



The 18th Century
FASHION DOLL

The doll which is presently at the Tate House
in Portland, Maine, is a completely accurate copy
of an 18th-century fashion doll.

Patterns for both the doll and her clothes
are available by writing to

The Tate House,
1270 Westbrook Street, PO Box 8800,
Portland, Maine 04104.

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The Fashion Doll

Fashion dolls, or "babies" as they were sometimes called, were among the items sent from London to Colonial ports. Although they were usually a year or more out of date upon arrival, the wives of prosperous merchants in the north, who were the nucleus of Colonial society, eagerly awaited these little fashion messengers dressed in the latest European styles. Many of the dolls were made in Germany, a thriving home industry in the region around Sonneberg. They were then clothed in Paris, London, or wherever the latest fashion was the rage.

Making the Doll

This replica of an actual "Queen Anne" wooden doll is made from poplar, a fine-grained wood commonly used for this purpose. When finished, it measures about 18" tall.

The basic form of the head and body is turned on a lathe, then is carved at the face to reveal the nose. The front and back of the lower part of the body are cut away flat, and deep notches are cut for the hip joints.

Arms, thighs, and lower legs are shaped from long narrow pieces of poplar. The legs are cut out for the movable joints at knee and hip, and the calves and feet are shaped with a knife. They are connected by long metal pins going through the knees and hip. The arms are also whittled to shape, and the hands are particularly cleverly done. The

arms join the shoulders with a universal joint made from a bit of cloth or leather tacked into place with a short nail.

The whole doll is then painted. The face is a traditional one, always the same. It has been said that it was made to resemble a famous actress of the period, but true or not it represents the idealized portrait of a fashionable beauty. The eyes in this doll are painted on--note the typical dots around the eyes--but in more expensive models glass eyes were often set in. Pink circles at cheeks and chin show how makeup was applied in the 18th century. The human hair completes the basic doll.

Dressing the doll

Getting dressed for a party needed the assistance of a maid or other helper, as it was a complicated affair. The shift was the basic undergarment, worn at all times by everyone, male or female, young or old. Fine lace trimmed the neck and sleeves of the best shift, but ordinary shifts were plain.

The next most vital piece of clothing for any woman were her stays. They molded the body into its fashionable conical shape, and provided support and comfort for the active life led by all.

Separate pockets, often nicely embroidered, were tied around the waist, hanging out over whatever under petticoats might have been put on over the stays. This doll has two petticoats, one linen and one wool.

The next important article for dress wear was the pair of hoops, which held the gown out on each side. Hoop fashions changed, of course, but in 1760 the style was wide on the sides and flat at front

and back. Some of the most exaggerated hoops forced the lady to go through the doors sideways!

Over the hoops hung a quilted petticoat. The fabric and workmanship of this garment were always very fine, as the front of the petticoat lay revealed by the open front of the gown. There were slits in both this petticoat and in the hoops so that the lady could reach through to her pockets, as purses or reticules were still far off in the future.

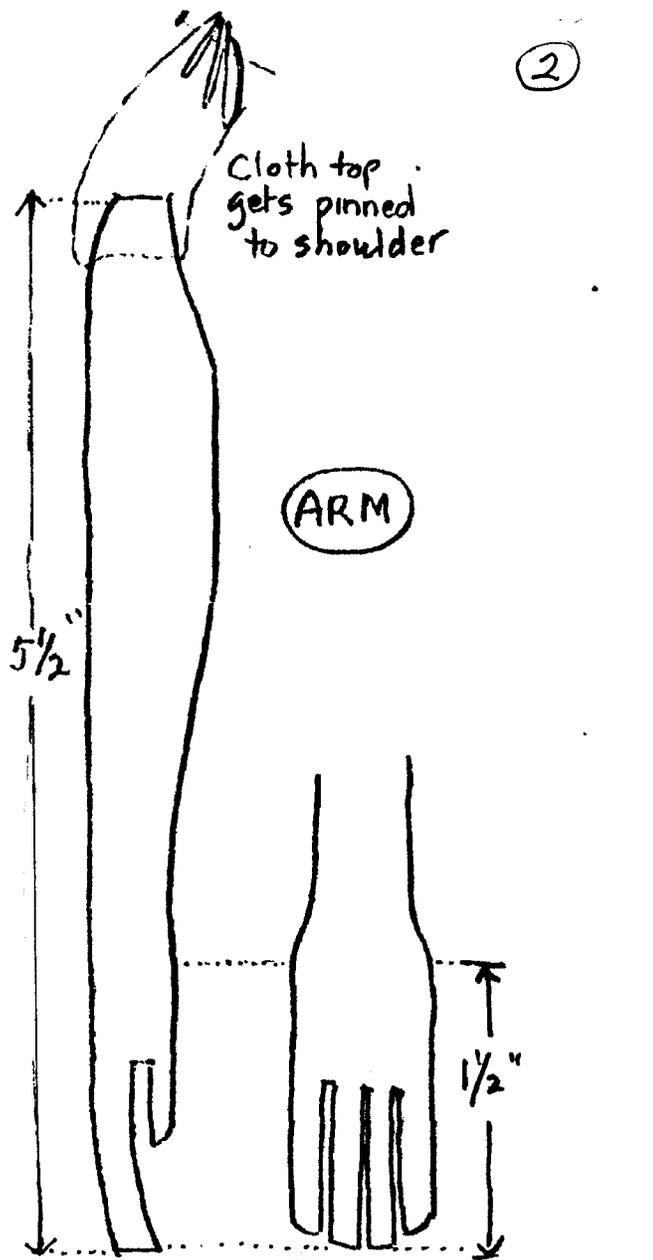
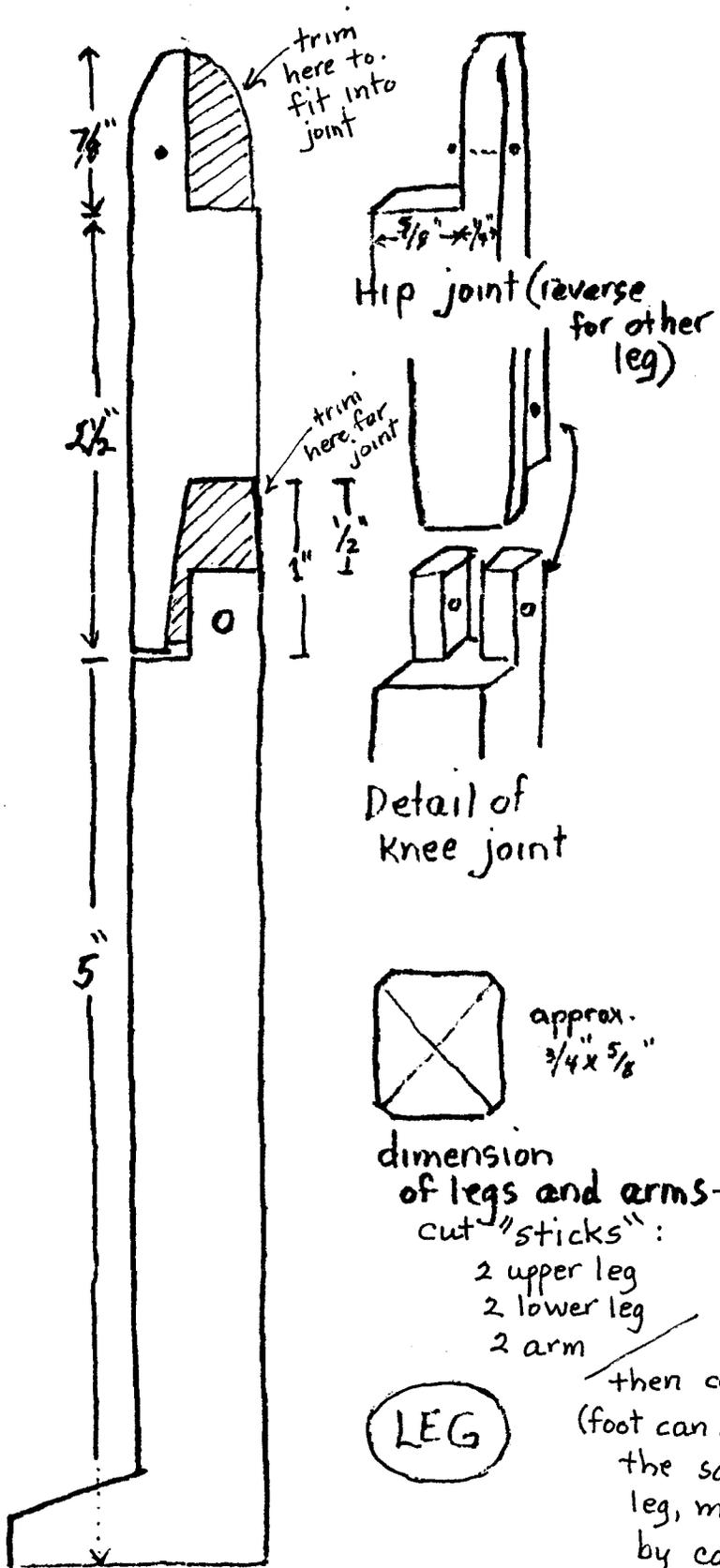
Before the gown was put on, the stomacher had to be pinned in place. This triangular piece, often stiffened with an inserted busk, was the single most elegantly trimmed part of the whole costume. It featured fine embroidery, metallic laces, beads, ribbons--anything to make it the showpiece. It covered the stays and filled in the area between the two open sides of the bodice of the gown.

