

CAP MAKERS IN MID NINETEENTH CENTURY WHITECHAPEL

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about clothing workers of East London in the period following mass immigration from Eastern Europe in the later part of the nineteenth century, but less attention has been given to the period before it. This paper therefore deliberately focuses on the situation of cap makers in the middle of the nineteenth century. This is done through an analysis of all cap makers recorded in the 1851 census in the registration district of Whitechapel, and through contemporary, first hand and eye witness accounts. The life stories of three of the Whitechapel cap makers are also presented, selected to show a variety of starting points and outcomes – a child’s story, a widow’s story, and an immigrant’s story.

CAP MAKING IN LONDON IN THE MID NINETEENTH CENTURY

Caps of various kinds have been worn and made in England for centuries.¹ In the mid nineteenth century, a great variety of caps were worn. The main types of caps for women were night caps, morning caps and dress caps.² For men and boys, there were cloth caps and boys’ fancy caps. There were also caps for particular situations, like widows’ caps and uniform caps.

When Henry Mayhew investigated the poorest London cap makers in 1850, he found many to be making widows’ caps and cap fronts. He reported them to be not only poorly paid when employed by tradesmen, but also often producing ‘on spec’, ie buying their own materials, making the caps, and presenting them to shopkeepers, who would then either buy them at the cheapest possible price or not buy them at all. Appendix 2 presents extracts from Mayhew’s article, which contains revealing and shocking statements from a maker of widows’ caps, a maker of cap fronts, and from a shopkeeper.³

The shopkeeper explains proudly that if he puts an advert for cap makers in the shop window, he will: “have a hundred of them in an hour, with all sorts of caps. Where they come from to my place I don’t know, haven’t a notion – don’t know the address of one of them – they’re nothing to me. They come with their goods in boxes, and of course I make the best bargain I can with them.” The cap makers describe the pittance they earn for the long hours worked, their inadequate diets, and the precariousness of their situation, with no allowance for periods of sickness or unemployment.

This is also shown in the account from the Times, given in Appendix 3, of the inquest into the death of Mary Anne Ryan, a 45 year old cap maker, who died of starvation. Mary Anne was a widow and had developed an ulcerated leg following a fall. The woman with whom she lodged reported that Mary Anne “obtained a few pence per week by the making up of men’s and boys’ cloth caps for a person in the same street. She

¹ See Appendix 1 for references to pre-nineteenth century cap makers.

² Buck, Anne, *Victorian Costume*, 1984, p 126

³ ‘Of the London Dressmakers and Milliners. Letter LXXVI’, in *The Morning Chronicle*, 31st Oct, 1850

could not obtain more than would get her a cup of tea and dry bread, and was frequently without that.”

This points to another feature of work organisation, common in the clothing industry at this time, ie the use of subcontracting and middlemen, who paid others to do the work as cheaply as possible. Mayhew’s investigations and reports on the London clothing trades in the mid nineteenth century show that the ‘sweating’ system was in evidence well before mass immigration from Eastern Europe.⁴

WHITECHAPEL CAP MAKERS IN THE MID NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the 1851 census, Whitechapel was the London registration district with the largest number of cap makers recorded. Whitechapel registration district included a number of parishes or townships in addition to Whitechapel itself, such as Spitalfields. In 1851, there were 176 cap makers recorded in Whitechapel registration district as a whole, with 81 of them residing in Spitalfields, and 65 in Whitechapel parish.

Table 1: Parish/ Township of Residence of Cap Makers, Whitechapel Registration District, 1851

Christchurch, Spitalfields	81
St Mary, Whitechapel	65
Old Artillery Ground	11
St Dunstan’s, Stepney	5
St Botolph, Aldgate	5
Holy Trinity, Minories	3
Norton Folgate	2
Not known	4
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Places of Birth

Table 2 shows the places of birth of all those recorded as cap makers in the Whitechapel registration district in 1851. It can be seen that more than half were born in London, the vast majority of these very locally. Only 37% were born outside England, although some of those born in England were second generation immigrants. It can also be seen that cap makers from Eastern Europe were a minority, not only of all cap makers, but also of immigrant cap makers. The largest immigrant contingent was from Holland.

