

Hatatorium: An Essential Guide for Hat Collectors

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by Brenda Grantland, Mary Robak,
Tammy Markwick, Jeffrey Moss & friends

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How to Use This Interactive eBook

As hat books go, this one is revolutionary. It is both a book and a website, with links to numerous other websites. Another revolutionary aspect is that, even though the book itself is static and will not change unless you purchase a new edition, the accompanying website will continue to grow and expand, as our hat collections grow and as other hat collectors join us and open Guest Albums displaying their hats.

If you see a thumbnail photo of the label or a hat style photo to the left of a style or milliner name heading, click the "eye" icon button (<O>) between the thumbnail photo and the style or milliner heading, and your web browser will instantly display the accompanying album of photos in our Hatatorium gallery, containing 4,000 to 5,000 photos. Many other links lead to fine examples of hats in various museums around the world, and websites of millinery supply sources and other informative internet resources. Some of the links lead to short videos we have created and posted on the accompanying website.

To search for a milliner, style or term, use the table of contents -- or just use the search function in your e-Reader or the Adobe Reader (if you're using the pdf version on your computer).

If you want to browse in the website photo gallery that supports this book, here are the links to the major albums.

Chapter 7, [Materials](#)

Chapter 8, [Hat styles](#)

Chapter 9, [Milliners](#)

Click on a highlight picture in these chapters and it opens the corresponding album, displaying numerous photos of examples of that style, milliner, etc. Click on the first picture and it opens a larger version of the picture, with a caption containing further information. To go on to the next photo, click the next button in the lower right corner of the screen.

To quickly go to any sub-album, use the pull-down menu in the Album Tree, in the right sidebar, midway down the page.

You can access the accompanying website directly by going to <http://www.Hatatorium.com>. Click the Gallery button to go directly into the photo gallery. Check the Publications page for information about updates to this book. Additional free information for hat collectors can be found in the Tips, Links and Videos pages. And please check out our new marketplace for vintage hats and other treasures, [Hatatorium Emporium](#).

When this eBook cites to an example in one of the online museums, use these URLs to find the museum on your computer, and then put the name of the milliner in the search box to find the examples we cited.

[Brigham Young Collection](#) in the Mountain West Digital Library - <http://155.97.12.155/mwdl>.

[Indianapolis Museum of Art](#) - <http://www.imamuseum.org/art/collections>.

[Los Angeles County Museum of Art](#) - <http://collectionsonline.lacma.org>.

[Metropolitan Museum of Art](http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections) in New York City (including the Brooklyn Costume Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art) <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections>.

[Museum of Fine Arts Boston](http://www.mfa.org/) - <http://www.mfa.org/>.

[Philadelphia Museum of Art](http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/search.html) - <http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/search.html>

[University of North Texas](http://digital.library.unt.edu/search) Digital Library - <http://digital.library.unt.edu/search>.

[Victoria and Albert Museum](http://collections.vam.ac.uk) - <http://collections.vam.ac.uk>.

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***Introduction:
A love affair with hats***



Since I was a little girl I have adored hats. Spring meant my new Easter hat and it was always something bold and dramatic. In childhood photos I was often wearing a hat.

In the mid 1970s at the University of Alabama, I began collecting vintage hats. A Tuscaloosa thrift store became my favorite haunt. I bought over 40 hats there, a number of which I still have today. The senior volunteer ladies there were amazed that I loved hats in the hatless 1970s. Encouraged by my enthusiasm, they happily brought in their lifetime collections and donated them to the charity thrift store just so I could buy them. Nobody else I knew wore or collected hats in the 1970s, but my roommates and I often wore vintage hats (and vintage clothes) to class.

In 1976, I moved to Washington D.C. and stayed until 1992, adding many favorites from D.C. and Virginia yard sales and estate sales. Some of my favorite hat memories are built around those early days of collecting. Through an elegant elderly couple and their charming daughter, I added some new labels and styles from a particularly upscale source. Moving to Europe from their tony D.C. home, these fine folks were selling not only their museum quality furnishings, but when they saw my interest, they also offered me a number of hats they hadn't planned to sell. What a gold mine that was.

One of my favorite hats, the brown velvet hat with two "made birds" created from real birds of paradise feathers (shown above), was found at Kitty Smith Antiques in Arlington, Virginia in 1979. I've managed to keep it in pristine condition, after 30 years and many moves.

In 1992 I moved to California. I had over 100 hats -- too many to pack. I had to sell over half of my collection. My yard sale brought early bird antique dealers, some of them dealers I had bought hats from in the past. I felt good about letting the hats go to people I knew who appreciated them.

