

SHOEING PRODUCTS THAT DIDN'T MAKE IT

Check out shoeing products which have gone the way of the Edsel

American Farriers Journal
25 YEARS
1975 - 2000



PRODUCT KEY

A line drawing of a disassembled product, likely a model or a kit, with various components labeled with letters. The components are arranged on a flat surface. The labels are as follows:

- A**: A large, irregularly shaped base or platform.
- B**: A rectangular block sitting on the base.
- C**: A small rectangular block.
- D**: A small rectangular block.
- E**: A small rectangular block.
- F**: A small rectangular block.
- G**: A small rectangular block.
- H**: A small rectangular block.
- I**: A rectangular block.
- J**: A rectangular block.
- K**: A rectangular block.
- L**: A rectangular block.
- M**: A small, fan-shaped component.
- N**: A rectangular block.
- O**: A rectangular block.
- P**: A rectangular block.
- Q**: A rectangular block.
- R**: A rectangular block.

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RACING SHOES OF THE PAST

Ed Kinney at Thoro'Bred, Inc., in Anaheim, Calif., came up with these aluminum racing shoe products of the past.

1 LITE-FLITE. This plastic shoe had a sawtooth adjustable bar. You set the shoe and hoped you had enough time to nail it on before the horse moved.

2 RUBBER INSERT SHOE. This was designed by a farrier who believed the rubber insert would keep the hoof clean during racing. Long rubber spikes pulled the locking pieces through holes in the sides of the shoe.

3 MAGIC CUSHION. It had rubber sandwiched between two pieces of aluminum.

4 ALLETRUX. This aluminum shoe from France contained a number of promising ideas. Some, like the breakover point, have proven to be valuable in shoeing horses.

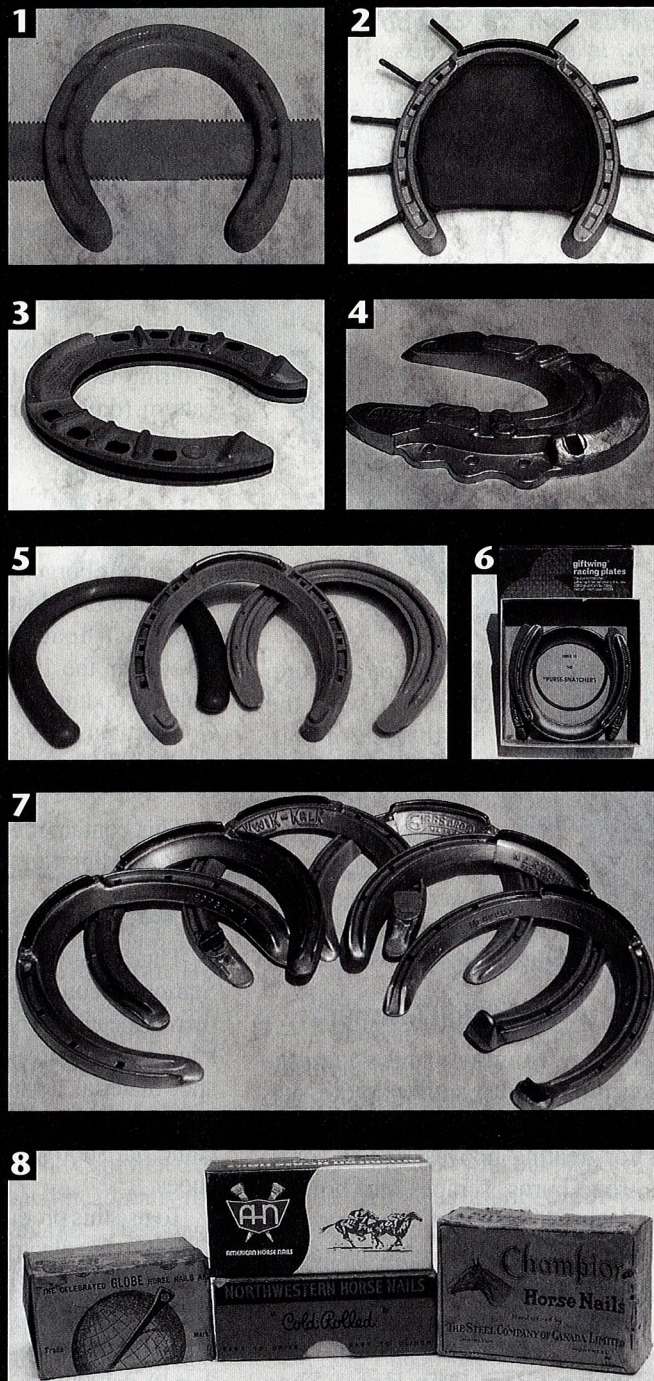
5 MIRACLE SHOE, FLEX-LON. The Miracle plastic shoe (left) had plastic studs on the back. A farrier would drill holes in the hoof, position the shoe and glue it.

