

Shoe Ornamentation

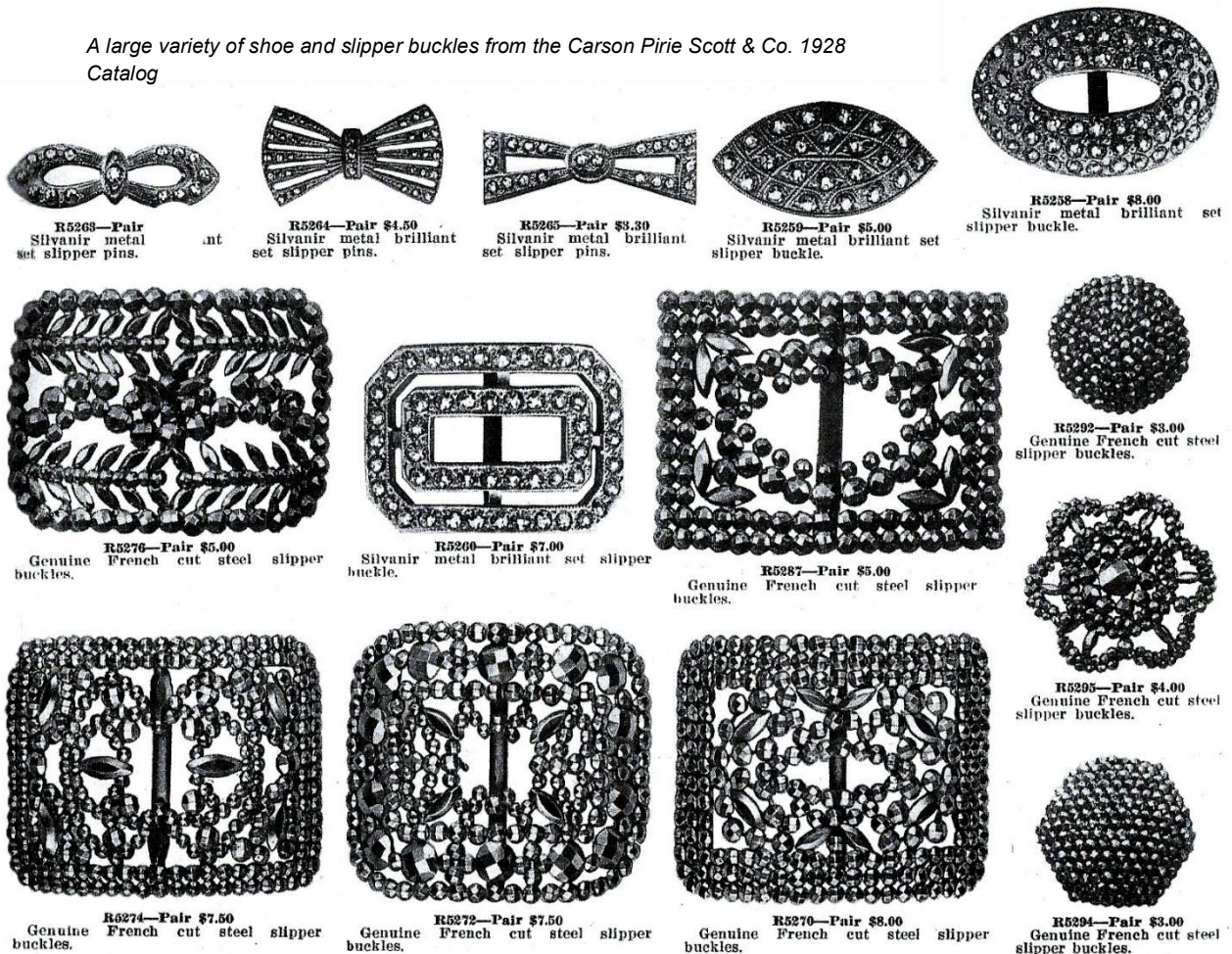
Sherry Winkinhofer, Northwest Missouri Model A Ford Club

Shoes in the early part of the 1900's were required to be serviceable and durable, but not necessarily attractive as they were not meant to be seen beneath long dresses. In the 1920's, hemlines began to climb higher and shoe styles evolved with them. Ankles were actually visible, and stylish shoes became more desirable.