At my new home in California I found the yard sales and estate sales were bountiful sources of hats, but life and work intruded and my time for collecting dwindled. I found it too hard to get up early on a Saturday. My hat collection remained in boxes in the closet, to be opened only occasionally when hat-lover friends visited. We would try them on and laugh, then laboriously wrap them up in tissue paper and nestle them all together in the box.

Until the summer of 2010, I hadn't opened the boxes to look at my early collection in several years -- although I had started collecting more hats again, having discovered the hat collecting potential of eBay.

For my birthday in July 2010 I decided to buy myself a hat from a designer I had recently discovered, Jack McConnell. That birthday wish started a hat buying frenzy. Not only did I collect lots of new hats, but it introduced me to fellow hat collectors, including Mary Robak, who sold me one of my Jack McConnells. This led to a desire to share my new finds and knowledge with my new hat collector friends. I found vintage hat resource books and saw many hats similar to hats in my collection. Recognizing I was sitting on a treasure trove of vintage hats I had owned for years but knew little about, I broke out the boxes of hats to photograph them. It was like having a reunion with old friends. I hated to put them away. They sat around in my living room for a week or more, and friends who came to visit were fascinated and had to try them on. After trying them on, some developed an interest in hats and began collecting too.

I got the idea of putting the pictures up on my website to share with my collector friends in other parts of the country, and the [Hatatorium gallery](#) was born. Those experiences brought me to this project, writing an eBook for hat collectors, and that led in November 2012 to the creation of the [Hatatorium Emporium](#), where I'm selling part of my collection, which grew to over 400 hats while I was researching this book.

With the helpful assistance of some hat collecting friends, we bring you what we hope will become a vital reference resource about the wonderful world of vintage hat collecting.

We hope that these pages and the pictures on line will inspire others to collect and wear hats, vintage and contemporary. Why? Hats are good for the spirit. They make people chuckle, smile, make a face, or assume a character when they pose for the camera. Hats keep you warm, keep the hair out of your eyes, cover bald spots, and prevent sunburn. They give you an air of mystery, confidence, comedy, or whatever you want to portray. Vintage hats carry with them the aura and the secrets of the people who once wore them. You can feel it when you try them on. It's a little bit of history sitting briefly on your head. Isn't that a good enough reason?

-- Brenda Grantland

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Another Hat Person's World of Hats



When I was 16, I found my first job at Evelyn's, a hat shop on Milwaukee Avenue in Chicago. That was just before Easter 1966. Since then I have been hooked on hats.

In 1974 I shopped for my wedding dress, I discovered that I spent more time and money on the wide brim ecru hat from Marshall Field's. The hat was my treasured item of that special day.

Decades later I started doing Vintage shows in the nursing home where my mother spent her last few years. It started with quilts, which were too heavy to carry around, too heavy to pass around to the attendees, and too precious to get dirty. Accessories became the focus, finally only hats. The shows became a part of my life. I have done many and will continue to do these shows locally.

Through the years my family gave me books about hats. Research is almost as much fun as collecting hats and showing hats. Christmas 2010 brought me my first iPad and I spent the rest of the day researching old *Chicago Tribune* newspapers for anything millinery since the 1800s. I'm still researching those newspapers.

People always ask me where I find my wonderful hats. Rummage sales, online and occasional estate sales were the sources of most of my collection.

My search often led me to interesting people as well as hats.

One unforgettable experience began with a search for Bes Ben and Raymond Hudd hats for an upcoming hat show. I came across an ad listing "300+ hats... 18 Bes Bens." I was only able to buy one Bes Ben and two Raymond Hudds, however, I asked the estate sale seller if the owners would lend me the unsold Bes Bens for my hat show later that week. The owner agreed to the loan and when I returned, he showed me a hat style that looked (to me) like the famed Independence Hat sold at the Doyle auction in New York for over \$18,000.

The owner (who inherited the hats from his sister, a famous hat collector) knew little of how his sister accumulated so many collectibles, and little about hats. He had been advised the whimsical Bes Bens should be sold for more in a different manner, perhaps auction. He had over 80 hats and he agreed to allow them to be photographed. Over time he graciously sold me the “leftover, non Bes Ben hats;” a couple hundred of them.

Another major influence was the famous Chicago milliner, Raymond Hudd, whom I had the good fortune to come to know. I met him after locating him thru his brother Ivan after seeing a response from Ivan on the Chicago History Museum’s blog. Visiting him at his Michigan nursing home for over a year, he inspired me and influenced me to do a show of his hats. He gave me far more joy than he ever knew. As a milliner wannabe and avid hat collector, he has been a great inspiration.

Hats have a way of making connections between people. Christmas 2009, my daughter set up a blog and my Etsy store, [FrouFrou4YouYou](#). My blog focuses on millinery and especially Chicago millinery history. My Etsy store, and now [Hatatorium Emporium](#), is for culling out the collection to make room for more.