The Flex-Lon shoe (front view in the center, plus a rear view at right) was designed by DuPont engineers. A half-round pattern on the back required a special double-bladed grooving knife. Few horses ever kept these shoes on for more than 100 yards of racing. Other plastic shoes not pictured include Rocket and Balanz shoes.

6 GIFTWING. These stainless steel racing plates had the toe located at the edge of the shoe.

7 ALUMINUM RACING SHOES OF THE PAST. From left to right: Air-Lite, Atomic, Kwik-Kalk, Gibbs Brothers, Nardon and Mercury. Not pictured is the Quick-Flight shoe.

8 EXTINCT NAILS. Left to right: **A.** Globe nails, made by Mustad. **B.** American nails, a limited production Thoro'Bred nail and a giant pain in the butt, says Kinney. **C.** Northwestern nails which many old-time shoers maintain was the best nail every made. The company was later bought out by Capewell. **D.** Champion nails from the Steel Company of Montreal, Quebec.



would never work. It didn't last long."

"It's a good thing this product died before the promoter got into a big lawsuit," says Bill Miller, a veteran farrier from Olympia, Wash. "He was making all kinds of exaggerated remarks about how shoeing crippled horses.

"How anyone could believe you could paint something on a horse's foot that would protect it from wear and tear is beyond me."

P Russell Hoof Gauge

This is a Russell hoof gauge which Pieh used from 1952 through the mid 1970s.

Q Farrier Price Lists

The 1968 Centaur Forge catalog and 1975 price lists from Madon Farrier Supplies in East Cannan, Conn., contained practically every item a farrier needed to shoe horses.

OTHER PRODUCTS

Several other products are well remembered by many farriers over the past 25 years.

✕ Seattle Shoe

Boeing engineers got the idea for this product from a human prosthetic device. The Seattle Foot could absorb shock

from the human foot and return that energy like a spring to the foot. The original horseshoe weighed 4 pounds, had a big bolt in the center and featured two levels so the shoe could turn right if the horse turned left.

The shoe was a two-part composite of high-tempered plastic and aluminum. Thicker than a conventional shoe, the plastic portion reminded farriers of back-to-back Frisbees compressed under pressure. Exertion at a full gallop was executed under full compression of 2,500 to 3,000 pounds per square inch and the shoe was forced virtually flat. Once the weight was released, it would supposedly spring back to its normal configuration, returning part of that energy to the horse.

The plastic portion was nailed to the foot and was constructed so the aluminum shoe could be screwed directly into it.

"I never had any experience with them, but if God wanted another joint on a horse, he would have put it there," says Miller. "Those shoes had a pogo stick effect on a horse."

✕ Tennessee Navicular Shoe

When this shoe was written up in *Western Horseman*, Miller thought it might be ideal for horses suffering from navicular syndrome. "Made of steel, it created a heel-weighted shoe," he says. "As a result, I felt it would be one of the last shoes I'd want to put on a navicular horse.

"At one of the AFA conventions, I was given a pair of G.E. aluminum navicular shoes to field test. I figured I had the perfect horse for a test.

"The aluminum version of the Tennessee navicular shoe made a world of difference. Judges who had seen the horse the year before came to the owner

FOR THE RECORD

The heaviest horse ever recorded was in 1948 at 3,200 pounds. Brooklyn Supreme, a Belgian stallion, stood 19.2 hands. The tallest horse was an Argentinian horse named Firpon. He stood 21.1 hands and weighed 2,976 pounds.

—Horsepower

to see what she had done to make him so much better."

✕ Pegasus Shoe

This clear plastic urethane shoe featured a big promotional splash. Miller used a few plastic shoes at the racetrack, but always felt it was like nailing a snake onto the bottom of the foot. He didn't think they were rigid enough.

✕ Adam's Shoe

This was a carbon composite shoe. "It was all hype. The idea was that you could shape it easily and just nail it on," says Steele. "When the product didn't go over with farriers, you'd see it in tack shops. But it never caught on."

✕ Mushroom Shoes

This type of shoe is still used on Standardbred racers, but Miller maintains it's not a new shoe. "Just before I left the track to come to Washington in 1977 to teach horseshoeing, there was a harness horse that wore a mushroom shoe and turned in a record time," he says.

