

A Tradition of Caring

by AnneLise Wilhelmsen



Children have always been eager for their dolls to join them in performing household and social duties. Early dolls were sometimes dressed as nursemaids or nannies. And even the most spoiled doll's wardrobes contained at least one apron to protect their wearer's clothes while they worked or served tea to visitors. With the outbreak of World War I, the first craze for dressing dolls as professional medical nurses came about (Fig. 1). And all too soon afterward, World War II inspired the next generation of little girls to do the same (Fig. 2).

Perhaps giving their dolls the important responsibility of caring for our fallen soldiers helped their young owners feel more useful themselves, or offered a way to process the overwhelming concept of a world in turmoil. Whatever the underlying reasons might have been, publishers of commercial doll patterns encouraged doll mothers in this pursuit by providing the means to sew these costumes. And collectors of vintage and antique dolls are charmed to this day by these detailed and earnest little uniforms.



Fig. 1 La Semaine de Suzette provided this nurse's costume pattern for Bleulette in 1915.



Fig. 2 McCall's began selling this pattern in 1942. It included both a nurse's uniform, and an air raid warden costume to clothe helpful dolls. McCall's® M1015. Image Courtesy of The McCall Pattern Company copyright © 2015

In this same spirit of helpfulness, our costuming project for this issue was inspired by the efforts of another group of girls, too old for dolls but equally determined to do their part for those less fortunate. In 1944 a high school civics class conducted a volunteer project at the East Orange General Hospital in New Jersey. The girls delivered mail, brought water and books, and generally provided well needed cheering up for the hospital's ill and wounded. Their matching outfits, made by the girls themselves, consisted of a red and white striped apron worn over a white dress. They were nicknamed "Candy Strippers," and similar volunteer programs still provide much appreciated assistance to veterans and hospital patients today.

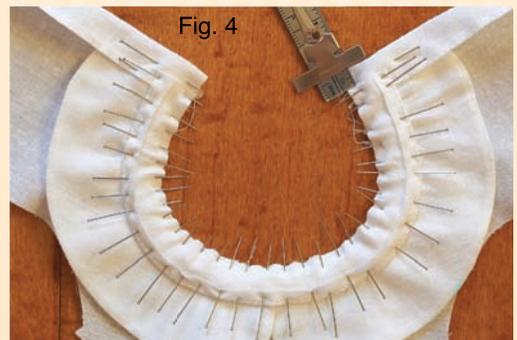
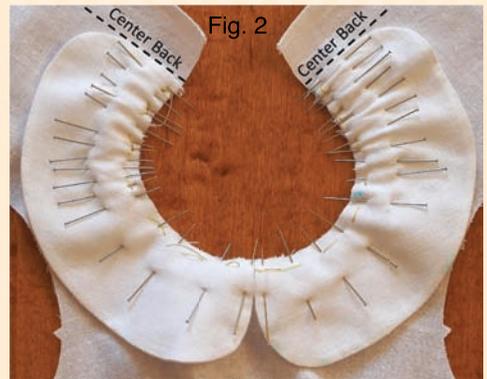
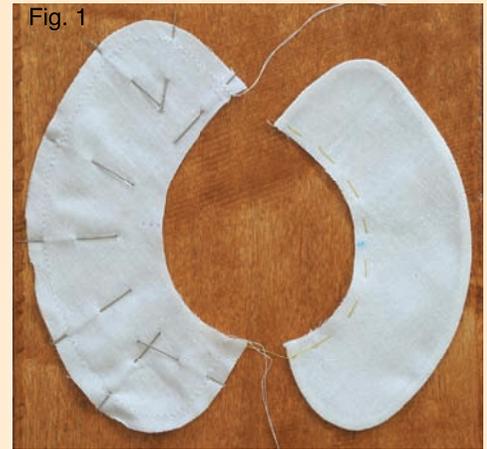
Our model is Madame Alexander's Margaret O'Brien doll. She is 20" tall, but her patterns are easily adapted to other sized dolls as both pieces are relatively loosely fitted. And of course, the dress can be made without the apron in various materials to meet different wardrobe needs.

We hope you and your dolls enjoy this vintage styled project, and are as inspired as we were by all the little girls and dolls of the past who made it their goal to take care of others!