Once all this underwear was in place, the gown slipped over it all, filled out and shaped by stays, petticoats, hoops, and stomacher. The basic gown was always the same, tight sleeves filled in with lace engageants or ruffles at the elbow, and open form-fitting bodice and skirt front with ruching, pinking, or other forms of embellishment down the whole length of the gown. The back could be either plain or with a wide loose pleated back hanging from the shoulders, as this doll is wearing.

The finest stockings were made on stocking frames out of white silk. They were knee length and held in place by hand-knit garters. Shoes were made of fabric, often embroidered, and had lovely silver buckles to hold them closed. They had French heels and very pointed toes.

At the time of the Tate House, around 1760, hair was worn close to the head caught up into a small bun at the crown, or the back hair was braided and pinned to the top of the head behind from hair rolled off the forehead. A small cap was always worn. For formal occasions this cap could be made of fine lace, as on this doll. Lace was a very expensive and very much prized element of fashion. Many early portraits show that the artist was required to paint both the pattern of the woven silks and the lace on the costume of the sitter in exquisite detail, emphasizing the wealth and good taste of the wearer.

Finally, the lady of fashion tied a satin ribbon around her neck, put on her jewelry, and applied her makeup, and she was ready for the Governor's Ball!

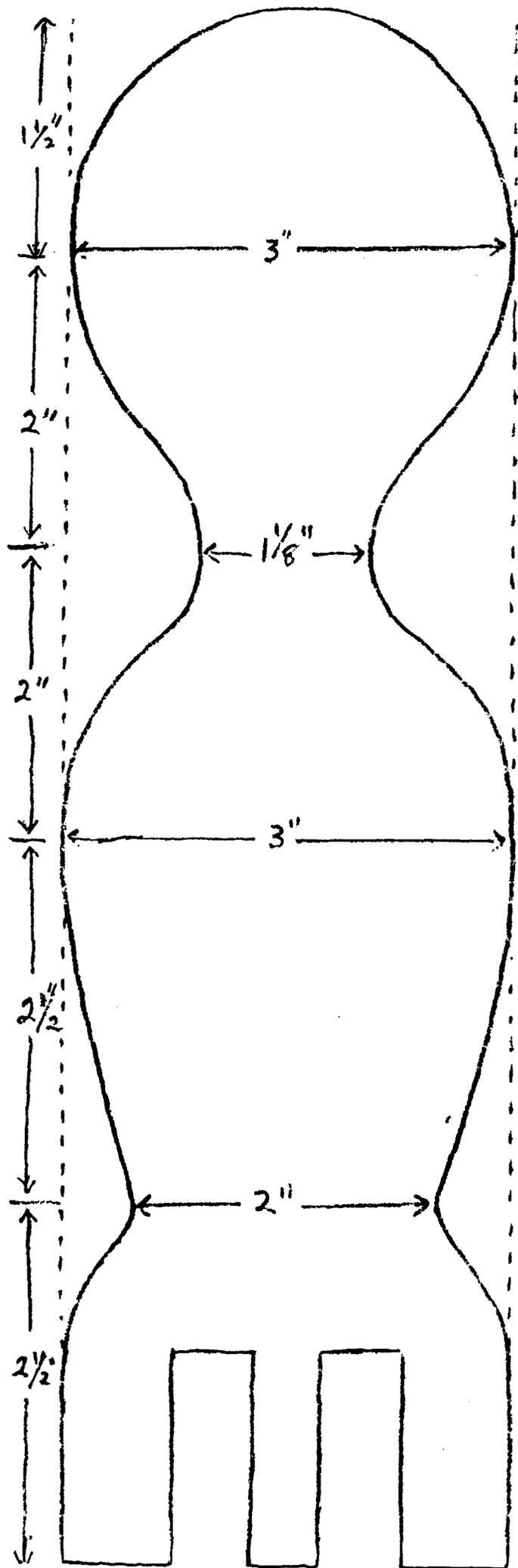


then carve to shape.
 (foot can either be cut at the same time as lower leg, made to look bigger by carving a nice ankle, or add a toe piece later)

note: arm and hand are painted as for face — legs are painted below the knee

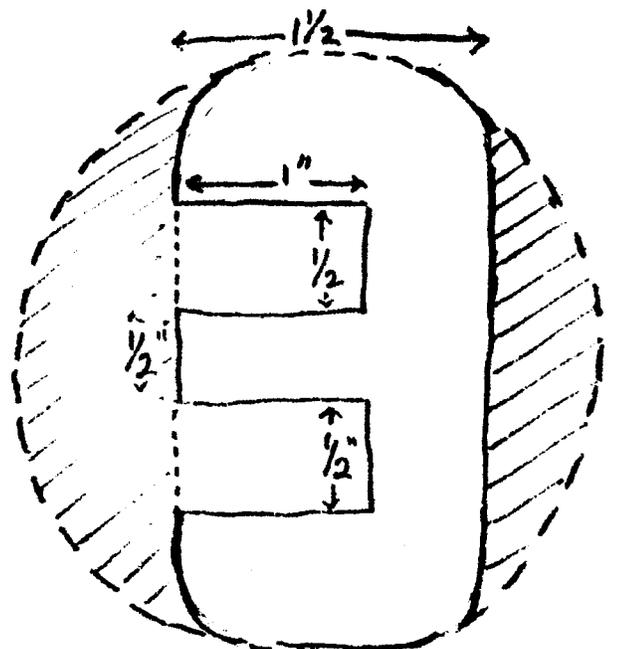
ARM + LEG PATTERNS

①



Turned area
of Doll Body

use soft pine,
poplar, or
other light-colored
wood which can
be easily
whittled and
sawn and
which will
hold pins at
joints.



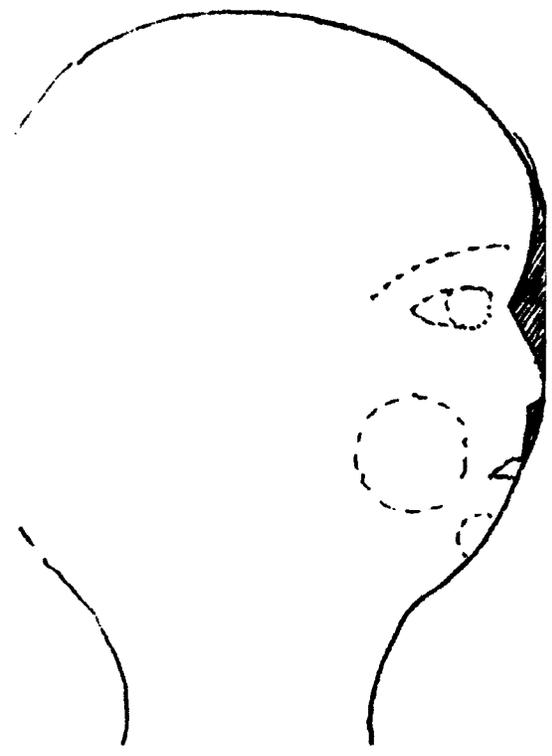
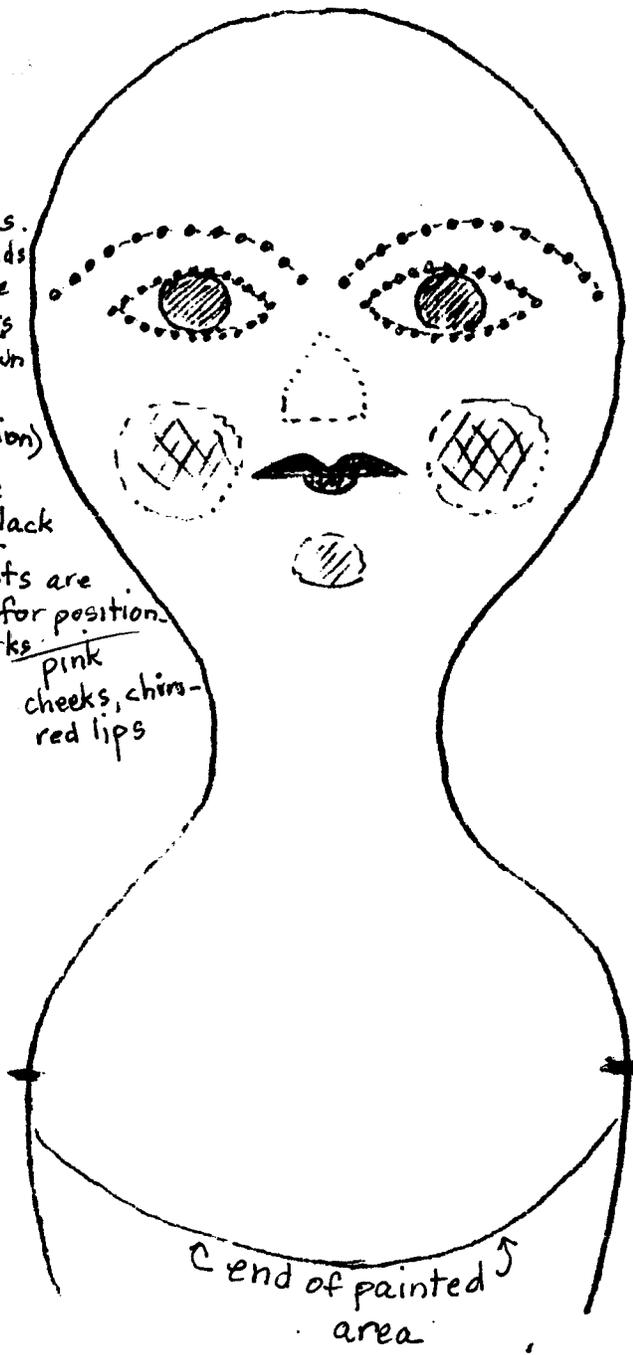
Bottom of Pelvis

eyebrows and eyelids are made with dots (lines shown are only for position)

eyes are solid black

nose dots are merely for position. no marks

pink cheeks, chin - red lips



PROFILE OF FACE

(cut roundness of block back to release nose)

