

Hats 1700's

[Evolution of Women's Hats From the 1700 to 1800s](#)

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Woman Wearing a Bergère Hat, Courtesy of Wikipedia

There were remarkable transformations in hat styles from the 1700s to the 1800s. The hat changed to match empires, dynasties, and ages, but it did not take on a fashionable turn until the mid 1700s. It was at that time that women made popular the shepherdess hat, a wide-brimmed, shallow-crowned straw hats, known as a bergère. They were usually stiff crowned hats, made from straw, and tied under the chin. These hats had been worn since the early 1700s but took on a fashionable bent between the 1750s and 1760s. Rising hairstyles soon caused many of these hats to tilt forward to accommodate the ever rising hairstyles. As hairstyles became larger and larger, hats styles became smaller and smaller until they were discarded altogether for time. However, extremely large hats were soon introduced and sometimes completely covered the high coiffures. It was also around this time that the word "bonnet" began to take on the its modern connotation and began to describe a variety of new hats.



Styles From the 1770s to the End of the 1790s, Public Domain

As with all fashions, for a time headdresses and hat styles became radical. By the end of the 1770s and the early 1780s, headdresses became monstrous, as depicted in the illustration to the right. Hats also reached colossal proportions and were worn on formidable angles to accommodate the curls, plaits, and frizzed hair beneath them. One famous eye-popping hat from this period was the “portrait” or “picture hat,” a hat Georgina Cavendish, better known as the Duchess of Devonshire, created and wore when Thomas Gainsborough painted her in 1785.

Hats also began to be named for events, characteristics, or cities. For instance, *The Lady's Magazine* in May 1775, provide a list of all sorts of popular hats at the time: “The City Hat,” “The St. James’,” “The Ranelagh,” “Macaroni,” “Otaheite,” “The Skimming-dish Hat,” and “The Calash.” The French also began naming their hats after American cities, with the “Philadelphia” and the “Boston” being two of the more popular ones.

After Italian [Vincenzo Lunardi's balloon ascent](#), the “Lunardi” or “balloon” hat became popular. Balloon hats were created from gauze or silk and had large puffed crowns with wide brims to match, as shown in the bottom illustration above. Although the name of the hat (Lunardi or balloon) lasted a couple of years, the hat remained popular until about 1790.



1790s Through the Regency Era, Public Domain

From about 1785, hair was combed low and bonnets were worn high with the styles of the times retaining similarities to the previously radical and towering hairstyles. Marie Antoinette originated the fashion of big curls at the side of the head with the remainder of the hair fashioned into a chignon at the back.

After the revolution began and guillotine was used, women sometimes cut their hair short around the neck to represent those who were beheaded. Cutting the hair before a beheading was fashionable at the time. In fact, the style was fashionable to take the gruesome name of “Guillotine Coiffure.”

The bergère from previous years remained fashionable, but it had a smaller brim, and before the end of Louis XVI’s reign in 1792, women began to wear tall hats similar to the man’s stove-pipe top hat of the late 1800s. This style, shown in the center illustration at the right, was high enough to require mechanical contrivances to secure them in place. Besides their high crowns, these hats also had broad brims and were often garnished with floral decorations, as shown.

Starting in 1795, women’s fashions began to follow the classical ideals of the Greeks and the Romans, and it extended to hairstyles as well. Curls were worn over the forehead and ears, and loose buns or knots were created at the back of the head. When Napoleon I began to reign in 1804, the variety of hats were bewildering. One of the most unusual hats at this time was a huge bonnet with an enormous visor—stiffened from whalebone or wire—and tied securely under the chin. (It is the last hat shown). Large feather plumes often garnished these large visor hats and cascaded over them. Additionally, a woman’s hair was worn in a Grecian style: cut short, curled, and tied in the back with velvet bands.



Hat Styles From 1810 to 1850, Public Domain

In the 1800s, for the first time in centuries and even though millinery was still popular, women sometimes left home without a hat. Some of the popular pieces at the time were the turban, the Highland or Greek helmet, and bonnets richly ornamented by feathers, ribbons, and trims. In 1810, of all the styles, the helmet style was the favorite, and it is the first hat shown in the illustration to the left. Overall, helmets were simple in style but had extraordinarily long visors, and one reason for its popularity was its many variations.

By the 1830s, the *Ladies' Museum* noted, "hats have increased in size; the brims are very deep and extremely wide, the crowns are of moderate height in front, and very low behind." An example of this is the second hat shown in the illustration to the left. Hats at this time were either straw hats (Leghorns) or created from stiffly starched cotton. These hats were sometimes covered with satin or silk, often had sweeping curves, and tended towards botanical embellishments as noted by one fashion magazine: "Wild flowers, particularly daisies, are much in favour, as are also bouquets of violets; but nothing is considered more elegant than branches of lilac, placed in the same style as feathers, that is to say, to droop from the right side to the left." Additionally, these hats were tied under the chin and the outside of these hats was often a different color from the inside.