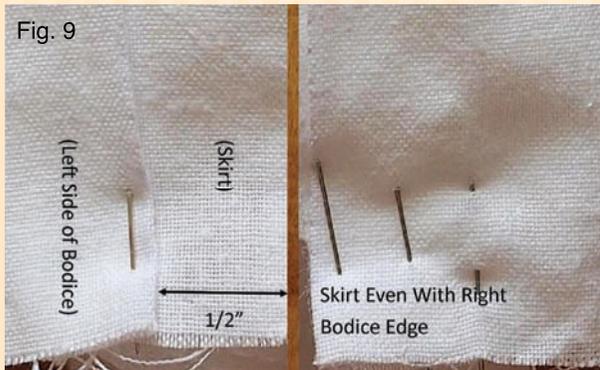
Candy Striper Outfit for 20" Slender Bodied Doll

DRESS

1. Cut one front bodice on the fold, two back bodices, two sleeves, two cuffs, two collars, two collar facings, one bias neck binding strip, and one skirt from your dress fabric. Transfer markings.
2. Create darts on front bodice by matching lines and machine stitching. Press away from center front.
3. With right sides together, pin front to backs at shoulders. Stitch using a 1/4" seam allowance. Press open flat. Finish seams by pinking, or overcasting.
4. Turn 1/8" to inside along each center back edge and hand baste. Edge stitch in place. Remove basting. Press.
5. With right sides together, pin one collar facing to each collar. Stitch outer edges using a 1/4" seam allowance. Trim to 1/8", clip curves, and turn right side out. Hand baste open edges together (Fig. 1). Press.
6. Pin collar sections to bodice, having wrong side of collar to right side of bodice, marks at shoulder seams, and finished back edges of collar at center back lines. Hand baste in place (Fig. 2).
7. Turn center back bodice edges to outside (right sides together) along fold line and pin to neck edge over collar (Fig. 3).
8. Turn under 1/4" along one long edge of bias neck binding strip and hand baste. Edge stitch in place. Remove basting. Press.
9. With right sides together pin unfinished long edge of binding strip to neck edge, having the short ends 1/4" from folded back edges as shown (Figure 4). Stitch through all thicknesses using a 1/4" seam allowance. Clip curves and trim seam to 1/8". Turn bias strip and center back edges (along fold lines) to inside and press.
10. Tack binding strip to bodice at shoulders and back edges (Fig. 5).
11. Stitch long gathering threads at 1/8" and 3/16" from sleeve cap, between notches. Repeat for lower edge, stitching between marks.
12. With right sides together, pin sleeves to arm's eyes matching notches and pulling up gathers to fit (Fig. 6). Adjust evenly. Stitch using a 1/4" seam allowance. Clip curves and finish seams with overcast or machine zig-zag. Press seams towards bodice.
13. With right sides together, pin sleeves to cuffs, pulling up gathers to fit. Adjust evenly. Stitch using a 1/4" seam allowance. Trim seam. Press seam away from sleeve.
14. Turn under 1/4" along remaining long edge of cuff. Press.
15. With right sides together, pin underarm and side seam (Fig. 7). Stitch using a 1/4" seam allowance. Press open flat. Finish with pinking or overcast stitch.
16. Turn cuff to inside as shown and slip stitch over seam allowance (Fig. 8). Press.
17. Run long gathering threads at 1/8" and 3/16" from upper edge of skirt, starting and stopping 3/4" from center backs.
18. Turn in 1/8" along each center back skirt edge and baste. Edge stitch in place. Press. Remove basting.
19. Pin skirt to lower bodice, having right sides together and doll's right center back skirt edge even with the finished bodice edge. On doll's left, leave 1/2" of skirt free beyond the left bodice edge as shown (Fig. 9). Pull up gathers to fit and adjust evenly. Stitch using a 1/4" seam allowance. Press towards bodice. Finish edge with overcast or machine zig-zag.



APRON



20. With right sides together, pin center back of skirt from lower edge to a point 3" below the waist as shown (Fig. 10). Stitch using a 1/2" seam allowance. Press seam towards doll's left. Tack turned in skirt edge to dress at waist seam.
21. Turn up 1/4" along lower skirt edge and press. Turn up hem 1 1/4" and pin. Blind stitch in place. Press.
22. To close back of dress you may use three snaps, or three buttons and buttonholes (one at neck edge, one at waist, and one halfway between). If using buttons a size of 3/8" to 1/2" is recommended (a flat button is best). Buttonholes should be the length of the button plus the height, plus bar tacks. For example, a flat 1/2" button would need a 1/2" long buttonhole (plus bar tacks) whereas a 1/2" button which is 1/4" high would need a 3/4" long buttonhole (plus bar tacks).

