

Fountain Pens: Model "A" Ford Era Fashion Accessory

By Donna May Bewley

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I collect era fashions and items that qualify as era fashion accessories. Some of my favorite accessories are jewelry, watches, purses, umbrellas, furs and fountain pens. I know that many other era fashion enthusiasts also enhance their enjoyment of our hobby by researching and searching for era fashion accessories.

Our MAFCA Era Fashion Guidelines defines accessories as all non-clothing articles worn or carried pertaining to and necessary in completing the major garment as an ensemble. Examples given are Jewelry, purses, wallets, etc. Many "Additional Limited Accessory Items" are also listed including fountain pens.

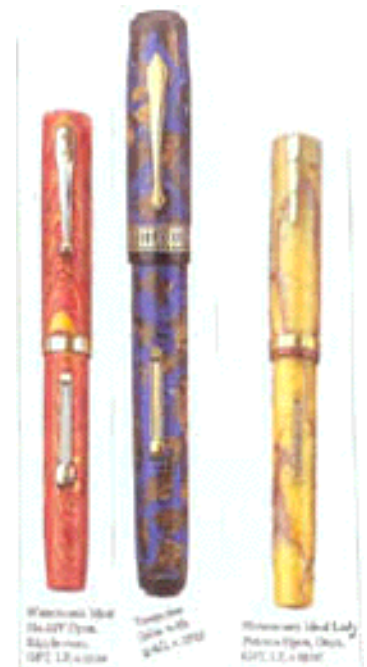
Perhaps you have never thought of a fountain pen as a fashion accessory. Certainly it is one of the most utilitarian inventions ever conceived. There was a time, in this country and around the world, when the fountain pen was seen as a highly desirable fashion accessory. Precious metals and gems were sometimes used in their manufacture. Color and style were emphasized along with performance. People purchased pens that reflected their personality, taste and socio-economic status.

During the Model A years scores of pen companies produced an amazing variety of pens. In the United States, Waterman, Parker, Sheaffer, and Wahl-Eversharp were the sales leaders. Less well known were brands such as Esterbrook, Carter, Diamond Point, Webster, Majestic, Waltham, Traveler, Red Dot and others too numerous to list. Fortunately for us, during the Model A years, some of America's best and most famous pens were produced.

Waterman Pens

WATERMAN PEN CO.

L.E. Waterman founded the Waterman Pen Co. in 1881. He is credited with developing the first practical commercial fountain pen. His most famous pens during the Model A era were the Ripple, Patrician and Lady Patricia. The Ripple, a pattern exclusive to Waterman, was his answer to the Parker Duofold. The Patrician, echoing in style the Art Deco movement of the 1920's was a huge success. It came in jet, onyx, turquoise, nacre (pearl and black) and emerald. The Lady Patricia, introduced in 1930, was a dainty, feminine styled pen that appealed to fashion conscious women. Some were customized for their owners to include gem stones.



Parker Pens

Parker Pen Co.



George S Parker received his first pen patent in 1889 and thus began one of the most successful pen companies in the world. Frequent innovation, reliability, affordability and industry leading use of advertising kept Parker in the forefront of the industry into the twentieth century. The Parker Lucky Curve Duofold and the Streamlined Duofold were Parker's top of the line models during the Model A years. They were offered in red, black, jade green, lapis lazuli blue, mandarin yellow and black and Pearl Deluxe models.

Schaeffer Pens

Shaeffer Pen Co.

Development of the first practical lever filling fountain pen, introduction of the first Lifetime pen with 14 carat gold nib, innovative use of plastic for making pen bodies and uncompromising adherence to quality, insured that Walter A. Shaeffer's company became one of the worlds most successful pen companies. Sheaffer's Balanced Life Time pen with tapered ends and flexible nibs was its biggest seller during the Model A years.





Wahl-Eversharp Pens

Wahl-Eversharp Pen Co.

Initially successful with their famous Eversharp mechanical pencil, the company's 1928 Art Deco styled plastic pens firmly established Wahl-Eversharp as an important player in the U.S. pen market. Their 1930 streamlined Equiposed pens and 1931 twelve-sided, classically styled Doric pens added to their success. These lifetime guaranteed pens were offered in Cashmere green, Burma, Morocco, Cathay and jet. Fourteen interchangeable nibs were available.

Fountain pens are increasingly popular in spite of the ubiquitous computer. Antique shops, flea markets, and the Internet are good places to search for pens. eBay is very useful for determining pen prices.

Sources:

Fountain Pens United States of America and United Kingdom, 2000. Andreas Lambrou.

Fountain Pens of the World, 1995. Andreas Lambrou. Collectable Fountain Pens, 1982 Glen Benton Bowen.

Special thanks to Mr. Lambrou, who graciously allowed me to use pictures from his beautiful books. His internationally famous and authoritative books can be purchased by contacting him at his web site: <http://www.andreaslambrou.com>.

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