At Christmas 2010, I listed a couple of hats on Etsy. In January 2011 I decided to recycle some good items from my collection to be enjoyed by other hat enthusiasts. My first customer was Brenda. That's how we met.

Now we are here, sharing what we have learned from others.

My greatest contribution to this exciting project are research and new additions to the milliner’s list of Chapter 9. We intend to continue expanding this list in future editions.

We hope that you too will enjoy the special spark each of the milliners brought to hat collecting and its history.

-- Mary Robak

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Chapter 1: Hats Come Out of the Closet

In the summer of 2010 when Brenda shared with friends the great Jack McConnell hats she found on eBay, they were surprised that she collected hats. "But, you never wear hats," they said. They were right. Although we love hats, we often felt intimidated about wearing our wonderful hats. But no more.

While sharing our collections with friends, we've seen the transformations as they try on their favorites. Friends who were latent hat collectors, or who used to wear hats but haven't in decades have begun collecting and wearing hats again. If you haven't tried it, you should. You cannot imagine how good it feels to have total strangers smile and compliment your hat. When they inevitably comment that they wish they had the nerve to wear them, we must say to them:

It is time to take your hats out of the closet and wear them!

Hats are making a mainstream comeback. Recent retro and period dramas featured on television *Boardwalk Empire*, the *Mildred Pierce* mini-series, and *Mad Men* have sent new hat collectors out looking for vintage hats. During the Recession, hats from the first Great Depression seem particularly timely again. They are so flattering - and they look fresh and new when worn with contemporary clothes.

Princess Caroline's royal wedding hat created media and internet hat madness. That Philip Treacy hat was typical of his extraordinary wearable art. Hate it or love it, you can't help but notice it. Mention Princess Kate Middleton on television or in a magazine and we look to see what kind of hat she is wearing. That, my friends, is accessory influence.

The newspaper style sections and fashion magazines report that hats are in again. One merely needs to click – or read – *NY Times* Style section or any fashion magazine to see hats complementing contemporary and vintage fashion. The re-discovery of vintage hats was the theme of the [Blondie comic strip on September 25, 2011](http://blondie.com/strip.php?month=9&year=2011&comic=2011-9-25). See <http://blondie.com/strip.php?month=9&year=2011&comic=2011-9-25>.

Not only are new hats appearing more often in fashion collections, but vintage hat collecting seems to be on the rise.

In the summer of 2010 when Brenda started collecting [Jack McConnell](#) hats, her first three red feather label purchases cost under \$100. Within a month or two, prices were rising. The good Jack McConnell hats were selling for \$120 or more, with some auctions peaking in the hundreds. Jack McConnell hats began changing hands more and more frequently on eBay. Even in the recession his red feather label hats often sell in the hundreds of dollars. In November 2011 a Jack McConnell red feather that one of our friends was hoping to buy sold on eBay for \$620.

In the first edition of this book we were surprised at how many hats were coming up for sale on line. In mid-summer 2011, eBay's women's vintage hat category listed over 9,000 items, which we thought was phenomenal at the time. By late November 2011, there were more than 10,500 items listed, which we reported with astonishment in the first edition of this e-book. As of this writing in early December 2012, eBay averages over 14,000 listings in its vintage women's hat category - and some of those listings are lots with multiple hats! Not to be surpassed, Etsy is

overrun with them, now boasting an overwhelming 49,000 vintage hats (and an even more overwhelming 432,000 hand made new hats).

In the past year we have seen prices rise dramatically for certain collectible milliners, but there are still fabulous bargains to be had on line these days. We are not sure what is causing so many great collectible hats to be listed all at once. Last year we opined that it may have been the closures of many antique and vintage clothing stores that were either going out of business in the recession or expanding to online venues. With the influx of listings continuing to rise, the more likely explanation is the aging of the population. Senior citizens often held onto their prize hats, even decades after hats went out of fashion, but when they have to downsize to a senior care facility storage becomes a problem. Heirs who inherit a relative's collection often see dollar signs but don't know how to value them - much less describe them accurately. Television programs like *American Picker* and *Antiques Roadshow* teach heirs and family members that items formerly dumped at charity based outlets are now too valuable to donate.

Hat collectors are also discovering the miracle of online collecting. What better way to add to the collection of your favorite milliner than to shop from thousands of vintage hats available on the internet? There is no need to get up early on Saturdays to be the first in line at estate sales or drive all over town to vintage clothing stores and thrift stores every week -- you can sit at your computer and window shop.

Once you get the hang of it, bidding on eBay is quite fun - although it can be as addictive as gambling. "Look what I won today!" we say to our hat friends. It is exhilarating to put in the magic number in the last few seconds of the auction and come up the winner. Then you click over to Paypal and the transaction is over without ever having to open your wallet. It doesn't feel like spending money. Then you get to wait in anticipation of a present that arrives in the mail.