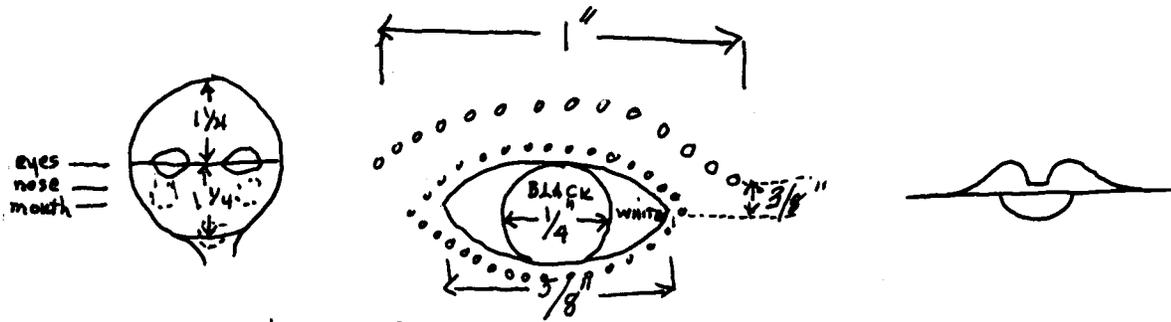
arms pinned here with a small nail or tack

end of painted area

Paint: I used

- 1) 3 coats of Liquitex Acrylic
- 2) Sandpaper: 100, 150, 200 Gesso
- 3) 2 coats of acrylic paint: white, pink (portrait), black
- 4) Acrylic retardant
- 5) a soft brush

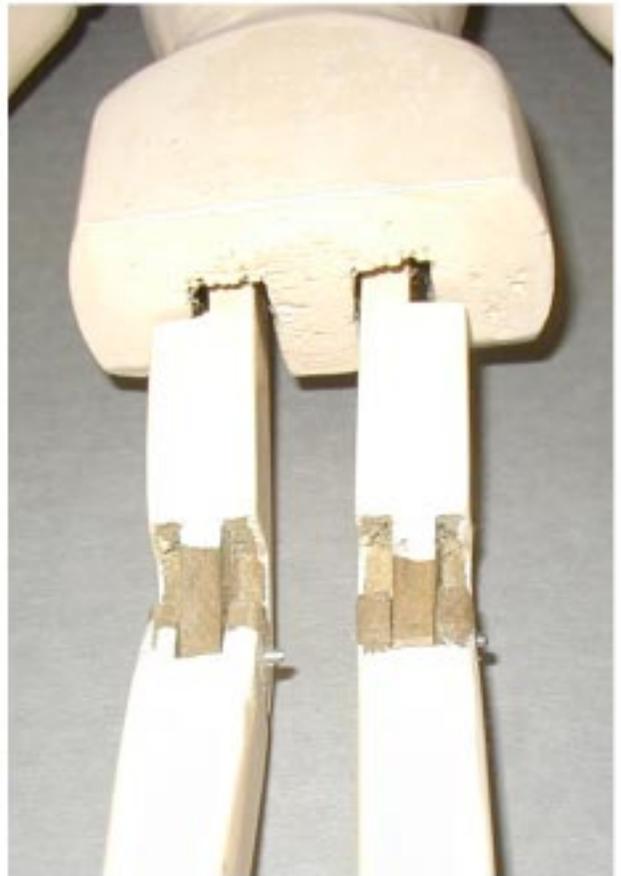
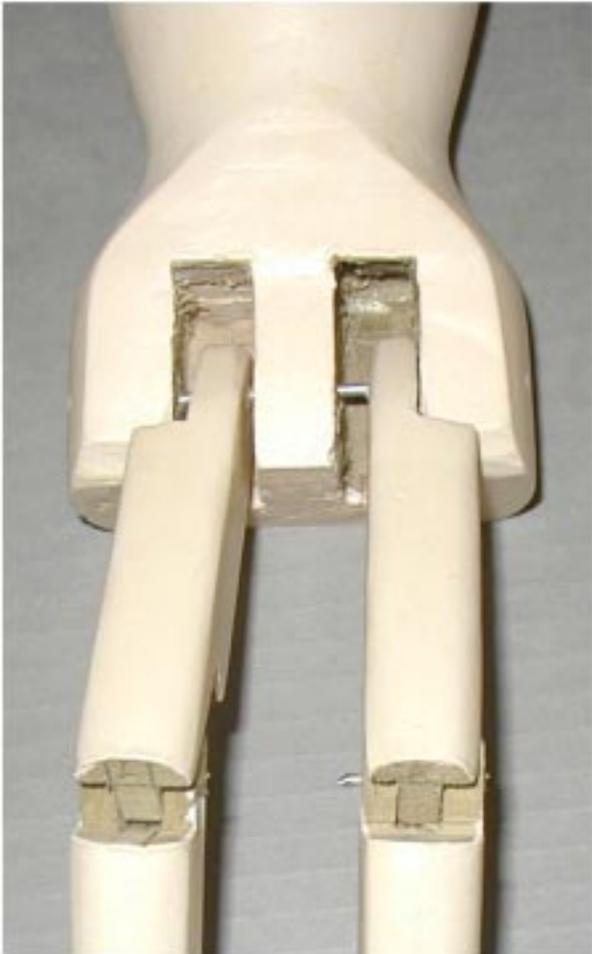
Detail of Painted area of head and bosom



details of face - eyes correct size - mouth may be a little large:
 pink circles on cheeks and chin - it should look like a rosebud,
 be sure to center the eyes on but this is how it is drawn
 the head, leaving enough space
 for hair -



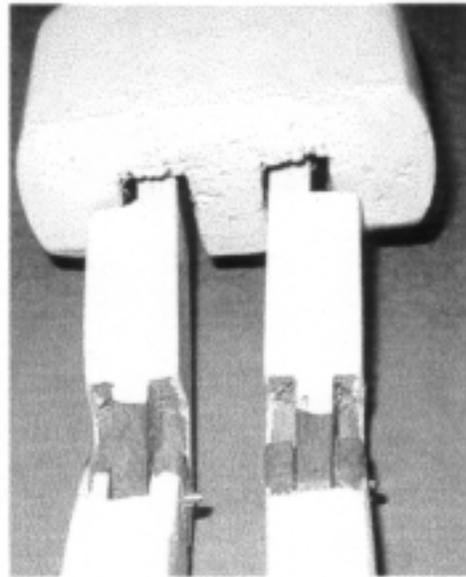
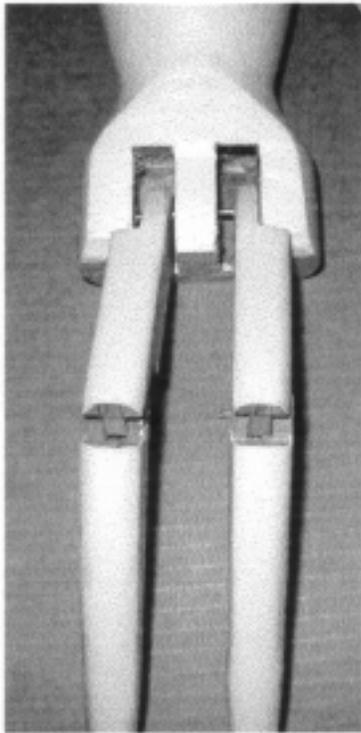






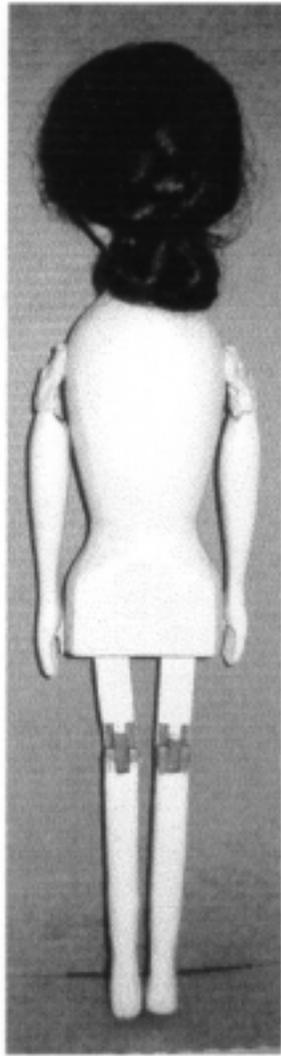
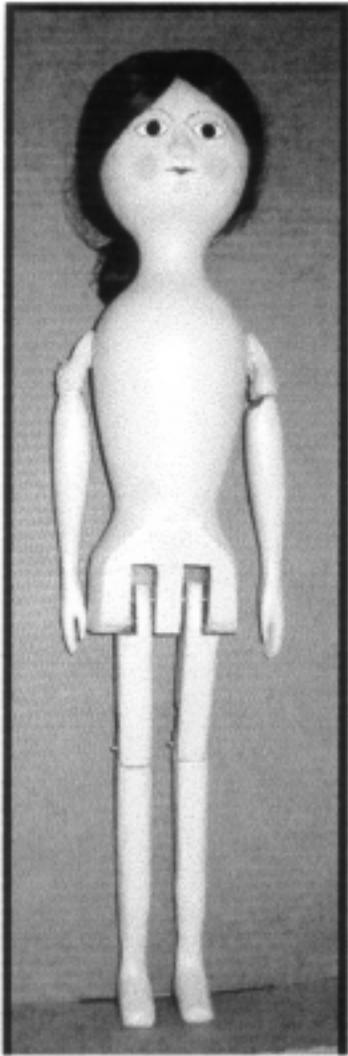






Details:

After the body block has been turned and the arm and leg pieces have been cut and carved, the joints are pinned in place and the face is painted before the hair is glued on.



