

Donation of the Month

1960s Pillbox Hat

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There was a time when one, male or female, wouldn't leave the house without putting on a hat. Now, you rarely see anyone wearing a hat; and if they are it's a baseball cap. Hats were worn as a sign of modesty, status or for protection; and they were, at least for women, an important part of your wardrobe. Wearing a hat took some bit of responsibility as well, there were etiquette rules to follow.

The fashion of wearing a hat has come and gone through out the centuries. Hats are practical and used for protection or heat retention. Hats are also status symbols or fashion statements. In most cases, the hat completed the outfit and often the hair style incorporated the hat. Wearing a hat almost died out by the 1940s, but a revival in the 1960s, maintained by the distinctive pillbox style worn by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, kept the fashion of hat wearing alive until the end of the 1960s. Today, people continue to wear hats for practical reasons, but not as fashion statements. However, casual hats such as

baseball caps are often used as statement pieces.

Wearing a hat is not a last minute, grab as you run out the door, type of fashion accessory. It not only has to match your outfit, it has to match your activities. Hat etiquette must be followed. For a woman the rules for wearing a hat aren't very complicated. You wear your hat at all times outside your home. Sounds pretty simple, but of course your activities and courtesy might dictate otherwise. For example, no large brimmed hats are to be worn to indoor parties, after dark, or if asked to remove while at a play, concert or the movie theater. The rules change slightly if the hat is a casual one such as a baseball cap. In this case, you remove the hat when the national anthem plays, and any other time the men around you remove their hats.

For men wearing a hat is not very complicated. A hat should be worn at any time outside the home unless, one is in a public elevator with a woman, attending an outdoor wedding or funeral procession, having your photograph taken, eating at a nice restaurant, or the national anthem is playing. This means your hat stays on your head when in public, in a hotel lobby, in the hotel hallway, or if seated at a lunch counter, coffee shop or bar. Then of course, you are to tip your hat to any woman you encounter, but never to another man unless you wish to insult him. If wearing a casual hat all of the above rules still apply.

Hats remain a part of the wardrobe ensemble, but only as a practical or casual player, often not matching the wearer's outfit. Those who do wear a hat are generally unaware of the etiquette rules involved. Now that you have been enlightened the next time you wear a hat keep in the rules in mind.