

NECESSARIES:
TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF
FASHION ACCESSORIES

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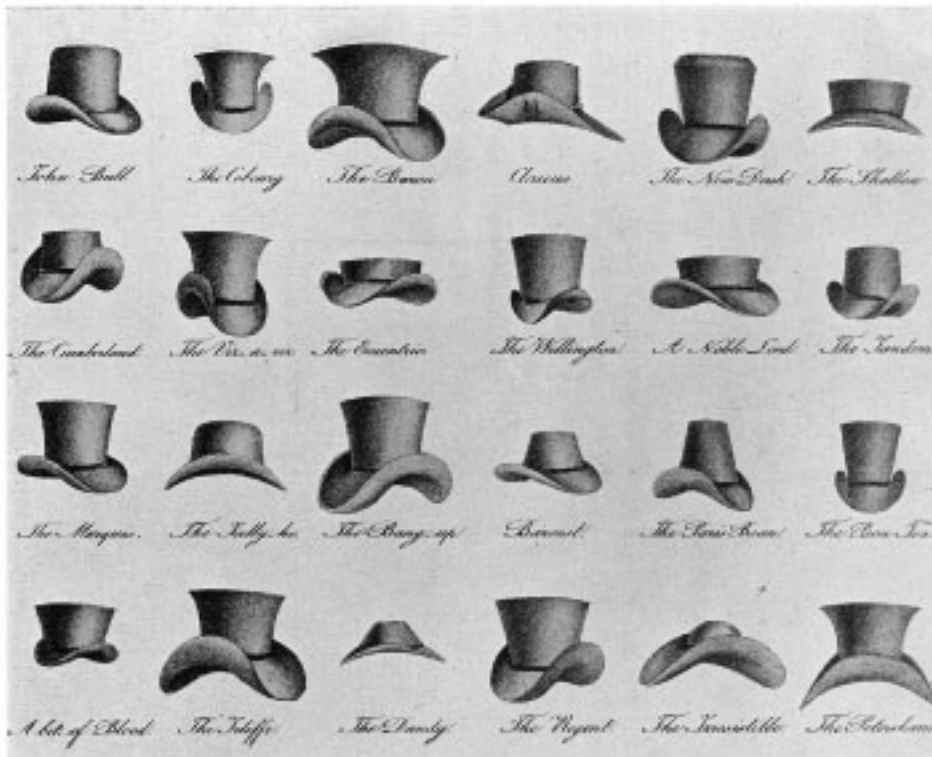
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Men's top hat styles, 1830.



Straw top hat, c. 1820-1825.



Chinese cap, 1834.

Three top hat styles: tall, tapered, flared, 1832.