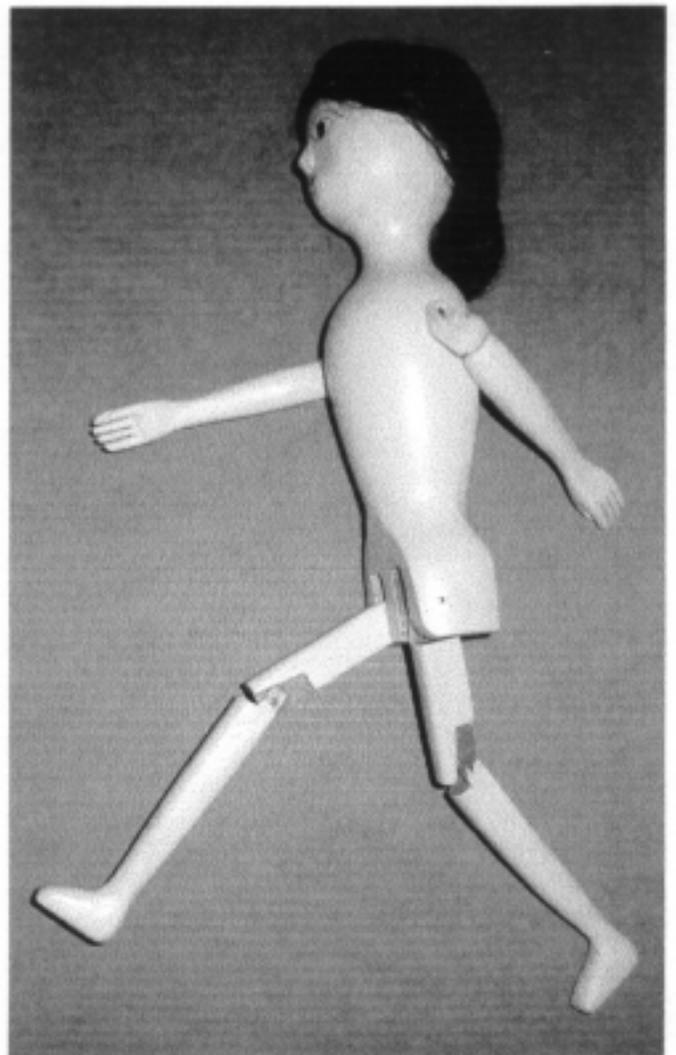
Front and Back Views:

Here you see the doll before she is dressed. Note the ingenious joining of the upper leg to the hips and the one-way bend at the knees.

Side view:

You can see how the original block has been trimmed at the front and back hips and how the face part of the head has been flattened to release the nose.

Note the cloth universal joint at the elbow and how the legs are made to bend at hips and knees.























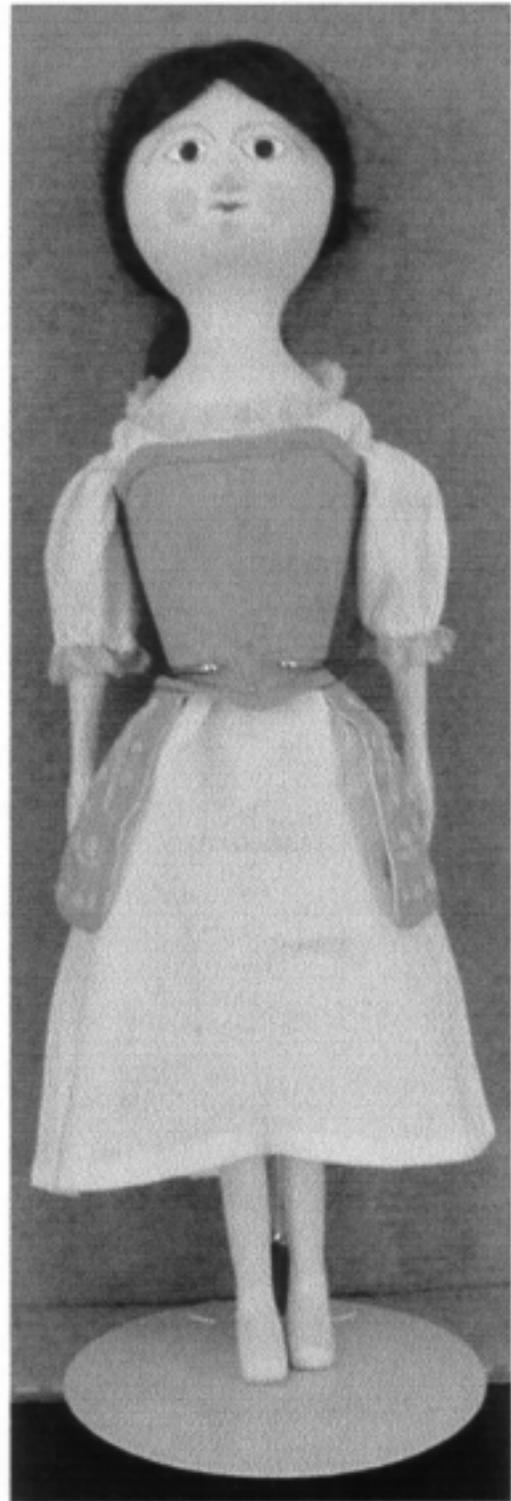








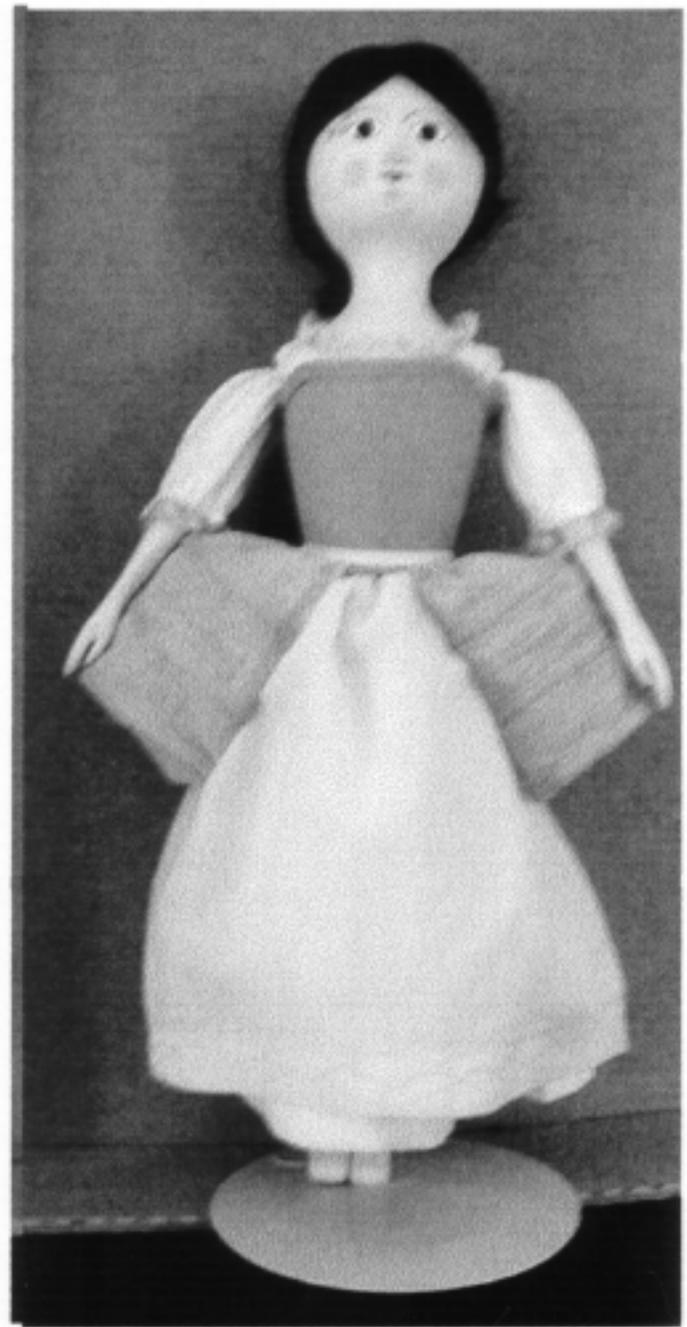




Dressing the doll:

Step one: The Shift, the indispensable undergarment worn by all classes, male and female.

Step two: The Stays, worn by all women of all classes. The Pockets, worn under the petticoats and reached through slits in the upper garments.



Step three: Under Petticoats were always worn beneath long skirts to give them body and make them move nicely, as well as for added warmth .

Step four: Pocket hoops, adding side width to the profile, were the fashion in the 1760s. Hoops and padding were used in women's dress, changing their construction as the styles changed.