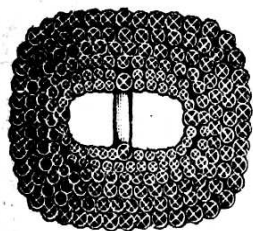
An amazing variety of shoes were available in the Model A years, with straps and buckles being popular design elements. But as always, multiple pairs of shoes were expensive, and the prerogative of the rich. What to do if you were from a household with a more modest budget? Why, buy a simple pair of pumps and then use shoe ornaments to change the looks. Voilà, your shoes were now a master of disguise, mimicking the look of multiple pairs

Shoe buckles were a popular option. A plain pair of shoes could be dressed up for evening wear by simply strapping or clipping on a pair of cut-steel or rhinestone buckles.

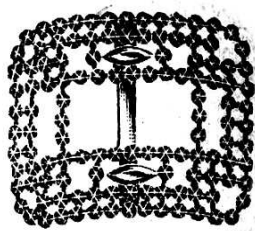
A large variety of shoe and slipper buckles from the Carson Pirie Scott & Co. 1928 Catalog



Shoe buckles could be very inexpensive, and were sold by all the large mail order companies.



**Imported
Shoe
Buckles**
Usual Retail Prices
\$1.25 to \$3.50



Shoe Buckles are again in vogue. A pair of these will "dress up" your best pair of pumps. Good imitation of genuine cut steel. Size 2 by 1 3/4 inches. Shipping weight, 8 oz.

Pumps take on added smartness with a pair of these genuine cut steel Buckles, bright polish. Imported from France. Similar quality retails for \$3.50. Size 2 by 1 3/4 inches. Shipping weight, 8 ounces.

545 C 6854—Per pair . . 65¢

545 C 6853—Per pair . . \$1.75

Several steel-cut shoe buckles from the Montgomery Wards Fall & Winter catalog 1928-29



A different style shoe buckle from the Montgomery Wards Fall & Winter catalog 1928-29

Shoe clips and smaller buckles were also a popular choice, selling for just a few cents in most of the big department store catalogs. The small buckle (below left) was meant to be slid onto a strap. The shoe buckle (below middle) appears to actually have the small clips underneath that we currently picture when thinking of shoe clips. The third illustration (below right) doesn't show the clip but describes itself as a "shoe ornament" with a "handy clip".

Post.,
3c Ex.

10¢
PAIR

12 E 373
This pretty Metal Buckle is just the ornament for the one strap pump. Length, about 1 inch.

The Charles Williams Store Spring & Summer 1928 catalog showed this small metal buckle as "just the ornament for the one strap pump".

SHOE BUCKLE

39¢
PAIR

12 E 374
Postage, 3c Extra
New Style Shoe Buckle. Easily attached to any pump. Size, about 1/2 x 2 ins.

The Charles Williams Store Spring & Summer 1928 catalog featured this "new style" shoe buckle that more resembles a clip,

29¢ 20 C 7075
WHITE METAL
SHOE ORNAMENT
A PAIR ABOUT 1/2 x 1 5/8 INS
HANDY CLIP

Montgomery Wards Fall and Winter 1928-29 Shoe Ornament with "Handy Clip".

One thing that always puzzled me was how they attached the larger buckles without damaging the shoes. In some of the older styles, ribbons or laces provided an object to slide the buckle on. But on the new leather pumps, that was not an option.