Straw hats remained popular into the 1840s, but were worn primarily with informal wear. Hat styles of the 1850s were created from velvet or felt and richly trimmed with huge bows that were often secured in place by flowers, pins, or buckles. An example of this hat fashion is shown at the bottom of the illustration above.



Hats From 1870 to 1895, Public Domain

Moving into the Romantic Era (1837-1850) or the Victorian Era (1837-1901), bonnets were in fashion but hats were out. However, around 1857 young women began to wear hats with informal wear, and, by the 1860s, hats began to replace bonnets. High crowned hats with turned up brims came back into fashion in the early 1870s, and hats in general were tilted forward or towards the rear of the head, depending on the hat and hairstyle.

Around the 1870s hats began to feature feathers, wings, and sometimes whole birds. The Mercury, a style shown in the top illustration to the right, featured wings as its main ornament. This hat was made from felt or velvet, sometimes sported flowers, and sat well back on the head, so as to show a woman's hairstyle to its best advantage.

The second illustration demonstrates a popular style worn 15 years later. As a general rule, this style included feathers and was made from felt. Mesh veils of spotted net, gauze, or tulle sometimes covered it, and when it did, the veils often helped secure the hats in place. In addition, certain physicians did not approve of this spotted net covering, because they believed it would damage a woman's eyes. However, women liked the look, claimed it was becoming, and maintained it kept their hairdos in place.

The last hat shown in the illustration above was another style that became popular in the 1890s. It was known as an Alsatian bonnet. It was a simple style that consisted of nothing more than a large bow (and sometimes fur ornaments) attached to a bonnet too small to be seen.



Common Warbler (top) Roller (bottom), Author's Collection

Over the course of 150 years, garnishment and ornamentation was as varied as hat sizes. Ribbons and bows gave way to feathers and eventually to whole birds. Owl heads and full stuffed bird bodies, such as Baltimore orioles, humming birds, blue jays, rollers, bluebirds, woodpeckers, and even prairie hens were used, but it did not stop there. Animals, such as mice or small reptiles were also put atop hats, and many hats did not just sport just a single item. Sometimes they were covered with an owl head, ostrich plumes, sparrow wings, multiple tufts of flowers or ribbons, and four or five warblers.

Decorating hats with birds eventually reached a point that bird populations were decimated, and this resulted in an outcry and action to stop bird slaughters. Yet, no matter the fashion and whether birds or not were placed atop millinery, women loved their hats. This was why one witty man in 1896, "defined a bonnet as a thing made partly of ribbon and partly of lace, but principally of price." Women considered their hats to be invaluable stating their value did "not [lie] in the value of the frame or the ribbon or the flowers, but in that indefinable something called 'the style,' that stamp of distinction, which [makes their hat a prized] work of art."

References:

- Abbott, Lyman, *The House and Home: A Practical Book*, 1896
- Hamilton, Lord Frederick Spencer, et al., *The Pall Mall Magazine*, Vol. 1, 1893
- *Historical Evolution of Woman's Head Wear*, 1895
- *The Ladies' Museum*, Vol. 31, 1830
- Uzanne, Octave, *Fashion in Paris*, 1898

1600 to 1700



wired ringlets tied with gold or silver ribbon with jeweled ends-metal ribbon rosette with jewels-plume of spotted breast feathers-Spanish-1650's



widow's coiff-black and pearl-edged-wired heartbreaker-chignon in back-French-1660's



heartbreakers with velvet bowknots-silk head tied under chin-French-1660's



wired heartbreakers-braided chignon-Dutch-1660's



head of fine white muslin-scalloped edge-English ringlets-Swedish-1660's



wired heartbreakers-pearl and jeweled ornaments-pearl round chignon-pearl earrings-Dutch-1668

coiffure dressed over wire frame-gold or silver ribbon-large rosettes on top and sides-fringe attached to bowknots-of small thin gold leaves-Spanish-1650's



widow's coiff-black with pearls-heartbreakers and chignon-French-1668



R.T.W



Men's Hats 1700's

Men's Hats in the 1600s

A flamboyant, romantic ideal came to dominate men's styles during the 17th century. The cavalier emphasized this romantic icon that was illustrated in art of the era. Long, flowing hair was topped by hats with turned up brims decorated by ostrich plumes and gem stones. The style can best be imagined when recalling images of the Three Musketeers.

Mid century, an interest in Eastern styles crept into English men's fashions and saw men topped with turbans. The turbans could be quite large, often decorated with feathers and jewelry.

