

## Donation of the Month

### Hatpins

2010.32.6; Raymond Boyd  
1994.16.7; Purchase





Wearing a hat was an important piece of one's wardrobe and one certainly didn't want the hat to be blown off or bumped out of whack. So to keep the hat firmly in place women used hatpins. Originally used to secure a veil, the popularity of the hat and associated etiquette rules, hair styles and hat size made the hatpin an important piece of equipment. These changes saw hatpins become more elaborate and longer; however, by the 1920s hatpins fell out of favor.

To keep one's hat on one's head it was important to secure it with a hatpin or two. Hatpins also allowed for the hat to be set at an angle on the head. These pins were expensive and imported until an American company invented a machine in 1832 that made hatpins cheaper. Made of all types of materials, they ranged from elaborate and expensive to simple and cheap. Length of the

pin also ranged in size from 6 to 12 inches depending on the hairstyle and hat size. Here are the steps necessary to secure one's hat:

Step 1 Pick out your hatpin. Your hatpin should fit the style of your hat. Hatpins can be long (12 inches) or short (3 inches). As a general rule of thumb, the bigger your hat, the longer your pin should be.

Step 2 Find a mirror, and place your hat securely on your head. Make sure it is at the exact angle you desire, and hold it in place with one hand.

Step 3 Remove the topper from the pin, and place it within reach. Insert the hatpin at the back of the hat near the crown. Avoid the edges of the hat.

Step 4 Continue pushing the pin until it touches your scalp. Push the pin upward slightly until it emerges on the side near the front (not squarely in front) of the hat's crown. Put the topper on the pin tip, while holding your hat in place with your other hand.

As hats became larger the length of the pin grew. Soon considered deadly weapons by some, several states, including Arkansas, began passing laws limiting the length of the pin. However, the downfall of the hatpin was a change in hat and hair style. By the 1920s hairstyles were short, which allowed for the popularity of the closer fitting hats such as the cloche or pillbox.

No longer needed today hatpins are collector items; and reminders, along with the hats themselves, of a by-gone era of high fashion and etiquette.