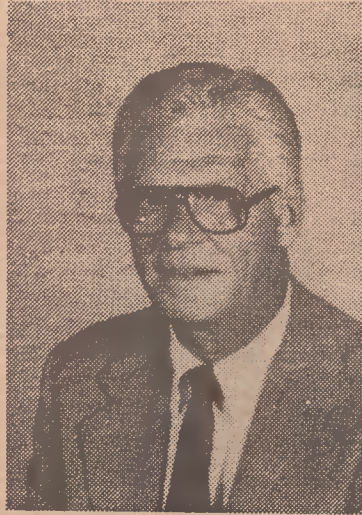
The machine was named the "Speedmaster" and Frank and Gilbert in the years since 1974 have built many more for Adams-Millis. They also have built other machines, converted others to newer techniques and are constantly overhauling equipment to extend its life well past its projected normal use.

As electronics and other new developments evolve in the knitting industry, Adams-Millis continues to strive to keep its lead in the field. Development of the



Reid Parrish

Randleman, have seven daughters, six of whom are married.



Jon Wallner

Jon Wallner, above, Senior Vice-President and Director of Operations for Adams-Millis Hosiery Company, has worked with the Research and Development Department of the Company, since it was started in 1974.

"Speedmaster," however, without question was a landmark era in the company's history, and the years of "Knitting-art" experience of both Frank and Gilbert unquestionably contributed to the ultimate success of this project. These machines were an important factor in Adams-Millis maintaining its position as one of the world's largest producers of diversified styles of hosiery for the entire family, Mr. Wallner said.

Gilbert Hine's Love Affair With 1956 Chevy Still Going Strong

When Gilbert Hine was a senior at Forsyth County's Glenn High School in 1961, he saw a 1956 Chevrolet BelAire Sports Coupe that he wanted so much he could taste it. Gilbert today is an engineer in the Research and Development Department of Adams-Millis Hosiery Company, and he still has that '56 Chevy—but it's a totally different car today.

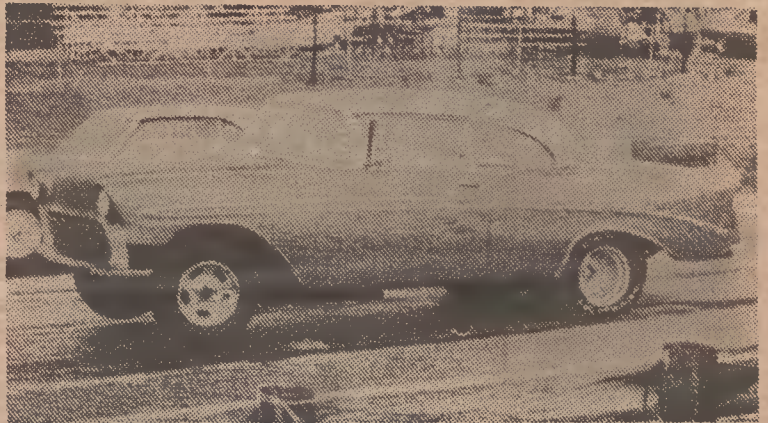
To go back to 1961, Gilbert and his mother were buying another car together at the time he saw the Chevy. He had saved money in a piggy bank, had earned money summers pulling tobacco, and had an agreement with his mother that she could use the car for traveling to work if she would help him pay it off.

When he saw the Chevy, he still owed \$250 on his first car. He worked out another agreement with his mother, however, for her to finish payments on the first car and then prevailed upon his grandmother to lend him the money for the Chevy; so, it was a cooperative family affair all around.

To see the '56 Chevy is to think immediately of "Happy Days," that popular television series about teenagers in the 1950's. Gilbert said he took his dates to the movies in the Chevy, and then later drove it to Myrtle Beach, S. C., when he and his wife honeymooned there. It was their family car for years, then became their "second car" and



Frank Rich and Gilbert Hine, left and right above, are special projects engineers.



Gilbert's Chevy

still later, Gilbert began entering it in drag races in the area.

As his interest in racing developed, he began gearing up the car for higher speeds and in 1974, stopped licensing it as a street vehicle and began hauling it to races on a trailer he built especially for that purpose.

Today, he enters some thirty races each year, and his two teenage sons have also restored a 1955 Chevrolet and have joined him in the sport. The dragsters run 1/8 mile tracks, and Gilbert said he averages getting up to 102 miles per hour, covering the track in just under seven seconds. When the tracks were 1/4 mile long, he averaged 108 miles per hour.

In spite of the tremendous speed attained in such a short span, drag racing is considered an exceptionally safe sport, he said, adding that few injuries are sustained each year. Entry fees run from \$10 to \$25, with prize

money ranging from \$100 up to as much as \$1,000 sometimes, and even to \$3,000 on rare occasions. Gilbert said he won enough times in 1979 and 1981 to more than break even. In 1980, however, the engine blew on his car and he was set back quite a bit.

Gilbert's wife, Olivia, is a spectator at some of the races, which are generally held on Saturday nights; but because they get home from 1:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. Sunday mornings, getting up to attend church can be a problem. Gilbert emphasized, however, that the family does attend church no matter what hour they get to bed.

The cost of the car in 1961 was \$998, and today the car probably would bring \$6,000. To hear Gilbert talk about it, though, one gets the impressions that the Chevy has become a permanent member of the family and probably couldn't be bought at any price.