In addition to the addictive qualities, there are a few other dangers and pitfalls of buying hats on the internet. Aside from buyers remorse, and hats that don't fit because you didn't check the size, there are the unexpected disappointments offered up by inexperienced and callous sellers. From undisclosed flaws and odors, to receiving a hat squashed into a box too small for the hat - or even an envelope - there are occasional downsides to online buying. Nothing can describe the disappointment when a hat you eagerly anticipated arrives damaged by an uncaring seller. However, all these bad experiences help you become a better buyer and, ultimately, a better seller - if, like us, you find that you have to start selling some of your overflow of hats to make room for more.

Later in this eBook we offer our tips and techniques for becoming a smart buyer and a 100% feedback seller.

Fortunately for those of us who enjoy wearing hats, a stunning vintage hat can sometimes be purchased for a fraction of the cost of a new hat. With hats being locked in the closet and seldom worn for decades, today no previous hat style is passe. Great hats from any era look fresh and new combined with today's fashions. With the current popularity of new retro styles, many hats from half a century ago could easily be confused with the latest millinery design.

As 18th Century milliner Rose Bertin said, "the only new thing is that which has been forgotten."

Chapter 6: Sleuthing the Provenance

Valuing Hats

One of the first things a collector or reseller wants to know is "what is it worth?" The problem is, it's all very subjective.

Obviously you want to find out what comparable hats sell for in the chosen venue. The problem is, with millions of vintage hats in the world, you rarely find two alike, so "comparable" is a very subjective judgment. Look for hats of a similar style, attractiveness and condition, from the same era, and from the same milliner or store if possible. Find several sales prices and average them.

The Find website (<http://www.thefind.com>), among others, allows word searches for listings across numerous online sites. Just remember that, just because a hat is offered for sale at a particular price does not mean the item will sell for that much. Even when the item sells, often there is no way to tell whether it sold for the price listed or the seller accepted a lower offer.

Hat books sometimes quote values, and those are helpful, although values vary with the economy and venue. See Chapter 10 for hat books that contain price guides.

Dating hats

One clue to a hat's probable era is the style of the hat. Compare the shape and features of the hat to the styles in Chapter 8 and the accompanying examples in the website [Styles album](#). Because many styles were seen in several different eras - or all of them - subtle differences in the style may be all that distinguishes a 1920s or 1930s hat from one made in the 1960s.

The best research tools for researching the date of a vintage hat by the style are old catalogs and fashion magazines, but most people don't have access to those. It is very difficult to find them even in public libraries, but they can be purchased on eBay and at flea markets. Serious hat collectors should watch for vintage magazines and catalogs to add to their research libraries.

Some online resources provide depictions of hat styles by era. Collector's Weekly [describes styles by era](#), and has a [show and tell](#) section where users can post questions and other users answer them. The [Fashion-Era](#) website has a huge amount of information, arranged by era, often illustrated with drawings. Oregon hat collector Dianna Hanson, whose private collection includes over 1,000 hats, has a very valuable albums of hat photos [arranged by decade](#).

Some of the most important clues for dating a hat, and for determining whether it is a reproduction or counterfeit, hide inside the crown of the hat. The type of lining or hat band, the materials, the style of any labeling, the grips or other mechanisms for securing the hat to the head, and the trims - sometimes lend sufficient clues to estimate the era of a hat within a decade or two - without even considering the style.

Important clues can be found by looking up the information written on the labels. Often there are labels for the milliner who designed the hat, the department store that sold it, and a stamp in the crown showing the hat body manufacturer. All of these names can be looked up in the directory of milliners. See Chapter 9.

Sometimes you can narrow down the era of the hat in one direction by the style, and then narrow it further by ascertaining the dates the milliner was in business. Details about the construction methods or materials may further triangulate the probable date of your hat. See Chapter 7.

The following is an era by era summary of basic changes in styles. The styles named below are described in detail in Chapter 8.

1900 - 1914

Natural materials including real horsehair were used exclusively to manufacture hats before the 1920s. Horsehair was woven into lace or narrow strips, and then the strips sewn together into a hat shape (much like straw hat construction), leaving the horsehair portion of the hat see-through. Horsehair was also used as trim.

Hats made before 1920 often had a wire structure especially around the rim. There was often a cloth bag with a draw string sewn into the crown which were stuffed with tissue paper to adjust the fit.

Hats were often very large with wide brims e.g. the Merry Widow. They were held in place with very long hat pins - sometimes so long they posed a danger to others. In 1909 the Arkansas legislature introduced legislation to outlaw hat pins longer than 9 inches.