Long hair can be difficult to maintain. Wigs began to replace long, natural hair. Hair was then cut close to the head in order to accommodate wigs. The wigs were often heavy, featuring waves and curls. In the 1690s, powder was added to the wig.

By the end of the century, hat crowns grew smaller. Hat brims were cocked, turning up at the front, side, or rear. This style led to the next century's prevalent hear gear, the tricorne.

Man in Wig Holding Hat



18th Century Men's Hats

Men continued to wear powdered wigs well into the 1700s. The style conveyed a look of dignity and high status to its wearers. The wigs were cumbersome and expensive to purchase and maintain. Wigs featured hair that fell past the shoulders. Military men introduced the campaign wig for men following active life styles.

Wigs could be worn with sculpted sides or tied locks. Some wigs were chin length at the sides with long extensions of curls that tumbled down the back. Bog wigs ended in a roll behind the neck. Long wigs could be tied at the back with a ribbon into a neat queue.

The **tricorne** was the popular hat of the 1700s. Made of beaver, these hats featured turned up brims attached to the crown. The upturned brim could be at the front or the sides. The tricorne fell out of favor in the late 1700s replaced by the narrow brimmed high crowned hat which would evolve into the top hat of later years.

An interest in the ideals of liberty led fashion away from the flamboyance of the French court. Clothing styles became more simplified. But some young men rebelled against the simple styles by introducing the macaroni style of the 1770s. Their clothing became wildly dramatic if not silly with tiny hats perched on curly wigs.

By the end of the 1700s the French and American Revolutions ushered in a more egalitarian phase in clothing styles. Wigs fell out of favor. An English country look introduced a plain kind of dignity that persisted into the Victorian period.

Tricorne Hat



1700 to 1795

"Ramilles cock"
tricorne, in
black felt-
high flat back-
braid edge-
powdered bagwig-
black silk bag
and ribbons-
pigeon's wings-
French-
1729



"Kevenhuller cock" tricorne
of black felt-blue cockade-
light brown bob wig-Austrian
soldier-1st
decade



"Kevenhuller cock"
Swiss military or
"Androsmane" in French-
black felt tricorne-
white ostrich-buttons
and loops-pigtail
wig-pigeon's wings-
black ribbon-
French officer-
early 18th C.



tricorne in
black felt-
gold braid-white
powdered
pigtail wig-
black leather
queue-German
officer-
1st half
18th C.



red cloth
and fringe
metal
frontal-
brown bob
wig-Austrian
soldier-
1st decade



bonnet of
cloth and
copper-
white stripes
and band-
metal insignia-
powdered hair in
braided queue
Prussian grenadier-
1760



blue cloth bonnet-
white stripe-
bearskin frontal-
metal insignia-
powdered pigtail
wig-Austrian
grenadier-1730

red
cloth bonnet-fur band-
shaved head with tuft on top-
French hussar-1721



blue cloth bonnet-
gold braid-black pompon-
falsage-powdered hair
in queue-black ribbon-
Austrian hussar-
3rd quarter 18th C.

PTW

1700 to 1795



felt hat with ribbon-wig or natural hair- "single glass" English- 1786



the fur cap of the American frontiersman- fox, squirrel, coon skin or bear



black felt riding hat ribbon and buckles-powdered cadogan wig English- 1789



white or gray wig of professional men- English- 1790



full-bottomed white wig- English and American judges- late 18 th C.



mortarboard-doctor of civil law- American- late 18 th C.



black felt with ribbon band and buckle- natural hair in tie- English- circa 1790



felt cocked hat-braid edged-buttons and cord-powdered bagwig- English- 1786



black felt cocked hat- mauve ribbon- bobbed natural hair- French- 1790



gray wig with pigtail- black ribbon- American-end of 18 th C.

RTW

1789-1795
French

Phrygian
bonnet or "le
bonnet rouge"
of the
Revolutionist-
of wool with
tricolor
cockade
natural
hair
in
pigtail-
earrings



black felt tricorne-
braid and button-
tricolor cockade-
bobbed natural
hair



army general-
black felt
tricorne with
metal braid-
natural hair
in pigtail



felt
hat
with
fringed scarf and
feather-bobbed
natural hair



general's
bicorn-
gold braid-
tassels-
ostrich and
aigrettes-
tricolor
cockade

"le bonnet
rouge" of the
Revolutionist-
red woolen
cap



felt hat with
ribbon and ostrich
worn over
silk scarf
tied round
head-
a royalist

felt hat with white
royalist cockade-
worn over silk
scarf tied
round
head



sailor
hat-
varnished
leather-
hair
bobbed
at sides with
short queue
in back



sailor hat-varnished
leather-hair in
cadogan

RTW



<http://www.gentlemenoffortune.com>



