

Colonial Clothing Vocabulary

From Williamsburg Colonial Clothing website <http://www.history.org/history/clothing/intro/>

Women's Clothing:

Hat- Worn for fashion and for protection against the sun, a lady out of doors almost always wore a hat. A fashionable hat usually had a very shallow, flat crown and a wide brim.

Lace Cap- Caps were worn by females of all ages to protect the hair from dirt, so that it did not need to be washed frequently.

Lace Neck Kerchief- A decorative shawl worn at the top of the gown. Often it is tucked into the stay.

Stomacher- A separate decorative triangular-shaped insert, either stitched, hooked, or straight pinned to the bodice of the gown or to the stays beneath.

Gown- The gown consisted of the bodice and skirt joined together with the skirt open in the front to reveal the separate petticoat, which was an essential part of the dress and not an undergarment.

Lace Apron- A decorative apron worn over the petticoat.

Silk Petticoat- A petticoat refers to a skirt or skirts worn beneath the gown, seen or unseen.

Shoes- Ladies' fashionable shoes were made in a variety of materials, including silks, worsteds, and leathers.

Stockings- Knit of wool, linen, cotton, or silk. Stockings were held up by ribbon-like garters tied above the knee.

Shift-The innermost garment worn by a woman. Made of linens, usually with drawstrings, at neck and sleeves. Sometimes trimmed with lace.

Hooped Petticoat- Hoops give width to the hip and may serve as pockets beneath the gown.

Stay- Stays refer to an 18th Century under-garment reinforced with narrow strips of whalebone, metal or wood. Stays give proper shape and posture to the body.

Men's Clothing:

Hat- This three-cornered hat is made of felt and is one of the most fashionable hats worn by men in the 1770's.

Wig- Made of human, horse, goat, or yak hair, the choice of material and styles changed constantly with fashion and personal preferences.

Coat- Fashionable coats are closely cut, knee-length garments. The shoulder and sleeves are narrowly fit.

Waistcoat- That part of a man's small clothes that covered the upper body and is worn under the coat. Today this is known as a vest.

Breeches- A well-fitted garment covering the lower body from waist to knees.

Stockings- Coverings for the leg and foot. Knit mostly of silk, cotton, linen, and wool.

Shoes- Fashionable shoes have straight soles, with no left or right until shaped by the wearer's feet.

Cane- A cane or walking stick is a popular accessory.

Shirt- A man's shirt of white linen is his undermost garment, with the shirt tails falling to the knees, worn tucked inside the breeches.