1. Cut one bib on the fold, one skirt, two binding strips, and two waistbands on folds (one inner, one outer) from your main fabric. Cut one bib from lining fabric.
2. With right sides together, pin bib to lining along neckline, inner strap edges, and short strap ends as shown (Fig. 11). Stitch using a 1/4" seam allowance, pivoting at strap corners. Trim to 1/8" and clip curves. Turn to right side and press. Baste remaining raw edges together.
3. With right sides together, pin binding strips to raw side edges of bib, matching notches and turning in 1/4" on short end as shown (Fig. 12). Stitch using a 1/8" seam allowance. Press strip away from strap.
4. Turn under 1/8" along remaining long edge of binding and baste. Turn to inside and slip stitch over seam. Press.
5. Pin bib to outer band, right sides together, matching center fronts. Pin inner band over the top, having the right side towards the wrong side of the bib (and thus, the right side of the outer band) creating a "sandwich" as shown. Pin together the entire length of the band, not just the bib section. Stitch using a 1/4" seam allowance (Fig. 13). Press.





Fig. 14



Fig. 15



Fig. 16



Fig. 17



Fig. 18



Fig. 19



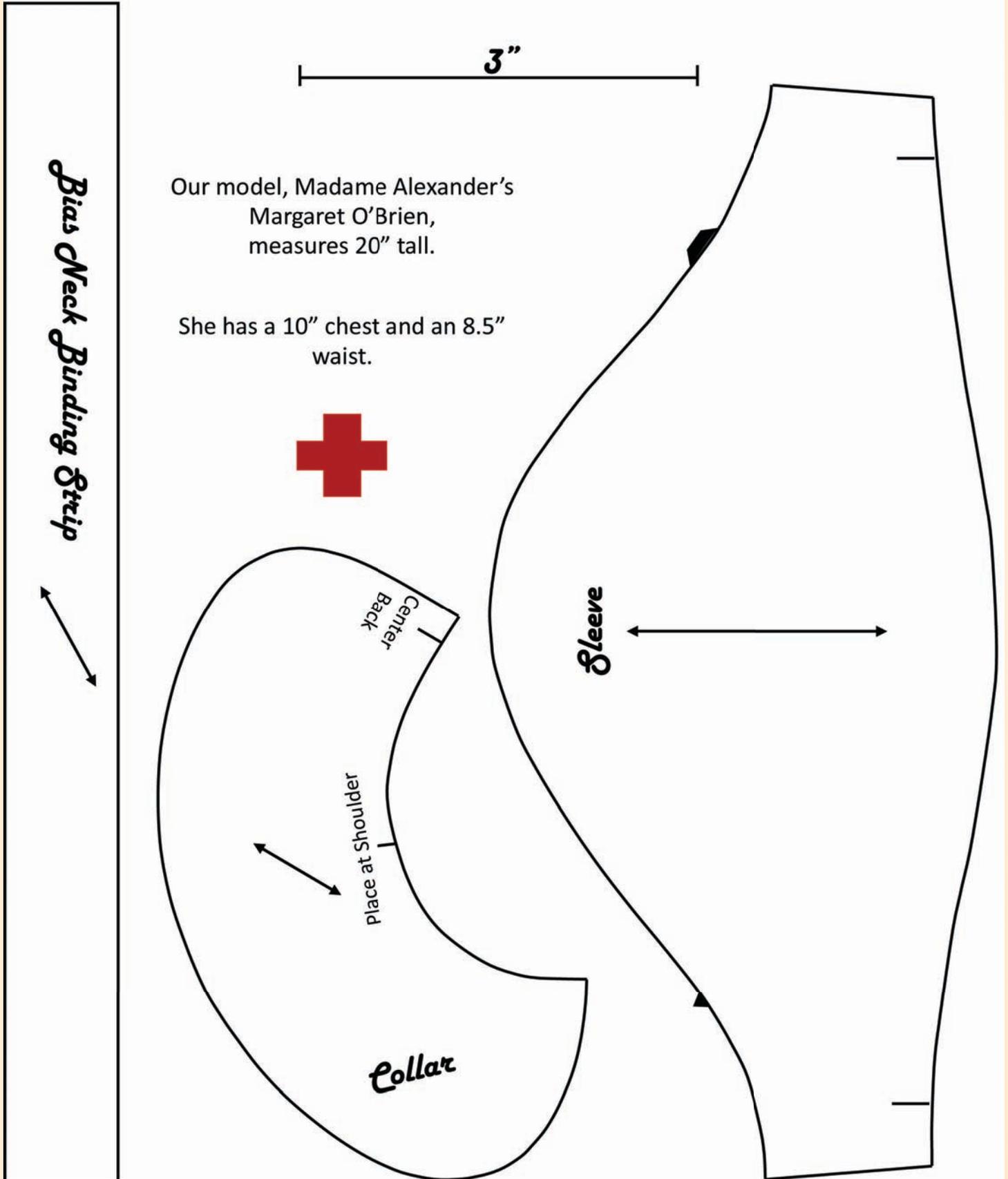
Fig. 20

6. Turn in 1/8" along each center back skirt edge and baste. Press.
7. Turn up 1/4" along lower skirt edge and baste in place. Press.
8. Turn center back skirt edges to outside 3/4" and pin. Stitch across 1 1/4" from lower edge as shown (Fig. 14). Trim away excess (Fig. 15). Turn to inside and baste facing in place. Edge stitch the entire length of the center back edges (Fig. 16). Press.
9. Run long gathering threads at 1/8" and 3/16" from upper skirt edge, starting and stopping at edges of facings.
10. Turn in 1/4" at each waistband end and press. With right sides together, pin skirt to outer waistband (Fig. 17), having center back edges even with folded ends of bands (Fig. 18). Pull up gathers to fit and adjust evenly. Stitch using a 1/4" seam allowance. Press seam towards band.
11. Turn under 1/4" along remaining long edge of inner waistband. Slipstitch in place over seam allowance, closing the two band ends as you go. Press.
12. Turn up remainder of hem 1 1/4" and pin. Blind stitch in place. Press.
13. Pin each strap to its corresponding center back position as shown, having finished short ends even with lower waistband seam. Try on doll to check fit, then slip stitch in place (Fig. 19).
14. Close apron at back with two snaps as shown (Fig. 20).

Candy Striper Dress and Apron

Sized for 20"-21" Slim Bodied Dolls

Seam allowances are included but vary from step to step. Please follow instructions carefully.



REQUIREMENTS

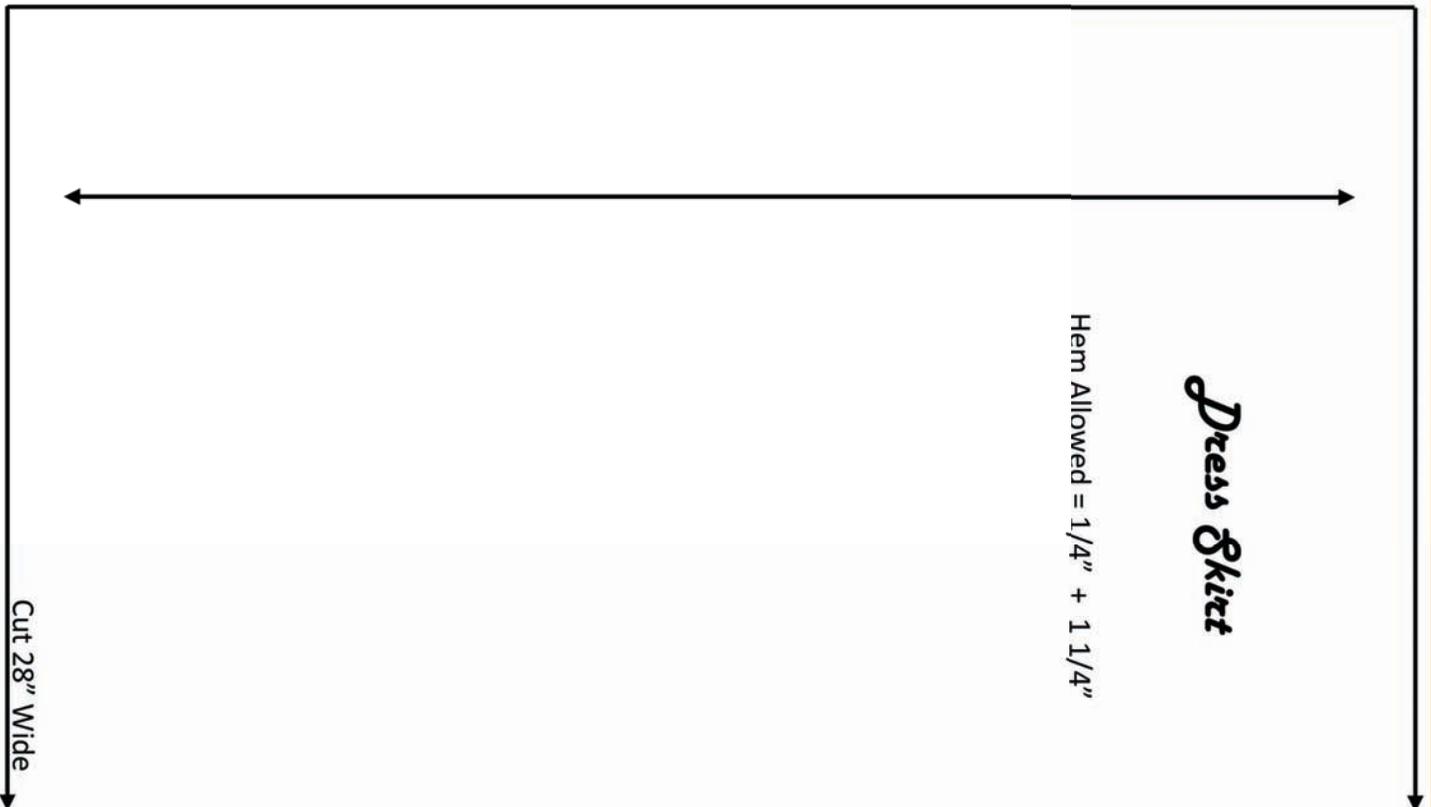
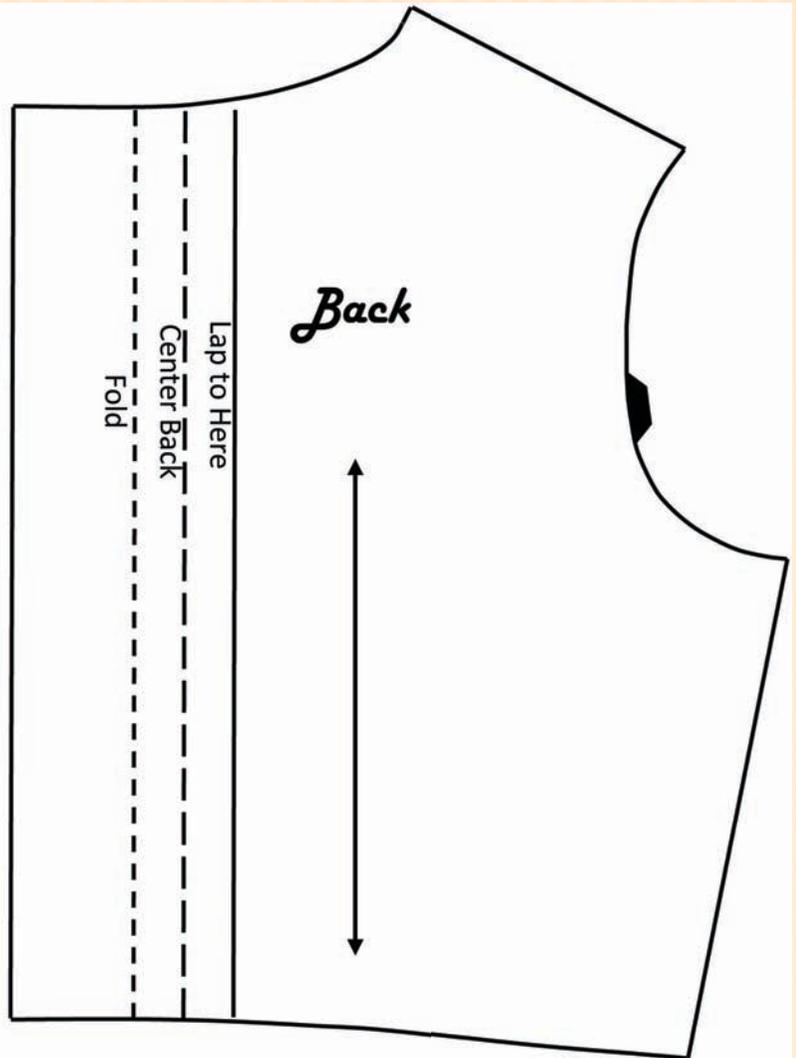
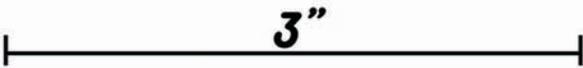
Dress Fabric - 25" L, 36" W

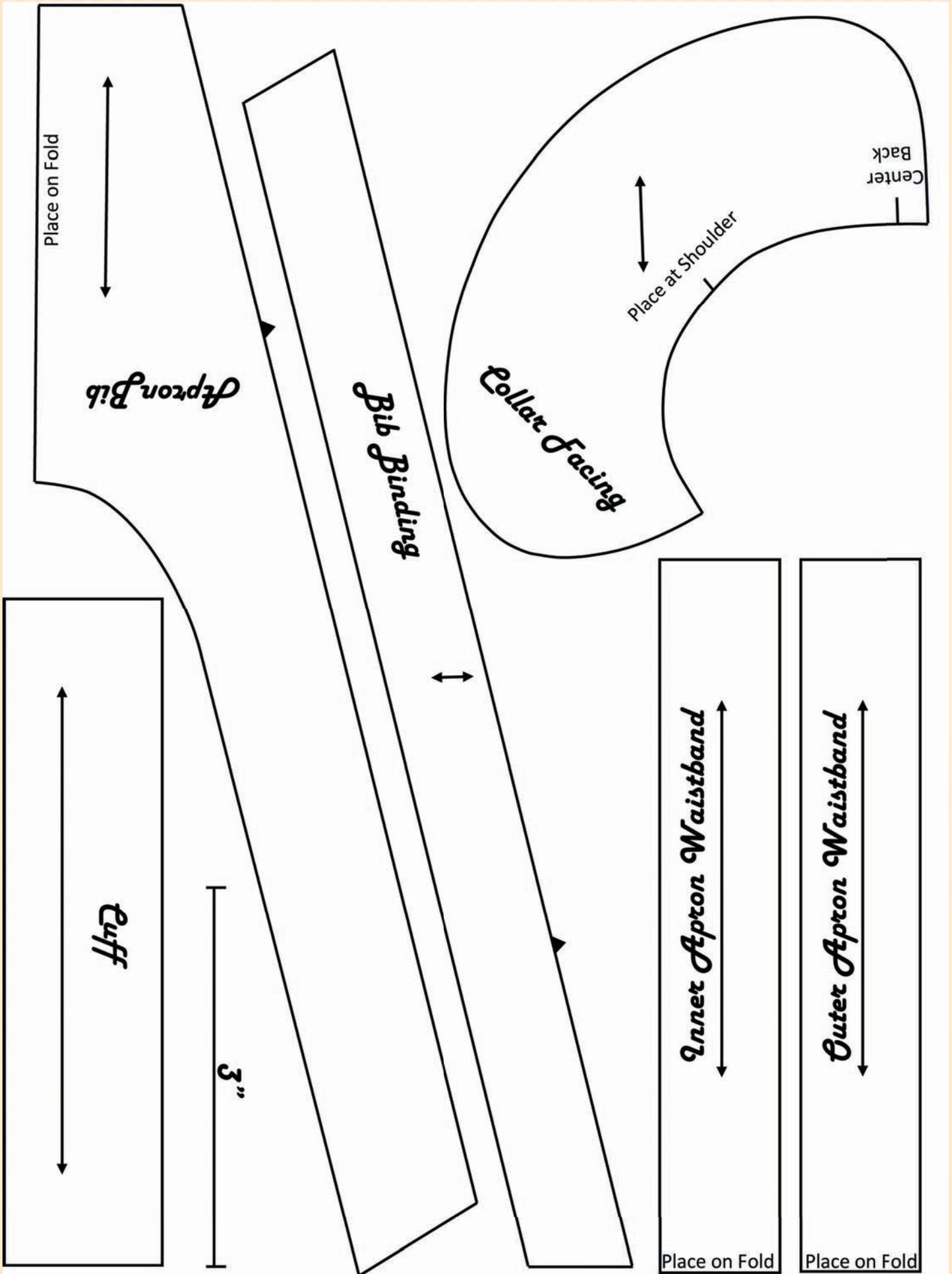
Dress Buttons - Three 3/8"-1/2" Flat

Apron Fabric - 14" L, 40" W

Apron Lining - 12" L, 8" W

Apron Snaps - 2





Next time you're in the San Diego, CA area be sure to visit Margaret at the San Diego Toy and Doll Museum, located in the Old Poway Village at:

14031 Midland Road
Poway, CA 92064

Special thanks to
Elisa Ballard
For allowing us to
dress and
photograph
Margaret
for
Doll News.



Bib Fitting
Apron

Place on Fold

Apron Skirt

Hem Allowed = 1/4" + 1 1/4"

Cut 28" Wide

Front

Place on Fold