The first athletic shoes were created thousands of years ago to protect the foot from rough terrain when hunting and participating in combat games (Cheskin 1987, pp. 2-3). In Mesopotamia (c. 1600-1200 B.C.E.) soft shoes were worn by the mountain people who lived on the border of Iran. These shoes were constructed with crude tools such as bone needles and stone knives; and made of indigenous materials like leaves, bark, hide, and twine. With the available manufacturing processes and materials, primitive shoes were only constructed as sandals or wraparound moccasins. In a sandal construction the foot is attached to a platform with straps, bands, or loops. A moccasin construction entails a piece of material wrapped under and over the top of the foot then anchored with a drawstring. As sports became more competitive throughout history, athletic shoes needed to perform better and be sport-specific. Functional attributes like weight, flexibility, cushioning, and traction became key features to making successful athletic shoes.

Folklore

According to some historians, King Henry VIII of England expressed ideas related to an athletic sneaker-type construction in the 1500s. According to folklore, the king was getting a bit overweight, and he decided playing tennis would be a good way to get in shape. But he was not happy with the shoes he had. He ordered his servant to get "syxe paire of shooyes with feltys, to pleye in at tennis" (six pairs of shoes with felt bottoms to play tennis in), from the local cobbler (Paquin 1990). Although the king was not exactly ordering sneakers, as we technically know them, he had the right idea-to make lightweight shoes with a separate functional outsole to play tennis better.

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What is a Sneaker?

The word “sneaker” was a marketing term coined in the United States many years after the actual shoe construction was created. "Sneaker" is one of many names given to a shoe that consists of a canvas upper attached to a vulcanized rubber outsole. A shoe made any differently (e.g., a shoe with a foam midsole and a stability shank) is not technically a sneaker.

The first shoes constructed with canvas uppers and vulcanized rubber outsoles were called "Sand Shoes." These shoes were an evolution of a former sand shoe design that had a cotton canvas upper and outsole made from flat leather or jute rope. In the 1830s an English company called Liverpool Rubber evolved the original sand shoe, by bonding canvas to rubber, making the outsole more durable. The name "sand shoe" came from the fact that they were worn on the beach, by the Victorian middle class (Kippen 2004). Sand shoes were revolutionary as they replaced heavy and more expensive leatherwork boots. Around the 1860s, a croquet shoe was created that had a rubber outsole with a canvas upper fastened with cotton laces. Sand shoes were different than the croquet shoe as they had a T-strap upper construction fastened with a metal buckle. Sand shoes were also the basis for traditional English school sandals, sometimes called "Sandies" (Wagner 1999).

In the 1870s, a more robust sand shoe was created; it was called a "Plimsoll" (also spelled Plimsol or Plimsole). The name came from Samuel Plimsoll (1824-1898), a British merchant and shipping reformer who designated the "Plimsoll Mark"—a mark on the hull of cargo ships that designated the waterline when it was at full capacity (Britannica Student Encyclopedia 2004). The term Plimsoll was adopted by the shoe industry because the point where the canvas upper and vulcanized rubber outsole bonded together looked similar to a ship's Plimsoll line. This line aesthetically made the shoe look more expensive than previous models and became adopted by all social classes for a variety of athletic activities.

Around the same time the Plimsoll was popular in England, the term "sneaker" was coined in the United States. There are several cited origins and dates of the term. Some say the word is merely an Americanism, made from the word "sneak" (1870), because the shoe was noiseless (Coye 1986, pp. 366-369). There is also a reference that the noise-less rubber shoes were preferred by "sneak thieves" (1891) hence the name sneakers (Vanderbuilt 1998, p. 9). There is even a source that mentions the shoe got its name from "sneaky" (1895) baseball players who liked stealing bases in them (Hendrickson 2000). Many sources reference Henry Nelson McKinney (1917), an advertising agent for N. W. Ayer & Son. He came up with the name "sneaker," because the rubber outsole allowed the shoe to be quiet or "sneaky" (Bellis 2004)

No matter how the name was born, shoes with a canvas upper and a vulcanized rubber outsole evolved into many forms. These evolutions allowed people to enhance their athletic skills and provided an aesthetic opportunity for casual shoe design. In the 1880s, vulcanized rubber was added to the toe box to stop the big toenail from breaking through the canvas. It also provided abrasion resistance in sports where the forefoot was dragged to provide balance (e.g., tennis). Functional outsole patterns (e.g., herringbone) were also created to add traction, facilitate player movements, and cushion the load when jumping. Similar types of shoes became useful for sailing and yachting, since they provided traction on the wet deck. The military also used them, and had them colored according to rank. Schools recommended them to students for gym class. Athletes wore them at the first modern Olympics in Paris (1900), and Robert Falcon Scott wore them on his Antarctic expedition (1901-1904) (Kippen 2004).

