

Men's Shirt

by Jeanne Brewster

One of my biggest problems in doing mini scenes is trying to dress a doll . . . for years I always bought the undressed doll thinking I would one day have this magical talent to outfit these poor little nude people. I have since learned to buy the doll dressed by the artist. So, when I find patterns that look easy and with some time saving hints I pass it on. This pattern is from an early issue of Small Talk magazine and a talented lady named Jeanne Brewster.

— Pat Carter

For nearly 200 years, men's shirts have been cut approximately to the same basic pattern. True, there have been periods of fullness, and periods when shirts were pegged snugly. There were periods when contoured tails were tucked in and periods when straight tails were worn out.

But the only thing about the shirt that, over the years, has really changed drastically is the collar.

Thus, the basic body and sleeves for a shirt for any period may be cut alike for our miniature gentlemen. If you are a real purist, you may make flat fell sleeves, stitched shirt fronts, French cuffs and so on. The end result will be exquisite but bulky.

Or you may effectively use illusion and glue. Either way, use a fabric that is plain, fine striped or small checked, making sure the selected fabric pattern was one that was popular in the period you are simulating.

I usually stitch the underarm seams. Then I glue the sleeve in place. Next, using pins to ensure proper placement, I glue the body of the shirt and glue shoulder and side seams.

Next, put the shirt on the doll, gathering the sleeves slightly at the cuff, and fasten to thread.

Finally, cut collar and cuffs. Here, too, you may stitch the fabric, which will prove bulky, or you can seal the fabric with Fray-Check or Hard-as-Nails. Personally, I believe a good grade of heavy stationery or drawing paper or very lightweight card stock provides a stiffness and a gloss much like the finely-starched collars on fancy dress shirts.

The exception might be the soft, rolled collar effected by Lord Bryon and his imitators, or the ruffled, edged collars to be found on fancy dress shirts. But the exquisitely upright shirt points of the Regency period; the arrow collar look, with long or short points; or the rounded Peter Pan type of collar all may be constructed of paper.

To guard against the miniaturist's bugaboo of thickness, you may find that you need only sleeves or just cuffs, collar and a dickey-type shirt front under vests or coats.

Buttons may be fashioned from tiny French knots or seed beads, but usually the necktie or vest covers the shirt front so buttons are not needed.

Remember that patterns are only a guide. Each doll is different and the pattern must be individually adapted to provide a proper look and fit.



TURN-OF- THE-CENTURY pharmacist Leon LeFleur, an original doll by Jeanne Brewster, wears stylish two-tone shirt, featuring white collar and cuffs on a shirt of very small red-and-white stripes.