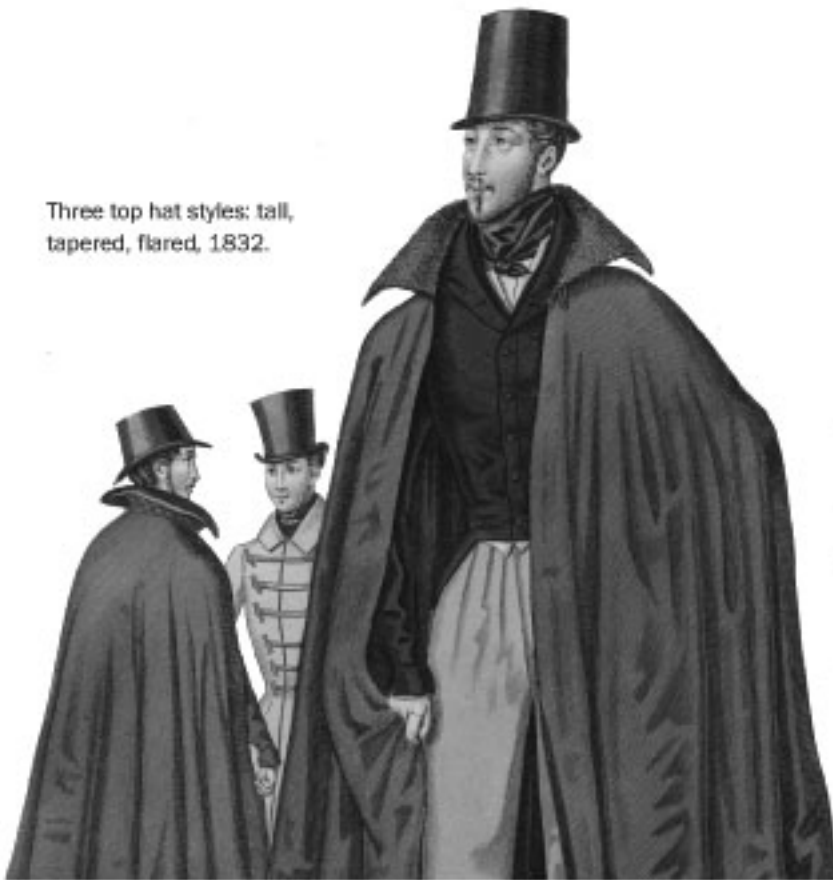


Figure 1.16. Men's top hats of the early nineteenth century were blocked into a wide assortment of shapes and heights. Some were straight cylinders and others either tapered or flared up from the crown. Brims typically dipped in the front and back with sides that curled up. Romanticism influenced *en dishabille* dress with hats inspired by styles from the Near East and Asia, such as the tasseled fez and Chinese cap.

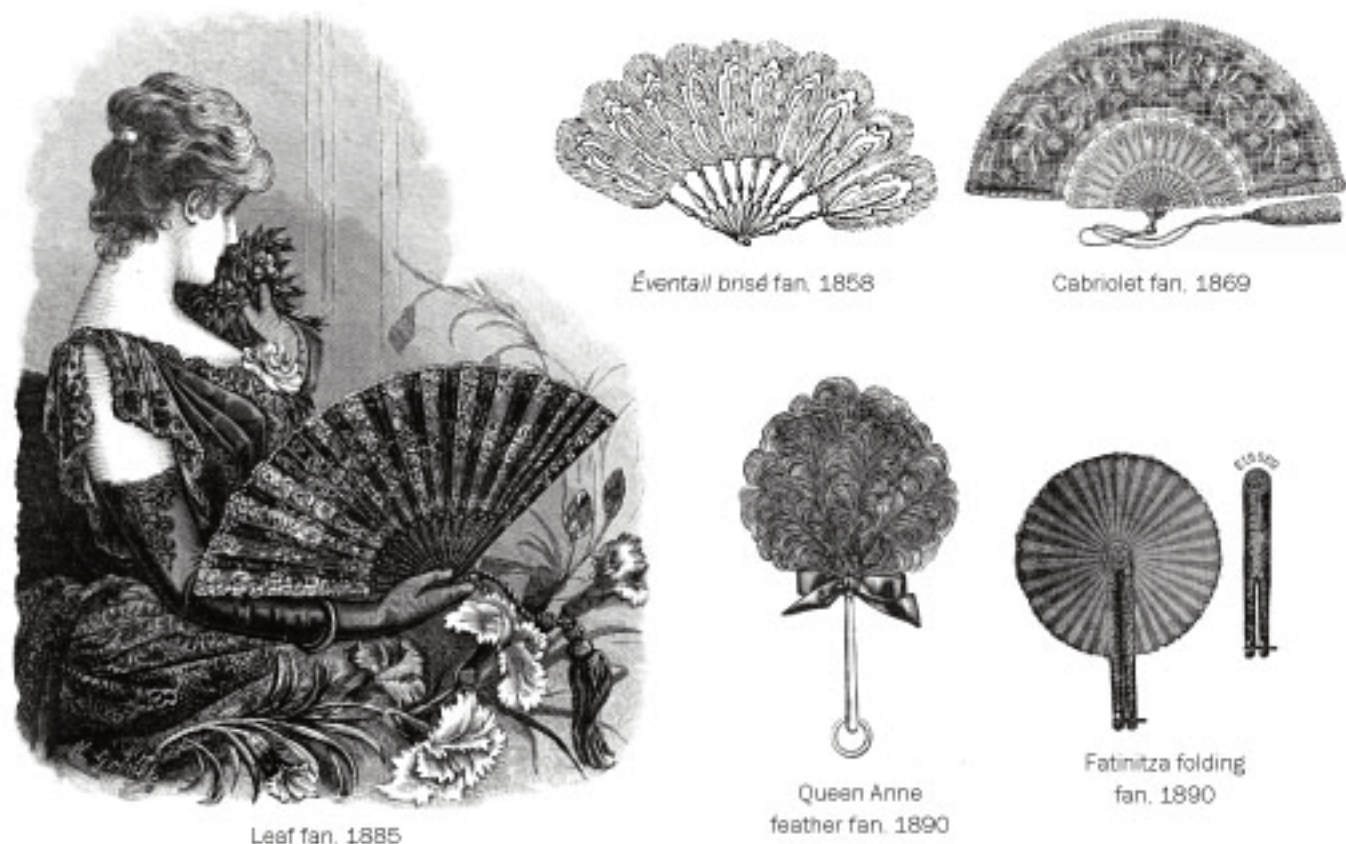


Figure 2.14. In the late 1800s, folding fans were as much as ever an accessory of the elite. Even though mass production reduced the cost of folding fans and made many more styles widely available, shop girls and office workers would have little opportunity for using one.

arranged with a fullness of folds or pleats and draped or tied at the front of the bodice.