Step five: A Quilted Petticoat goes over the hoops, and the stomacher is pinned to the stays.



Step six: The Stomacher was the most highly decorated element of the gown, sometimes embroidered, sometimes even made of silver lace.



Step seven: Jewelry, a fine lace cap, a decoration around the neck, and my lady is ready to put on her gown.



Step eight: The Gown, with its separate engageants, or lace flounces at the elbow, is slipped on over the stomacher, revealing the quilted petticoat. It's no surprise that my lady needed help getting dressed!



Pattern section

*Here you will find all the patterns you need to make and dress the
18th century fashion doll.*

The doll itself:

To turn the body

To shape the limbs and joints

To paint the traditional face

To make all the clothes:

the shift

the stays

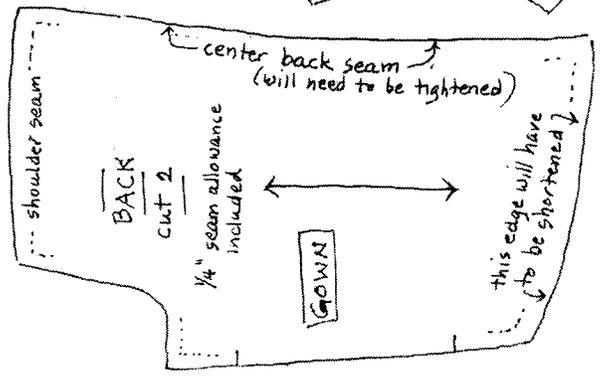
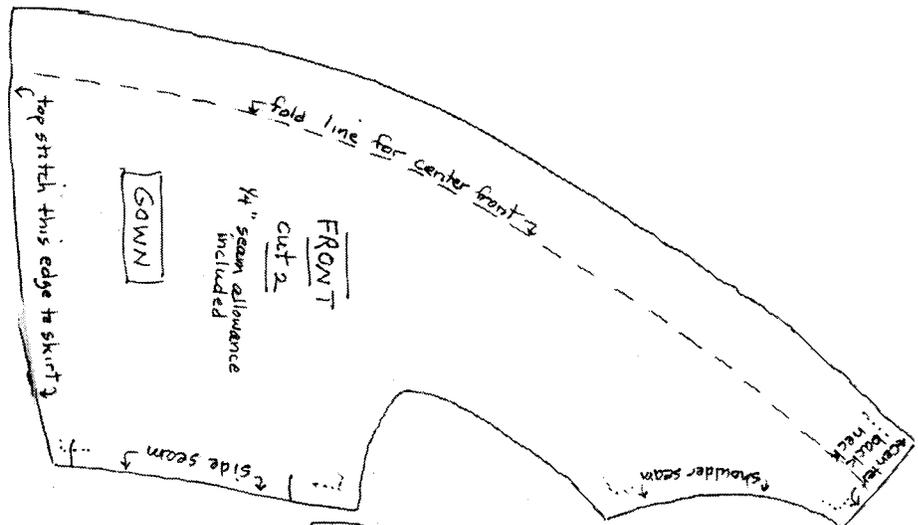
the pockets