Although the majority of the cap makers were born in England, most of the cap makers were Jewish. It is not possible to give an exact figure, but certainly more than half had names (or had parents or siblings with names) which were clearly Jewish.

⁴ See, in particular, ‘The Slop-Workers and Needlewomen. Letter VI’, in *The Morning Chronicle*, 6th November, 1849.

Table 2: Places of Birth of Cap Makers, Whitechapel Registration District, 1851

London, Middlesex	85
Other or unspecified London/ Surrey	8
Other England	14
Ireland	4
Holland	24
Germany	8
Prussia	10
Russia	7
Poland	11
Bohemia	1
Not known	4
	176

Sex, Age and Position in the Household

A substantial majority of the cap makers were female. (N=130=74%) Most cap makers were also young. Table 3 shows that 56% of cap makers were aged less than 25, and 71% were less than 30. This sex and age distribution reflects the general pattern in London as a whole, where there were 1,277 female cap makers, of whom 53% were aged less than 25, and 68% were less than 30.⁵

In terms of position in the household, the largest group of Whitechapel cap makers were females living at home with their parent(s). This can be seen from the fact that 44% of cap makers were categorized as “daughter”. (N=79) The next largest categories were head (N=28=16%) and wife (N=28=16%). There were only 8 cap makers recorded as “sons”.

Table 3: Age of Cap Makers, Whitechapel Registration District, 1851

Age	Number
10-14	23
15-19	36
20-24	40
25-29	27
30-39	21
40-49	14
50-59	12
60-69	2
70-79	1
	176

⁵ H of C Parliamentary Papers, *Census of Great Britain, 1851. Population Tables. II.* 1852-3 [1691-I] p 368. Figures for male cap makers are not given! Total number of cap makers of both sexes for Great Britain given as 4,793.

The Youngest Cap Makers

There were no cap makers recorded as being under the age of 10. There were 23 in the age group 10-14, of whom 4 were aged 10; 6 were aged 12; 4 were aged 13; and 9 were aged 14. Table 3 gives the names of the cap makers who were aged 10-12, together with some information about their family circumstances. It can be seen that the households of 4 of the 10 children were headed by a female, although in the case of 2 of them this may have been due to a temporary absence of a male head. It is also striking that 8 of the 10 children came from households where the head of household was an immigrant, and that 5 of the children lived in households that had a servant.

The life story of one of these children – ‘Whellie’ Hamburger – is examined in greater detail later in this paper, as is the story of Rosa Schneiders’ family.

Table 4: 10 -12 Year Old Cap Makers, Whitechapel Registration District, 1851

Name of Child	Date and Place of Birth of Child	Name of Head of Household	Occupation of Head	Place of Birth of Head	Number of People in Household (Number working)
ASHER Esther	Spitalfields (1841)	ASHER Alice (widow)	General Dealer	Spitalfields	9 (8)
ISAAC Michael	Whitechapel (1841)	ISAAC Jacob	Cap Maker	Frankfurt	10 (7) + 1 servant
JOYCE Francess (male)	Spitalfields (1841)	JOYCE Francess (male)	Cap Maker	Somerset	3 (3)
TOMPERAS Catherine	Holland (1841)	TOMPERAS Catherine (says wife, but no husband present)	General Dealer	Holland	9 (5) + 1 servant & 4 lodgers
BLOMBERG Emily	Russia (1839)	BLOMBERG Annette (widow)	Seamstress	Russia	4 (3)
HAMBURGER Whellie (female)	Whitechapel (1839)	HAMBURGER Myer	Pedlar	Amsterdam	5 (3)
ISAAC Henry	Whitechapel (1839)	ISAAC Jacob	Cap Maker	Frankfurt	10 (7) + 1 servant
SCHNEIDERS Rosa	Amsterdam (1839)	SCHNEIDERS Zudek [Sadok]	Cap Maker	Amsterdam	10 (4) + 5 lodgers
SOLOMAN Jane	Spitalfields (1839)	SOLOMAN Israel	Commission Agent	Holland	5 (4) + 1 visitor & 1 servant
TOMPERAS Mary	Holland (1839)	TOMPERAS Catherine	General Dealer	Holland	9 (5) + 1 servant & 4 lodgers

