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Costume crafts an exploration through production experience

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COSTUME CRAFTS
AN EXPLORATION THROUGH PRODUCTION EXPERIENCE

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts
in
The Department of Theatre

by
Michelle L. Hathaway
B.A., University of Colorado at Denver, 1993
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Abstract

The process of developing Costume Crafts for any production begins with research into the given time-period of the proposed production. With the appropriate research into the fashions of the day and the available tools and techniques, the Craftsperson can collaborate with the Costume Designer to create that Designer's vision. This project included two productions set in adjacent time-periods. The first step in the process was to research millinery fashions from 1910 through 1927 thus encompassing the time-periods set for each production. This research included the prevailing fashions of the day, the available materials, fabrics, and techniques employed in creating millinery. The next step involved meeting with each Costume Designer to assess the projected millinery requirements for each production. Although modern materials and fabrics are different from their historical counterparts, the actual creation of the millinery for each production employed many of the same techniques used during the time-periods in question. While exact historical representation is not the overall goal in theatrical millinery a complete understanding of historical materials and techniques can aide in a pleasing impression of a given era.

Introduction

This thesis documents my experiences as Craftsperson for the Swine Palace productions of “Love’s Labour’s Lost” and “The Royal Family.” As Craftsperson for these productions, I worked with the Costume Designers for each show to create the needed accessories required by each individual design. The work focused on the craftsperson position, which is a “jack of all trades” position. A Craftsperson either builds or alters whatever accessories are needed to complete the Costume Designer’s vision of the production. These items could include anything from hats to armour to footwear. I find the diversity of the position as well as the detailed nature of the items produced to be a constantly enjoyable challenge.

The process of creating crafts for any production begins with an understanding of the era in which the play is set. The research must include not only endeavoring to understand the people in society and the fashions of the day but also the means of producing those fashions and the materials available at that time. A similar understanding of the play itself and the characters in it helps the Craftsperson to discuss the Designer’s vision more completely. Once the actual production process begins, the Craftsperson uses the Costume Designer’s renderings or sketches for each character to better understand the Designer’s vision. For example, the Costume Designer for “Love’s Labour’s Lost,” Robin L. McGee, met with me to review her sketches and discuss what items were needed to make her designs come to life. That conversation led to a comprehensive list of craft products, mostly millinery, that I would endeavor to create. From that list, further conversation determined shapes, colors, trims, style and functionality. As the production process

developed, items were occasionally added to the initial list or cut from the list depending on how the show developed.

For these two productions, “Love’s Labour’s Lost” and “The Royal Family”, in terms of craftwork the focus was almost completely on millinery. Both productions were set in a time when millinery was an intrinsic component of fashion. “Love’s Labour’s Lost” was set during the period of 1914 to 1916 and “The Royal Family,” was set in 1927. My curiosity was piqued to research how millinery fashions developed from 1910 to the end of the 1920’s. As the research will detail, the vast amount of change that took place during this relatively short period is amazing.

This thesis will detail the historical development of millinery fashions from 1910 through 1927, the processes involved in the construction of millinery, the production processes for both “Love’s Labour’s Lost” and “The Royal Family,” produced at Swine Palace in Baton Rouge, LA, and my evaluations of these processes.

Chapter 1 A Detailed Exploration of the Development of Millinery Fashions from 1910 through 1927

As society entered into the twentieth century women's hats as a fashion accessory played a significant role. A hat can either set one apart from the crowd, demonstrating personal style while maintaining the prevailing fashions of the day, or it can unify a group such as police or military service people. For centuries, hats have been status symbols of visible easily recognized and accepted signs of wealth, religion, nationality, political beliefs, and occupation. In 1910, etiquette demanded the wearing of hats out of doors regardless of weather or time of day. No proper woman left the house without her head covered. In fact, some women even wore caps, unstructured bonnets, or hair ornaments in the home as well.

At the turn of the century a Paris hat was every fashionable woman's desire, a confection created with the flair of the French modiste. Of course, this wonder of beauty and style was expensive, but it could elevate its wearer into the fashionable and social elite. Certain considerations had to be taken into account when choosing a hat such as the time of day at which it was to be worn, practicality, price, the dictates of etiquette, and the climate and season. However, these all dwindle to insignificance when compared to the sensation a beautiful hat can create. "To be just to oneself," admitted British *Vogue* in 1918, 'one should be biased in the matter of hats.'" (Probert)

In the early years of the twentieth century hats were enormous with a very high crown which was further embellished with flowers, ribbons, artificial fruit, and even entire stuffed



Figure 1 The cover of Good Housekeeping Magazine dated June 1910, featuring a traveling hat of straw with a spray of malines and peacock feathers. The veil was used to secure the hat from the stiff breezes caused by motorized travel. (Reilly and Detrich)

birds. (figure 1) The most fashionable plumage was that of exotic birds. This trend for using birds on hats was destructive to wildlife and eventually led to legislation against the practice. “So devastating to bird life was this fad for fine plumage that, through efforts of the Audubon Society of America, protective measures were passed, bringing about the passing of the craze.” (Merceron) “In 1906, Queen Alexandra announced that she would no longer wear feathered hats.

In 1911, she was joined by Queen Mary, who publicly discarded hers.” (Reilly and Detrich) In response to pressure from the Audubon Society, milliners began to replace exotic plumes with feathers of

domestic birds. These feathers could be harvested from the living bird during the molting process without harming the bird. These feathers often became “made” plumage. (figure 2) Feather trim was also recycled from one season to the next to accommodate changing fashions from season to season. This form of recycling applied to not only feathers but also to any other usable trim that could be reassigned from last season’s fashions.



Figure 2 A black straw hat with blue and black “made” wings. (Reilly and Detrich)

While many hats were made of straw, fabrics such as velvet, moiré, lace, satin and tulle were acceptable alternatives. As reported in the New York Times in 1918, “‘Of course,’ the bulletin goes on, ‘satin will be used in combination with maline or later on in the year, will be combined with velvet, but there is little possibility that all satin hats will find favor at this time, even though for the past few seasons satin has been in demand. The current demand is, as every one knows, for soft materials, and there is no reason at this time to expect a change.’” (Millinery in

Vogue) While large hats were the fashion for adult women, hats for young girls were smaller in scale and balanced out the proportions of their ensembles.

When World War I broke out hat styles began changing along with all other fashions. The emphasis went from huge horizontal brims to a new vertical shape. As with previous decades, new names were given to these new styles. “The ‘tête de negre’ straw crown had a ‘fancy ostrich feather burned out to make it delicate’; the ‘Chapeau Niniche’ was a bandeau hat raised at the back and towards the side, ornamented with flowers and ribbons.” (Probert) (figure 3)

Women’s hats also took on a more masculine feel for those women who worked at jobs during the war previously performed only by men, as they were required to wear the



Figure 3 "At left, a Gainsborough hat of dull green, trimmed in green and with faint rose and oyster-grey ostrich feathers; in center, small tête de negre sailor; at right French grey tulle hat with curled brims and shirred sides, violets front and back." (Dun's Review, Volume 24 by R.G. Dunn and Company)

appropriate uniform. Women in Britain were recruited into the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and the Women's Royal Naval Service, which had adapted the masculine uniform to suit their new duties. This adaptation included the hat as well as the clothing. In the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, "The ranks wore pudding basin felt hats, the officers man-style peaked caps." (Ewing) (figure 4) In the Women's Royal Naval Service, officers wore the precursor of today's black velour felt tricorn. (figure 5) These two military groups later became the core of the Women's Royal Air Force. "Women working in munitions factories and other types of work where the hair needed protection wore a kind of mob cap similar to the bathing caps of the period." (Courtais) (figure 6) Of all the



Figure 4 WAAC Officer on tour of inspection at Rouen, July 1917. (Ewing)

professions women took on during World War I, the most iconic was that of the Red Cross Nurse. This job also came with a distinctive headcovering, which consisted of a folded white linen square tied at the back of the neck (figure 7).

In response to escalating wartime losses, mourning became a common and public act. As with many other fashion



Figure 5 The original uniform of WRNS officers, note the tricorn hat worn by the officer on the left (Ewing)

rules of the day formality was relaxed to the point that touches of white were now allowed with black for first mourning. Fine



Figure 6 Women munitions workers note the mobcap style headwear. (Ewing)

lace veils of varying lengths came into fashion as well. In fact, many of the instructional texts of the day included an entire chapter on the appropriate colors and fabrics to use in mourning millinery. Crepe in black and white was called for when constructing a hat worn in deep mourning.

Silks could also be used in a rich, dull grosgrain, peau de soie and Ottomans of heavy cord as well as uncut velvet. These could substitute for crepe as they have a deep, dull surface not unlike crepe. Brussels net and nun's veilings were suggested for veils and fancy touches. (Kaye)

“‘One of the newest hats’ said British *Vogue* in 1917, ‘is a cloche designed by Lucie Hamar.’” (Probert) This version had a tall crown widening to the summit, a large brim, unlike the hat of the same name in the twenties, which was a very close fitting hat with little or no brim.

Colors and trimming varied widely from 1910 through 1920. Single colored hats with contrasting trim were common at the beginning of the decade and eventually gave way to printed and embroidered fabrics, laces, dotted net, moiré, velvet, silk, tulle, faille, crin and taffeta. Ornamentation started simply with feathers like ostrich and écume, French for 'foam,' at the beginning of the decade. It then grew to excess with voluminous rosettes of Malines tulle, straggly squirrel tail aigrettes, plaited silk, flowers, entire stuffed birds and ribbons. As is the norm with fashion, by the end of the first decade of the twentieth



Figure 7 Red Cross nurse, 1914-18 with the distinctive white linen headcovering.
(Ewing)

century ornamentation had become less overpowering for everyday wear. Party hats were the exception being very heavily decorated with miniature pagoda, flower baskets, and jewel boxes.

The post war deprivations of materials, dyes, and manpower caused markets to shrink directly affecting the clothing industry. Europe's textile industry was devastated due to a flood of cotton and silk imports from India, Egypt and the East. Northern France's wool industry was almost completely destroyed. Cotton mills in England experienced a cotton slump in 1922 and the United States clothing industry was still dealing with organizational problems in regards to standardizing production and distribution. While there was wide spread economic devastation, the 'nouveaux riche' flocked to the fashions of Poiret and other French couturiers who celebrated the end of the war with ostentatious couture. The prevailing social and economic attitudes censored such obvious indulgence and society deemed it smarter to assume poverty than be associated with war profiteers. Women who had spent the war as part of the work force found it difficult to revert to being an ornament. Fashion responded to this significant change in social expectations. Women now had to provide wardrobes for themselves on limited budgets. "In 1921, Worth considered that 'the modern designer must devote his greatest effort to clothes for ordinary occasions...simplicity is praiseworthy and suited to our present conditions of life.'"

(Mulvagh)

By 1923, the cloche, which had evolved into a small, close fitting hat with or without a small brim usually with a rounded crown, dominated millinery fashion. (figure 8)

Milliners tired of the demand for the same type of hat tried to introduce new very different

looks. However, the mood of the twenties was very suited to this style and their efforts were in vain. In addition to cloches, there were turbans, toques, berets, and boat ers. Millinery choices were no longer determined solely on the beauty of the hat but on the overall silhouette. Variety came in the form of color and trimmings added to the basic shape of the cloche. While the cloche of the previous decade had a vertical emphasis in the twenties, the height was diminishing and eventually a horizontal line was reintroduced in summer hats made of semi-transparent straw or tulle with drooping brims and feathers.

Hollywood also had direct influence on millinery styles. In 1923, *The Three Musketeers* made the musketeer style fashionable.