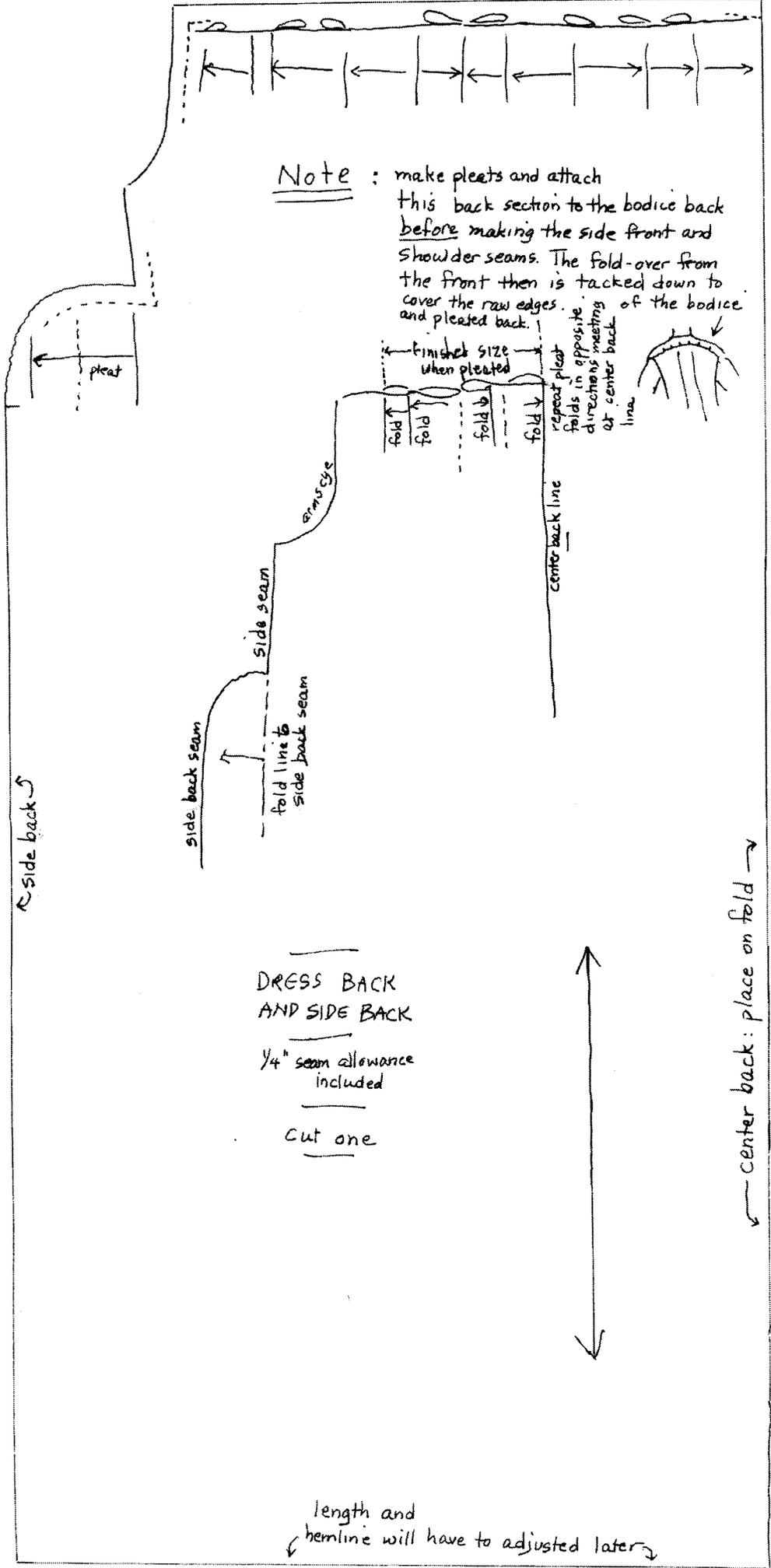
the underpetticoats

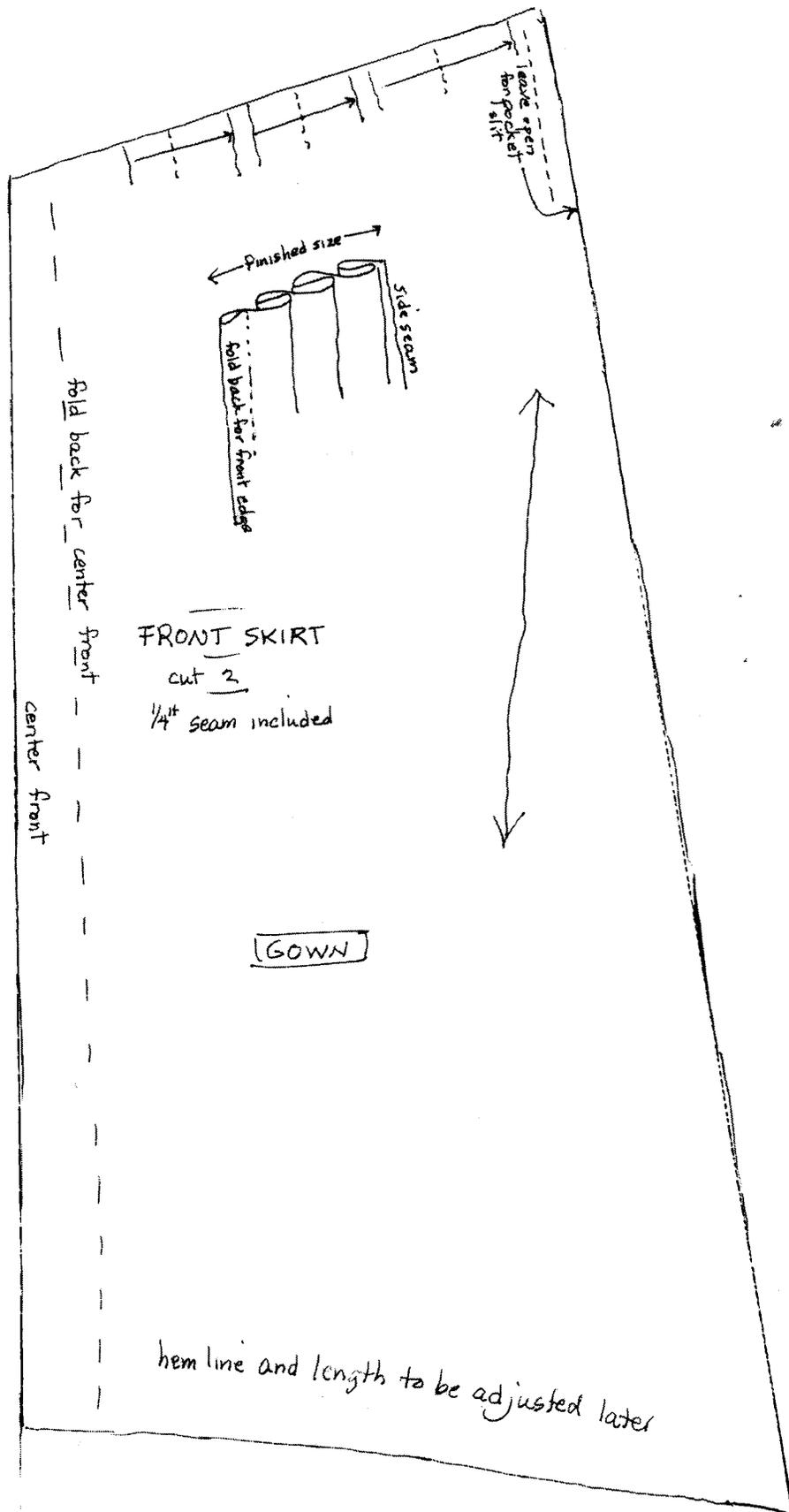
the quilted petticoat

the gown

the shoes





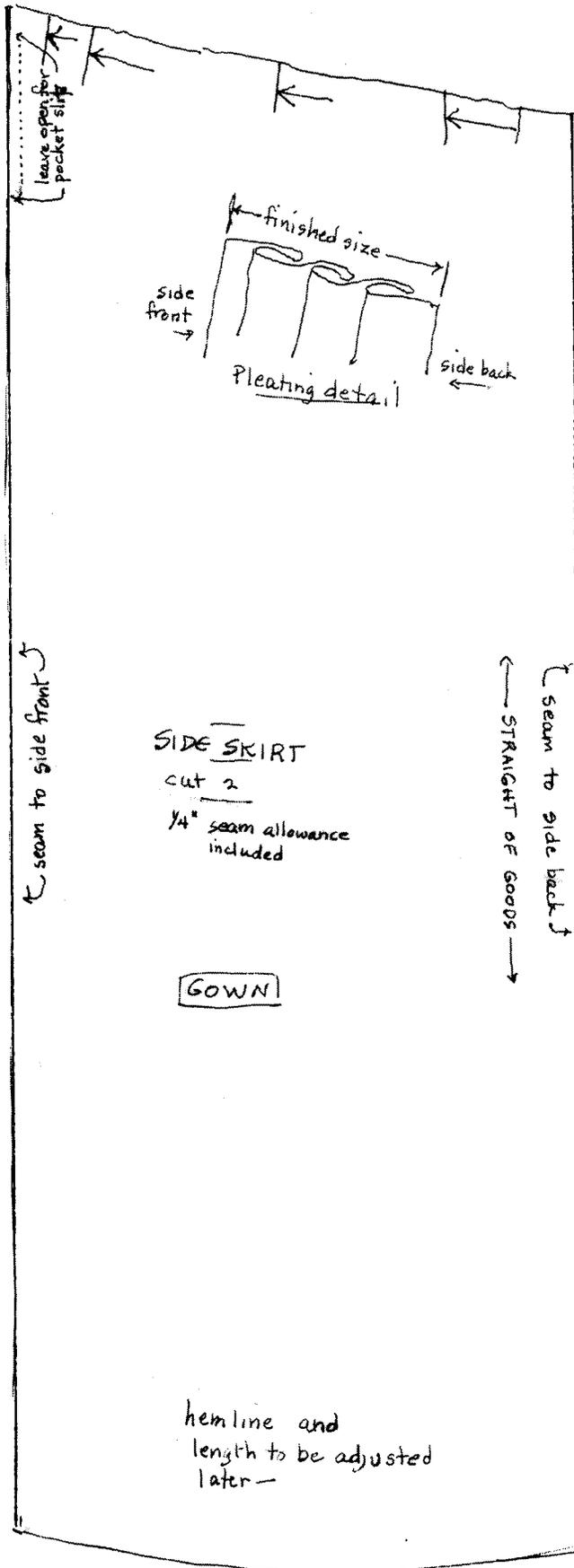


FRONT SKIRT
cut 2
1/4" seam included

fold back for center front
center front

GOWN

hem line and length to be adjusted later



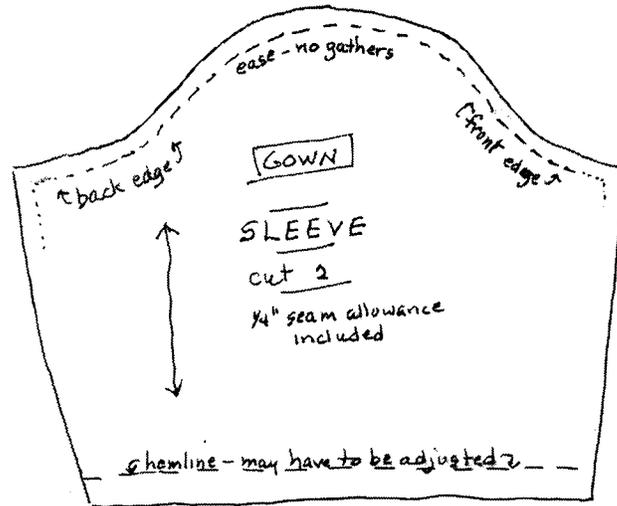
SIDE SKIRT

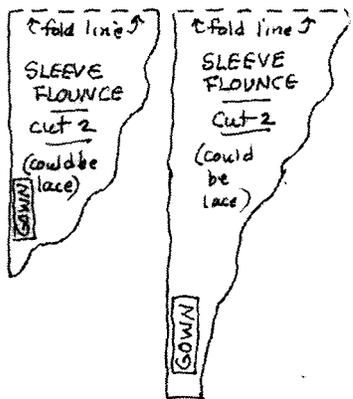
cut 2

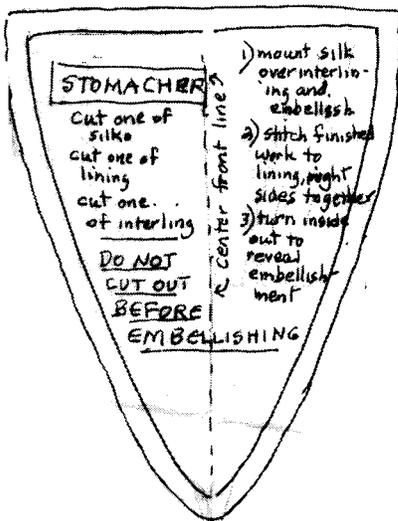
1/4" seam allowance included

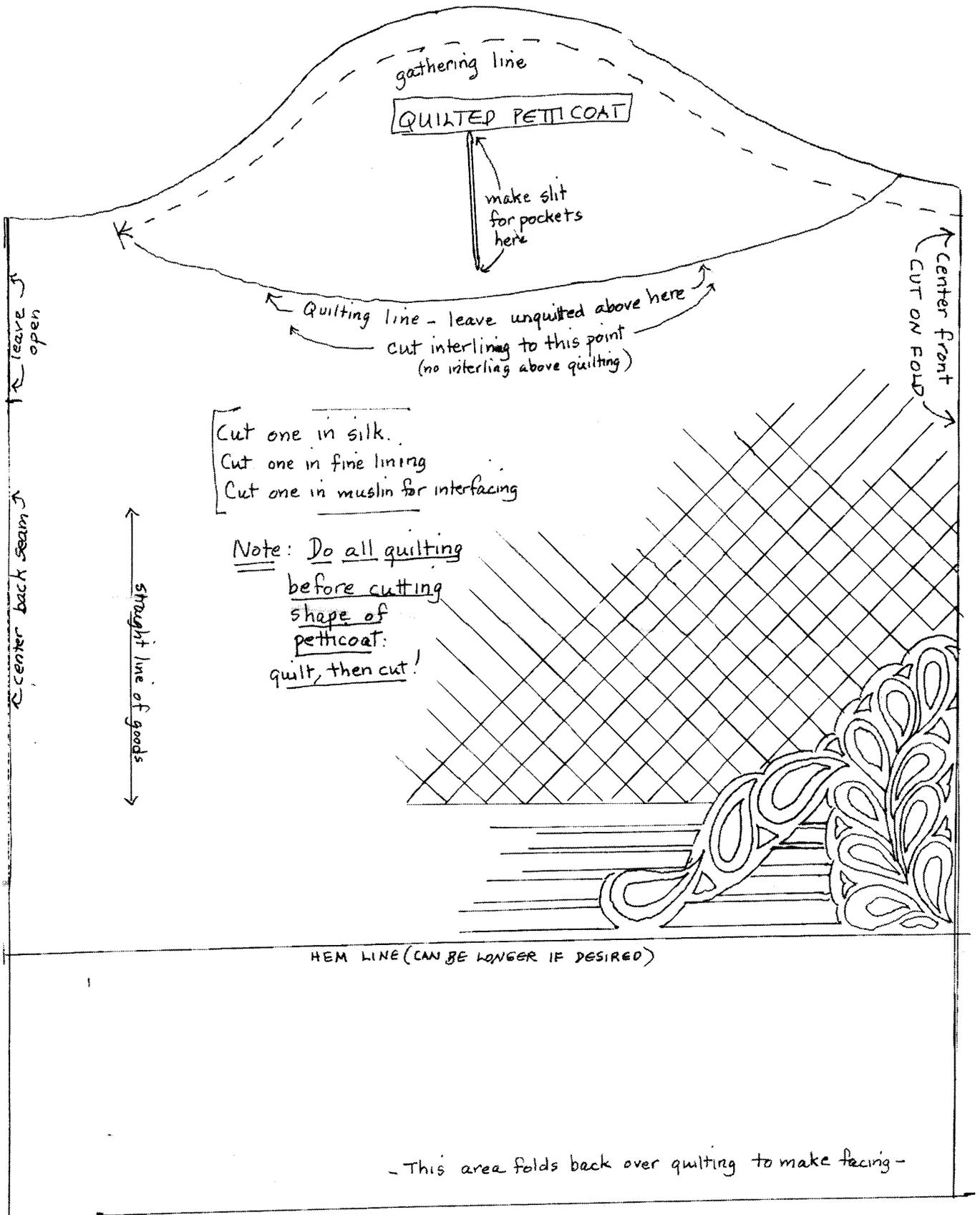
GOWN

hemline and length to be adjusted later









frame up on 12 X 24 frame

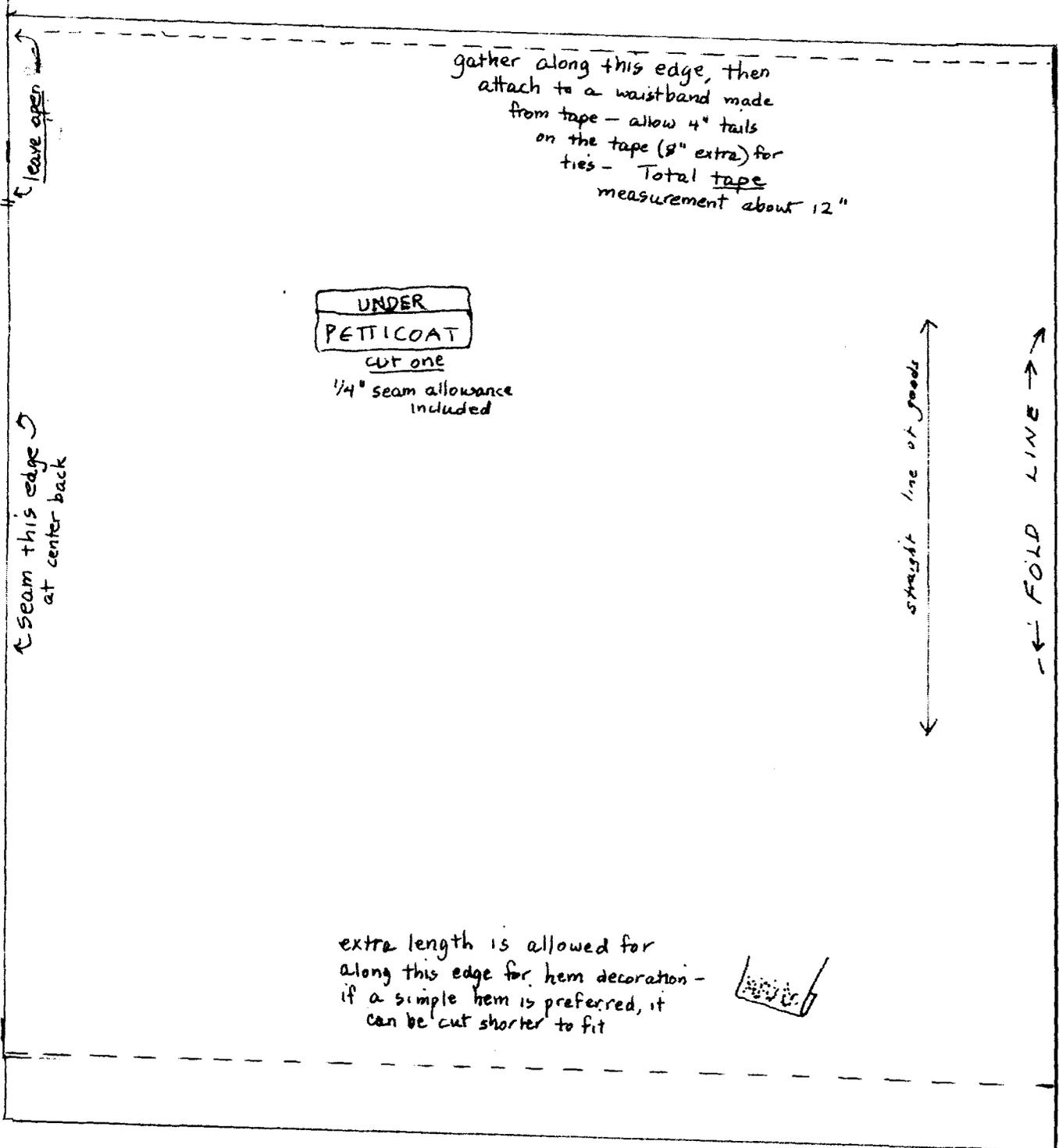
1 piece lining or fine linen 24 x 15 or to fit frame

1 piece interlining (old linen towel or thin cotton flannel preshrunk) 8" wide and 24" long (to fit within the edges of the frame)