Female Cap Makers who were Heads of Household

Only 5 of the 28 cap makers, who were heads of household, were female. One was a young, unmarried woman, living with her sister, who was also a cap maker. The others were all widows. All but one of the widows had dependent children living with them, but they also had at least 1 other breadwinner in the household. Elizabeth Turner looks to be particularly vulnerable as she was living alone, although there were 3 other households in the same house. The story of one of these widows – Celia Solomons – is reported later in this paper.

Table 5: Female Cap Makers who were Heads of Household, Whitechapel Registration District, 1851

Name	Marital Status	Date & Place of Birth	Number of People in Household	Number of People in Household who were working
BITTON Fanny	Un-married	1829, Whitechapel	2	2
HART Julia	Widow	1806, Holland	7	4 + 1 apprentice
OSBORN Mary Ann	Widow	1804, Middlesex	9	5
SOLOMONS Celia	Widow	1811, Whitechapel	6	2 + 1 apprentice
TURNER Elizabeth	Widow	1802, Whitechapel	1	1

Male Cap Makers who were Heads of Household

As we have seen, a substantial majority of the Whitechapel cap makers were female, and 60% of these were “daughters”, living at home with their parent(s). Only 46 of the 176 cap makers were male (26%), and exactly half of these were heads of household. It is noticeable that of the 23 male heads of household, 18 (78%) were immigrants - 5 each from Holland and Germany, 4 from Poland, 2 from Russia, and 1 each from Prussia and Bohemia. This might indicate increased difficulty of immigrant males in finding alternative sources of employment, and/or that they brought cap making skills with them from abroad.

Whatever the reason, the trade could sometimes serve them well, as in the case of Sadok Schneiders, whose story is told below.

CASE STUDIES

In this section the life stories of three of the Whitechapel cap makers are reconstructed, chosen to show a variety of starting points and outcomes. In 1851, one was a Whitechapel-born child of Dutch parents, one an Anglo-Jewish widow, and one an immigrant from Amsterdam.

A CHILD'S STORY: 'WHELLIE' HAMBURGER, born 1838 in Whitechapel

"Whellie" Hamburger was born in 1838 in Whitechapel. Her real name may have been Willhelmi, as this is how she is named in the 1841 census, although she later became known as Welcome. In 1841, she and her family were living in Horse Shoe Alley, Whitechapel, where they stayed for many years. Her father, Myer Hamburger, was born in Amsterdam, c.1793 and her mother, Sophia, was also born abroad, probably in Holland, c.1811. At this time, there were 5 daughters living at home – Sarah, aged 14, Elizabeth, aged 12, Julia, aged 9, Hannah, aged 7, and Willhelmi, aged 3. The children were all born in Middlesex, so the family must have been living in England for at least 14 years. The only person in the household who was working in 1841 was Myer, who was described as a "General Dealer".

By 1851, Whellie's mother, Sophia, had died, and Myer had remarried Amelia Mendoza. The family were living at 6, Horse Shoe Alley. Whellie's father, Myer, was now described as a "pedlar". His wife, Amelia, and eldest daughter, Sarah, aged 24, had no occupation recorded, but 19 year old Julia was working as a dressmaker and 12 year old Whellie as a cap maker. In 1861, "Welcome", as she was now known, was still living at home with her parents and elder sister, Sarah, at 6, Horse Shoe Alley. She had now become a tailoress, and her father, Myer, was described as a "General Dealer".