Figure 8 A close fitting cloche, it's upswept brim punctuated by a rondele, all in navy straw. Label: M.S. Andree by Bellini (Ewing)

Hairstyles were shaped to match the look of the hat. Curls were seen at the edge of the cloche with the ears concealed beneath. In 1924, the cloche had begun to sit so low on the forehead that the brim both in the front and in the back had to be turned up to allow a woman to see and turn her head. By 1925, the toque, a close fitting hat with no brim, was all the rage. (figure 9) Art Deco was the prevailing art form of the day and the simplicity of the toque suited the Art Deco ornamentation very



Figure 9 A simple toque with a netted satin band (Ewing)

nicely. By 1927, the toque had grown in height with the crown sometimes pleated to echo the pleating of the skirts of the day.

Emily Burbank devotes an entire chapter in her book, *"The Smartly Dressed Woman How She Does It,"* to hats which she states is the most important part of a woman's costume. She admonishes the women of her day to pay close attention to the outline or silhouette they aim to achieve when purchasing their hats. She

stresses that the material and the shape of the hat must suit the costume being worn as well as the environment it is worn in. In response to the "sport" hat also known as the cloche decreed by Paris, "but even the most knowing lifted it into the class of the dress by means of a lovely jewel pinned into the felt." (Burbank) While the shape of dresses or outerwear changed frequently, the trimmings on a hat changed even faster and could firmly place its wearer in the out of date category of fashion. A woman choosing a hat needed to be very familiar with current fashions to determine how it would suit her face shape not to mention the rest of her ensemble. When coordinating the ensemble, a woman would need to be thinking about color, line, trimming, quality of materials, and hairstyle. Fashion dictates regarding the prevailing color of the day could help or hinder a woman when choosing a hat. If the fashionable color was black then the choices would be easier; however, if



Figure 10 A lovely example of a horsehair picture hat. (Ewing)

fashion dictated a particular color, that color would have be coordinated throughout the outfit from top to toes.

While the cloche is considered the hat of the twenties, it is by no means the only hat worn during that period. Picture hats were also quite popular with their wide graceful brims tilted at an angle prescribed by fashion.

(figure 10) This angle changed as frequently as the trimmings and had to be adhered to

just as strictly. Ms. Burbank states that while not every fashion suits every woman, every woman will suit a fashion and should make the most of that particular look.

Influential Millinery Designers of the Time

Coco Chanel, arguably one of the most influential fashion icons of her day, began her career as a milliner in 1910. Ms. Chanel grew up poverty stricken on the outskirts of fashionable society yearning for money and independence. She never married, but sought her independence by becoming the mistress of powerful, wealthy men. In this role, she carefully observed the ways and wardrobes of the fashionable elite to better fit into their world. She found however, that due to her petite frame and small stature she was unable to wear the voluptuously decorated hats of the day. Instead of bowing to the fashion dictates

of her time, she designed hats better suited to her size and personal style. This “rule breaking” led to the launching of the Chanel line.

Impressed by Chanel’s simplistic approach, the actress Gabrielle Dorziat and the opera singer Marthe Davelli asked Chanel to create hats for them. This led to photos of both women wearing her fashions on stage, which further pushed Chanel into the limelight. As photos of Chanel wearing her own millinery designs appeared in the theatrical periodical “*Comoedia Illustree*” in 1910, other designers started to follow her lead. “Her hats and accessories did more than top an outfit; they created a total look.” (Wallach)

Chanel’s first atelier, or workroom, backed by her Lover, Boy Capel, opened in Paris in 1912. While her hats were labeled odd and her look impertinent, the demi-mondaines came to her atelier to appease their curiosity. Her spare style was seen as young and appealing even though her prices were high. A few years later Capel helped her open a second store in the resort town of Deauville.

In August of 1914, Deauville became a ghost town as all the men were called on to fight in World War I. Unlike most shop owners, Chanel kept her doors open. When the well-to-do were forced to flee their homes and return to the safety of Deauville with only a few belongings and in need of clothes, Chanel’s boutique was the only place to go. The new wartime environment required ease of movement and the simpler styles for which Chanel was already known. By the end of the First World War, Chanel was selling her fashions nearly worldwide. Her success as a fashion designer continued for the rest of her life and included not only clothing but also hats, accessories, jewelry and perfume.

Jeanne Lavin also began her career as a milliner. She began working for the firm of Madame Bonni at the age of thirteen. She also worked for the famous milliner and couturier Maison Felix in the same building, which eventually became the home of her own business. The beginning of her career saw her move from one millinery house to another working her way up the ranks. Lavin spent three months working for a well-respected dressmaker in Barcelona when she was eighteen years old, thus providing her with the financial boost she needed to open her own millinery shop upon her return to Paris.

Jeanne Lavin was married twice. The first marriage in 1896 resulted in the birth of her daughter Marguerite Marie-Blanche, who was Jeanne's muse and source of inspiration from that point onward. Her second marriage in 1907 was an arrangement of convenience for both husband and wife. Lanvin's daughter was her model for millinery fashions as well as her children's fashions.

While Chanel modeled her own designs and capitalized on her public persona, Lavin was much more private preferring to use models for her designs. She collaborated with photographer Paul Nadar to disseminate the earliest images of Lanvin millinery fashions in fashion magazines in 1909. While Chanel and Lavin were often advertised in the same magazines, their styles were very different. Lavin preferred to use some form of applied detail whereas Chanel preferred a much more simplistic aesthetic. Fashion photography fell out of favor in 1913 when Poiret brought fashion illustration back into the public spotlight.

Lanvin, whose career began a decade earlier than Chanel, was firmly established in the eminently feminine millinery fashions of the end of the Edwardian era. Her hats known for their luxurious details of fur and feathers frequently had coordinating muffs or other matching accessories. Lanvin revealed a new desire for minimal accoutrement in her millinery designs of 1918-19. The focus changed from the wide horizontal brim covered in fruit and flowers to focus on the face and neatly coiffed hair. The dawn of the 1920's also saw beaded skullcaps and bejeweled headbands with cascading crystals, which served as replacements for jewelry at the neck and ears.

Chapter 2 Millinery Construction Techniques of the Period

Pieces of the Hat

From the large number of home sewing millinery texts I have discovered, it is apparent to me that most women at least understood the process of creating the hats they wanted. In fact, many of the books were originally intended as instructional texts for home economic curriculums or correspondence courses. This implies that at least basic sewing skills and an understanding of patterning was common knowledge for women of this period. As hats were a social necessity these ladies would have grown up wearing some sort of hat and fashion being the ever changing entity it is, they would have learned early how to augment or alter their hats to suit each new style. Today in America, hats are not everyday wear so some explanation of the process is necessary.

As with the growth and changes in any other facet of life, millinery terminology has changed somewhat over the last hundred years. Georgina Kaye refers to the frame of the hat, which we would now call the brim. The crown of the hat consists of the side crown and the tip or top crown.

In a more modern text, Denise Dreher, includes a more comprehensive look at the pieces of a hat. The crown of the hat is the part that covers the head and can be made of one or two parts. These parts are the tip, or lid which is the topmost part of the crown, and the sideband, which is the lower section and determines the height of the crown. The headsize brace is a band that strengthens the join between the crown and the brim. The headsize

brace is not used on every hat, in fact I have never made a hat that required this particular part.

The brim of the hat, which extends out from the head, has the most parts. These parts are:

1.) the headsize opening which is surrounded by the headsize collar, 2.) the upper brim, 3.) the under brim and 4.) the outer brim edge. The headsize collar is the seam allowance at the headsize opening and provides a way to join the crown to the brim. These parts are illustrated in figure 11 from the same text. The instructional texts of the day suggest that a home milliner should purchase manufactured or blocked crown if a solid frame is to be used. (Kaye) In an article called “Ladies’ Blocked Hats” the “shape” or blocked hat is referred to as the foundation of millinery fashions. (figure 12) The unknown author further

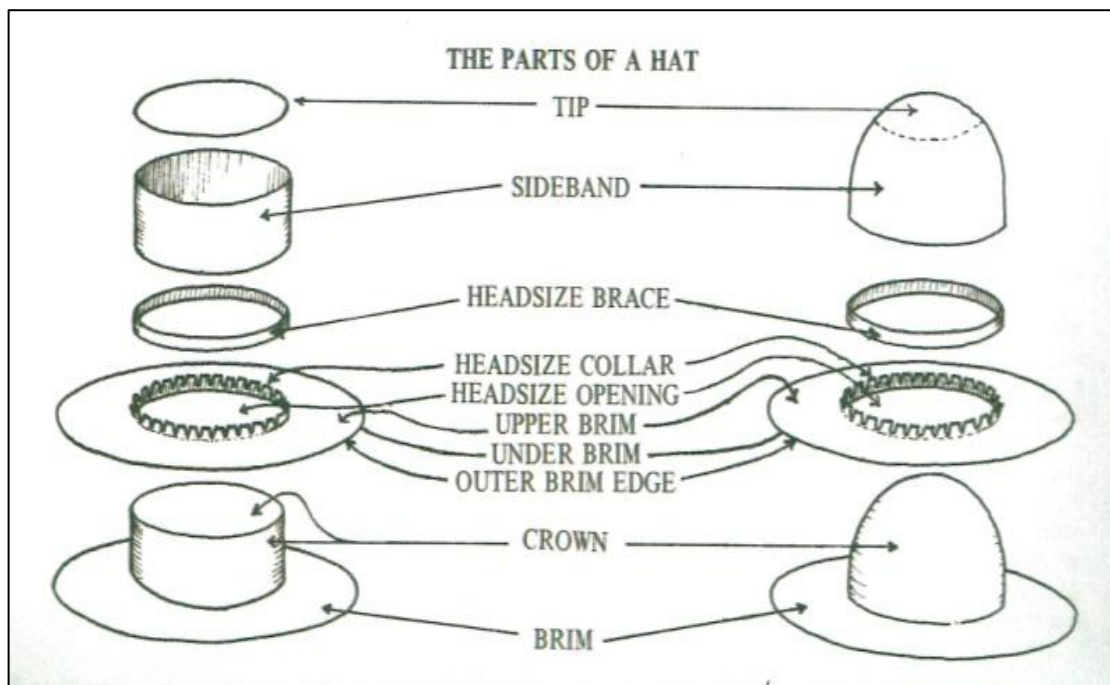


Figure 11 The Parts of a Hat (Dreher)



Figure 12 This illustration shows one style of ladies' blocked hats made by A.M. Lowenthal & Son, in the most popular shapes that have received the stamp of fashionable approval in New York. (Dun's Review, Volume 24 by R.G. Dunn and Company)

expounds on the versatility and economy of purchasing an untrimmed block, such as the one pictured in figure 12 from the same article which when embellished will suit the lady who will be wearing the finished product.

The blocked hat foundations these authors reference were made of a variety of materials and mechanically shaped into the desired form. The article states these blocks were made of straw and Milan hemp for temperate seasons. For fall and winter, the blocks were made of "satin, felt, plush, velvet, or other seasonable material."

(Dun's Review, Volume 24 by R.G. Dunn

and Company)The end user, either a commercial milliner or a home sewer would then apply whatever trimming, feathers, or flowers needed to coordinate with the ensemble in question.

I have used Denise Dreher's modern instructional book as a student. This made me wonder how home sewers used the period instructional texts. As an experiment, I have attempted to use Georgia Kaye's patterning techniques to recreate the frames she discusses, but my experiment was unsuccessful. Despite carefully following her

directions, I was unable to recreate the hat she described. My research from period sources has led me to surmise that the authors seem to expect that the readers already have an understanding of both pattern making and the basic construction methods of the day. I do have some experience in both pattern making and basic construction methods but I still could not understand her instructions. There seem to be pieces of information missing. This puts the modern novice milliner trying to use vintage techniques at a severe disadvantage. While there are modern texts that aptly teach the basics of millinery the fine detail of the trimmings and some of the vintage techniques described in the vintage sources are not generally covered.