Grandiose exotic feathers were used -- birds of paradise, ostrich, osprey, heron and egret. Taxidermy birds as well as artificial "made birds" (constructed of feathers over a cork or cotton bat body) were frequently seen on hats of this era. Ribbons, lace, silk flowers and feathers could all be seen in the same hat. Wide chiffon veils were often attached to tie the hat on. Also seen in this era were women's tams, fedoras and panama hats similar to the men's styles.

Men's styles: collapsible opera hat (Gibus), homburg, flat cap, boater, silk top hat, bowler, porkpie.

World War I - 1914 - 1918

Popular styles included: the Basque beret, circular bandeaus worn around the forehead with upstanding aigrettes, silk hats, sailors, beehive crowned hats and square-ish hats with downturned narrow brims (precursors of the cloche).

In the late 1910s the Audubon Society was successful in getting laws passed banning the importation or sale of exotic or migratory bird feathers. Made birds (artificial birds constructed of bird feathers on a cork or other form) were still sometimes seen on hats after that, but not as frequently. In this country, dyed goose and chicken feathers were substituted for the banned feathers. Paris was not bound by those laws and continued using exotic bird feathers.

After the war, the simple cloche came into style. Women wore top hats for horseback riding. Turbans and wide brims were popular too.

1920s

Cloches from the 1920s fit tightly around the head, covering the forehead to the eyebrows. Hatpins were merely decorative. A variation on the cloche was the capeline which had a cloche-like crown and an oval brim, wide on the sides and narrow in front and back. The brim curved down on each side. Asymmetrical brims were seen on capelines and cloches, with the brim wider on one side. Sometimes the brim was long all the way around, but was folded back against the crown in front, like a Sou'wester.

Other women's styles included beret, sailor, tam, toque, tricorn, turban and top hats for riding. Men wore snap brim fedoras and berets.

1930s

Cloches were made shallower and rode higher, exposing the forehead. Hats became very small, and perched off center near the front of the head. Beginning in the 1930s, elastic bands were commonly used to hold on doll hats. The elastic was looped under the hair in back, not worn under the chin. Tilts from the 1930s and 1940s were held on by a rigid loop or flap of felt in the back into which hat pins could be pinned to fasten the hat to the hair. Other popular styles for women: bowler, cossack, Empress Eugenie, fez, Juliet cap, sailor, slouch, snood, toque, turban, tricorn, tyrolean (Robin Hood influenced style). Hats often had nose length veils. Furs were very popular, including fox, leopard, mink, Persian lamb, sheared beaver. Popular feathers: coq, hackle, eagle, ostrich, pheasant.

Paris continued to dictate millinery styles during this period, though the Great Depression put a damper on American's buying power. Many American hat manufacturers rushed to Paris each season to bring back original hats from Paris which they copied and sold -- labeled as "copy of" Agnes, Paulette, etc. -- for greatly reduced prices. The label "Reproduction of" meant a copy true to the original; the label "Adaptation of" meant an American variation of the original design. Several American milliners who became famous in their own right began by creating authorized reproductions of French designs. G. Howard Hodge and Madcaps both got their start copying Paris originals. Their labels often accompanied a label proclaiming that the reproduction an authorized reproduction of such and such French designer.

Chapter 8: Hat Styles

Novice hat collectors and sellers are often at a loss when it comes to naming the style of hat they are looking for, or trying to sell. Searching through listings on eBay for the proper terminology is confusing -- and fraught with erroneous information. A seller who only knows a few names for hats -- pillbox, cloche, derby and top hat -- can be easily led astray by eBay or Etsy sellers who boldly describe a hat style incorrectly. They sound so convincing, it's hard to know that they are wrong. Unfortunately, it does matter what the style of hat is called, because without the proper terms in the title and/or description, a buyer doing a word search for a favorite hat style will not find the listing. You also need to know what the hat style is in order to look up information on it to determine the probable era of the hat.

To make up for their lack of knowledge, many eBay or Etsy sellers string together a lot of commonly overused terms for hats, which amount to a lot of jibberish. Calling your hat a boho hippie, flapper, rockabilly, roaring 20s, madmen (or even "admen"), bird cage veil, topper tends to signal that you are a novice hat seller. The "Roaring 20s" was an era when "flappers" wore cloches, capelines, sculls and wide brims. "Hippies" were never called "boho" and there were many hat styles common in the 1960s - 1970s which were worn by hippies. Rockabilly is a type of music, generally associated with 1940s-1950s clothing, but no particular hat styles. "Topper" is a slang term for a top hat, but eBay sellers often label any kind of hat a "topper" - or a "fascinator" - an even more often misused term. Same with "steampunk" which can be a style of hat, but not necessarily what eBay sellers think. "Bird cage veil" is a term eBay sellers use to refer to a whimsy or just any hat with a veil.

