

13 Colonies Milliner

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13 Colonies Navigation

This page describes the work of a colonial milliner. Did you know that a milliner's business was similar to a modern-day clothing store?

[13 Colonies
Home](#)

[13 Colonies
Interactive Map](#)

[Artisans &
Trades](#)

[13 Colonies
Regions](#)

[Colonial
Profiles](#)

[Colonial
Historic Events](#)

[Colonial
Williamsburg](#)

[Founders](#)

[Religion in the
Colonies](#)

[Online
Activities](#)

[Printable
Activities](#)

[Make Your
Own Map!](#)

[French and
Indian War](#)

[American
Revolution](#)

[Home](#) >> [United States History](#) >> [13 Colonies](#) >> [13 Colonies Trades](#)

Trades

[Apothecary](#)

[Wigmaker](#)

[Harness & Saddlemaker](#)

[Blacksmith](#)

[Milliner](#)

[Hatter](#)

[Cooper](#)

[Brickmaker](#)

[Printer](#)

[Cobbler](#)

[Tavern Keeper](#)

[Wheelwright](#)

[Candlemaker](#)

[Gunsmith](#)

[General Store Keeper](#)

[Silversmith](#)

Making a Ball Gown at the Colonial Williamsburg Millinery Shop

A milliner's business was much like a modern-day clothing store. Here, men and women could shop for the day's fashionable clothes and accessories. Interestingly enough, a millinery was just about the only business in colonial times that could be owned and managed by a woman. A milliner sold a variety of things such as fabric, hats, ribbons, hair pieces, dolls, jewelry, lottery tickets, games, and medicines. Most of the items for sale were imported from England. In addition, milliners hired people called mantua makers, who would craft customized outfits, costumes, dresses, and jackets for women, and tailors who would perform similar duties for men.