Materials Used in Hat Construction

The materials that were used in the early 1900's to construct hats for men and women have the same names as materials used today; however, the actual materials were much different than today's textiles due to manufacturing advancements over the last one hundred years. There are many different types of materials used in the construction of a hat. The standard for making a solid frame is buckram. Buckram is a stiff material made of an open weave of cotton and heavily sized with glue. According to "Millinery for Every Woman", buckram is used primarily for "making frames for flat brims and some other shapes; never used for blocking, if it is possible to get willow or cape net." (Kaye) Willow is a fine split wood material with an open weave similar to buckram, used for making stiff forms and blocking over a wire frame. It comes in heavy, medium and light forms. Cape net, or rice net, is a stiff open mesh material also used for blocking forms. This material may need to

be doubled depending on the weight of the fabric that will cover it. The hat frame was interlined with a number of fabrics depending on the fashion fabric to be used, the season in which the hat was worn, and the final effect desired. Book Muslin, Mull, a thinner type of muslin, and Tarlatan, a thin stiffly starched muslin in open plain weave, prevented the frame from being seen through sheer materials. Flannelette, a cotton imitation of flannel, covered up defects in a frame and gave taffeta or satin covering a smoother and more effective look. For georgette, crepe de chine, or very thin silks, cotton crepes or thin silk or satin were used as interlinings over willow frames as they enriched the effect of the outer covering material and could provide color variations if desired. Crinoline, a coarse stiff fabric of cotton or horsehair, was used to bind the edges of hats to keep the wires from wearing through the outside covering of the hat.

I have discovered that many of these materials are not readily available. Willow, cape net, and millinery crinoline as described in the period sources in particular are very difficult to find, and I understand they tend to be expensive if they do become available. As there are no millinery supply outlets near me, I have searched the internet for sources and have found no sources for Willow, but I did find a source in England for a product called “Blocking Net” which seems to be similar to the descriptions of cape net. I also found a source in Australia for millinery crinoline, which they refer to as horsehair. I found only two retail suppliers of millinery products in the United States and neither of them carries willow or cape net though one carries a much lighter weight form of crinoline.

Fabric choices changed seasonally in the twenties. Satin was followed by crepe de chine, and then in quick succession by lace, tulle, tissue, velvet, fine straws, crepe georgette and

leghorn, a fine pleated straw. By the mid 1920's, velvets, furs and felt, which dominated the rest of this decade, became the fashionable choice. Ornamentation was very popular at the beginning and the end of the decade with exciting colors, and swathes of net and tulle, ribbon bound edges, embroidery, silver lace, and clusters of fruit or flowers. Hats of the middle of the decade were much more austere. Colors ranged from greens to grays, browns and beige. Decoration was as simple as ribbons or painted directly on the body of the hat.

Millinery Construction Techniques of the Time

Millinery techniques have not changed much over the last hundred years. The milliner must first decide on the shape and overall look of the hat to be constructed. When that decision is made proper measurements of the wearer need to be obtained. The head size is the most important measurement. it is taken around the circumference of the head above the brows and ears, making sure the measuring tape is parallel to the floor. While the headsize is a starting point for the creation of the pattern, many other factors come into play. The milliner must consider how the hat will sit on the head, the hairstyle of the day, and the desired final effect of the hat. As the hairstyles changed dramatically from the turn of the century to the advent of the First World War these considerations were very important. Denise Dreher includes in her book "From the Neck Up" an information sheet that details eight different measurements to be taken from the wearer in addition to places for detailed information about the wearer's hair, hairstyle, shape of the face, eye color, complexion, and type of makeup to be used. This particular collection of information is

intended for use in theatrical millinery but the measurements would be of use to any milliner.

There are different ways of creating the foundation for a hat. The pieces of the hat can be patterned and sewn together, or the hat can be blocked which means it is formed from one

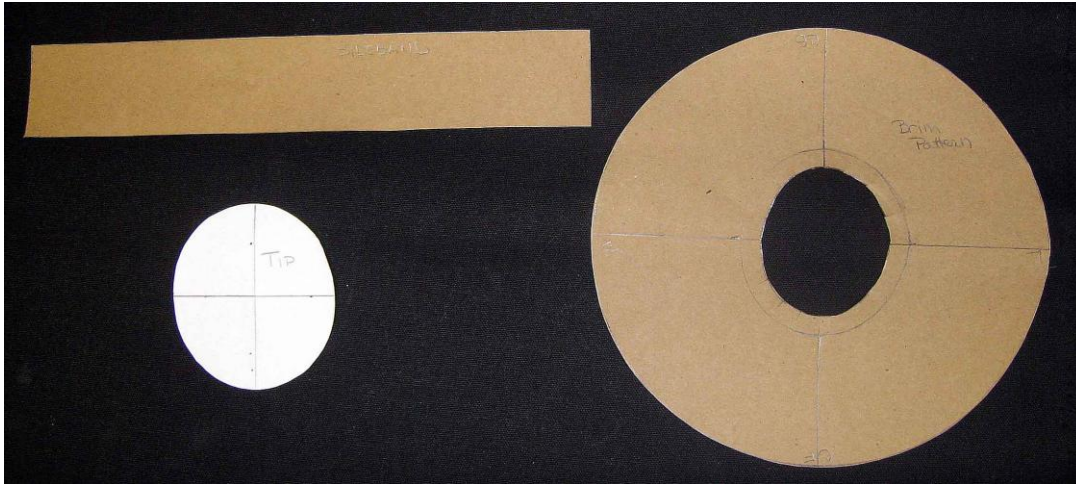


Figure 13 A half scale hat pattern. At the top left the sideband, directly under the sideband the tip, to the right the brim. Note that the tip and brim both have center front, center back, right and left sides marked.

piece of material, or a combination of the two techniques can be used. I have put together a simple half scale hat to demonstrate the steps. For a hat with patterned pieces, the milliner would use the following steps:

(1) The pattern pieces for the brim, the side crown, and the tip of the hat are drafted using the wearer's measurements. I have taken Denise Dreher's headsize template and reduced it by fifty percent. I used this reduced pattern for my tip pattern and drafted a simple brim and sideband pattern to fit the tip as show in the following photograph. (figure 13)

(2) The side crown and tip together form what we know as the crown of the hat which joins to the brim at the headsize opening. To verify the shape and sizing of the pattern pieces I have learned it is best to make a paper mock up of the hat. This step allows me to not only see what the final shape will be but to alter that shape as needed without wasting valuable materials.

(3) The pattern pieces are then cut from either buckram, or willow allowing for at least two inches for lapping the pieces together. (figure 14) The milliner would also need to be sure to mark the center front, center back and right and left sides of the pieces to ensure that they are assembled correctly. Kaye suggests placing the pattern pieces on the bias for better effect.

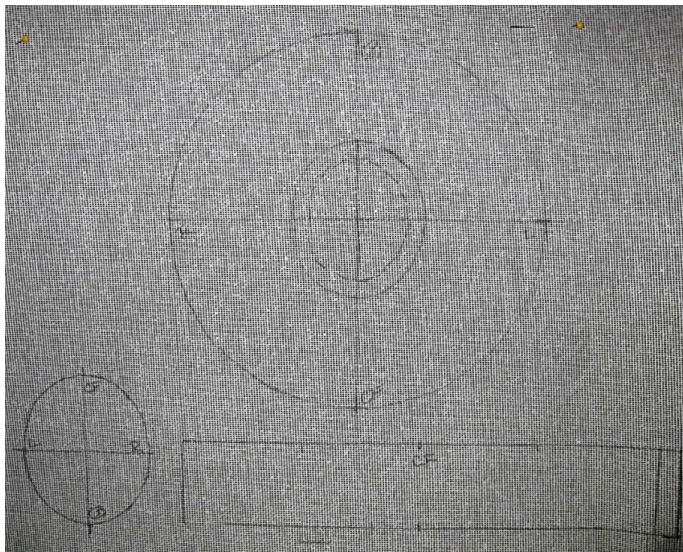


Figure 14 The same half scale pattern pieces transferred to buckram with seam allowance added at the headsize opening in the brim and at one side of the center back edge. Center front, back and right and left sides are clearly marked.

The true bias of any fabric is found at a forty-five degree angle to the straight of grain on that fabric (figure 15). The grainline or straight of grain is parallel to the factory edge of the fabric also known as the selvage. Finding the true bias of the fabric is important not only in the foundation of the

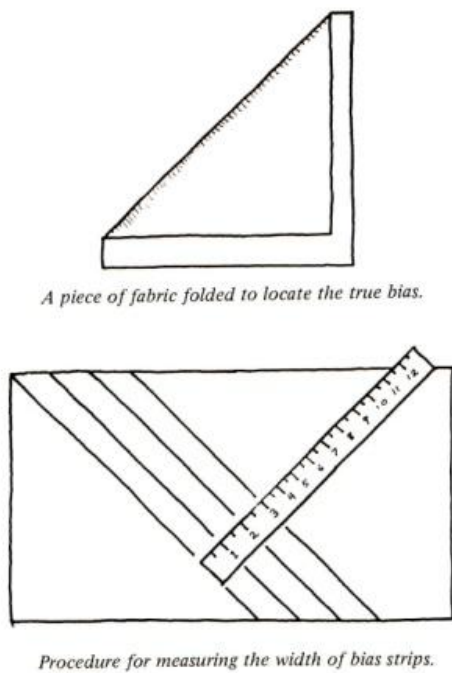


Figure 15 Finding and measuring to cut bias (Dreher)

hat but also in the fabric covering that foundation. (figure 15) When fabric is cut on the bias, the resulting strips or pieces have a significant amount of stretch to them, which allows the fabric to cover the foundation with fewer wrinkles or flaws.

(4) The pieces are then wired at the edges to add extra stability to the shape. Wiring the pieces consists of sewing millinery wire to the edge of

the piece in question. This is done with a wire stitch using very heavy thread. There are two ways to wire the pieces. One method of wiring the brim is to wire the sideband edges and then attach them to the tip and the brim. The second method is to wire the tip and the brim and attach the unwired sideband to both. (figure 16) According to Georgia Kaye, the base of the sideband and the edge of the tip are wired and then a bias strip of crinoline is sewn around the wire where the sideband meets the brim as well as the edge of the brim to prevent the wire from coming through the covering on the hat. I have wired my half scale hat on the tip and the brim as demonstrated in the following photographs.

(5) When the pieces have been wired they are sewn together. (figure 17)

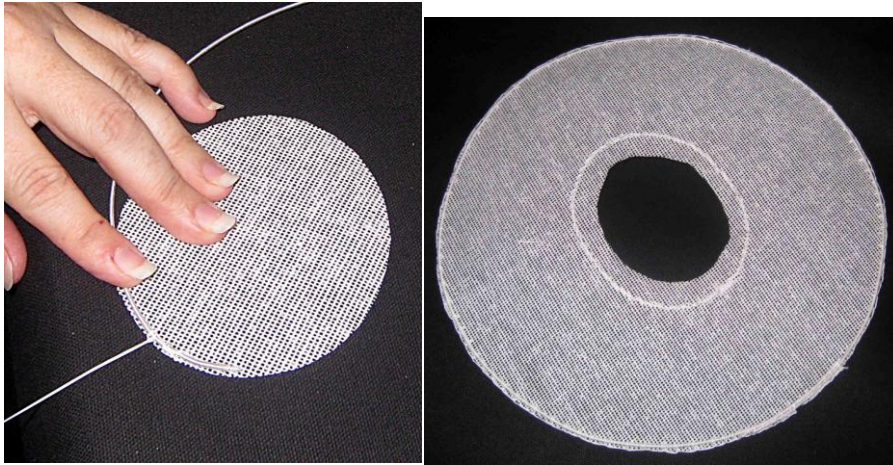


Figure 17 On the left the tip of the half scale hat at the beginning of the wiring process. The wire sits just inside the edge of the tip. On the right the brim of the half scale hat. The headsize opening is wired and the outside edge