New forms of neckline fillers for the Victorian era included berthas, which were tailored shoulder treatments and coverings. Most berthas were made with lace trimmed ruffles and varied in depth, depending on the time of day it was to be worn. Evening wear versions of the bertha were usually shallow to display the neck and clavicles; day wear berthas were deeper and higher, some covering the shoulders up to the neck. The bertha was popularized in America in the late 1850s by the Washington, D.C., socialite Harriet Lane, who served as the White House hostess for her bachelor uncle, President James Buchanan.⁴⁵

By the bustle era of the 1870s and 1880s, and espe-

cially in the leg-of-mutton era of the 1890s, detachable collars and cuffs were standard accessories in every woman's wardrobe. An assortment of detachable collars and cuffs, along with the many other varieties of neckwear and bodice accessories, made it possible for women to dramatically alter a few basic gowns with innumerable fresh looks week after week. At the end of the nineteenth century, mass produced collars and cuffs were of such fine quality that they were virtually indistinguishable from handcrafted versions. (Figure 2.14) And because of the abundant availability and affordability of such a wide assortment of such detachable accessories, women were continually adding to their collections. Indeed, even as gown silhouettes evolved, a woman's accumulation of lace or embroidered collars and cuffs was retained and



Art Nouveau brooches, 1901.



Arts and Crafts "pebble" necklace, 1904.



Earrings and necklaces, 1914.



Pendant brooch and necklace, 1912.

Figure 3.6. The Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts movements of the late nineteenth century had a significant impact on jewelry preferences of Edwardian women. The high style and hand-crafted quality of jewelry produced by designers working in these genres lessened the stigma against wearing non-precious and imitation styles of jewelry.

early 1910s were large, fluffy muffs made of fur, chiffon, or chenille, "and having purse openings into pockets for glasses and for all the vanity boxes and 'necessaries' which the elegant needs during the course of an evening."¹⁹

Women's Jewelry 1900–1914

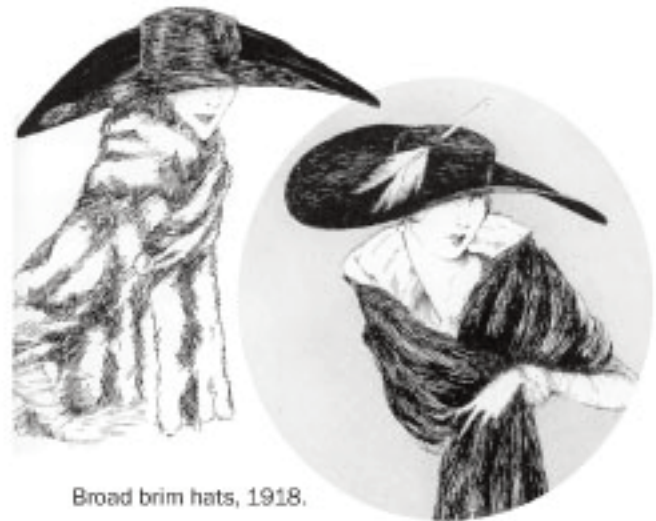
Fashions for the Edwardian woman were excessively ornamented and embellished with all manner of trim. The "lingerie look" of the early 1900s referred to gowns, shirt-waists, neckwear, hats, and parasols that were lavishly adorned with lace.²¹ Feathers, likewise, were a favorite

trim for collars, sleeves, muffs, boas, and especially hats. Also, beading was done to excess on everything from tea dresses and evening gowns to daytime accessories like purses and shoes.

In keeping with such a profusion of ornamental garnishments, jewelry, too, was worn in abundance, especially non-precious varieties. The stigma of wearing jewelry not made of precious metals and gems diminished in the early 1900s. Among the contributing factors were the Art Nouveau and the Arts and Crafts movements that emerged in the late nineteenth century, which emphasized handcrafted, high style designs made of materials such as silver, copper, enamels, art glass, and ce-



High crown hats, 1917.



Broad brim hats, 1918.



Main Street catalog hats, 1916.



Flapper cloches, 1929.

