



Madam Can't Decide:

Variety and Taste in Early Women's Fashion

Women in the 18th and early 19th centuries had a surprising choice in footwear. Even middle-class women would probably have had at least one "fancy" pair to wear out for a special occasion. Examples here show the variety:



a pink polka-dot number,

a gold shoe with fish scale brocade and ruffle,



and a pointy-toed black leather flat.



a white satin pump with Italian heel



And one could always add a glittering buckle if you needed a little bling. SJP would not be displeased!!



A special note. The white leather low-heeled shoe, cut-out and scalloped, bears an instep label:



"Shoes of all kinds/made for/ Elijah Fitch/and for sale/at etc., etc./opposite the Old/ South Meeting/House/Boston. Rips mended gratis"

Mr. Fitch was smart in luring his customers back into his shop for repairs.

The mistress would also have had choices in her jewelry, gloves, buckles and perfume.



a pair of Buff-colored elbow length suede/leather gloves, (ca. 1800);



Seen among the shoes are: a pair of steel shoe buckles set with clear glass stones, with high arch, set with prongs inside the frame which attach to shoe (about 1770);

a square cut crystal toilet bottle with a flared nozzle and companion scalloped stopper (also ca. 1800);



a lady's watch in gold, with a blue enamel and pearl-decorated case, a hair braid on reverse along w a blue and white enamel stem surmounted by oval handle studded w seed pearls on both sides. marked inside: Jn. Thomas/St. James's Street (also about 1800).