It is important to describe hats with the proper terminology if you want to attract avid collectors. Using the proper terms increases the odds that a buyer will find it in word searches, and instills confidence in the seller's expertise.

Every style of hat has a name commonly used when the hat was popular, although there may be other synonyms for the same style of hat in different eras. The best sources of the proper terminology for hat styles are magazines and catalogs from the period in which the hat was made, but of course most of us don't have access to a library of old magazines and catalogs. Hat books, such as this book and the books listed in Chapter 10, are the next best source of information, along with the Hatatorium website gallery and the other website resources listed in Chapter 10.

Basic hat styles have existed for centuries, and come back into style again and again with variations. Many hats are not pure examples of one style of hat, but hybrids of two or more styles, often updated with features peculiar to the era. So, though cloches were popular in the 1920s, 1930s, 1970s and today, the styles differ enough between the eras that a trained eye can tell them apart.

The styles are alphabetized below. If you see an "eye" (<O>) between a photo and the name, it's a button. Click it to open the photo album for that hat style.



<O> African tribal-inspired -- in the 20th century, various milliners took inspiration from traditional hat styles in foreign lands, often in response to a current event such as an official visit by the U.S. president or a European leader. African tribal designs, with their dramatic use of feathers, inspired a number of U.S. milliners in the mid-20th century.



<O> All-over feather - any hat style completely covered in feathers. They were very popular in the 1960s.



<O> All-over flower - any hat style completely covered in flowers. They were very popular in the 1960s.

Ascot races hat -- The British Gold Cup races for thoroughbred horses, held in Ascot, England, every June since 1807, is famous for its dress code, including outrageous hats. The tradition continues today. Here are some of the [2011 race hats](#). Not to be outdone by England, Americans adopted the lavish hat tradition at the Kentucky Derby, and Australians at the Melbourne Cup. Sarah Jessica Parker's attention-grabbing [2011 Melbourne Cup hat](#) was designed by British milliner Philip Treacy. Perhaps the most famous hat of this genre is the enormous black and white plumed [hat worn by Audrey Hepburn](#) in the Ascot scene in *My Fair Lady*. The hat was designed by British photographer and set designer Cecil Beaton and Irish milliner Alice O'Reilly, influenced by the huge picture hats of the Edwardian era.

Aso Oke hat - (pronounced ah-show-kay) a [traditional Nigerian hat](#) worn by men as part of their formal dress. The Aso Oke hat is made of hand woven fabric in cotton, velvet or damask, in a shape similar to a kufi or pillbox, except the top slouches over above one ear. In African countries this hat is often worn with the [Boubou](#) or [dashiki](#).



<O> Audrey hat -- a bell-shaped wide brim hat with a crown that puffs out, based on the style of hat worn by Nicolas Arnolfini in Jan van Eyck's 1434 [portrait of Arnolfini](#). Lilly Dache made a version of this hat in 1960s, either influencing or influenced by the lampshade hats that were popular around that time. They were popularly called Audrey hats because of their association with Audrey Hepburn.

Aureole -- hat with large, half-moon brim swept up from the back crown so as to halo the face; aka halo hat. See also Horseshoe brim.

Babushka -- popular term for a head scarf tied under the chin or behind the head, wrapping around the hair. The term is Russian for "grandmother" or "old woman." The style was popular during World War II when women went to work in factories to support the war effort and needed to secure their hair.

Bagnolette - a light weight fabric hood, wired to stand away from the face. Worn in 18th century.



<O> **Bandeau** -- the term bandeau has been used to describe many different shapes of head-wear. In the 1920s it meant headbands worn around the forehead, often sporting an upright aigrette in the center front. In the 1950s and 1960s the term "bandeau" was used to refer to wide, arch shaped headbands (also called clip bands) that go over the crown and clamp onto the head through tension in the wired or metal banded frame. Bandeaux come in a variety of widths and shapes, sometimes with open areas in the crown. Veils were sometimes seen on 1950s and early 1960s bandeaus.

Chapter 9: Milliners and Labels

A vintage hat does not require a label to be a great hat. Any hat collector will spot a great hat first and see the label next, and then at that moment will exclaim aha! or hmmm? A previously unknown name on a label on a great hat is a hot clue that more great hats by the same milliner might be out there somewhere waiting to be discovered.

Just because a hat does not have a label does not mean it was not made by a great milliner. Some hats lose their labels or never had a label at all, but that makes them no less valuable to a collector -- just harder to sleuth the provenance. Every tidbit of information you have about a hat adds to its value. If all you have is a name on a label, look it up and you may find you have a great treasure.

