

Katie & Annie

As Annie and I have been going about our winter chores in our humble cottages, our men folks are beginning to get that river fever that spring brings on. As they will soon be preparing the batteaux for hauling goods to Richmond, Annie and I have been stitching new clothes for our families.

So we thought perhaps our river friends might need some advice of how to look like an 18th Century boatman. To do that, follow the following instructions for putting together an 18th Century man's work shirt and instructions for changing 20th Century pants to 18th Century breeches (be sure pants are cotton and the color is khaki, dark brown, gray or burgundy).

18th Century Work Shirt

Purchase 3 yds. x 45" wide 100% cotton material (white or a small check of blue or brown with white) 3 small buttons (pewter, bone, wood, horn, etc.) and sewing thread.

1. Pre-shrink fabric before cutting. Allow 1/2" seams. Finish all raw edges as you go.
2. Cut body 31" wide x 72" long (or longer if you desire longer shirt, this will require buying more yardage) cut 2 sleeves each 21" long x 20" wide. Cut 2 square neck gussets 4 1/2" x 4 1/2". Cut 2 square underarm gussets 6"x 6". Cut 2 cuffs 3" x 9". Cut 1 collar 11" x 18".
3. Fold body in half to make it 36" long. Cut neck slashes as shown in diagram. Make a rolled hem along the two sides of the vertical slash. Reinforce the base of the vertical slash with extra stitching.
4. Fold under 1/4" around all sides of each neck gusset. Fold gusset in half to form a triangle. Insert gussets into corners of horizontal neck slash as shown, sandwiching raw edges of neck slash between layers of gusset. Stitch through all layers close to folded edges of gussets to encase raw

- edges of the neck slash. Gather neckline where indicated by dotted line. (see neck details)
5. Fold sleeves to make 10" wide. Attach underarm gussets to sleeves as shown. Pleat top of sleeve to 16" wide (to fit the 8" marked on shirt body diagram). Sew long seams of sleeves, leaving 5 inches open at the bottom as shown, hemming sides of the opening.
6. Sew sleeves and underarm gussets to body. Gusset should form a diamond-shaped insert in the underarm. Sleeve seam will drop off the shoulder line.
7. Pleat bottom of sleeve to fit cuff and attach cuff. Sew side seams of body.
8. Try shirt on. Draw up neckline gather to fit neck. Adjust length of collar if necessary. Attach collar.
9. Work one button hole on left side of collar 1/2" above collar seam. Work one button hole in each cuff. Sew on buttons opposite buttonholes. Hem the bottom of shirt. (1" hem)