A recent find provided the clues to how some solved the problem. A pair of rhinestone buckles included a mechanism on the back labeled “Evergrip” with a patent number. This mechanism was removable and could be used with different buckles as long as they had the metal bar down the back. A little research resulted in the below patent application. This mechanism allowed the user to easily switch back and forth to different buckles, thus allowing the use of a single pair of pumps with a variety of looks.



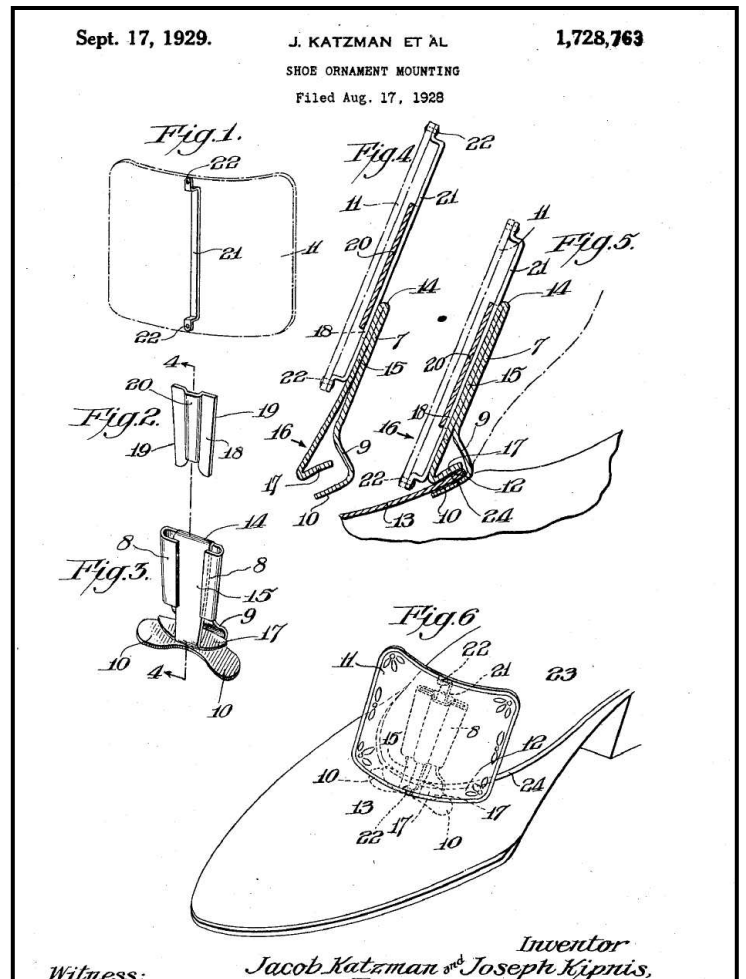
A pair of rhinestone buckles found with the Evergrip clip attached.



The back with/without the clip mechanism



A few more details showing the pieces of the support and how it looks clipped on the buckle.



An excerpt from the patent application: Our invention relates to a new and useful improvement in shoe ornament mountings, and it relates more particularly to a novel shoe buckle support adapted for quick and readily detachable mounting of ornamental shoe buckles upon ladies' shoes, particularly of the slipper style when it is desirable to mount an ornamental shoe buckle upon the vamp of the shoe.

The object of our invention: is to provide a detachable mounting or support which may be quickly and securely attached to the vamp of a shoe or slipper, without sewing or without perforating, nicking, or in any way marring the vamp of the shoe as by prongs or the like projecting into the vamp.

