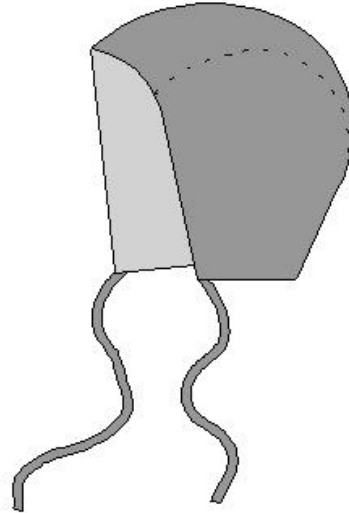


The Coif

The coif is one of several styles of cap known by that name. All of them are close fitting caps, most often made of linen. The coif was also called a "biggin". We have chosen, for the sake of convenience, to call one of the close fitting caps in this pattern package a biggin, and the other a coif, but both words can be used interchangeably.

The style had been fashionable since the early Middle Ages at least, and remained so well into the 17th century. Servants continued to wear them well into the 19th century, and the style is still with us today as the baby bonnet.

Coifs were worn by people of all classes and ages. They were usually worn as an undercap for another, more elaborate hat. The secure fit of the coif provided a secure base to which to pin another hat, as well as a washable protective layer between the more elaborate hat and the hair.



About the Pattern

The Coif pattern consists of a center panel, called the Gusset, and two side panels. It can be fastened with ties or with a buttoned strap. The coif can be lined, or constructed as a single layer.

The coif can fasten with ties or with a buttoned chin strap. Ties are more adjustable, but the buttoned strap gives a tidier appearance, with no dangling ends.



Fabric, Trim, and Color

Coifs were most often made of white linen, although a few pictures show men wearing coifs made of dark fabric.

Narrow white or metallic lace can be sewn around the edges for a rich effect. Coifs can also be embroidered in blackwork or polychrome, around the edges or in an all-over pattern.

Constructing the Coif

Cutting

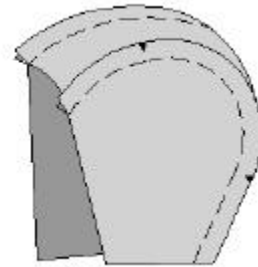
For the lined version, cut two Gussets and Four Side panels. For the unlined version, cut one gusset and two side panels.

Lined Coif:

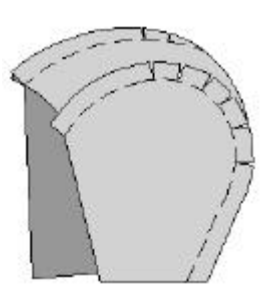
Seams

Pin Side panel to Gusset, matching notches. Stitch. Repeat for other side.

repeat for lining.



Press seams open, clipping as needed.



Ties

(skip this step if you wish to make the Buttoned Strap version)

Cut two strips of fabric 1 1/2" wide and 12" long.
Fold right sides together and stitch, forming a tube.

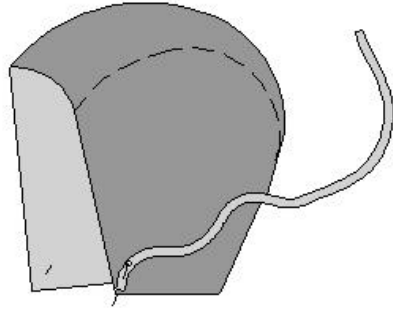
Trim seam allowances to 1/8".



Turn. Press.

Turn one end in 1/4" and stitch closed.

Fold unfinished end of ties under twice. Stitch to inside of coif corners as shown.

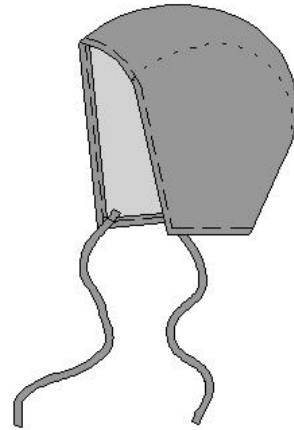


Unlined Coif

make as for Lined Coif, clean finishing seams.

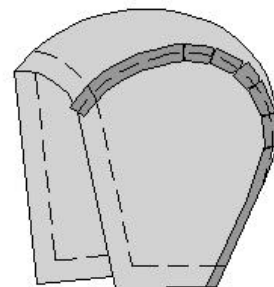
Press edges under 1/4". Turn under and press again. Hem edge.

Make ties as above and tack to inside at corners.

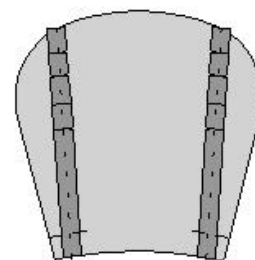


Lining

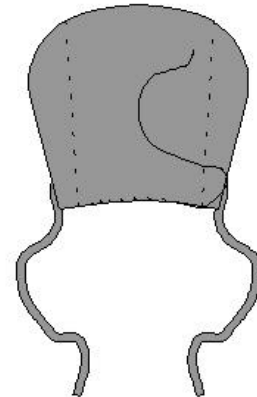
Pin Lining to Coif, RIGHT sides together, being sure that ties are between layers.



Stitch, back tacking at corners to secure ties, leaving an opening between seams at back. Trim and grade seam.



Turn Right side out. Press. Slipstitch opening.



Buttoned Strap

To find length of strap, put on coif and measure from corner to corner, passing tape measure under jaw. cut strap 1 1/2" wide and the above measurement plus 1" long.

Make strap following directions for Ties.

Sew button to end of strap.

Make a buttonhole in one corner of coif (right is easier if right handed) pacing it on the diagonal as shown.



Trim

If desired, sew narrow lace trim around edge.