Names
Since the creation of the sand shoe, there have been numerous names used globally to describe a shoe with a canvas upper and vulcanized rubber outsole. In the beginning, plimsoll and sneaker were popular names. Over time, a variety of other names have been created. Some are based on function, while others are based on materials, people, and even street slang. A few of the names include: Bobos, Bumper Boots, Chuck's, Creepers, Daps, Felonies, Fish Heads, Go Fasters, Grips, Gym Shoes, Gymmers, Joggers, Jumps, Kicks, Outing Shoes, Pumps, Runners, Sabogs, Skiffs, Sneaks, Tackies, Tennies, Trainers, and Treads (Perrin 2004).

Materials and Construction

Although athletes have been wearing performance-related footwear for thousands of years, the "sneaker" is only a recent creation based upon serendipity and adaptations of several industrial revolution inventions.

The most recognized feature of a sneaker is its vulcanized rubber outsole. Natural or India rubber, a byproduct of trees, has been cultivated since 1600 B.C.E. (by the Mayans). However, natural rubber "as is," is not really appropriate for shoes. In hot and sticky weather it melts; in cold weather it becomes brittle and hard. In 1839, Charles Goodyear from the United States serendipitously created the modern form of rubber used for sneakers when he was trying to come up with a waterproof mailbag material for the U.S. government. Goodyear's recipe, later named "vulcanization" was discovered when he accidentally dropped a mixture of rubber, lead, and sulfur onto a hot stove. His accident resulted in a substance that was not affected by the weather, and would snap back to its original shape when stretched (Goodyear 2003). The same type of rubber was reinvented and patented in England (1843), by a rubber pioneer named Thomas Hancock, who analyzed and copied samples from Goodyear. A friend of Hancock's coined the term "vulcanization" after Vulcan, the Roman god of fire (Goodyear 2003).

Sewing Machine

Cotton canvas was around for a long time before the creation of the first sneaker-type construction; however, sewing small pieces of canvas into a three-dimensional shape that conforms to the foot is quite tedious by hand. The lockstitch sewing machine was invented and patented in 1845 by Elias Howe, which allowed fabrics of all weights and constructions to be quickly and neatly stitched together. In 1851, Isaac Merrit Singer improved upon Howe's invention (and also infringed on Howe's patent), and started his own sewing machine business that still prospers among home sewers and clothing factories (Bellis 2004). Singer's sewing machine was further evolved for the shoe industry by one of his own employees: Lyman Reed Blake. In 1856, Blake became a partner in a shoemaking company and was dedicated to inventing machines that helped automate the shoe-manufacturing process. In 1858, he received a patent for a machine that could stitch shoe uppers to outsoles. He sold his patent to Gordon McKay in 1859, and worked for McKay from 1861 until his retirement in 1874. The shoes made on this machine were known as "McKays" (United Shoe Machinery Corporation 2004).

Lasting Machine

The sewing machine was helpful in automating the shoemaking process, but it was not the ultimate solution of joining an upper to an outsole. A typical sewing machine cannot manipulate around small, curvy parts that exist in a shoe design, and it takes great skill to bend, shape, and hold the upper while it is stitched to the outsole. American immigrant Jan Matzeliger (from Dutch Guiana) helped revolutionize the shoe industry by developing a shoe lasting machine that could attach an outsole to an upper in one minute. His shoe lasting machine was able to adjust an upper snugly over a last (a foot form used for shoemaking), arrange
the upper under the outsole and pin it in place with nails while the outsole is stitched to the upper. On March 20, 1883, the United States Patent Office awarded Matzeliger patent number 274,207 for his do-it-all shoe lasting machine (Tenner 2000, p. 37). The lasting machine revolutionized the shoe-making process as it could make hundreds of pairs of shoes a day and enabled the mass production of affordable shoes.

Early Sneaker Marketing
There are hundreds of companies that produce sneakers for the global marketplace. The first sneakers were manufactured and marketed by rubber companies, as they were the major producers of Vulcanized rubber.

Dunlop Green Flash
The Dunlop rubber company in England can trace their first marketed sneaker (plimsoll) back to the 1870s. In 1933, their Green Flash collection was launched and proved to be very popular. It had a higher quality canvas upper and a better outsole (with a herringbone pattern) to provide good traction on grass tennis courts. Dunlop’s Green Flash was worn by Fred Perry to win three Wimbledon titles (Heard 2003, pp. 290-291).