Figure 4.5. During World War I, the two high fashion hat designs featured either high, exaggerated crowns or broad, aerodynamic brims. On Main Street, though, the preferred wartime hat style had a low, rounded crown with a moderate brim. In the 1920s, the bell-shaped cloche became the iconic hat style.

though, the two prevalent trends that emerged were a dropped waistline and long, ankle-length hemlines. (Figure 4.4.) The dropped waistline came to define the fashions of the decade, but the longer hemlines were rejected by women. After three years of complaints from retailers and consumers, in 1925, designers finally raised hemlines to a radically short knee length—the shortest skirts since ancient times before the Christian era.

Accessories, too, evolved rapidly, introducing new drama such as the “skullcap” cloche, and discarding forever the hightop button boot. Important to the flapper were cosmetic vanity sets and cigarette cases, but she had no more use for parasols, fans, and daytime gloves than she did for corsets. Art deco styling of graphical, geomet-

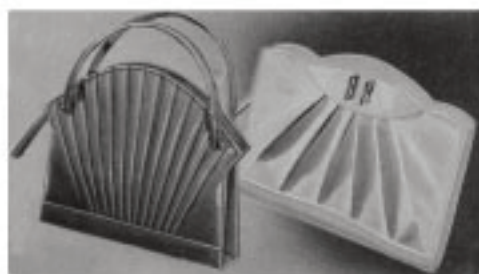
ric patterns was applied to every accessory item from head to toe.

Women’s Hats 1915–1929

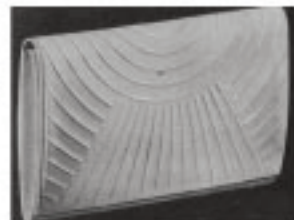
The two prevalent design features of women’s hats of the First World War were either high, exaggerated crowns or exceedingly wide brims. (Figure 4.5.) “Most of them have overdevelopment of the crown,” suggested *Vogue* in 1917, “and some...are almost all crown.”¹ On the other hand, wide brim styles were made more emphatic with low crowns and minimal trimmings. Many were “designed with an evident partiality to aircraft,” with “curved lines that suggest the blades of an airplane propeller.”² Both



Soft bags with expandable gathered sides, 1937.



Art deco styling, 1938.



Pocket leather ensemble including matching bracelet, necklace, belt and leather corsage, 1938.



Wood bead bags, 1938.

Figure 5.4. Handbags of the Depression era were large and capacious, constructed with expandable gussets and gathers to accommodate a woman's essentials as well as market purchases. Zippers for closures and inside pockets helped prevent spillage of contents. For the elongated wartime designs, plastics and fabrics were substituted for leather.



Winged bags, 1943.



"Mother/Daughter" fabric and wood frame bags, 1943.

Yet, jewelry was certainly not abandoned by the austere measurements taken by budget conscious women of the early 1930s. Catalogs of the time are filled with fine and costume jewelry of all types. Tiffany and Cartier continued to advertise their newest art deco jewelry designs—pieces that were striking in their modernity but far less ostentatious than a decade earlier. (Figure 5.5.) By 1933, jewelry became a leading indicator that fashion was

beginning to inch away from the sober simplicity of the darkest days of the Depression. That year Chanel presented an exhibit of fine jewelry in Paris and later in New York, which surprised the fashion press. "Not 'phony' jewels either," observed one editor, "such as the glass baubles she flung to the world back in the days when there was money to burn—baubles that she believed in then because they were 'without arrogance in a period of



Wide, "little girl look" shoes, 1969.



Buckle pump made of "wet-look" Corlam, 1968.



Louis XV tongue and buckle shoe, 1969.



White go-go boots, 1965.



Platforms, 1973.



Wooden clogs and wedges, 1978.

Figure 7.4. For the youthquake woman of the 1960s, the low, wide, "little girl look" in shoes was preferred for the thigh-high miniskirt. In the early seventies, shoes rose with thick platforms and high, chunky heels. At the end of the decade, shoes made of natural materials like raw wood and leather were popular with casual layered looks.

high heel, the platform sole actually began to develop in the late sixties. The 1969 Sears Shoe Place ad shown in Figure 7.4 features "platform" shoes with thickened soles of contrast leather. In 1972, the first platforms of a 1/2- to 3/4-inch thickness were in the news from Charles Jour-

dan and Yves St. Laurent. Heels remained thick, even when elevated to four inches high. The new platform shoe "has texture, sturdiness without being clunky, the lift of a platform, often a high heel, always an emphatic one."¹⁴ Despite the claim in this editorial that the sev-