"Horsemen are the greatest copy cats. If a shoe works on one horse, it has to work on all of them. I left the track just in time to keep from having to nail on a zillion mushroom shoes.

"I shod for one trainer who didn't have a clue about effective shoeing. I'd run out of ideas for one of his problem horses, but eventually reversed the hind shoes, put the swedge to the inside and placed the half round to the outside. When it worked, he wanted me to shoe all of his horses with reverse shoes."

Despite all of these product failures, Miller says it's great that new products continue to show up on the shoeing scene.

"This means people are thinking," he says. "Some new products make it and some don't. But just because it worked for Grandpa doesn't mean we have to stay with that same vein of thought.

"It's progress to try something new."

SHOES THAT DIDN'T MAKE IT

1 Draft Horse Swamp Shoe

This contraption provided extra flotation for draft horses working in marshes or swamps. While earlier models were made of wood, this steel unit could be adjusted for extra traction. It carries a 1906 patent and was made by the Fheinig Co., in Beaver Dam, Wis.

In the center of the contraption, there's a Phoenix front shoe with sharpened heels and handmade toe calks.

2 Diamond Shoe

Manufactured by Diamond in Duluth, Minn., this shoe was factory drilled and tapped for 3/8 inch screw-in calks.

3 Rubber Shoes, Pads

Fruin, Ajax, Dryden, Firestone, Morgan & Morgan and other firms

HAIL TO THE CHIEF!

25 Years Ago...

—The President of the United States was Gerald R. Ford
(Richard Nixon resigned the presidency in 1974).

—The Vice President was Nelson A. Rockefeller.

private branded rubber pads up until the mid 1970s. This pad had leather backing over the rubber pad and a tip shoe was nailed to the suction-style pad.

"The shoe and pad offered non-slip heel support and full support across the heels," says Pieh.

4 Snow Shoe

This Phoenix hind snow shoe was popular before World War II. It featured a laminated heel calk and split heel.

5 Hackney Pony Shoe

This was a cast shoe made by the Russelloy Co. from Bettendorf, Iowa.

6 Drop Forge Calk Shoe

Looking like a Williams-style shoe, Pieh isn't sure who made it. The shoes came drilled but untapped.

7 Nature Plates

The idea was to allow a horse to dig in with its toes. Nail holes were spaced out at the heel and spaced in at the toe to match the natural dimensions of the hoof wall. A concave bottom conformed to the normal shape of the hoof and hopefully made the shoe self-cleaning.

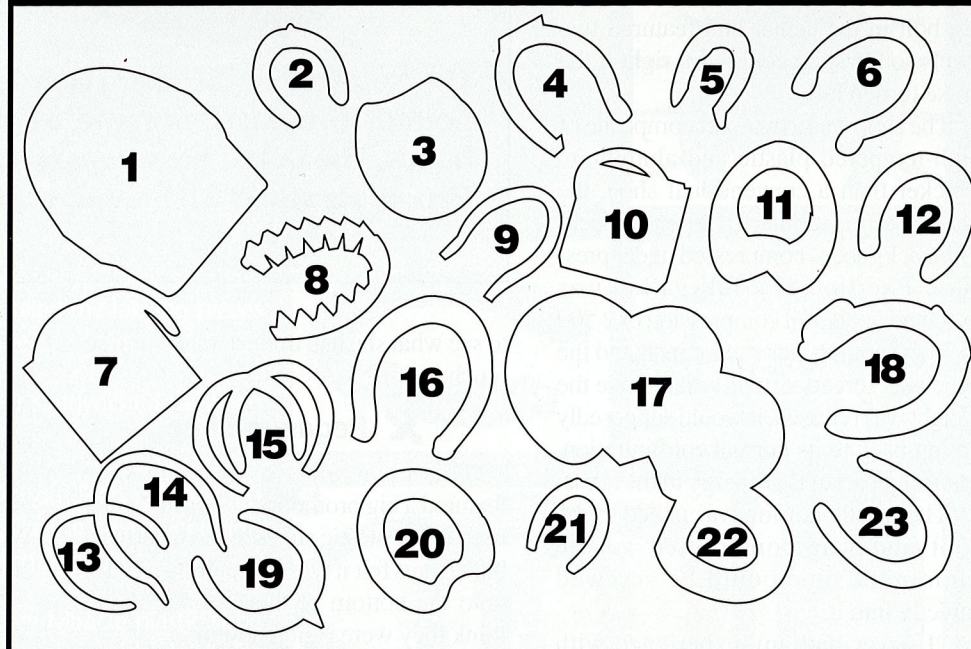
"They looked like they'd be the best thing since sliced bread," says Miller. "I shod a cutting horse with Nature Plates and the owner loved them at first. But as the shoes wore down to a sharp edge, he was afraid the horse might cut the opposing limb. Horses seemed to move better at first, but they tended to stumble as the foot grew.

