



The National Trust of S.A. Moonta Branch

THE BOX MANGLE

The Branch has two of these machines. The one located in the Museum (the former Moonta Mines School) is the older of the two. Note its large light weight flywheel opposite the driving handle and the conventional type link used in the chain. The other located at the Miner's Cottage is similar but the flywheel is less ornate and heavier and the chain is of the linkage type similar to that used on a bicycle.

Oswald Pryor in his book "Australia's Little Cornwall" mentions that the Moonta Mining Company had a number of the mangles which were lent to the widow whose husbands had been killed while working for the Company, thus giving them a source of income by making a charge of two pence (about two cents) a dozen for all the linen put through it.

The Box Mangle was built large and massive the bed and box being made of a hard timber. The box was fitted inside the bed or frame. The bed was usually about six feet (two Metres) and three feet (one metre) wide. Guide rollers were installed in the top rail of the frame for the sides of the box to roll against.

The box itself was made of wood about two inches in thickness and was situated between the rails of the frame and loaded with stones to give it weight of about one ton. About eighteen inches above ground level a floor was fitted in the frame. The work rollers were placed on this floor and the box moved backwards and forwards on them. The sheets, towels and so on (small articles like placemats were put inside the sheets) requiring mangling were wound around the work rollers before inserting them.

By turning the hand cog "A" which engages a peg like pulley "B" turns. The chain drive is fixed one end to the pulley and the other to the box. As cog "A" travels round pulley "B" which is of a special design such that "A" moves round the outer and inner surfaces of the pegs so that the box moves backwards and forwards even though the handle is turned in the same direction all the time. In this manner the articles around the roller were pressed. The box was lifted to remove the roller and replace it with the next lot of articles by lowering a tongue T. The box was wound onto this tongue and lifted.