1 piece silk 12" wide and 24" long (to fit within the edges of the frame)

Hold silk fabric plus design up to the window (or use a light box) and trace the design

Baste to framed up lining and interlining and stitch with fine quilting stitches



gather along this edge, then
attach to a waistband made
from tape - allow 4" tails
on the tape (8" extra) for
ties - Total tape
measurement about 12"

UNDER
PETTICOAT

cut one
1/4" seam allowance
included

leave open

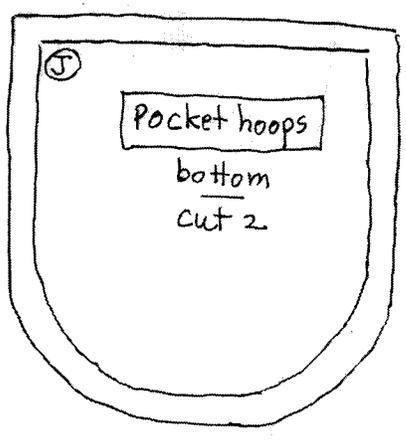
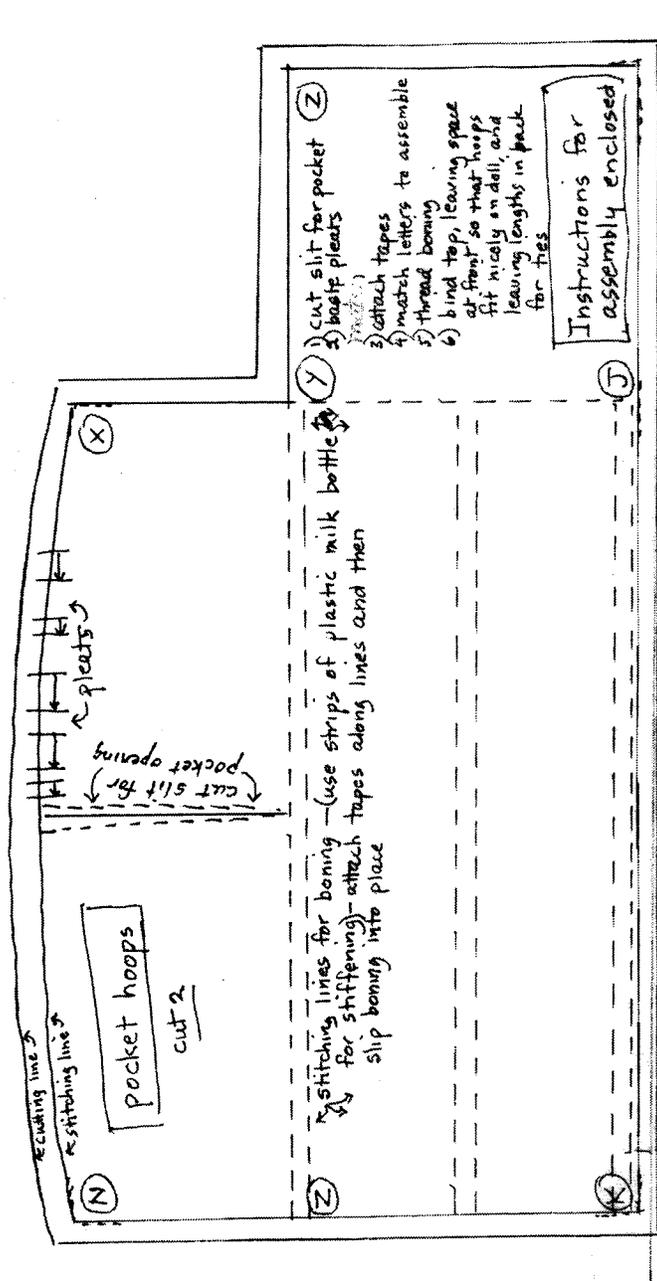
seam this edge
at center back

straight line of goods

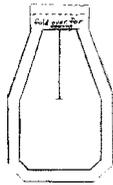
FOLD LINE

extra length is allowed for
along this edge for hem decoration -
if a simple hem is preferred, it
can be cut shorter to fit