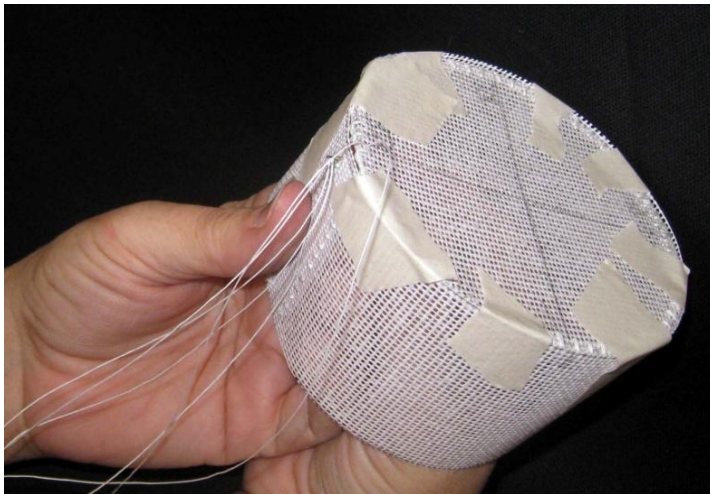


Figure 16 The tip is joined at the edge to the sideband creating the crown of the hat. The masking tape in the picture is holding the tip to the sideband until it is sewn together. The crown and the brim are not sewn together until they are covered with fabric

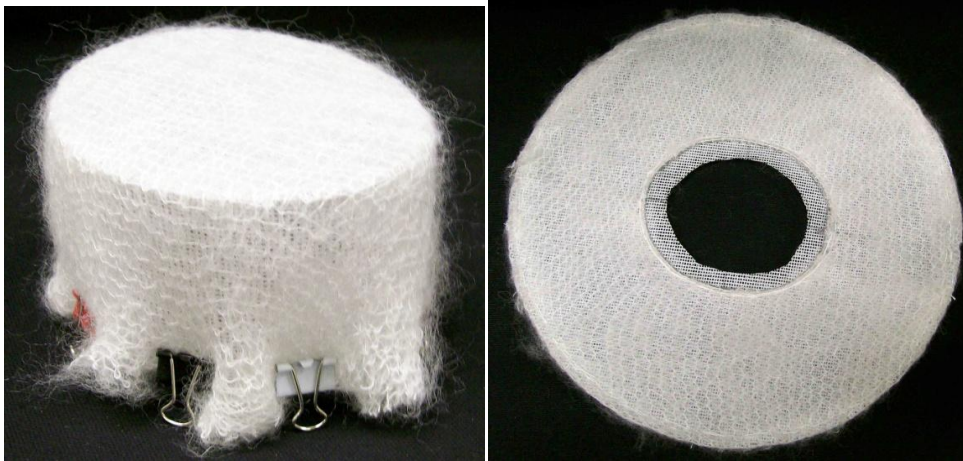


Figure 18 On the right, the crown of the half scale hat covered in ice wool. I use binder clips to hold it in place for stitching, as pins are often difficult when working with small pieces. On the left the brim of the half scale hat. The ice wool has been basted on around the outside edge and the headsized wire. The excess has been trimmed from the headsized.

Covering the Frame

The process of covering the frame begins with deciding on the type of material needed. If the hat is covered in a thin material such as silk or taffeta, the frame must be covered in flannelette to smooth the frame and prevent unsightly imperfections from showing through the fabric. Today milliners also use a product called ice wool or fleecy domette to achieve the same effect. This process of interlining the foundation of the hat is called mulling.

(figure 18) If the hat frame was created from a pattern, that same pattern can be used to cut out the fabric. If the frame was purchased, either the milliner can create a pattern using tissue paper or muslin, or using exact measurements, draft a pattern with which to cut the covering fabric. The milliner should make sure to mark the center front of the covering fabric as well as the center back and the right and left sides.

Begin covering the brim by clipping the curve of the headsize collar to allow it to spread and be manipulated for the top of the brim. Pin the fabric to the wired brim, matching the center front, center back, right side, and left side marks. According to Kaye, the center front should be on the bias. Smooth the fabric onto the brim, pinning it along the edges without stretching the fabric and causing ripples. (figure 19) The edge is then turned under the wired brim and pinned in place. This is secured by slip stitching it in place through the buckram but not through the fabric on the outside. Then sew the cover to the buckram at the headsize using a basting stitch. Attach the cover for the underside of the brim in a similar fashion, matching the center front and back and pinning the cover in place. This time though, the headsize will be sewn first and then the edge of the underside

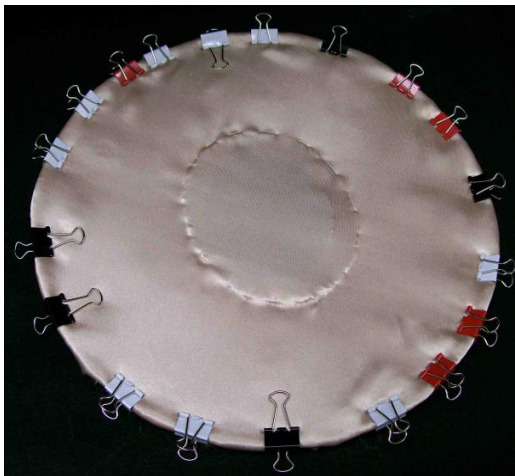


Figure 19 The half scale brim with the covering fabric basted around the headsize and pinned at the outside edge. Note the headsize opening has not yet been cut out. This stabilizes the fabric as it is sewn to the frame. Before the crown is attached this center piece gets cut out.

To cover the crown, the milliner must first decide on the interlining needed to accentuate the covering material. When the crown has been “mulled” meaning the mulling material is securely basted onto the crown, the milliner can pin the cover material in place again matching center front and back then pinning down smoothly. If the crown of the hat has been patterned and sewn together, the outside fabric should likewise be patterned and can be either slipstitched in place or basted, and a bias strip added to conceal the edge. sewn



Figure 20 The tip of the half scale hat with the cover material pinned in place. The ripples on the top edge of the tip are caused by excess seam allowance

together. While this can cause difficulty due to the seam allowance of the outside fabric causing unsightly lumps, it is important to get a good fit over the foundation. Turn the fabric under the edge of the side crown and baste through to hold it in place (figure 21).

The turned edge can also be slip stitched to the buckram frame. Then the crown will be attached to the brim headsize in one of two basic ways. If there will be a trimming of

some sort around the base of the crown of the hat the crown can be basted directly to the headsize of the brim through all the materials. Then the trimming can be applied and cover up any stitching. If there is to be no trimming where the crown and brim meet, the crown must be slip stitched to the brim very carefully to conceal the stitching.

The next step is to attach the headliner to the inside of the inside of the headsize. This is done before trim is added to prevent the trim from being crushed during the installation of the headliner. The headliner is a piece of millinery grosgrain which is cut two inches longer than the inside measurement of the headsize opening. It is then shaped with the iron into a curve which allows the ribbon to follow the contour of the headsize opening. The ribbon is stitched at the bottom edge only, allowing the lining to rest behind the headliner.

Trimming can then be sewn on the outside of the hat through the covering and framing and then the lining can conceal those stitches.

While there are several methods of lining a hat depending on the shape and desired final look, Kaye suggests the most simple method consisting of a strip of hat lining material cut either on the straight of grain or the bias the length of the headsize plus two inches and as deep as the crown. At the top of this strip, the milliner would sew a ¼-inch casing through which a small ribbon or cord can be passed. Lay the lining material right side down on the brim of the hat with the bottom ½ inch inside the crown of the hat. Stitch the opposite edge to the headsize of the brim. After sewing turn the lining over the stitching at the headsize into the crown of the hat. Cut out a small square of lining material and paste or stitch it to the top of the crown. Using the ribbon or cord in the casing draw the lining up and tie the ribbon. This type of lining allows the lining to sit on the head while the top of the crown of the hat could be significantly higher. Another method for lining the hat is to use the pattern and cut the tip of the hat from lining materials adding a half inch seam allowance. Join that piece to a strip of lining cut on the bias the depth of the side crown plus two inches and the length of the headsize opening. Turning up the raw edges so they are concealed inside the crown, slipstitch the lining to the hat at the headsize.

A Brief Explanation of the Process of Making a Felt Hood

Felt became a prevalent hat making material at the end of the nineteenth century, especially in men's headgear. The process for taking a skin or harvested wool from a sheep and making it into a workable material was long and complex. This process, dating

from the end of the nineteenth century is described at length in a letter from Mr. J.M. McNulty, the Secretary of the British Felt Hat Manufacturers' Federation in Michael Harrison's "The History of the Hat." He begins by explaining there are two distinctive types of felt, one made from the harvested wool of sheep, known as a wool felt, and another made from the fur of the rabbit, the fur felt. Other furs may be added to the rabbit fur such as beaver, hare, or nutria. These distinctions are important as the initial processing of the raw materials is very different. The higher grades of felt hats were made from fur felts while lower quality hats were made from wool felts.

With a fur felt the processing begins by treating the rabbit skin with a solution of nitrate of mercury. This increased the felting properties of the fur and turned the tips of the fur a reddish yellow color causing this process to be known as "Carotting". (Harrison) Once this is done, the skin goes through a cutting machine separating the fur from the pelt. The fur then goes through a cleaning process known as "blowing" which separates the coarse hairs, which will not felt, and any remaining pieces of pelt from the rest of the fur.

(Harrison) The remaining fur is weighed to determine the amount needed to make a hood and put into another machine to be formed. The fur is drawn on to a large, perforated, rotating, copper cone by suction covering the surface uniformly. When the cone is covered it is sprayed with hot water and the "form" is taken off the cone.

When creating the wool felt, a slightly different process is employed. The wool from the sheep must first be washed in hot water and treated with chemicals to purify it. The hot bath of course washed out any dirt or debris that the sheep may have encountered and the chemicals are used to remove any vegetable matter that may be entangled in the wool. If

the final project is to be light colored further chemicals processes are needed to remove any tar or paint the farmer may have used to mark the sheep for identification. The wool is then carded, which straightens and aligns the individual fibers. These processes are common for readying wool to be used for any purpose so the next steps are specific for turning the wool into wool felt. When the wool leaves the carding machine it is deposited onto a wooden cone which revolves and oscillates very slowly, similar to a child's top that is winding down. The wool wraps around the cone until a cocoon of wool is surrounding the cone. The wool is then cut around the widest part of the cone leaving two hat shapes, similar in shape to the fur felt.

The remaining steps are similar for both fur felts and wool felts. The hardening process consists of rolling the hat forms in cloth until the felting or matting process begins and then the hoods pass on to the planking process. Planking is the process of shrinking the form or hood to a suitable tightness. The hood is kept as hot as possible by application of boiling water with sulfuric acid added to it to help with the shrinking while being rolled under pressure. The hoods shrink from an average size of twenty-four inches high by thirty inches wide to approximately ten and a half inches high by fifteen and a half inches wide. The hoods are also substantially thicker and tough enough to withstand hard wear. After the hood is dry it is placed on a revolving cone shaped block and shaved with sand paper to clean up any loose or overly long hairs.

The dying of a felt hat may be done at several different stages of the felting process depending on the desired result. For fur felts, the dying can be done before the felting process begins or the hood can be dyed during the planking process and further shrunk

later. The dying of the soft hat made of wool is usually done before the final planking process. If the felt is to be made into a hard or stiffened hat, both the fur and the wool are dyed after stiffening.

Soft hats are stiffened or “proofed” with a solution of shellac dissolved in hot water and borax, which was applied to the felt with rollers inside and outside of the hood. The chemicals are then steamed to drive them deeper into the felt. Hard felt hats are stiffened with shellac dissolved in methylated spirit. The dyed and proofed hood is now stretched and shaped on a wooden block to the specific shape and size by steaming the hood and pulling it onto the block. After the felt has been pulled onto the wooden block, it is allowed to cool and dry. The blocked hat is then ready for finishing which consists of hand or machine rubbing of the hats with fine grit sandpaper.

The brim of the hat is now ready to be shaped. Brims can be shaped by hand or machine, and then it is trimmed to the appropriate width. The hat is then ready for trimmings and a lining, which is made separately and then fastened into the finished hat. Bindings and other trimmings are sewn directly to the hat.