By 1871, Myer Hamburger had died, and his wife, Amelia, and daughter, Welcome, were now living with Welcome's older sister, Elizabeth and her family at 17, Bury Street, St Katherine Cree. It was a large household, headed by Elizabeth's husband, Rev. Solomon Levy, containing 11 children, and 2 servants, as well as Welcome and Amelia. Welcome was still working as a tailoress, as were 2 of her nieces. One of her nephews, aged 22, was "an undergraduate at London University".

In 1877, Welcome, aged 38, married Israel Cohen, who was born in Holland in 1841. They continued to live with Welcome's sister, Elizabeth, and her family, who in 1881 were resident at 21, Great Alie Street, Whitechapel. Elizabeth and her husband now had 7 of their children living with them, as well as 2 grandchildren, a servant, and 2 other boarders, besides Welcome and Israel. Neither Welcome nor her husband had an occupation recorded. Indeed, the only person working in this large household, apart from Solomon Levy, who was still a clergyman, was his 14 year old daughter, Julia, who was a dressmaker. One of his other children was a student, the rest scholars.

It seems that such home comforts as Welcome had, came by virtue of her elder sister's marriage partner, and this situation was soon destined to end. By 1891, Solomon Levy

had died, and his widow, Elizabeth, was living with an unmarried daughter in Hackney. Welcome herself died in 1888 in Mile End, at the age of 48, and her husband, Israel Cohen, swiftly remarried one of the women who had in 1881 been a boarder with the family.

A WIDOW'S STORY: CELIA SOLOMONS, born c.1811 in Whitechapel

Celia Solomons, née Hyams, was born c.1811 in Whitechapel, the daughter of Emanuel and Rachel Hyams, who was born c.1774 in Middlesex. In 1841, Celia was living in St George's Terrace, St George in the East, with her widowed mother, Rachel, her brother Charles, and her children, Emanuel, aged 5, and Esther, aged 2. Celia was working as a cap maker, and brother, Charles, as a labourer. Celia's husband, Moses Solomons, a policeman, was not at home on census night, and he died on 5th June 1843, at the age of 37, just before the birth of his youngest son, Moses, on 25th June 1843.

In 1851, widowed Celia Solomons was living at 25, Castle Place, Whitechapel, still working as a cap maker. She now had 4 children – Emanuel, aged 14, who was apprenticed to a tailor, and Esther, aged 11, Maria, aged 9, and Moses, aged 7, who were all scholars. Celia's brother, Charles Hyams, aged 35, was also living with them, now working as a "Traveller of Caps". Celia was fortunate in having her brother, Charles, to help support her family, but unfortunately, he died in 1857.

In 1861, Celia was living at 28, Gowers Walk, Whitechapel. Living with her was her daughter Esther, aged 20, and son Morris, aged 16. Celia was also recorded as having another daughter, Rachel, aged 6, but Rachel was actually Esther's daughter and must have been 6 months, rather than 6 years. None of them had an occupation recorded, so it is not clear how they were surviving at this time. In 1871, Celia, Esther and Rachel were still living at 28, Gowers Walk, with Celia a cap maker, and Esther a tailoress.

By 1881, Celia had died, but her daughters and granddaughters continued to earn their living by sewing. Esther was living with her now married daughter, Rachel, and Rachel's 2 young children at 33, Christian Street, St George in the East. There was no sign of Rachel's husband, and both Esther and Rachel were tailoresses. Celia's other daughter, Maria Levy, was now a 40 year old widow living at 29, Gowers Walk, with her 4 children. Maria was a tailoress, as were 2 of her 3 daughters. Maria died in 1886, aged 44, and her daughters continued to support themselves through needlework. In 1891, Maria's 3 daughters were living together at 81, Leman Street, Whitechapel, with 2 of them working as tailoresses.

