

CSCMVA

HELPFUL HINTS FOR LIVING HISTORY PARTICIPANTS

From the Costume Committee

Since its inception, our efforts at presenting Living History seem to get better and better. Why? Well, in part, our success stems from the enthusiasm and hard work of all the participants. Another part of what makes it so successful, particularly for those who come to watch, is that each year we strive to become more and more historically accurate.

This resource focuses on historical accuracy in dress and appearance.

Don't let these new (old?) guidelines overwhelm you. Becoming someone else is part of the adventure of Living History. Not everyone has the opportunity to step back in time as we do.

Toward that end, here are some helpful suggestions:

For the Ladies

- Dresses:** CSCMVA's Costume Closet has a variety of costumes that can be borrowed for Living History events. However, you may want to have your own 1906 and/or 1911 blouse and skirt, dress or suit. The Costume Committee has annual workshops to help you construct your costume.
- Make-up:** The ladies in this era, of course, wore none. Few of us are that brave these days, so we have fudged a bit and been allowed a foundation make-up and mascara, but no rouge, eyeliner, shadow or lipstick.
- Scents:** Lavender water was the scent of the day. For those wearing their own costumes, this would be perfectly acceptable. Unfortunately, for the costumes from the Costume Closet, scents of any kind have an adverse effect on the fabric. We request that now scent or powder be used when these costumes are worn.
- Jewelry:** There is a vast selection of wonderful jewelry available. Attached is a page from "Vintage Clothing: 1900-1919" illustrating the variety. Remember, our modern watches and earrings should not be worn.
- Hats:** No self-respecting lady would have been seen in public without a hat. The attached pages from "Vintage Clothing" shows the abundant variety and can be used when making your own hat historically accurate. The Costume Committee has annual workshops to help you construct your hat.
- Neck Covers:** No proper Edwardian woman would allow her neck to show in public. If her collar did not sufficiently cover her neck, she would wear a neck cover – a piece of gathered lace attached to her hair to ensure proper modesty. The Costume Closet has these available.

Hair Styles: No discussion of hats can be complete without discussing hair. Today's hairstyles do not match hats of yesteryear. Our chief problem seems to be getting the hat in the correct position and then getting it to stay in that position on the head. Hatpins do help. Costume Committee members may have additional suggestions.

The proper hairdo is the basis for making it work. We suggest hairpieces or wigs. The attachment shows some styles for 1905-06 (figures A-H). Hair was worn neat and tidy and *without* tendrils (loose curls).

Gloves: Edwardian women seemed to be covered from head to toes when in public. All ladies wore gloves. The length of gloves depended on the length of the sleeve. The aim was to have the arm totally covered. "Vintage Clothing" excerpts offer some ideas on what to wear.

Shoes: Again, "Vintage Clothing" provides some suggestions. High-top shoes were still being worn. The "Louie" heel was popular. These styles might be found in shoe stores today. The Costume Closet has a few as well.

When performing in Living History events, "period" styles are preferred. However, they may not be practical when on your feet all day. Because dresses nearly reach the floor, some latitude is allowed.

For the Men

Suits: Sack Coats and Frock Coats (morning coats similar to "tails") were the fashion of the day. CSCMVA's Costume Closet has a few jackets, shirts and collars that can be borrowed for Living History events. However, you may want to have your own. The Costume Committee should be consulted before purchasing a coat, as they are a somewhat costly investment. Fortunately, men's styles changed little between 1906 and 1911. Your suit jacket can be worn for either time period.

Shirts: Tuxedo shirts work well for our time period and can be purchased locally or online. The front pleats / tucks were not appropriate, but will be covered by a vest.

Pants: It is suggested you wear your own pants. Men's pants of the era tended to have a narrow leg. Because they are not readily available, we allow wider pants. Avoid front pleats. Black or dark gray is best.

Vests: If you wore a suit, you wore a vest. The Costume Closet has a few that can be borrowed for Living History events. They are somewhat easy to find online or have made for you.

Vest should have six buttons and coordinate with your jacket. Fabrics were plain, tweed or subtle stripes in black, gray or charcoal, brown, tan or navy. A particularly fashionable character might wear red or a pattern. Check with the Costume Committee before purchasing one.

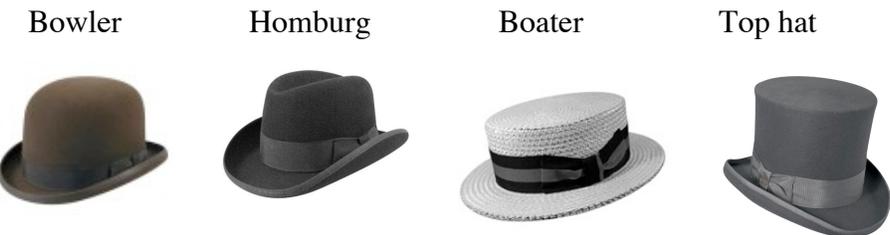
Ties: The illustrations show mostly long ties, but there were bow ties and ascots as well. The Costume Closet has several bow ties, but has been unable to find period authentic long ties.

Collars: As you see from the attachments, men of the period wore all kinds of collars. The Costume Closet has a variety – all equally uncomfortable. Another reason to purchase your own tuxedo shirt.

Hats: Gentlemen wore hats and used walking sticks when out and about. Bowlers and Homburgs were worn in winter months. Boaters (also known as “Skimmers or the straw hats worn by barbershop singers) were popular in warmer months. Top hats were worn for special occasions.

Since most of our activities take place indoors, hats are not required. But the Costume Closet does have hats and walking sticks for anyone feeling especially fashionable and trendy.

Hats.com illustrates the various hats for the era. Shown below:



Hair Styles: The center part seemed to be favored, although some men did use a side part.

Beards and Although most men appear to be clean-shaven, some wore beards.

Moustaches: Moustaches were still popular in our time period.

The Costume Committee hopes these short descriptions have been of some help in getting ready for Living History events. If you need assistance with your costume or have questions, contact:

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