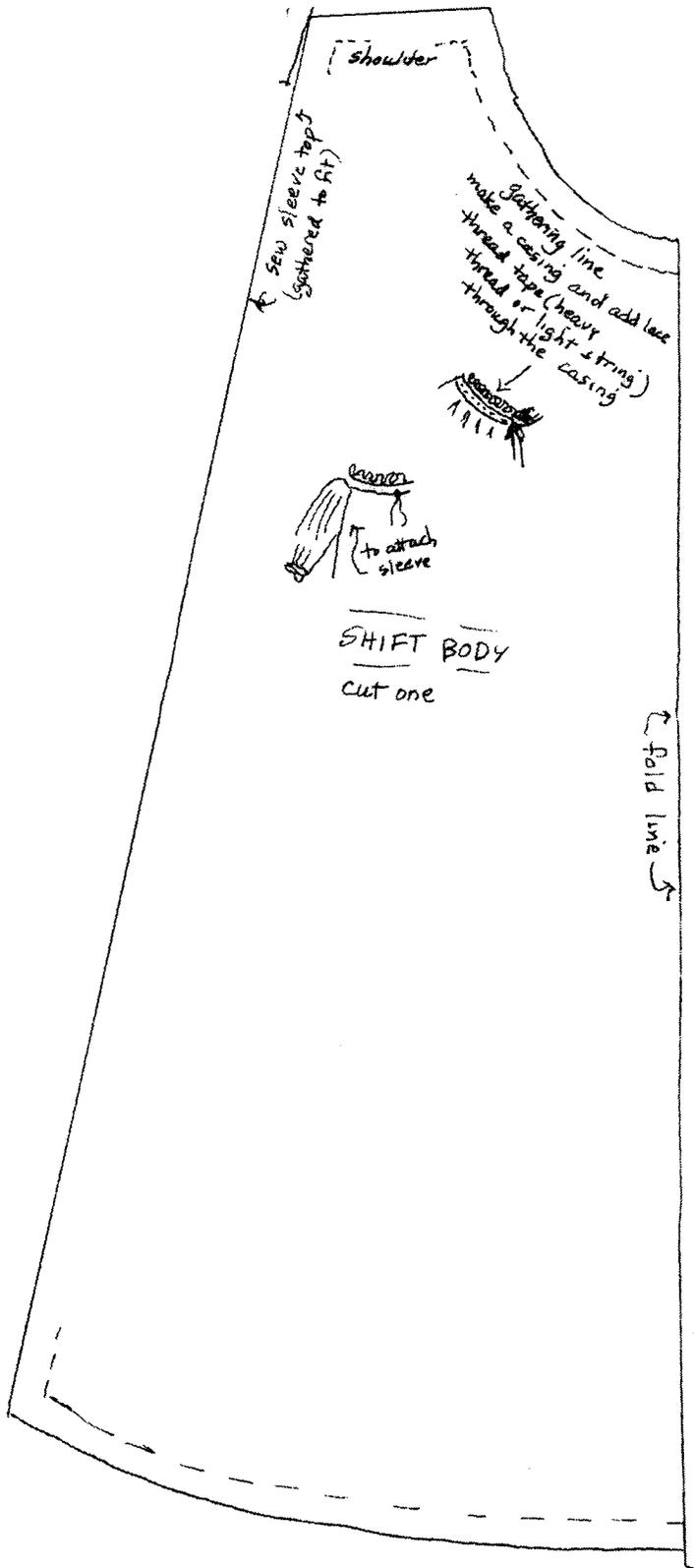
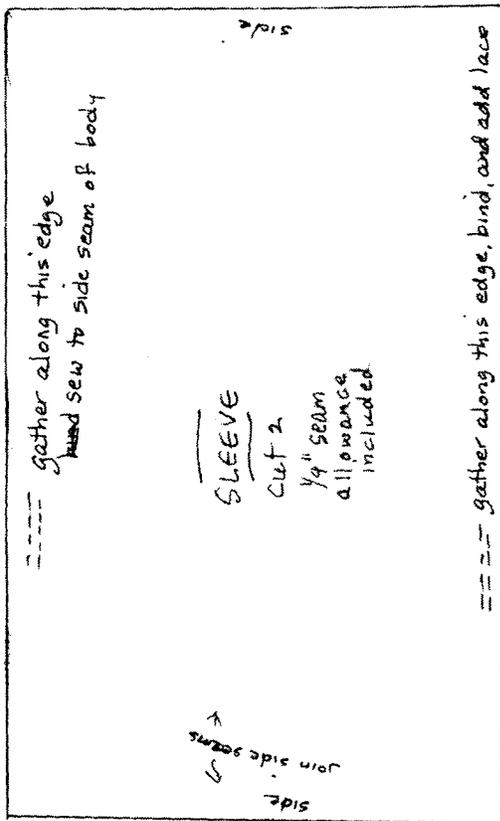




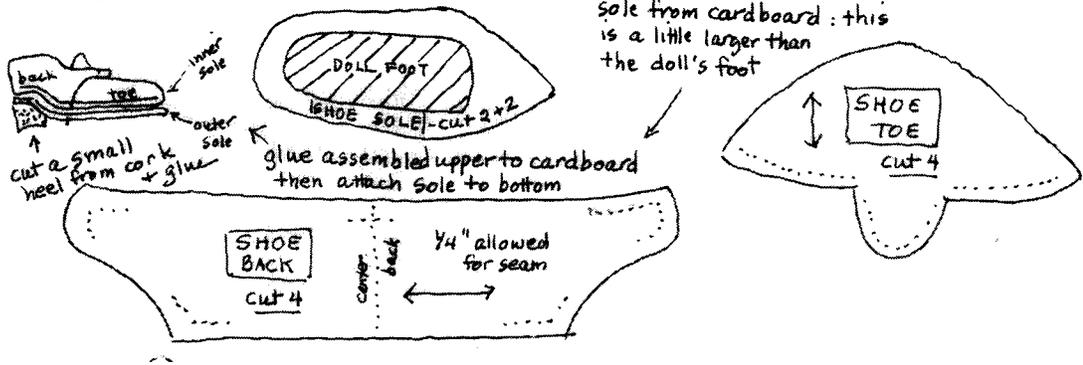
- 1) cut slit for pocket
- 2) make pleats
- 3) attach tapes
- 4) match letters to assemble
- 5) thread boning
- 6) bind top, leaving space at front so that hoops fit nicely and all, and leaving lengths in back for ties

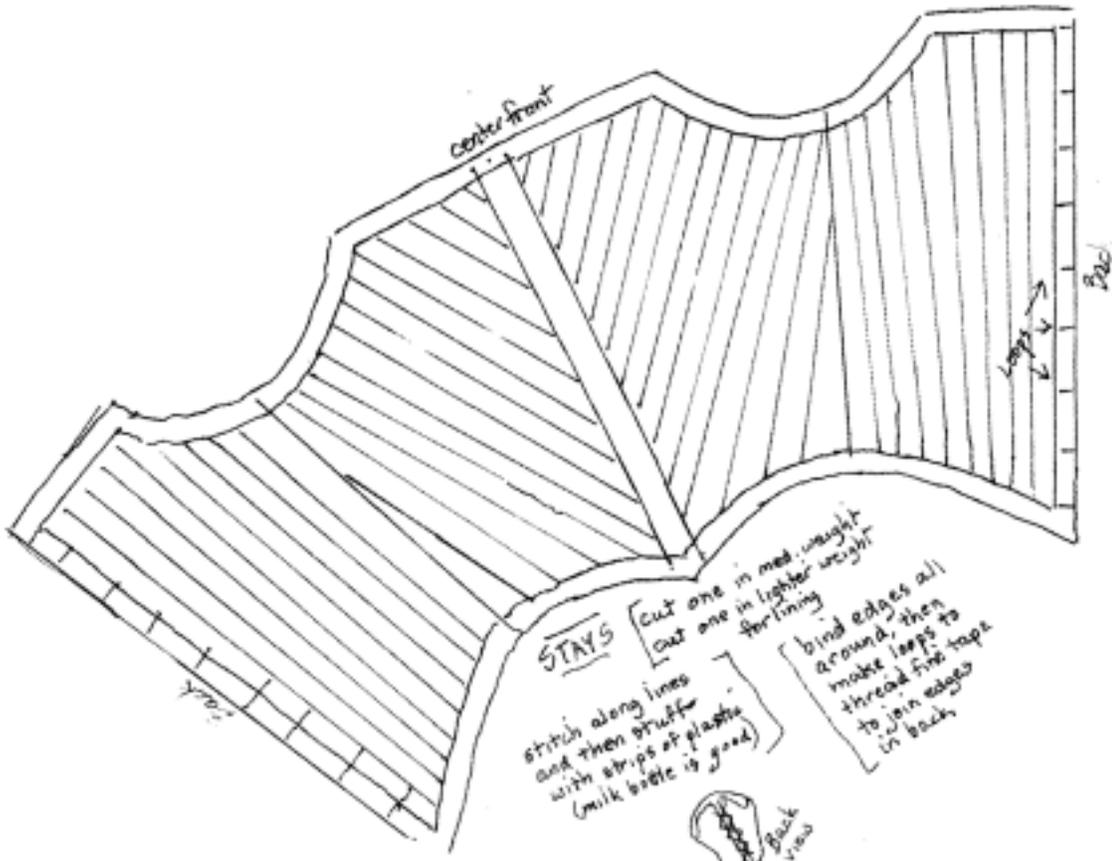






SHOES







*The 18th Century
FASHION DOLL*