

GREAT COLONIAL AMERICA PROJECTS YOU CAN BUILD YOURSELF

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Ages 9-12, non-fiction, history

Great Colonial America Projects You Can Build Yourself (Nomad Press, 2006 ISBN: 09771294-0-3) introduces readers ages 9–12 to colonial America through hands-on building projects that use common household supplies. From dyeing and spinning yarn to weaving cloth, from creating tin plates and lanterns to learning wattle and daub construction, Great Colonial America Projects You Can Build Yourself gives readers a chance to experience how colonial Americans lived, cooked, entertained themselves, and interacted with their neighbors. Detailed step-by-step instructions, diagrams, and templates for creating each project combine with historical facts and anecdotes, biographies, and trivia for the real-life models of each project. Together they give kids a first-hand look at the daily life of our American ancestors.

MAKE YOUR OWN MOBCAP

During colonial times, it was considered improper to go about without a head covering - leaving the house without a hat was like going out only partially dressed! Most women and girls wore mobcaps, which were plain and gathered around the head with a tie. The caps served a practical purpose, too. Covering up the hair prevented it from becoming soiled from all of the daily work. Smoke from fires, dust, and grease from cooking would all take its toll on hair. In a society where bathing was infrequent - it was thought to be unhealthy to wash hair too often - it was easier to put on a clean cap. Just as the caps kept one's hair clean, the opposite was true as well. Ladies who powdered, greased and perfumed their hair - as was the style - slept with a mobcap in order to protect the bed linens from all of their cosmetics. Mobcaps were also worn under fancier bonnets and head pieces.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

One-half yard of cotton fabric or an old pillowcase
Pencil
Scissors
Safety pin
A 3' length of narrow ribbon
Tape
Lace (optional)
Glue/needle and thread

WHAT TO DO:

1. Cut an 18" circle from the fabric (if there's a large platter in your house, this might work as a template to trace around).
2. Use a pencil to lightly mark a line 3" in from the cut edge, all the way around. Use your scissors to snip holes large enough to slip a safety pin through, about 2 inches apart all along this line.
3. Pin a safety pin to the end of the ribbon.
4. Starting at any hole, push the safety pin up through one hole and down through the next one. To prevent the ribbon from pulling all the way through, use a bit of tape to secure the ribbon's end to the fabric. Follow this up and down pattern all the way around the cap until you are within two inches of your starting place. Make certain that your last stitch leaves the tail of the ribbon out on the same side of the fabric as your starting ribbon.
5. Lightly gather the fabric along the ribbon, and make sure that the ribbon tails are of equal length. Tie a knot about 4" from the end of each ribbon to prevent the ribbon from accidentally being pulled out. If you'd like, you can glue lace around the edge of your mobcap.
6. To wear your mobcap, place it on your head and pull the ribbon to make it fit snugly on your head. Tie the ribbons in a bow to hold it in place.

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