

Mary Jane Shoes

By Harriet McNeill

Shoe styles for children during the Model A era did not change much. (A)



There was not much difference between boy's and girl's shoes. They are shown in the *MAFCA Fashion Guidelines 2010 Edition* as having a sturdy strap across the instep, for play and school. (B)



Shoes with one strap sometimes are described as Mary Jane shoes in descriptions of footwear during fashion judging. Where did the term Mary Jane originate?

The original Mary Jane shoe dates from the early 1900's but the shoe and the name have carried over into today's culture. Mary Jane was a character in Buster Brown comic strips that was created by an artist named Richard Outcault in 1902. Mary Jane was depicted in the comic strip as Buster Brown's sister.



The style of shoes worn by Buster Brown and his sister, Mary Jane, came to be known as Mary Janes. (C)



The front of the shoe is always round allowing for growth and roominess. Usually they are made of black leather or patent leather. Today they are considered either semi-formal or formal depending on the setting where worn. For many people they remain a symbol of girlhood.

(A) (C) *Hamilton Brown Shoe Company, Shoelight Junior, Spring & Summer, 1929*

(B) *1931 Spring & Summer Style Book, Roberts, Johnson & Rand*

Illustrations from McCall's Magazine, April, 1928