US Rubber Keds
Keds was the first mass-marketed sneaker brand in the United States (1917), by U.S. Rubber. Much debate took place around naming U.S. Rubber’s sneaker, as the initial favorite was Peds meaning, “foot” in Latin. Unfortunately another company trademarked the name, so U.S. Rubber narrowed the name down to two other possibilities—“Veds or Keds.” Keds was chosen because the company felt that “K” was the strongest letter in the alphabet (Paquin). Another story says that the letter “K” represents the word “Kids,” and that Keds is rhyming slang for Peds—the name that U.S. Rubber originally wanted to use for their sneaker (Vanderbuilt 1998, p. 22).

Shoelaces

Before shoelaces, shoes were typically fastened with metal buckles. The shoelace (lace and shoe holes) was invented in England (1790). An aglet is the small plastic or metal tube that binds the end of a shoelace to prevent it from fraying. It also allows the lace to pass easily through the shoe’s eyelets or other openings (e.g., webbing/leather loops). The term “aglet” comes from the Latin word for “needle” (Bellis).

Converse Chuck Taylor
In 1908, Marquis M. Converse from Massachusetts was producing rubber galoshes and decided that he would like a more exciting career. In 1917, he introduced the Converse All-Star, a high-top sneaker designed especially for basketball. At the same time, Charles H. Taylor, a basketball player for the Akron Firestones, believed so much in Converse’s shoe that he joined the sales force in 1921 and traveled across the United States promoting the All-Star Sneaker. He was so successful in promoting, selling, and making important changes to the original design that in 1923 his signature “Chuck Taylor” appeared on the ankle patch and the shoes were known as “Chucks” (Heard 2003, pp. 278-279). Converse’s Chuck Taylor design is still popular around the world.

Modern Sneaker Marketing
Once the basic processes were established to make and market sneakers, companies other than rubber manufacturers were
Reebok
In the 1890s, Joseph William Foster from Bolton, England made some of the world's first known track spikes. Although track spikes are technically different than sneakers, Foster was interested in making athletes run faster by evolving shoe technologies. By 1895, he was in business making spikes for an international circle of distinguished runners. In 1924, J. W. Foster and Sons made the spikes worn in Summer Olympic Games by the athletes celebrated in the film *Chariots of Fire* (Vanderbuilt 1998, p. 11). In 1958, two of Fosters' grandsons started a companion company named Reebok (which went on to make sneakers), after the African gazelle. Reebok has grown to be one of the world's largest athletic shoe manufacturers, producing products for many sports like tennis, basketball, and cross-training.

New Balance
Location was another commonality between the first sneaker manufacturers, as talent and machinery were important in keeping manufacturers in business. Most came from England or the New England region of the United States, particularly Massachusetts. New Balance was one of those companies, and was established in 1906, by William J. Riley from Watertown, Massachusetts. Riley was a 33-year-old English immigrant who committed to help people with troubled feet by making personal arch supports and prescription footwear to improve shoe fit. Arch supports and prescription footwear remained the core of New Balance's business until 1961, when they manufactured the "Trackster," a performance running shoe (weighing 96 grams) that was made with a rippled rubber outsole and came in multiple widths (Heard 2003, pp. 48-49). The Trackster was the preferred shoe of college running coaches and YMCA fitness directors. Since the 1960s, New Balance's reputation for manufacturing performance footwear in multiple widths has grown through word of mouth and "grassroots" marketing programs for which they are still known.

Adidas
The first major non-English or American sneaker manufacturers were the Dassler brothers, Adolf (nicknamed Adi) and Rudolf (nicknamed Rudi) who setup business in Herzogenaurach, Germany (1926). Their first sneakers cost two German Reich marks, and followed three guiding principles: to be the best shoes for the requirements of the sport, to protect athletes from injury, and to be durable. The Dasslers developed many firsts in the athletic shoe industry. Some of them included shoes with spikes and studs for soccer, track, and field. They also looked at constructing shoes with materials other than leather and canvas to reduce weight. By 1936, the Dasslers' shoes were internationally known, and were worn by many great athletes like Jesse Owens. In the Berlin 1936 Olympics, Owens won in almost every track and field event he competed in, earning four gold medals while wearing the Dasslers' shoes (Cheskin 1987, p. 11). Due to irreconcilable differences, Adi Dassler parted from his brother Rudi (1948), and they formed two separate shoe companies (Vanderbuilt 1998, p. 29). Rudi's company was called Puma, named after the powerful wild cat. Adi's company was called Adidas, where he took the first two syllables of his first and last name to create the famous name for his product line. To give support to the runner's midfoot, Adi created the three side stripes trademark in 1949 which is still used in almost every Adidas athletic shoe design (Heard 2003, pp. 90-93).

