

From Frontier Folks

Thanks to the 18CWoman List, here is a great site for basic info on 18thC clothing; the first link below has a Clothing Glossary page that is quite handy:

http://marquise.de/en/1700/i_basis.shtml

At the same site, here is a page with detailed instructions for making a bedgown:

<http://marquise.de/en/1700/howto/frauen/18mdelit.shtml>

Included on this page is the following paragraph, which has an intriguing statement about stays not being necessary with a bedgown or shortgown.

Any comments on this, ladies?

"The bedgown, sometimes also called shortgown, is next to the skirt the simplest female piece of clothing during the 18th century. It's easy to sew and easy to wear. Since it is not fitted, it is not absolutely necessary to wear a corset under it, so it is very well suited for wearing to the breakfast table or for bodily labour. So wealthy ladies wore it between getting up and dressing properly, while the lower class wore it as everyday garment."

Bed Jacket Instructions

From Beth Gilgun's *Tidings from the 18th Century*

“A bed gown may sound like something worn to bed, but that is not the case. It is, rather, an everyday working jacket. It is simple to make as it has no lining and is cut with the sleeves and body in one piece. It can be adjusted for size by adding fabric in the back and center front and like the short gown, can be made large enough to be worn during pregnancy. The measurements on the diagram will make a jacket that approximately will fit a small woman. If you are long waisted, you should adjust the length from the shoulder to the top of the side pleat. To make the jacket larger, simply add to the width. Perhaps the best way to test the fit would be to make up the jacket in scrap fabric first and see what needs to be altered. This garment does not fit snugly. Be sure to try on the test garment over a shift and petticoat, as they will alter the fit. The top of the pleats should come to the waist.

“To make a bed gown, you will need two times the length of the jacket plus 1/8 yard. If you are making a jacket 36 inches long, you will need 2-1/8 yards of cloth. Possible fabrics are wool, heavy cotton or linen in either plain colors or stripes. You could also use a documentary print. As always, be sure to wash the fabric first so that the garment will not shrink once it is made.

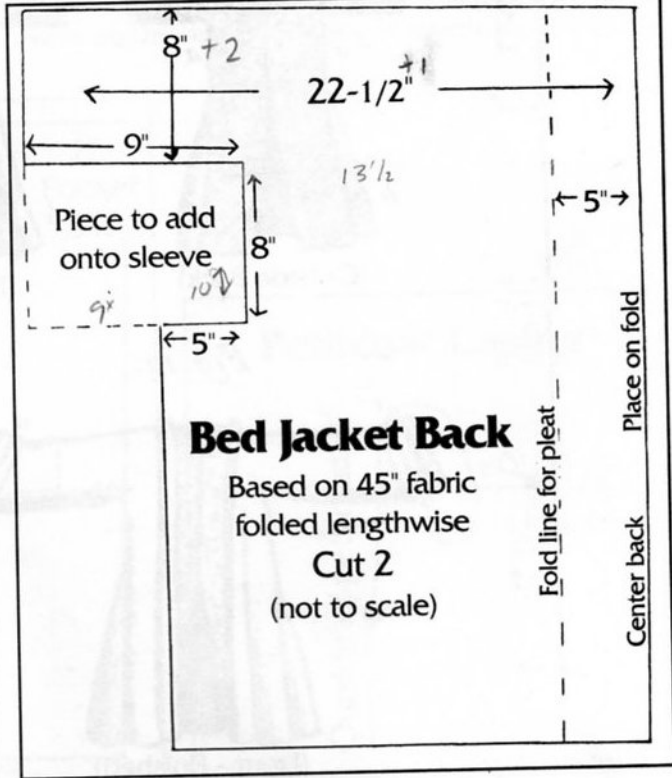
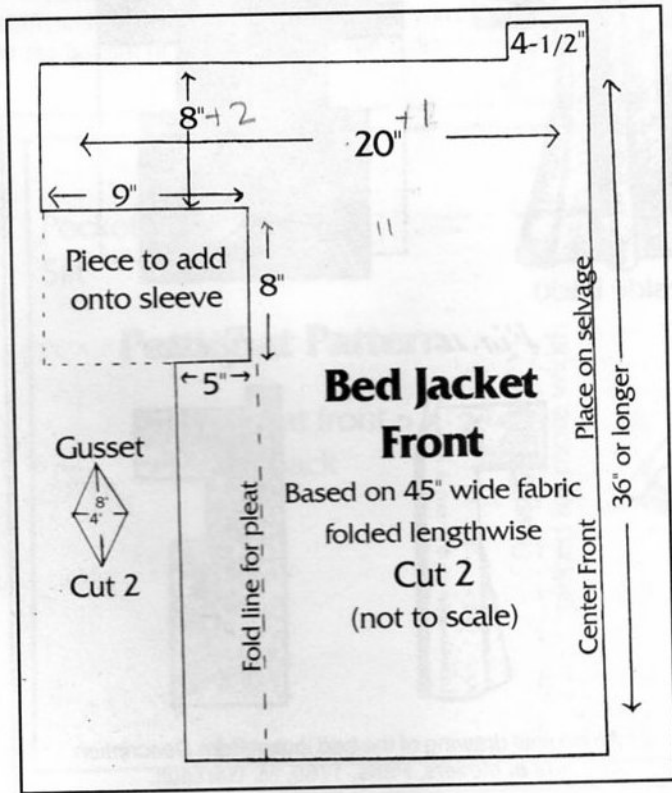
“Cut the fabric according to the pattern on the facing page [front.jpg and back.jpg], being sure to include any alterations you made on the test garment. Make sure the length of the jacket is cut on the length of the fabric. The underarm gusset should be cut with the grain running either from the top to bottom or left to right. Do not have a bias running down the middle. The pieces of fabric cut away from the sides of the gown between the sleeve and side pleat are saved to add to the sleeves to make them longer.

