

STOLL

KNIT AHEAD



HEINRICH STOLL - FOUNDER OF THE COMPANY

Heinrich Stoll was born on 14 May 1847 in Salach near Göppingen. In 1852, the Stoll family, parents, Heinrich Stoll and brothers and sisters, moved to Oberndorf/Neckar, where Heinrich Stoll also spent his school years and youth. He started his apprenticeship as a mechanic at Mauser, a state-owned weapons factory. After his apprenticeship and work at Mauser, he first came into contact with knitting machines in the Ferdinand Gröber company in Neufra/Riedlingen during his journeyman years. In order to expand the knitting factory, flat knitting machines from America were introduced, and later they built their own.

On 27 July 1873, Heinrich Stoll and Christian Schmidt founded their own company in Riedlingen. Heinrich Stoll is regarded as a pioneer in the construction of knitting machines. After recognising that Riedlingen was unsuitable for the future development of the firm, he separated from Schmidt and relocated the company to the emergent town of Reutlingen. A decisive factor in settling the company in Reutlingen was the town's dominant position at that time as the centre of the textile industry. As early as 1870, the first V-bed flat knitting machines from America were introduced and commissioned in the Reutlingen region.

The start of the Stoll company can be seen from the business contract that Heinrich Stoll concluded on 1 April 1878 with his silent partner at that time, Louis Burkhardt. As early as 1882, Heinrich Stoll paid off his partner, and the company became the exclusive property of the Stoll family. The owner of the estate on which Heinrich Stoll was a tenant and where he produced his knitting machines was Ernst Dorner, a tanner. On 11 July 1884, Stoll purchased the premises and land from him.

At 31 years of age, Stoll began to build up the plant in Reutlingen. The way he planned for generous extensions showed even at that early stage his self-confidence and entrepreneurial foresight.

The production range in the first few years in Reutlingen included all needle knit hand flat knitting machines in the gauge range E 5 to E 14, with working widths of 16 to 50 cm needle space. As can be seen from an early photo album, machines

were built with long and short carriages. In the first ten to fifteen years, Rosina Stoll, the founder's wife, had taken on the task of providing instruction for customers from the Reutlingen area and had already set up a kind of "knitting school".

However, Heinrich Stoll was not only a born entrepreneur, he was also an inventor. He was not happy simply to continue building simple machines: he was in search of progress, and he achieved it with a large number of patents of an impressive technical standard.

In the years 1890 – 91, Heinrich Stoll developed the perfect "transfer mechanism of double-ended needles with the aid of knockover control and cam mechanisms", patent No. 62734 of 17 June 1892. Stoll ordered the double-ended needles in 1890 from Groz in Ebingen. The first functioning purl split machine was invented.

Prior to this, the Englishman Clay and the Frenchman Cazeneuf had both tried and failed to develop a purl split machine.

With the additional patents 95 683, 77 951 and 90 049, a purl split machine construction programme was created with reliability and showcase technology that sparked a radical shift in the knitted goods industry towards purlstitch goods, and at the same time initiated the economic success and rise of the company.

The many Stoll inventions also included a cover device for all needle knit and purl stitch flat knitting machines (patent document No. 118 682 of 31 March 1899) which later, in the year 1920, was to form the basis for the production of the first Stoll automatic narrowing machine.

However, Heinrich Stoll's business acumen did not allow him to rest on his laurels: the development of his machines continued, and many other Stoll patents followed. In Christian Grotz, Heinrich Stoll had found an employee in 1880 who also performed impressively in the field of mechanical engineering and who was able to contribute to a more rational organisation of the knitting machine production.

The production range of the year 1882 included all needle knit hand knitting machines with short and long carriages as well as high-bow industrial machines. In 1893, the first Stoll purl stitch hand knitting machines with the type designation "LH" were produced and sold.

The production of the first mechanically driven all needle knit and purl split machines can be traced back to the year 1899. Later, tandem, and even four-headed, knitting machines were produced and sold.

Experiments were carried out on the first jacquard attachments for a pattern selection of the needles. Initially, it was fitted as a kind of weaving loom jacquard, later as a jacquard attachment to purl stitch and all needle knit machines with sheet-metal cards. Petinet knitting machines that operated with a cover comb, with needles that operated across the entire working width, were built (patent No. 118 682).