Onitsuka Tiger (ASICS)
Although most sneakers in the early 2000s are manufactured in Asia, Onitsuka Tiger (later named ASICS) was the first Asian brand to make a statement in the sneaker market. Established in Kobe, Japan (1949), by Kihachiro Onitsuka, the company's philosophy was based on "bringing-up sound youth through sports." Onitsuka believed that playing sports was a solution to keeping kids out of prison, especially after World War II. The company's first shoes were made in Onitsuka's living room and resembled the Converse All-Star. Another philosophy of Onitsuka's was "harmony between human and science." In an interview with Onitsuka, he said: "We try to analyze all phenomena which affect a human body during sports and to make shoes which will meet the needs of the users is our principle toward the shoe making" (ASICS 2004). The company's name evolved to ASICS in 1977 based on the Latin phrase "Anima Sana In Corpore Sano," which translates to "A Sound Mind in a Sound Body." Although ASICS is a smaller company compared to the others mentioned, it is important to note, as it inspired the creation of Nike. Nike's founders, Bill Bowerman and Phil Knight, started their careers in the sneaker business working for ASICS, where they designed, developed, and sold their products.

Nike
Of all the major sneaker companies, Nike is the youngest, yet the largest globally. Nike was a business venture between the track coach Bill Bowerman from the University of Oregon and Phil Knight (who ran for Bowerman). Bowerman always had a desire for better quality running shoes and was always tinkering with new ideas. He even made customized shoes for his own athletes. Bowerman was very inspirational to Knight, and while studying for his MBA at Stanford University in the early 1960s, he devised a small business plan for making quality running shoes, producing them in Japan, and shipping to the United States for distribution. After graduation, Knight traveled in 1963 to Japan to seek a way to live his dream. Representing Blue Ribbon Sports (BRS), he met with the president of Tiger ASICS (Onitsuka Company) and they agreed to go into business. Knight traveled throughout the West Coast of the United States and sold ASICS out of his car. Even Bowerman got involved and evolved some of the designs. Eventually the partners decided to split from the Onitsuka Company and create their own company. In 1971, Jeff Johnson (the first Nike employee) coined the name "Nike," and the Swoosh was created. The name originates from the Greek goddess of victory, and the famous Swoosh design was the creation of student Caroline Davidson, who was paid only $35 (Nike 2004). The first Nike shoe to feature the Swoosh was the Cortez in 1972. Product innovation and marketing has been key to Nike's success. By the end of the twentieth century, technologies like the waffle outsole, AIR, SHOX and legacies like Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods were just a few things that contributed to making Nike the largest sneaker company in the world.

Trainers
Technically, a sneaker is a shoe made of a canvas upper and a soft rubber outsole. What some refer to as a sneaker is much different and a more correct term to use is "trainer or "athletic shoe." Since the creation of the first sneaker-type construction, technology, fashion, and the desire for athletes to perform more efficiently and accurately have led to design evolution. The most typical types of sneakers are: running, cross-training, walking, basketball, and tennis. Technologies in materials have allowed sneakers to be made of synthetic leathers and 3D knits that are lightweight, breathable, and waterproof. A modern-day trainer could be as complicated as a shoe with an upper, midsole, insole, outsole, and shank. Within those parts, there are often subparts that better define each particular technology and give it its own specific performance advantage to others in the marketplace.

See also Shoemaking; Shoes.

Bibliography
Internet Resources


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A smart sneaker is a footwear equivalent of a smartphone, as the name says. As of now, smart sneakers have features like self lacing, or adjustment of tightness by use of buttons. The newest smart sneaker is Nike hyperadapt, which was released in 2016, and to be rereleased this year. It also has a feature of real time adaptation to your foot position for maximum comfort.

Pick an eBay sneaker auction at random—go ahead and do it—and more likely than not “deadstock” will be in the title. Maybe it will be in conjunction with another word, like “near deadstock,” or in the form of initials, like DS or NDS or...
as if there were some sort of official guide one could refer to (there isn’t) regarding condition. As it turns out, there are plenty of questions as to what “deadstock” actually means, and where the term came from to begin with. Well, we’re here to help. “Dead stock is new old stock,” says Adam Leaventon (aka “Air Rev”) a longtime sneaker collector w Sneakers is what many people in the USA call an athletic shoe. Yet, many people also include your basic slip-on or CVO (Circular Vamp Oxford) shoe as a sneaker. The key - IMHO - to telling if a shoe is a sneaker is how the manufacturer connected the upper part to the sole of the shoe. A dress shoe might be sewed or glued. A sneaker use the vulcanization process, which melds the two pieces together.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulcanization Honestly, there are dozens of words around the world to mean the same thing OR to describe slightly different versions of the same thing. A few examples: