Pressman's Hats

In the 1890s, most people wore a hat whenever they left their house. In fact, it was considered rude to leave your house without a head covering. In addition, some people wore a particular style of hat at their job (for example cowboys and police officers).

Paper hats like this pressman's hat were popular with newspaper printers and painters as early as the 1700s. In order to keep their outside hats nice (and because people did not wash their hair daily) press operators would make a paper hat at the start of each day to keep grease, paint, paper lint, and oil out of their hair.

In 1892, just before the Rosson House was built, there were three daily newspapers in the young town of Phoenix, Arizona. Residents got their news from the Arizona Republican (now called the Arizona Republic), the Arizona Gazette and the Phoenix Daily Herald. Many of the newspaper operators probably wore hats just like this.

Pressman's Hat Craft Activity

This activity teaches children about the Victorian hat craze through the creation of a folded hat using a piece of newsprint, wrapping paper or heavy tissue.

Materials

- 1 sheet of newspring/wrapping paper or heavy tissue
- Open work space

Steps to make your own pressman's hat

1. Start with one folded sheet (4 pages) of newsprint. Turn it so the fold is at the top - away from you.

2. Fold in each top corner so they meet in the middle leaving about 2" at the bottom. You can tape the flaps.

3. Fold the top layer of the bottom flap half its width: then fold again to meet the bottom edge of the triangle. This creates a smooth rim with no raw edges.
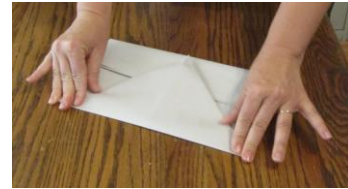
4. Turn the paper over. Fold sides in to center.

5. Fold top flap of bottom edge up.

6. Fold pointed top down and tuck point under flap or tape down.

7. Open up from the bottom, pulling gently until the opening edges meet in the opposite direction. Crease the outside edges.

8. Fold outside corners down and tuck under flap.

9.Open into hat shape.

Your new Pressman's Hat is ready to wear!