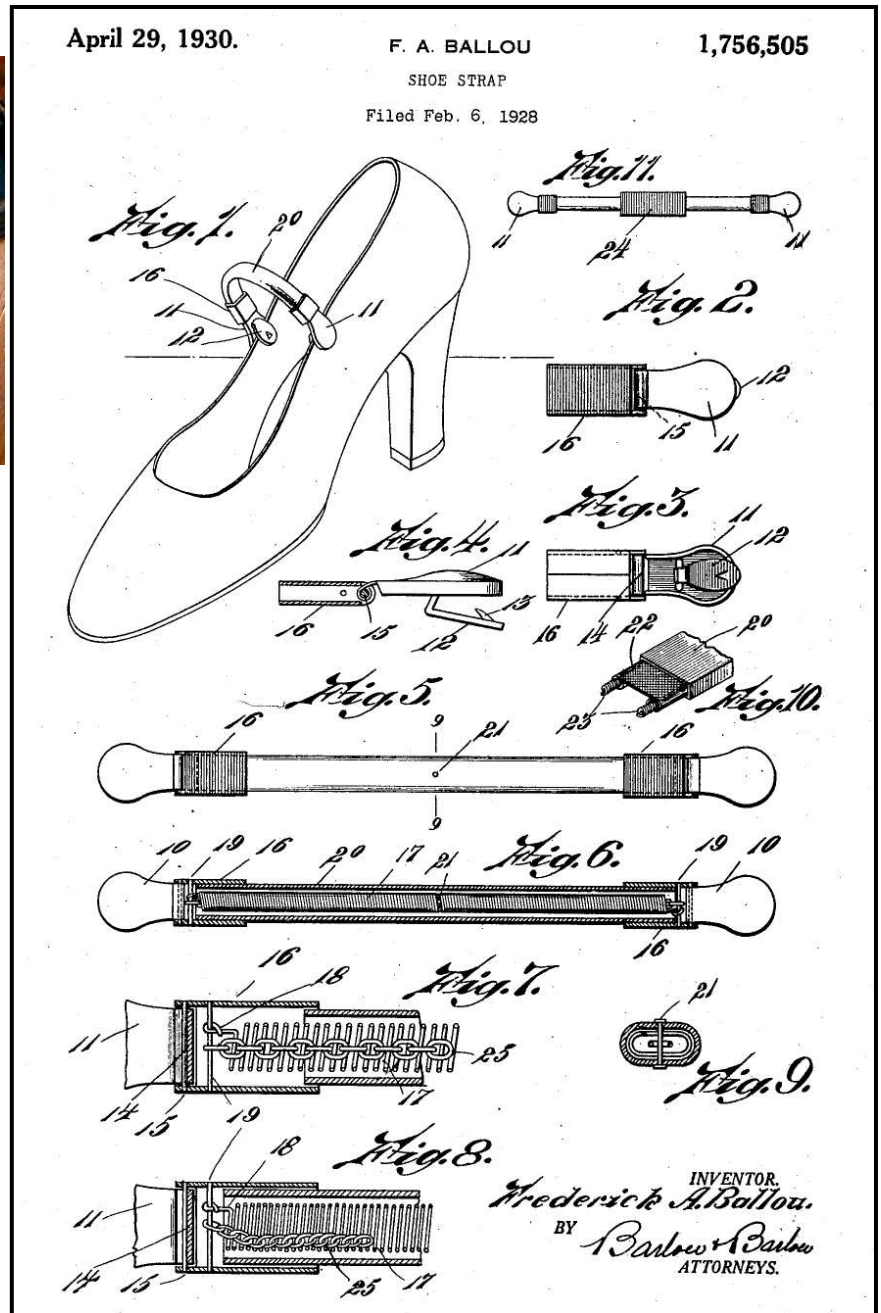
A further object of our invention is to provide a readily detachable shoe buckle mounting or support which may be clamped onto the vamp of a shoe without the aid of any additional fastening means and to which the shoe buckle in turn may likewise be detachably secured in a quick-and easy manner, and likewise without the aid of any sewing or any permanent fastening means.

A little more searching discovered that the “Evergrip” clip was not a unique item on the market. Here are a few additional patents I found during my search.