When a felt hood is ordered today, the milliner decides on the size of hood needed, from a conical shaped hood as described in Mr. McNulty’s letter to a large cartwheel, which is similar to a conical hood with the addition of a large brim, usually measuring between five and six inches. The smaller hood is useful when pulling a small brimmed hat or a hat without a brim. The larger cartwheel is useful for a hat with a large brim. Today’s milliner also has a wide variety of colors from which to choose.

Chapter 3 A Detailed Exploration of the Crafts Processes Involved in the Production of Millinery for “Love’s Labour’s Lost” and “The Royal Family”

“Love’s Labour’s Lost” Concept

The concept to the Swine Palace production of “Love’s Labour’s Lost” was a somewhat fantastical one. The Director in collaboration with a composer had developed a musical version of Shakespeare’s “Love’s Labour’s Lost.” This version, which maintained the same story line and characters as the Shakespearean original, added several newly written songs using the Shakespearian dialogue and soliloquies to augment the action. The Director and the Design team decided they wanted this production set in New Orleans between 1914 and 1916. The concept revolved around the plantation feel of the New Orleans area and the prewar innocence of the period. Because this production also had music, the Designers were instructed by the Director to treat this production as a musical.

The storyline revolves around Ferdinand, the King of Navarre, and his three friends who have all sworn off women in an effort to focus all of their energies on their studies for the next three years. Of course, in true Shakespearean comedy fashion as soon as the vow is taken, the Princess of France and her ladies in waiting arrive for a prearranged meeting with the King on matters of state. The King and his men immediately fall in love with the Princess and her ladies and the men spend rest of the show trying to find a way around the aforementioned vow. While these four romances are the main storyline, Shakespeare included a secondary romantic comedy storyline involving the rest of the characters.

The truly ridiculous Don Armado, Moth, Jaquinetta, and Costard support the four main couples, becoming embroiled in the miscommunications between the couples by way of misdirected love letters. In addition to these clownish characters, there are the two academic characters and their twelve “schoolchildren” who function as the chorus.

Production Process for “Love’s Labour’s Lost”

My first meeting with Robin McGee, the costume designer for “Love’s Labour’s Lost,” revolved around the expected scope of the craftwork to accommodate her design for the show. The director had decided that he wanted to set the play in New Orleans circa 1914-1916 so her first request was for “paper collars.” Authentic collars of that day were in fact made of stiffened paper, but the Designer felt that real paper collars would not hold up to the demands of a theatrical production. She explained that it had been her experience that most theatrical “paper collars” are made of fabric, which was not the look she wanted. She wanted me as craftsperson to find a way to make them from something else that would be durable enough to stand up to a long run but maintain the look of a real paper collar. The Designer had designed traveling suits for the Princess and her ladies and in keeping with the period, they had matching hats. (figure 21) She specified that the traveling hats not have big brims. She asked me to pattern caps for the six male chorus members. Because of budget constraints, we couldn’t purchase period boots for the entire chorus so she decided custom fit spats for all twelve chorus members was a workable solution. She challenged me to recover parasols to match the lace dresses she had designed. Last but probably most challenging was a request for armor from the director. She told me to do

research on the above-mentioned items and get back to her. I was confused as to what exactly I was supposed to research as the shape and color of the items would come directly from her design but I researched, beginning with the hats.

To ensure a full understanding of the effect of my role in the project I was invited to attend the production meetings. Prior to the first meeting, the Costume Designer asked me if it was possible to complete four hats and all of the armor in three weeks. Honestly, I did not know if it was possible, as I had never made armor before so I was looking at a steep learning curve to get everything done in the time frame requested. As it turned out, it would not have been possible to complete the hats, and armor in three weeks as I was doing all of the work by myself and there were many other projects on the list that were not apparent at the beginning of the process. At the first production meeting I learned that the director had decided to cut the “soldier stuff” so the armor was stricken from my list of assignments.

It was stated at this meeting that the color palette for the costumes would revolve around blues, purples and golds, while reds would be used for the ‘opera’ at the end of the show. The idea of the women from France having fans was discussed and discarded. It was stated though that the women would have ‘lots of hats’

After the production meeting the director, costume designer, wig designer and I met to look at all of the renderings and discuss what the director thought would work and what he did not like. The Princess and her ladies would start in their traveling suits, which would be heavier in color and feel to make them seem otherworldly and then take their coats off

as they settled into the environment. The academics in the show would need a mortarboard or an academic cap to set them apart from the chorus. The women would need parasols for the romantic dance scene, something along the lines of the movie “Easter Parade,” to set up the idealized romance the director was looking for. The women would all have hats, masks and capes for this scene.

The director and designer then went through each character and decided on specific costume pieces that were needed to designate each one. These specifications were more about the actual costume pieces rather than the costume crafts area that I was focused on. However, this discussion did help me to understand the scope of the production. At the close of these two meetings I asked the designer for a comprehensive list of what exactly she would need me to construct. The following is the list provided by the designer.

Table 1 Detailed crafts list provided by the Costume Designer with detail of final builds, pulls, or cuts.

	Detail of Items needed	Build/Pull
Hats	Princess Traveling Hat – make out of Buckram and cover in Fabric	Built
	Rosaline Traveling Hat – find shape, cover and trim	Built
	Katherine Traveling Hat – find shape, cover and trim	Built
	Maria Traveling Hat – find shape, cover and trim	Built
	Costard – possibly make soft cap (plaid newsboy)	Pulled
	Mercade – cover hat in maroon fabric	Cut
	Moth as Hercules – make red laurel wreath headband	Cut
Gaiters and Spats	4 – jewel toned spats for leading men – make patterns, cut and sew	Cut
	6 pair gray spats for School boys – make pattern, cut and delegate construction	Built
	6 pair gray women’s spats for School girls – make pattern, cut and delegate construction	Built
Parasols	Cover 4 parasols with fabric of designer’s choosing	Cut
Armour	Don Armado – make felt armour piece	Cut
	Holfernia – make felt armour shoulder pieces	Cut

While I made other items for this show, I will be focusing on the process of creating the four hats for the Princess and her ladies. I began my process by reading a copy of the script and making copies of the sketches that are involved in my projects. All of this information will go into my “Craft Bible.” I was given a list of what the designer thinks will be needed though I am sure the list will change during the course of this project. I was told to research the items on the list and then we would discuss the items again. The caps for the schoolboys that were mentioned in our first meeting are not on the list but a few other hats for other characters are included. I will begin by mocking up the traveling hats for the Princess and her ladies.



Figure 21 Robin L. McGee’s costume sketches of the Princess of France, Rosaline, Katherine, and Maria in their Traveling outfits and hats for Act 1.

I discussed the process of making the bases for the traveling hats with the designer and we decided that it would be a more economical use of time and resources to purchase the hat bases and add buckram brims to them as needed. Three pillbox shapes and one dome shape were ordered.



Figure 22 Robin L. McGee's preliminary sketch of Maria's Traveling suit with hat

Maria's Traveling Hat

As three of the four hats had the same base shape I chose to start with the most basic hat to perfect the pattern needed to cover the pillbox shape. The pillbox shape base is all that is needed for Maria's hat, as it has no brim. (figure 22) It does have a large bow on the front that is placed just off center in the front. I used the bright green peau de soie, which was the base fabric of Maria's outfit, for the base of the hat. (figure 23) The bow detail was constructed of a plaid taffeta and a lighter green pique. I mocked up the bow in taffeta scrap and found I may need to interface the real bow to make it keep the right shape. I mulled the base shape today and will start covering it with fashion fabric tomorrow.



Figure 23 Maria's hat in process with fabric pinned on.

I started the next step on Maria's hat. I cut the sideband fabric on the grain when it should have been cut on the bias. I hand stitched it on to the tip fabric which is prick stitched on. This method caused the sideband to wrinkle and the tip to pucker around the edges. To fix this problem I took the sideband off and machine stitched the center back together. I then pinned around the bottom of the base to make sure the

top was correct. The sideband is bunching a lot with the back sewn on the machine, I will have to open the center back seam and adjust it.

I worked on the bow for Maria's hat and pinned it in place. (figure 24) It is much bigger than the mock-up bow. This could have been due to the weight of the fabric and the heavy interfacing. I started with a bagged piece but it was entirely too big and bulky. I did have to line the back of the swallow tail end of the bow and it is seen. (figure 25)



Figure 24 Maria's Traveling hat in process showing bow detail front and back.

Katherine's Traveling Hat

Katherine's hat began in the same manner as Maria's but I ran into different difficulties.

(figure 26) I began by mulling the pillbox shape as I had with Maria's hat and then I wired the vertical brim piece. (figure 27) At this point, I was unable to continue with Katherine's hat or cut out fabric for the Princess's hat as the draper had taken all the fabric with her so she could work on those dresses while she was out of town. In the future, the milliner/craftsperson should have materials specifically for their use to avoid this delay



Figure 25 Production photo of Maria's Traveling Hat . Photo credit Audrey Hathaway-Czapp



Figure 26 Robin L. McGee's preliminary sketch of Katherine's traveling suit and hat.

I made some rapid progress on Katherine's hat, though I had to cover the brim piece twice as I made the first covering too short in both width and length. The designer decided at the last minute that she would like piping on this part of the hat. The first attempt had piping but we decided that it was too big in proportion to the size of the hat. For the second attempt, I used a much thinner piping that accentuated the lines of the hat and looked much better. As a finishing touch a covered button was added at the apex of the point.

(figure 28)

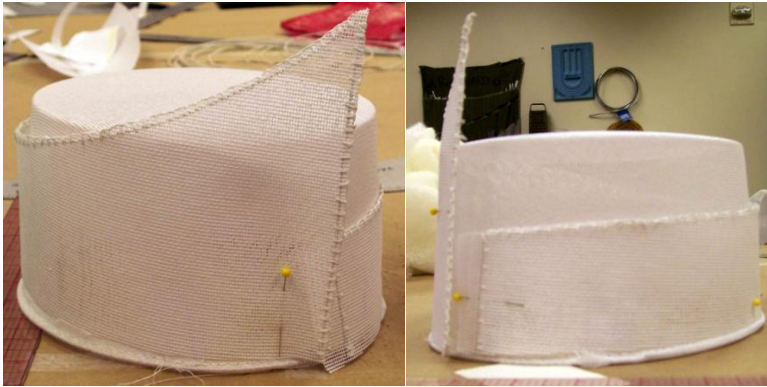


Figure 27 Katherine's hat - The pillbox base with wired buckram brim piece pinned on to check for fit and proportion



Figure 28 Production photos of Katherine's Traveling Hat. Photo Credit Audrey Hathaway-Czapp

Rosaline's Traveling Hat



Figure 29 Robin L. McGee's preliminary sketch of Rosaline's traveling suit and hat

The designer made an executive decision about the proportions of the elements on Rosaline's hat, as we have not been able to get that actress into the shop for a fitting yet. Normally the Designer would look at the actor in the costume before making these final detail decisions. Rosaline's hat has gores in the vertical section around the pillbox shape similar to the Princess's hat, but it also has a small horizontal brim unlike the other three hats. (figure 29, 30)

I got the pillbox shape and the brim on Rosaline's hat mulled

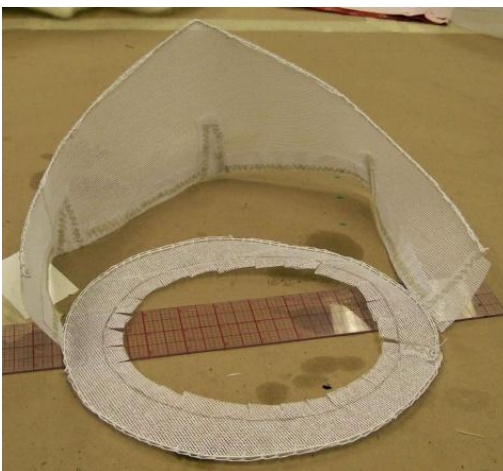


Figure 30 The vertical buckram piece and separate brim for Rosaline's hat which were added to the purchased pillbox shape in the same manner as the hats for Maria and Katherine.

and covered with white satin for the pillbox base and bright blue satin for the brim. The vertical piece of the brim was also covered with the bright blue satin. The edge of the vertical piece was piped with the tan and blue striped fabric from the traveling suit. I have to say that the piping did make the hat look much more finished than it would without it. This hat had more trimming than any of the other three hats as it had a wide hatband of the tan

and blue fabric which was cut on the bias and stitched on after the pieces of the hat were sewn together. It also had a covered button and a fan of pleated white cotton opposite the point of the vertical brim. (figure 31)

Due to the difficulty of getting this particular actress into the shop for a fitting, this hat was the last one constructed. Since it was the last one, it also went together the fastest as I had gotten some practice with Maria's and Katherine's hats. This hat had to go to dress rehearsal without lining so that the light and sound people could work with the brim. I installed lining in this hat during tech week.



Figure 31 Production Photo of Rosaline's Traveling Hat. Photo Credit Audrey Hathaway-Czapp



Figure 32 Robin L. McGee's preliminary sketch of the Princess' traveling suit and hat

The Princess's Traveling Hat

The hat for the Princess had the most complicated brim shape as it was gored to flare at the outermost edge while still following the vertical line of the times. (figure 33) I worked out the shape of the upturned brim that surrounds the dome base of the Princess's hat using a brown paper mock up brim.

It was an interesting layout because the flat pattern was slashed and then gores were added to flare the top edge. (figure 33) Making the flair symmetrical was a challenge. Once the flare needed was achieved, I transferred the pattern to buckram and then wired all around the top edge.

(figure 34)



Figure 33 At left, the mock-up for the Princess hat with the top slashed and taped to represent gores. At right, the buckram brim added to the purchased dome shape with the gores sewn in and the edge wired.

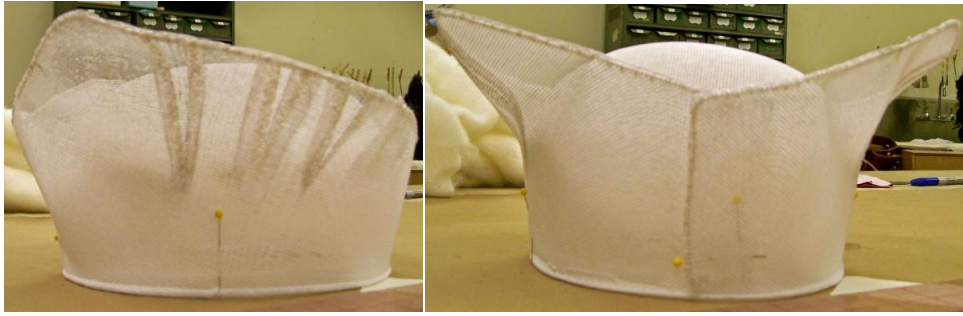


Figure 34 At left, the side view of the Princess hat showing the gores sewn into the buckram brim in more detail. At right the back view showing the flair of the brim due to the gores and wiring

I covered the brim piece first, piping the edges as I had done for Katherine's and Rosaline's hats. I then covered the dome base with fashion fabric to the wire edge and then the wired buckram brim was added and the outside most fabric was turned under the edge and stitched to the inside and lining which, cut down on the bulk of fabric at the inside of the headsize opening. (figure 35)



Figure 35 Production photo of the Princess's Hat. Photo Credit Audrey Hathaway-Czapp

Other Millinery Needs

The designer gave me a straw hat that she found in stock for Jaquinetta. She wanted to use the hat for the run of the show, but it needed some repair on the sidewall and a ribbon that could tie under the actor's chin. The hat was very brittle and I shared my concerns that it might not last the run of the show.

The repair of the straw hat for Jaquinetta was difficult. I had problems with it because the straw was so dry it kept breaking as I was sewing through it. I ended up basting it without reinforcement just to maintain the shape of the sideband and crown so it would be stable enough to reinforce. I reinforced the sideband first with regular grosgrain ribbon, which did not really work because it did not curve much around the shape of the crown. After I took that out, I basted the two pieces together and reinforced the sidewall with felt. This worked much better as the felt was flexible enough to conform to the shape while being wide enough to support the entire sideband of the hat. I then stitched around the top and bottom of the felt. I also added ribbon as per the designer's instructions to the sides of the hat so it can tie beneath the actor's chin or dangle down her back as needed. The designer decided to use the hat for the photo call, but not for the run of the show as the actor had difficulty working with costume pieces and the lighting did not accommodate hats with large brims.

I was given another hat pulled from stock that the designer would like to see in the photo call pictures. She asked that I replace the hatband ribbon and bow on a straw boater.

When I took the old hatband off I discovered that the thread holding the headband on was

rotten, as it fell apart as I was working on the hat. I had to replace the headband as well as the new hatband and bow. The end result being a newly refurbished hat that not only worked well for the photo shoot, but enhances the stock of hats available for future use.

The end of the build for this show was chaotic. I worked on the hats and the spats right up until the night before opening. I was putting in the lining on the hats half an hour before the curtain on the final preview. The single most time consuming project was putting the snaps on the spats. I spent twelve hours applying snaps to the spats by hand, which resulted in swollen and bruised hands for a week because we did not have the tool we needed to do the job more efficiently. I was never able to recover the parasols. While I did make a covering for the Princess's parasol, I was unable to get the correct tension in the panels to make the parasol functional. I would like to figure out how to do this as I see it as a valuable skill but I simply ran out of time. The spats for the four principle men were also cut from the list. The paper collars the designer had discussed with me in the beginning were purchased and proved to be very difficult for the actors to work with so after the opening of the show new "paper" collars made of fabric and then heavily starched were made for the actors.

"The Royal Family" Concept

The Swine Palace Production of "The Royal Family" was intended to be a showpiece. This show was the first to open in the newly renovated Shaver Theatre in the Music and Dramatic Arts building. The choice of this particular production was particularly appropriate as this show is set in the late 1920's which is when the new space was

originally opened. The concept of this show revolved around the glamour and demands of being famous which can be seen even today. The costumes in particular were designed to highlight the social strata of the Cavendish family. The successful characters were clothed in rich, luxurious fabrics and the height of the fashion of the day, while those who were not as fortunate were more ridiculous.

“The Royal Family” written by George Kauffman parodies the lives of American Theatre’s royalty, the Barrymore family. The Cavendish family represents the three siblings Lionel, Ethel and John Barrymore. The story revolves around Julie Cavendish the darling of Broadway, her mother Fanny Cavendish, the aging matriarch, her daughter Gwen Cavendish, the rising star and her brother Tony Cavendish the bad boy of film. In addition to the immediate family, there are the Deans, Kitty and Howard, who are Julie’s Aunt and Uncle. Kitty and Howard are also in the theatre; however, they are not nearly as successful. The family is surrounded by a host of faithful servants and their ever present agent.

Comedy and chaos ensue when Julie, the rock of the family, has to try to keep her brother away from the paparazzi after his latest scandal while she tries to talk her daughter out of throwing away her career for the socialite she has fallen for. As if these two difficulties are not challenge enough she has to deal with her mother’s demand to go on the road with a new show in spite of her failing health and the reemergence of a long lost beau. The pull of being everything to everyone proves too much for Julie who decides to quit the theatre and move to Brazil with her long lost beau. Gwen quits the theatre and marries her sweetheart and Tony flees the country until the heat from his scandal cools down. In the

end, the call of the theatre is too much and Julie changes her mind and decides to keep her career.

Production Process for “The Royal Family”

My initial meeting with Katie Johnson, the Costume Designer for The Royal Family, resulted in a list of millinery pieces that she felt were necessary to the implementation of her design for the show. She began with the main character of the piece, Julie Cavendish. For Julie she wanted a brimmed hat built similar to the research she found and a cloche, which she hoped to find in stock. For Gwen Cavendish, she requested one cloche with a brim and another with a band and brim. For Kitty Dean, she wanted a headband with a feathered fascinator and a “Carmen Miranda” fruit plate hat. For Tony Cavendish she wanted me to add boot tops to a pair of boots pulled from stock and gauntlets to a pair of pulled leather gloves. Tony also needed a fedora, which was to be pulled from stock or purchased. The character Gunga needed a turban built, for which she provided me research. The Director wanted Gunga to have a pet monkey which would need a small pillbox hat. The Chef needed a chief’s toke and needed to have his coat distressed as if he were very messy. The Chef’s assistant needed a mobcap. Della, the maid, needed a maid’s cap. The remaining men in the show Wolfe, Dean and the paparazzi all needed fedoras, which were pulled from stock. The table below is my breakdown of the requested items and the eventual means of delivering them.

While my assignments for “Love’s Labour’s Lost” varied from millinery, the entire assignment for “The Royal Family” revolved around the various millinery styles of the

day. The opportunity to focus entirely on this one aspect of craftwork allowed me to polish my millinery skills and learn techniques that were new to me.

Table 2 A detailed representation of the Crafts work needed for The Royal Family. The asterisks denote items added during the build process to accommodate changes or additions developed during the rehearsal process.

Character	Act	Item needed	Build	Pull	Purchase	Cut
Julie Cavendish	1	Brimmed “matinee hat”	Built			
Julie Cavendish	2	Cloche	Built			
Gwen Cavendish	2	Cloche	Built			
Gwen Cavendish	3	Pieced cloche				Cut
Tony Cavendish	1	Fedora			Purchase	
Tony Cavendish	2	Boot Tops and gauntlets				Cut
Tony Cavendish	1	Towel hat	Built *			
Kitty Dean	1	Feathered fascinator “cat toy hat”	Built			
Kitty Dean	2	“Fruit plate hat”	Built			
Gunga	2	Turban	Built			
Chef	1,2,3	Chef’s Toke			Purchase	
Chef	1,2,3	Distressed coat	Painted		Purchase	
Chef assistant	1,2,3	Mobcap	Built			
Della	1,2,3	Maid’s cap	Built			
Oscar Wolfe	1,2,	Fedora		Pull		
Herbert Dean	1,2,	Fedora		Pull		
Oscar Wolfe	3	Top Hat		Pull		
Herbert Dean	3	Top Hat		Pull		
3 Paparazzi	1	Fedoras		Pull		
3 Bellboys	2,3	Pillbox bellboy hats	Built *			
Mrs. Peake	3	Mourning hat		Pull *		

Julie Cavendish’s Matinee Hat

I pulled a buckram skullcap for the base of Julie’s “matinee hat.” I doubled the buckram on the form, as our buckram was very lightweight. When it dried, I added a paper brim for the fitting with that actor. (figure 36) The mock-up brim for this hat was a challenge. I draped the brim with brown paper pinching out the excess to form the brim, but I had many problems getting the paper to do what I needed it to do. The weight of the paper and

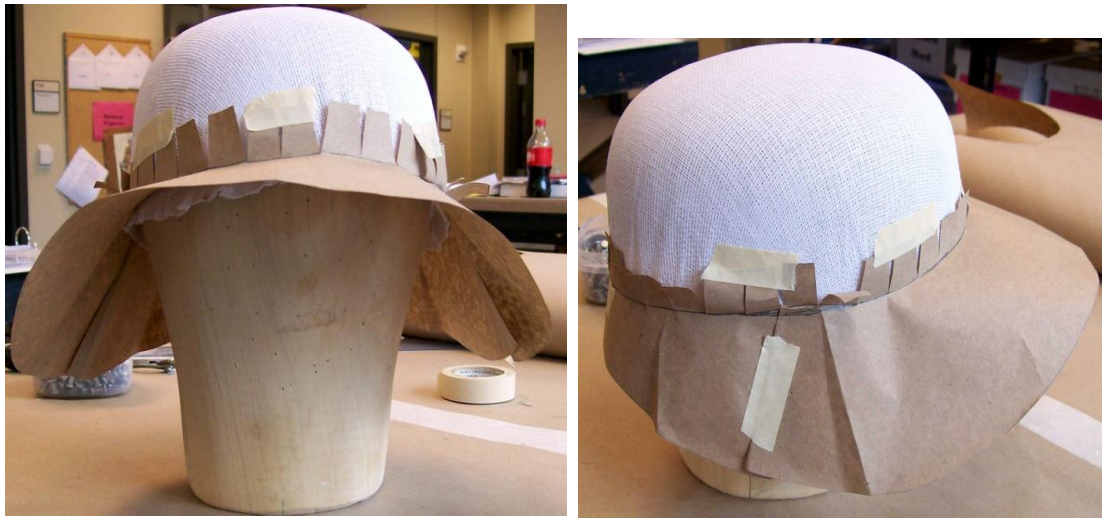


Figure 36 The Pulled buckram base with paper mock-up brim attached Side and front views

tape changed the way the front of the brim stood up or drooped depending on where the tape was. After five incarnations, I settled on a final look that could work. We looked at the mock-up on the actor and decided what needed to change at that point. The final version of the brim was wired shaped buckram, which eventually eliminated the shaping issues.

I was advised by my professor to pull another buckram base for this hat, as the skullcap I pulled earlier did not echo the shape of the crown in the research. I pulled a new buckram base over a hat block for a bowler hat to get the proper oval shape. Once that the base was dry, I draped muslin over the shape to pattern the sides of the crown and the center section, which would have the fishbone detail the Designer liked. (figure 37) I will then pipe the seams with the same brown satin as the crown of the hat.

I next laid out the brim and sides on the satin and then cut the bias strips for the fishbone detail. I cut the bias strips twice as wide as I needed them and then folded them down the

center so no raw edges would show. I sewed the bias strips onto the muslin base for the center detail of the hat. (figure 38) I had problems arranging the ends of the strips because

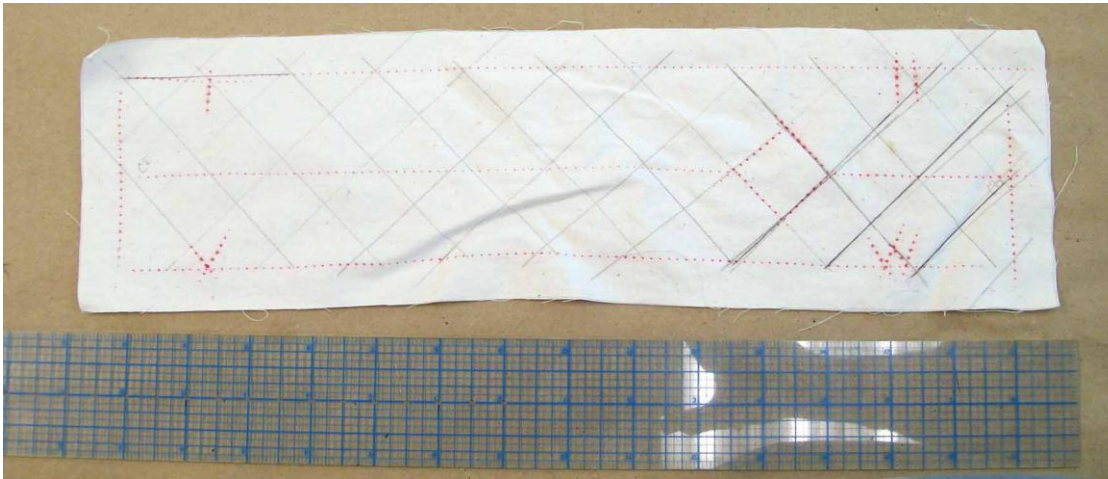


Figure 37 The muslin base of the fishbone detail center of the “matinee hat” The stitching lines for the bias pieces are marked. The diamond on the right side is the starting point and will be covered in a corresponding diamond shaped piece of satin before the bias strips are added.

I needed them to be long enough so that raw edges would not be seen, but short enough that they did not add bulk to the seams at the center of the crown. I stitched the long edges down but not the ends. I then had to go back and stitch down the ends.

When I mocked up the sidepieces, I added notches to better match up the real pieces. I added piping to the centerpiece on each side then hand basted the sidepieces onto the centerpiece. Once the crown was finished, I shifted my attention to the brim covering. I began by flat lining the lace to the satin top of the brim and added piping around the outside edge. I then flat lined the “French elastic,” an interfacing material, to the bottom piece of satin, folded over the seam allowance, and inserted the wire. (figure 39)



Figure 38 The fishbone detail in process. The diamond shaped centerpiece and the folded bias strips attached below it. The process will be mirrored on the other side of the centerpiece.

To prepare the wire to be inserted I laid the wire out in the appropriate size and shape to fit around the edge of the brim and then button hole stitched it together at the back and reinforced the stitches with white glue. When the glue was dry, I laid the wire shape on the bottom piece of the brim and topstitched the seam allowance down with the wire inside.

I then slipstitched the bottom piece of the brim to the top piece at the outside edge. I then basted the two pieces of the brim together at the headsize opening with white thread to make it easier to see the stitch line when I attach the crown of the hat to the brim. I wired the buckram frame of the crown at the headsize opening and then, after clipping the curve of the seam allowance on the brim I sewed the brim to the buckram frame. (figure 40) I then moved to the pieced covering for the crown of the hat. I pinned the seam allowances



Figure 39 The brim pieces of the “matinee hat”. On the left the top of the brim the lace flat lined to the satin with the piping applied to the edge. On the right is the underside of the brim. The white material is “French elastic” and the edge is pinned down where the wire will be sewn in

toward the center of the pieced section and folded up the seam allowance at the bottom to



Figure 40 the mulled crown of the hat attached to the finished brim. Note the yellow stitches at the base of the crown where the brim is sewn on.

slip the crown covering fabric onto the buckram. This was the most difficult process as I had to pull out the excess fabric to prevent it from buckling and puckering, but I couldn’t pull the excess around to the inside of the hat due to the brim.

I slipstitched the crown fabric to the brim. I then had to sew through the piping at the top and down through the

buckram frame to pull out the puckering at the top of the crown of the hat.

I then attached the headband to the inside of the headsize opening. I used millinery grosgrain which I curved with the iron overlapping it one inch at the center back of the hat. I then cut out the lining with a smaller oval for the inside of the tip and the sides cut on the bias. I blocked the lining on the same hat block that was used for the buckram frame using steam to shape it. I then glued it in around the tip and at the seam allowance under the headband. (figure 41)



Figure 41 The finished “Matinee Hat.” On the left the front of the hat and on the right the back showing the fishbone detail. Production photo credits – Eddie Perez

Julie Cavendish and Gwen Cavendish’s Cloche Hats

There were no renderings for these two hats. The Designer felt she would be able to find something in stock that could be altered to suit her design. Happily, the Designer was not able to find what she wanted so I had the opportunity to learn a new skill. The Designer and I discussed the brim shapes that she was looking for. The overall shape of the hat was

restricted to a skullcap shape, as I did not have access to a true cloche hat block. The Designer decided a very small simple brim with a simple jeweled pin on each hat would suit her needs as the rest of each ensemble was quite decorative.

This process began with ordering two basic felt hoods that were then pulled over a wooden head block. I ordered a black hood for Gwen and a grey hood for Julie. I sat down with the Costume Shop Manager to discuss the steps involved in pulling a felt hat.

Step 1) Set up the hat steamer. This involves protecting the surrounding area with towels and making sure there is enough water in the steamer.

Step 2) With a spray bottle of water dampen the inside of the hood.

Step 3) Set the damp hood over the steamer handle and steam or “cook” it for 30 minutes. To be sure the steam penetrates the felt I place a plastic shopping bag over the felt.

Step 4) While the hood is cooking, place two layers of plastic wrap on the hat block. Mark the headline on the plastic wrap with sharpie marker and cover that mark with clear tape. Cover the block with two more layers of plastic wrap taping it in place with masking tape.

Step 5) Remove the steamed hood from the handle of the steamer and gently but firmly pull it down onto the hat block. Smooth the felt down onto the hat block to ensure no ripples or bumps remain. If the felt is pulled too hard there is a real possibility that it will rip making that felt unusable.

Step 6) Place a piece of ¼-inch elastic round the headline that was marked in step 4 and secure it with tacks.

Step 7) Pull the remaining felt up into the shape the brim will eventually take. This step depends on the finished look of the hat. (figure 42)

Step 8) After the felt is dry mark the center front and center back on the inside of the hat.

Step 9) Using the appropriate safety precautions lacquer, also know as sizing, the inside of the hat and place it back on the form to dry.

Step 10) While the lacquer is still wet pull the excess lacquer out of the hat with a craft stick and then roughen the surface of the felt with your fingers.

Step 11) Let the sized, or lacquered hat dry overnight.

Step 12) Pry the dried hat off the form, use a corset bone, a thin piece of flexible steel, if needed to separate the hat from the form. (figure 43)



Figure 42 Both Cloches in process. On the left , a side view of Julie's cloche, note the elastic at the back showing the location of the headline. . On the right Gwen's cloche.

Step 13) Trim off excess felt from the brim

Step 14) Using the wire stitch wire the edge of the brim and then apply bias trim as needed to achieve the final look.

Step 15) Install the headliner the same way you would with any other hat. This piece of grosgrain protects the hat from the sweat and oils on the wearer's head.

Step 16) Apply trim as needed.

Both Julie Cavendish and Gwen Cavendish wore cloche hats in this production. Both hats were very simple in their trimming with a simple strip of bias applied over the wire at the brim and a simple piece of jewelry pinned to the hat. (figure 44)

I discovered that steaming a felt hood comes with its own challenges. On each of the felts that I pulled for this show, I ended up with a strange discoloration. On Gwen's cloche, the



Figure 43 Julie's cloche in process. Note the discoloration at the edge of the felt.

discoloration was on the inside of the top of the crown and luckily didn't bleed through to the outside. On Julie's the discoloration was on the outside edge of the felt, which was eventually trimmed off.



Figure 44 Above, Julie's finished cloche. To the right Gwen in her finished cloche. Production photo credits – Eddie Perez

Kitty Dean's Cat Toy Hat



Figure 45 Costume Designer Katie Johnson's rendering of Kitty Dean Act 1

Both bases for Kitty's fascinators have been made of doubled buckram and covered with ice wool and base fabric. The Act 1 hat, which was referred to as "the cat toy hat", was covered with a white silk Dupioni to blend in with the white marabou feathered boa I used to build up the poof the Designer wanted. (figure 46) I also wired several feathers to make them longer

as the materials at hand were very short and stumpy looking while we are looking for longer bouncier feathers. To wire the feathers I took the following steps. First, I stripped the excess downy vanes leaving only a portion of the feather intact at the end. I tried several weights of wire, jewelry wire, millinery wire, and pieces of wire from pipe cleaners. The jewelry wire was too flimsy to use to extend the length of the spine of the feather. The millinery wire was too substantial making the spine look lumpy. The pipe cleaner worked best after I took it apart to get rid of the fluff and eliminate the bulk it added. Using one of the two wires from the pipe cleaner, I cut the wider portion of the feather's spine off and glued it to the wire. I started out using Magna Tac but was advised by the Costume Shop Manager to use white glue. Her reasoning for switching was two fold. Magna Tac is a more toxic glue while white glue, specifically Sobo glue, is non-toxic and retains some flexibility when it is dry. It is also easier to soften and remove should that need arise. I glued the spine of the feather to the wire near the base of the remaining vanes. Then I took a two-inch piece of white net, glued it to the join at the top, and carefully wrapped it around the wire gluing as I went.

