

# History of the Sock Monkey

What is it that makes the Red Heel Sock Monkey such a beloved part of our lives? Is it their nostalgic appeal, their charming personality, or some other mystical phenomenon. Children and adults have enjoyed Sock Monkeys for over 100 years. The original crafter who created this lasting icon is unknown, but the creativity behind this wonderful doll has brought joy to millions.



The Red Heel socks were first manufactured in 1890 by The Nelson Knitting Mills in Rockford, Illinois. John Nelson came to this country from Sweden in 1852 with the Swedish immigrants stepping off the train in Rockford. The first sock knitting machines were patented by him in 1869. Incorporated in 1880, The Nelson Knitting Co. was the first company world wide to manufacture socks. There sturdy and comfortable work socks were worn mainly by farmers and factory workers.

In the 1900's mothers started crafting these socks into sock monkeys and other animals for their children. These quality socks were intended and used as work socks, but they became so much more when the Sock Monkey was born. In 1920 Nelson Knitting Mills started to include the directions for the Sock Monkeys with every pair of red heel socks

Nelson Knitting Mills was purchased by Fox River Mills in 1992 and now Fox River Mills continues the tradition and includes the original directions with every pair of Red Heel Socks they manufacture.