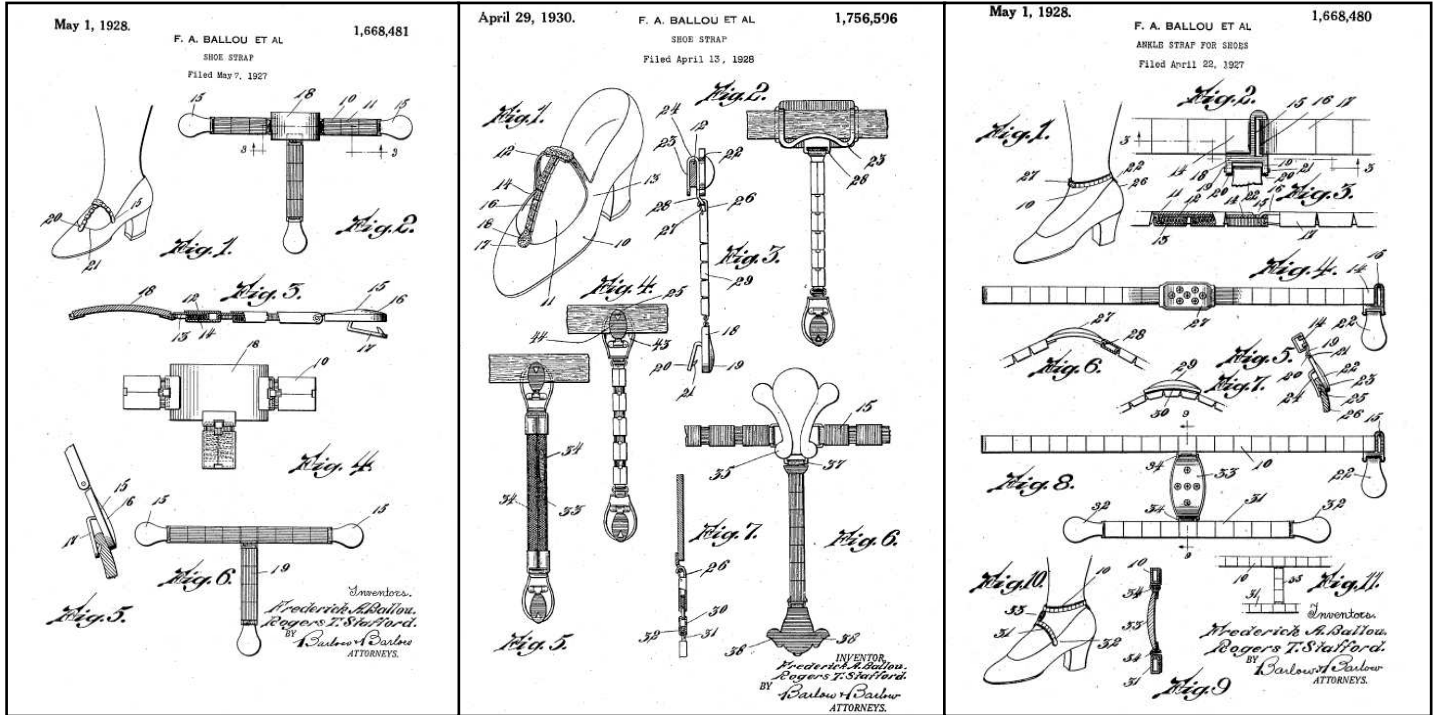
This shoe strap patent shows how the strap attaches with little clips on each end:



A few examples of this type of shoe strap found from recent sales on eBay, Etsy, and Rubylane.



I was unable to find any examples of the below shoe straps, but F.A. Ballou did manufacture some of the straps pictured on the previous page, so it's likely these were also available.



As you can see, the use of shoe ornaments was common in the Model A Era. So if you've struggled trying to find just the right style shoe for your Model A dress-up events, here's a great solution.

Just find a pair of pumps with appropriate heels and dress them up with era style shoe clips. Shoe clip mechanisms are available from on-line vendors such as Etsy and Ebay. Add matching rhinestone findings and your shoes will be dressed in style—Model A style!



Shoe Clip Blanks from Etsy.com



Rhinestone barrette found on Amazon

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