I started with a very stretchy white net cut on the bias but it stretched too much leaving the wire too visible. With the second net I used I made sure to cut it with the least possible stretch and folded the two inch width in half, which helped to disguise the wire. The difficult part was getting the wrap started and making sure it was pulled tight enough to keep from adding unneeded bulk to the artificial spine. (figure 46) These wired feathers were sewn into the feather boa base as if they are sprouting from it. Once I placed the wired feathers on the base with the marabou boa, the Designer and I felt that the hat still

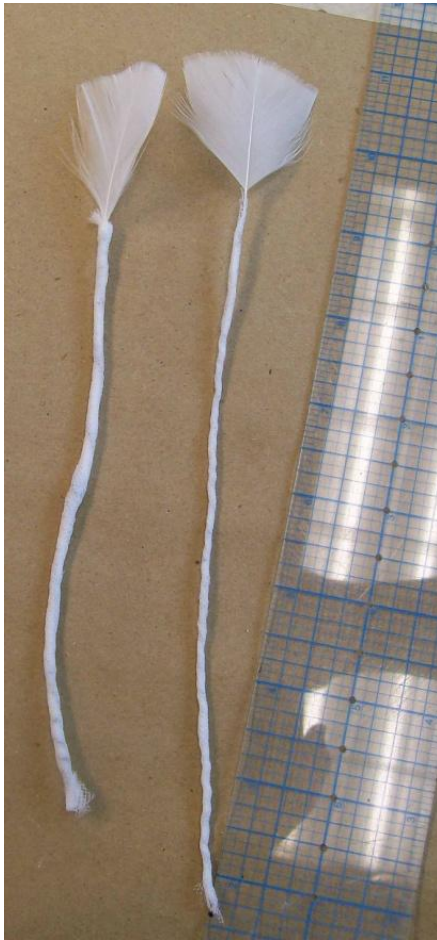


Figure 46 The wired feathers. The bulky feather on the left using jewelry wire and the more slender feather on the right with pipe cleaner wire.

needed some bounce. I decided to use a different technique with the black feathers allowing them to fill more space and add more bounce. I started by taping the black and white goose biots to a small wooden dowel rod. (figure 47) I then steamed the feathers and allowed them to cool and dry. When I removed them from the dowel they spiraled very nicely. To make attaching them to the hat base easier, I glued some hot pink ribbon to the ends. (figure 48) I then stitched through the ribbon to attach the feathers to the hat base. (figure 49)

Kitty Dean's "Fruit Plate Hat"

The "Fruit Plate Hat," was an item that developed from conversations with the Designer rather than the usual method of beginning with a rendering. The Designer wanted a "Carmen Miranda" style fruit hat to go with Kitty Dean's Act Two ensemble. While the "Fruit Plate Hat" had been on my list from the beginning of the process, the Designer had not chosen a dress to go with it so I was unable to start on the hat until close to the end of the process, as I had no fabric to cover the bases of the hat. Once that issue was resolved, I could start on this item.



Figure 47 The goose biots taped to the wooden dowel.



Figure 48 The end result, a spiraled feather with ribbon glued on.



Figure 49 The finished “Cat Toy Hat”. Production photo credit – Eddie Perez



Figure 50 Two pieces of buckram pulled on a wooden head form and pinned to dry. The beginning of the fascinator base.

At the beginning of the process, I pulled a buckram fascinator base for a party hat for Kitty Dean, which was no longer needed, so I used that base and recovered it with a slate blue satin. (figure 50) I then cut up another pulled buckram skullcap originally intended for Julie's "matinee hat" making a circular concave "plate" for the plastic fruit to sit in. (figure 51)

I covered the plate with ice wool and the same blue satin. I pleated the interior so I

would have some texture giving me opportunities to anchor the fruit. (figure 52) I took the



Figure 51 The base, covered in blue satin and the "plate" mulled and waiting for fabric.

fruit and flower stems, provided by the Designer, apart to make them easier to place on the hat and stitched them in place. I added purple ribbon to fill in the open spaces



Figure 52 The “plate” with the pleated blue satin. This pleating allowed me to firmly anchor the fruit



Figure 53 The finished “Fruit Plate Hat”.
Production photo credit – Eddie Perez

and glued the foam pears together to help stabilize them. I added a lining of the same fabric to the base and sewed horsehair around the bottom to pin through. I also added a long ribbon to the base that ties at the base of the skull in a bow. This ribbon helps with stability as the grapes in particular are heavier than the entire hat making balance a problem.

When worn, the hat is pinned onto the wig round at the base of the hat, but the ribbon is also pinned at the back of the head near the bow to provide a counter balance. (figure 53)

Gunga’s Turban

I made a felt coif with a pattern from *Patterns for Costume Accessories* by Arnold S. Levine and Robin L. McGee for the base of Gunga’s turban. (figure 54) A coif is a hat that dates back to the middle ages. It is usually pieced



Figure 54 The Costume Designer Katie Johnson's rendering of Gunga

together and fits snugly to the wearer's head like a skullcap though it generally covers all of the wearer's hair. For theatrical purposes, the coif usually has a piece of elastic at the nape of the neck so that it can be easily worn without having to pin it in place. (figure 55)

Once I had the coif base sewn together I used the fabric the designer had chosen to build the turban onto the coif. I

added quilt batting to the fabric to build up the folds without adding weight to the piece.



Figure 55 The finished coif base for the turban

The interior folds are sewn to the coif base to ensure the turban folds do not shift when it is worn. (figure 56) The actor came in for a fitting and tried it on. It seemed to be a good fit at that point so I finished the edges so the coif base would not be seen. Finishing the edges entailed folding the fabric around the edge of the coif and stitching them down so the turban could be worn without the coif being visible.(figure 57)



Figure 56 The finished turban. On the left the front and on the right the back.

Bellboy Hats

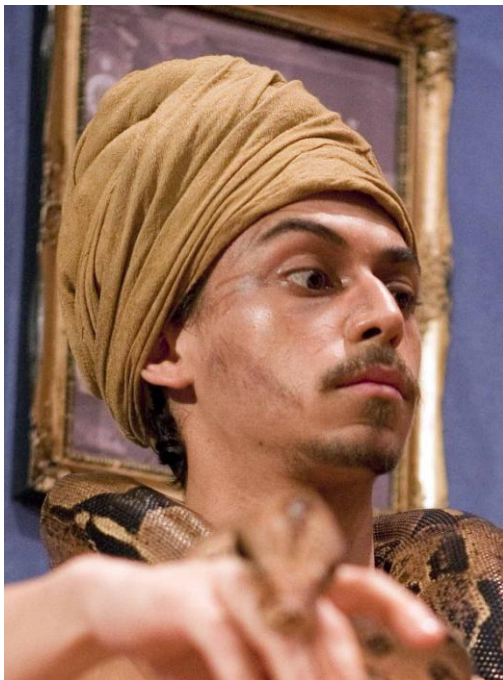


Figure 57 The finished turban onstage. Production photo credit – Eddie Perez

While the original plan was to purchase hats for the bellboys, the designer was unable to find anything appropriate; so they have been added to my build list. (figure 58) I was handed a pattern for a pillbox hat base and asked to make the bases for the hats from buckram and cover them with fabric.

I cut out the pattern in buckram adding seam allowance to the tip but not the sides. The Costume Shop Manager then taught me how



Figure 58 The Costume Designer Katie Johnson's rendering for the bellboys

to double the buckram for the sides using stitch witchery. This short cut saved me the time it would have taken to let the buckram dry after using water to layer it and provide the needed stability. To double buckram using stitch witchery I first cut out two sideband pieces of equal size from the buckram and one piece of stitch witchery of the same size.

I then laid the first piece of buckram down and placed the stitch witchery directly on it with nothing and all the sides flush to each other. The top piece of buckram is then placed on top of the stack but over hanging one end by a few inches. This leaves one end of the bottom piece of stitch witchery and buckram exposed. The sandwiched pieces are then ironed together only where all three pieces are touching. The bottom edge of the sideband was then wired using the sewing machine and the buttonhole foot, which allows the wire to slide under the foot without impeding the sewing process. I then sewed the center back seam of the sideband together by hand allowing the overhang of the top piece of buckram to overlap the bottom piece and stitch witchery. I then ironed the section that was overlapped essentially gluing the pieces together. The tip of the hat was then attached by hand after the curve in the seam allowance was clipped.

I used the same pattern to cut out the grey twill fabric the designer had chosen to cover all three hats. I added the trim to the sidebands of the hats by machine before the pieces were assembled. I then assembled the fabric pieces and eased them onto the buckram frames. I should have wired the frames to provide more stability as the buckram has lost some strength due to over handling and high humidity. I added the headband on all three hats. The lining was put in the following week, as they would need to dry before being worn and they were needed the next day in rehearsal. (figure 59)

Tony Cavendish's Towel Hat



Figure 59 On the right, the finished bellboy hat. On the left, the finished bellboy hat Production Photo credit – Eddie Perez

During tech week for this show the actor who played Tony Cavendish decided he needed to wear a towel around his head to signify that he had just gotten out of the bath. The problem with that is that he had trouble doing the necessary action on stage while wearing this towel. The Director liked the towel so the Designer



Figure 60 The finished “towel hat”
Production photo credit – Audrey
Hathaway-Czapp

came to me and asked me to make him a “towel hat”. (figure 60) I started with the same coif base that I used for Gunga’s turban but I made it from white felt this time. I then took some ribbed chenille fabric that I found in stock and draped it around the coif base to look like a towel that had been wrapped around a head. I stitched the folds down and tacked the raw edges under so they would not be

seen. The actor came in the next night for dress rehearsal to a new hat that not only alleviated his movement problems on stage but made his quick change backstage much easier.

Conclusion

The research into millinery fashions of the early twentieth century clearly demonstrated to me both the changes in societal expectations and how developments in manufacturing processes have changed the products we use today. Unfortunately, some products that were commonplace then are rare or completely unavailable today. It could be assumed that the more developed manufacturing processes used to produce materials for today's milliner would change millinery techniques. I have learned happily, that the basic techniques have not changed appreciably in the last century.

The most challenging element of the production process for "Love's Labour's Lost" was time management. As theatrical productions are collaborative in nature when decisions from the Director or Design team are delayed or changed at the last minute the impact on the technical staff is intense. For this particular production, the delay in decisions at the beginning of the process shortened the available build time for what was a huge show. Timing was also a factor in the available workforce to build the necessary items. I have learned that the first step in planning exactly how much can be built for any production is to determine exactly how much time is available and estimate how much time it will take to build the needed items. When planning what to build it is also helpful to determine what if any manpower is available. Experience and hindsight being what they are these lessons would not have been as powerful and immediate without this experience.

I began the production process for "The Royal Family" knowing that I would be the only craftsperson. This understanding made the conversations with the Designer much more

productive as I had a better idea of what I could achieve in the given time frame. While some decisions were delayed during this process, I was able to shift my focus from project to project while waiting for materials or decisions. Having a better overall view and a slightly better grasp on time management made this process smoother.

The production processes for both “Love’s Labour’s Lost” and “The Royal Family” have taught me many lessons. I have learned many millinery techniques, and how those techniques apply to millinery specifically for the stage. I have learned some time management skills, and that I need to keep developing those skills to make my work and planning more efficient. I have begun to learn to listen, watch and interpret a Designer’s vision for a character. I have begun to learn how to discuss and help develop that Designer’s vision.

While these lessons are valuable, I have also learned many things about myself. I have learned that I have a deep respect for what some consider “lost” arts. I have learned that I much prefer the challenge of detailed handwork. I have found that providing the finishing touch to an ensemble is a very satisfying event. The most important lesson I have learned is that I still have more to learn.

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Vita

Michelle L. Hathaway was born in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and grew up in both Colorado and New Mexico. After graduating from Westminster High School in Westminster, Colorado, she began her undergraduate studies at Tarkio College in Tarkio, Missouri. As a sophomore, she was inducted into the Missouri Epsilon chapter of the Theatre Honors Fraternity, Theta Alpha Phi. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Colorado at Denver and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree in theatre and communication. She spent seven years teaching junior high and high school drama in Colorado before moving to Louisiana to study for her Master of Fine Arts degree in costume design and technology at Louisiana State University. After graduation, she will pursue a career in costume technology focusing on craftwork and millinery.