

Fancy Hats – A Thing of the Past?

By Marilyn Reeves

It seems to me that people used to dress a little nicer back in the 40's and 50's when I was growing up. Women seldom wore pants. Mostly they wore skirts and dresses, and on special occasions, often wore hats. And the men would wear fedoras.

I can remember Easter being a special occasion during my childhood. Each of us girls got a pretty new dress and a new pair of patent leather shoes. Then we'd put on some sort of hat or bonnet and even a pair of little white gloves. It was such fun going to church and looking around at all the fancy clothes and hats the other girls and women were wearing. Some wore hats festooned with ribbons and bows and flowers or feathers. Some wore little pillbox hats – small and discreet, perhaps adorned with a little black veil. While others took a leaf from Carmen Miranda and wore something resembling an upside down fruit basket, with apples and cherries and bananas and berries sticking up and dangling down, each edible looking bit of ornamentation vying for attention. I always sympathized with the poor souls who had to sit behind some lady wearing one of those big, gaudy hats – there was no way they could see around her!

It's been awhile since I've been to church, but the last few times I went, I observed that the dress code has definitely changed over the years. To be sure, some of the ladies still wear dresses, but often you see both men and women attending church nowadays wearing scruffy looking jeans and a t-shirt. The same is true of going out to eat – at least at the low-to-mid-priced restaurants that I frequent. There simply isn't a dress code nowadays. People wear whatever they have on – regardless of how sloppy they look. And I never see women wearing fancy hats anymore. Baseball caps – for both men and women – or the occasional sun bonnet or even a cowboy hat. But not the frilly, flowery, showy hats of yesteryear. They seem to be a thing of the past.

But who am I to talk? For many years I wore skirts and dresses and heels - even to work, but now when I want to dress up, I put on a pantsuit and call it good. And I never, ever wear a hat.