This directory of milliners includes legendary milliners as well as milliner labels commonly seen in vintage hats, manufacturers of hat bodies, and department stores that put their own labels in hats.

We are including some recent and contemporary milliners as well. You will likely encounter recent labels in your search, and may need to know their significance, either to avoid buying non-vintage, or intentionally, to add "tomorrow's collectibles" to your collection.

We alphabetized the names under the last name of a person or first word of a partnership or corporation. Sometimes we couldn't tell whether the name was a first name and last name or the first names of two partners, so we guessed. If you can't find a label under what appears to be the last name, try looking under the other word in the name.

When you see an "eye" (<O>) between the photo and the name, that is a button. Click on the button to go to our website album of hats by that milliner or store.

Use the "A to Z" buttons below to navigate to the first letter of the last name (or the first letter of a partnership name). Click on the letter in the line of "A to Z buttons" to jump to that section in the alphabetical listing. To look under another letter, click the "*Back to A-Z buttons*" link at the end of any alphabetical section to come back here and select another letter.

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A

A's, Mr.

New York. Paris. 1950s - 1960s.

Abbott, Halliburton

New York, Paris, Tulsa Oklahoma. 1930s.

Abrahms, H. B.

Chicago 1950s.

Acato Hats

Made by Armstrong, Cator & Co., Baltimore, Maryland. Advertised in *The Illustrated Milliner*, January 1, 1920.

Ach, Samuel

817-823 Walnut St., Cincinnati, Ohio. 1920s. Ads in the 1920 and 1922 *Illustrated Milliner* indicate openings were held in Dallas, St. Louis, Baltimore, Atlanta, & Indianapolis.

Achille

Paris. Began business in the 1950s.

Adam Hat

Los Angeles. Men's hats, primarily fedoras. Advertised on matchbook covers that appear to be from the 1950s: "they're smart - worn by millions of men!"

Adam, Pauline

Paris & New York. Mentioned and/or advertised in fashion magazines in 1940s.



[<O>](#) **Adams, Frances**

Fifth Avenue, New York. 1940s and 1950s. Seen in *Hats* magazine 1956-1957.

Adams, Helene Inc.

New York. A late [1950s straw cartwheel](#) is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Adamstown Hat Co.

1940s.

Addis Co. Salon

Syracuse, N.Y. 1950s.

Adi's

41 Hohn Street, New York. 1940s.



[<O>](#) **Adolfo**

Born Adolfo F. Sardina in Cuba in 1933. His mother died in childbirth. His wealthy aunt raised him and took him on shopping trips to Paris, where he met Balenciaga and Chanel, his aunt's favorite designers. Immigrated to New York in 1948. Worked at Bergdorf Goodman, but quit

when the store refused to put his name on the labels. Apprentice milliner at Cristobal Balenciaga, Paris 1950-52. Designed hats as Adolfo of Emme 1951-58. Became chief designer for Emme in 1953. Won Coty Fashion Award, 1953, and Coty gave Adolfo a special award for millinery in 1955 and again in 1969. Established his own millinery salon in New York in 1962. His clients included the Duchess of Windsor and Nancy Reagan. Closed his salon in 1993, but continued to license. Mentioned and/or advertised in fashion magazines in 1950s and 1960s. Labels: Adolfo, Adolfo Realities, Adolfo II (bridge line), Pirouettes by Adolfo II (seen in 1970s hat).

Adrian, Gilbert (Adrian Adolph Greenburg)

1903-1959. Designed costumes for the stage when he lived in Paris in the early 1920s and for Hollywood movies in 1920s and 1930s. MGM's leading designer 1925-1939. In 1930 he designed the plumed Empress Eugenie hat for Greta Garbo's role as *Eugenie*. In 1939 he designed the hats for the movie *The Women*, which is worth watching just for the fabulous hats. Clients included Valentino, Greta Garbo and Joan Crawford. In 1941 he launched Adrian Ltd., a ready-to-wear business (until 1948). His designs often incorporated themes from traditional regional costumes of past eras. Labels often include name of a movie studio as well. Mentioned and/or advertised in fashion magazines in 1920s. His [1940s feathered version of the tyrolean](#) and a mid-1940s [fur felt fez with matching feathers](#) are in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Adrian won a Coty award in 1945.

Adrienne Original

5th Ave. New York. Mentioned and/or advertised in *Hats* magazine 1956. "Original Adrienne of California" label seen in a beret probably circa 1960s.

Advance Hat Co.

Chicago. Mentioned in trade publications and fashion magazines in the 1920s.

Agate, Barney

Chicago, 1950s.