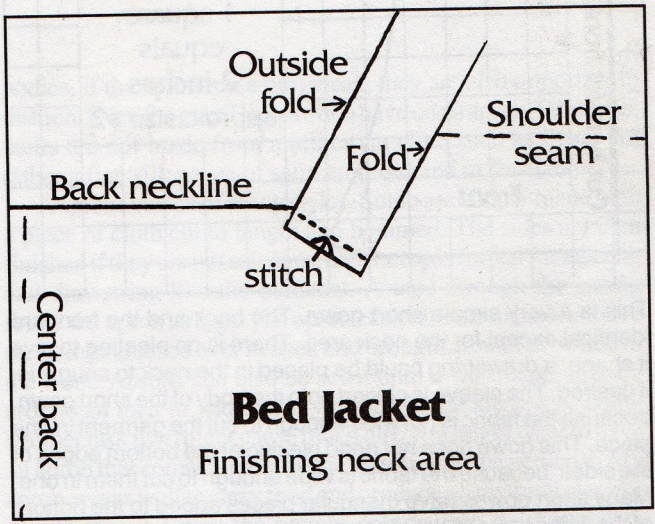
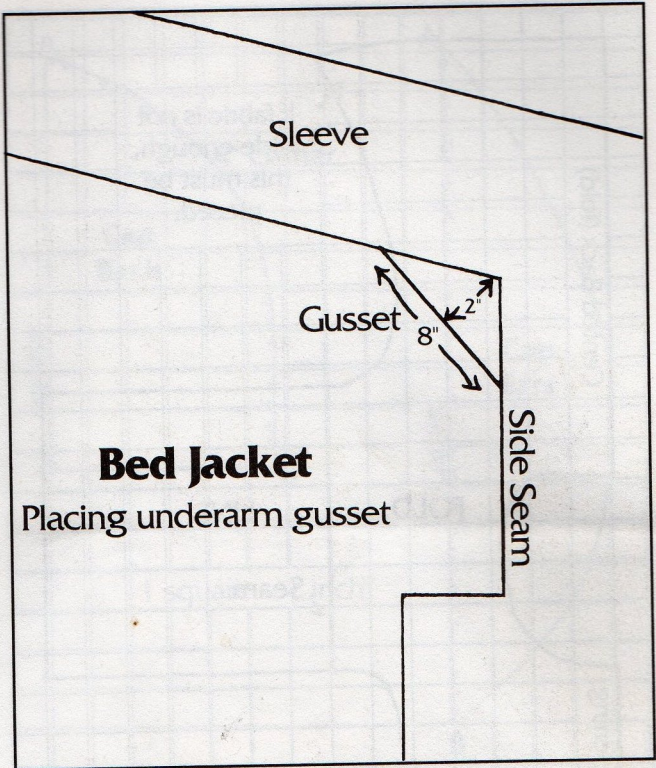
“When you are ready to start sewing, piece on the added lengths of the sleeves first. Then sew the shoulder seams using a 3/8” seam and match the seams that result from piecing the sleeve length. Next, if the center back was not cut on a fold, sew the center back seam. The underarm gussets are put in next. See the illustration at right for the placement of these. [gusset.jpg]

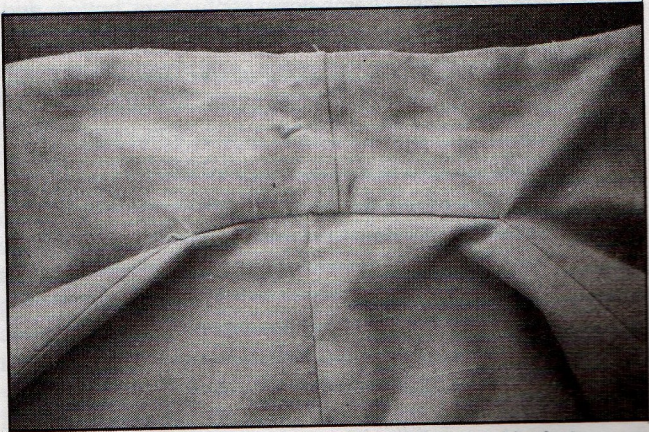
“Once the gussets are in, sew the underarm seam and the side seams down to the top of the pleat. Sew the side pleat seams one inch down from the top of the pleat. Leave an eight-inch opening in order to reach your pockets and continue sewing the rest of the seam. At this point narrow hem the pocket openings, and if your fabric is apt to ravel, you will want to overcast the seam allowance.

“The next step will be to set in the three pleats. All the pleats are inverted, which means that the fabric is folded on the inside of the garment. For the side pleats, match the side seam of the gown to the side seam of the pleat. Sew across the top of the pleat to firmly anchor it to the jacket. In the back, fold the fabric along the pleat lines and spread it flat along the neck edge. Sew the top of the pleat along the neck edge. You can also stitch it across the pleat at the waist if you wish. The pleats are not ironed flat, but rather left in soft folds.

“To finish the neck area, you sew together the two tabs that are sticking up from the front at the center back. Then sew this section down to the neck edge. You will then want to make a narrow, rolled hem along the bottom, the sleeves, and along the front edges and across the back neck. The fronts and neck are then folded to the inside – or outside, if you have a reversible fabric. The neck area creates a shawl collar. I either leave the front open over my other clothes, or fasten my apron strings over it to close it at the waist. The sleeves can either be turned up into cuffs or pleated up to form cuffs that look like the ones in the original drawing from Garsault. [original.jpg] I have left one of my bed gowns with shorter sleeves that have no cuffs at all.”







The finished shawl-type collar on the bed jacket.