"Extension of the natural foot seemed like it might work, but that was just man's thought. The horse is always the final decision maker."

8 Original Glue-On

"It was a lot of work to use this original Mustad glue-on shoe," recalls Steele. "The tabs came as a straight piece and you had to bend them, trim them and cut a piece of hard plastic to hold everything together. The shoe came with a 3/8-inch

SHOE KEY



pad which could be cut with a saber saw. You could make a glue-on heart bar, but needed a special tool to pull the tabs.

"Mustad quickly recognized that farriers could glue the tabs to the pad. They found a way to mold the shoe and have the tabs already attached."

Farriers had to go to a two-day school to learn how to use these glue-on shoes. After completing the course, each farrier received a Glu-Strider certificate which was required to order the shoes.

9 Extra, Extra Light Shoe

This Phoenix hind shoe was made from 1008 mild steel and had an erratic punching pattern. It was used extensively with riding horses, driving horses and hunters. The shoes were so light (8 ounces) you could ship 200 of them in a 100-pound keg.

10 Mexican Steel Plates

Along with Cooper nails from England, these Herraduras Valdes Steel Plates were introduced at the 1983 AFA convention in Houston, Texas.

"Because of low labor costs in Mexico, the shoes were cheap to make," says Pieh. "But by the time they crossed the border at Laredo, Texas, they cost as much as U.S. manufactured shoes."

11 Rubber Shoe

"I liked this Fruin Co. shoe for circus horses and carriage horses driven on pavement," says Pieh. "The rubber was molded to the steel at the heel with very little rubber in the toe area. It still had plenty of toe support."

12 Neverslip Shoe, Calks

Used with light work horses, this Phoenix shoe contained plenty of prepunched holes for calks. Farmers used little wrenches which came with the shoes to easily change the calks.

13 Plain Hind Rim Shoe

The punching pattern was poor in this Phoenix blank shoe which a farrier could swedge out. It was used extensively on polo ponies until it was banned.

McGraw Brothers at Manteno, Ill., manufactured this shoe after Phoenix went out of business.

14 Half Swedge Shoe

This 15-inch hind shoe was used on Standardbred pacers.

15 Light Racing Plate

These shoes carry a British patent and



came from London, England. The nail holes are set back in the heel in the British style. Steel grabs offered extra grip and wear on these light racing plates.

16 Heel Back Draft Shoe

This drop-forged shoe was not as easy to customize as a rolled shoe. Note the shallow crease with toe and heel calks.

17 Rubber Pads

Left to right: Mary Jane pads were made by East Coast shoer Charlie Guimarra of Stephentown, N.Y. It was an inexpensive pad named after his daughter.

The Flexi-Slab 7/32-inch pad was manufactured by the Field Acre Tack Shop in Akron, Ohio.

Fruin-Tobin Snow Pads were among the first bubble snow pads.

18 Double-Drive Draft Shoe

Known as a double-drive Diamond shoe, this draft shoe was sold with factory prepunched holes for driving

blunt calks. Farriers used a tapered punch to reform the holes to lock the calks in place. Larger toe calks were used with horses pounding the pavement.

This shoe includes a giant grip double-drive cushioned heel. The rubber heels proved popular in the Midwest since they could be easily switched with changing winter weather conditions.

19 Cast Shoe

This toe-weighted Saddlebred shoe was cast instead of being drop forged. The shoe from a long-forgotten Iowa manufacturer proved difficult to rework and almost always had to be repunched.

20 Bar Shoe

Fruin rubber shoes for police horses and circus horses featured extra heel support with a rubber insert which could be easily cut with a knife.

The shoe was expensive since the manufacturer had to make the steel shoe before adding a vulcanized coating of

rubber. The toe clip was drop forged.

21 Pony Shoe

This Phoenix shoe was drilled and tapped for 5/16-inch Neverslip calks. It was used with ponies on ice and snow.

"Phoenix shoes were really tough to shape cold and I always figured that's one of the reasons why they went out of business," says Steele.

22 Plastic Shoe

This was another of Charlie Guimarra's specialties. The Stephentown, N.Y., supplier sold these plastic shoes for use on Standardbred trotters and pacers.

23 Steel Inserts, Aluminum Shoe

Aluminum made this shoe light-weight while steel inserts provided grip and longer wear.

Pieh says this horseshoe could even have been produced as far back as the 1920s. ☐