[<O>](#) Agnes, Madame

Paris. Born Agnes Trouble (what a great name!), she was a sculptor and friend of avant garde artists, as well as a leading milliner. She trained with Caroline Reboux, then opened her own salon in Paris in 1917. During the 1920s and 1930s she was one of the most successful Parisian milliners. Like Schiaparelli, she was inspired by the Surrealist art movement. She was one of the first to use cellophane in hats, as well as zigzag and abstract patterns. Mentioned and/or advertised in fashion magazines from 1920-1940, featured in *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* in the 1930s and 1940s. She retired in 1949 and died soon after her retirement. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has in its collection a [wool toque with silk flowers](#) circa 1936-39, and a 1938 [cocktail hat](#) with coils of twisted filmy silk wound around a straw crown, with the end dangling in the back.



[<O>](#) Agnes, Grace

California. Known for popularizing a Mercury style winged hat in the 1950s.



<O> **Agnes of California**

Mentioned and/or advertised in fashion magazines in 1940s and 1950s. May be the same as Grace Agnes.

Ahrens, Therese

Label seen on a whimsy/cone hat from I. Magnin and a straw brim hat from Bullock's of Wilshire, both from the 1960s.

Aikins, Ethel

10 Arlington Street, Boston. A [brimless felt cap circa 1950s](#) is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Aitken Sons & Co.

New York. An [asymmetrical velvet toque with sequins](#) circa 1917 - 1920 (attributed to "Aitken Son & Co, Broadway & 78th Street, N.Y.") and [a felt medium brim](#) hat circa 1900-20 (attributed to "Aitkens Son & Co., Broadway & 18th Street, N.Y.") are in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Advertisement in *The Illustrated Milliner*, January 1920.



<O> **Akubra**

An Australian manufacturer of hats since 1874. Akubra's founder, Benjamin Dunkerley invented a machine that removed the hair tips from rabbit fur so the under-fur could be used to make felt - a process that previously had to be done by hand. In 1912 the business changed its name from Dunkerley Hat Mills to Akubra. It is best known for making men's hats, including wide brim felt fedoras, straw hats and cowboy hats. Popularized by Crocodile Dundee.

Al, Mr.

Label with an embroidered rose (similar to Lemington's) seen in a 1950s or early 1960s pillbox.

Alaia, Azzedine

French. Born in Tunisia 1940. A [flat beret decorated with grommets](#) circa 1983 - 1984 is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



<O> **Alan, Ruth**

Label seen in a World War II style military inspired sculpted toque and in a fedora with chin ties, both with Michael Howard stamps in the crown (indicating they are probably from the 1960s-1980s).

Albouy, Gerard

(1912-1985) Paris. Had Paris hat shop from 1938-1964. In the 1950s, when he was in his 30s, Albouy was said to design "the most extreme and exotic hats in all of Paris." He was popular among the theatrical crowd. A [dish shaped feather hat](#) circa 1957 is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



<O> Albrizio, Ann

New York. Daughter of a hat blocker, Ann Albrizio began making hats at age 16, and went to work for Mr. Sal in 1928. Her sister married Mr. Sal; when he died, the two sisters started Albrizio Hat. Albrizio Inc. was incorporated in 1958, and moved to 30 W. 39th Street New York, where it remains in business. Ann Albrizio hand-crafted each design, and was well known for her feather hats. Her book *Classic Millinery Techniques*, coauthored with Osnat Lustig and Ted Morrison, is highly regarded today as a millinery textbook. She designed some hat patterns for the Hat of the Month in *Hats* magazine. As an instructor at the Fashion Institute of Technology in NYC she had some high achieving students in Eia Radosavljevic, Eric Javitz, Lola, and Kokin. Customers included Madonna, Marlene Dietrich, Al Green and Sonny Rawlins. She passed away at 97 in 2009, with the company alive and well, headed by her nephew, David Cicalese.

Album and Berman

1040 Ave. of the Americas, New York. Mentioned and/or advertised in *Hats* magazine 1956.

Aldens

Started as Chicago Mail Order Millinery in 1899. Dropped "Millinery" in 1906. Changed name to Aldens in 1946. They were the fourth largest mail distributor in the U.S. Closed in 1982.

Aldrich, Abigail

New York. [A silk fascinator circa 1989](#) is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



<O> Alfreda Inc.

Paris, New York. 1940s - 1950s and possibly 1960s. Label seen in a chinchilla hat sold at Coles of Columbus, OH, a black hat from Fines of Savannah, Georgia, and a black feather from Littler of Seattle, WA and Pebble Beach, CA. Mentioned and/or advertised in *Hats* magazine 1956. Worn by Sally Victor in 1944 [in this photo](#). A [1955 Alfreda hat](#) is displayed in the University of North Texas Digital Library.



<O> Alice, Miss

New York. Mentioned and/or advertised in fashion magazines in 1950s and 1960s. 1964 press photo depicts a tall crown with exaggerated crease in crown.