The story of the women in Celia's family seems to have been one of absent men and continued dependence on sewing. Meanwhile, Celia's son, Morris, (born 1843) became a lithographic printer. The occupations of Morris' daughters show expanding opportunities for women over time. Morris' eldest daughter, Lucy, (born 1864) was a tailoress, but younger daughters, Ada and Maud, (born 1876 and 1885) became school teachers, and by 1911, the youngest daughter, Ethel, (born 1887) was a printer.

AN IMMIGRANT'S STORY: SADOK SCHNEIDERS, born c.1805 in Amsterdam

Sadok⁶ Schneiders was born c.1805 in Amsterdam, and arrived in England some time between 1844, when his son Michael was born in Amsterdam, and 1848, when his son Abraham was born in Aldgate.

In 1851, Sadok and his family were living at 5, Castle Place, Whitechapel. It was a large household, consisting of Sadok, his wife, father-in-law, 4 sons, 3 daughters, and 5 lodgers. Sadok and 2 of his daughters - Fanny, aged 14, and Rosa, aged 12 - were cap makers. Sadok's son, Joseph, aged 16, was a segar [cigar] maker. All the members of the household were born in Amsterdam, apart from Sadok's wife, who was born in Belgium, his 2 youngest children, who were born in Aldgate, and one of the lodgers, who was born in Hamburg.

In 1861, Sadok and his family were living at 23, Fashion Street, Spitalfields. Sadok and 3 of his sons - Michael, aged 17, Abraham, aged 14, and Gerson, aged 12 - were cap makers. Also living in the household were Sadok's wife, father-in-law, 4 younger children, and 2 servants. By 1871, the family had moved to 63, Stepney Green, Mile End Old Town. Sadok and his son, Michael, were hat and cap manufacturers. Sadok was now widowed, and Michael was the head of household. Michael's sister, Leah, aged 16, was a machinist. Other members of the household were Michael's wife and baby son, 2 of Michael's brothers, a cousin, and a domestic servant.

In 1881, the family were living at 95, Tredegar Road, Bow. Sadok was now aged 76, and recorded as a retired hat and cap manufacturer. The household was headed by Sadok's son, Michael, a hat and cap manufacturer, employing 25 men, 50 women, and 20 boys. Also living in the household were Michael's wife, 3 sons, 4 daughters, 2 brothers, a niece, employed as a servant, and 3 other servants.

The family thus built up a successful hat and cap making business, and also branched out into the clothing trade. In 1881, Michael's brother, Henry, aged 24, was a clothing trade traveller, and brother, Loui, aged 22, was a clothing trade warehouseman. The 1882 Post Office Directory lists under 'Cap Makers', Schneiders S. & Son, 7, St Mary Street, Whitechapel, and, under 'Clothiers', Schneiders Sadak & Son, 27, Commercial Street.

Sadok Schneiders died in 1885, aged 80, but the business and name continued. By the late 1880s, Sadak Schneiders & Son had a factory in Bucks Row (later Durward Street), Whitechapel. By 1901, S Schneiders & Son had extensive premises in Durward Street,⁷ and was described as "one of the largest and best known firms in London", making a large range of clothing and hats.⁸ The business remained in Durward Street until the 1960s.

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⁶ Different documents use different spellings, including Sadok, Sadock, Sadak.

⁷ *The Times*, 1st July, 1901

⁸ *The West Australian*, Perth, 7th Feb 1902

APPENDIX 1: PRE-NINETEENTH CENTURY REPORTS OF CAP MAKERS

1. 18th CENTURY REPORTS OF CAP MAKERS OF 15th & 16th CENTURIES:⁹

1489. In this fourth Year of King *Henry VII.* of *England*, a Statute ...”(Cap. ix.) no *Hatter* or *Capper* shall sell any Hat above the Price of 20d. for the best, nor any Cap above 2s. 8d. for the best.” Here a Cap [Such, I suppose, as are seen in Old Pictures on the Heads of Persons of Rank.] is supposed to be a more valuable or fashionable Covering for the Head than a Hat, then probably worn only by meaner People. This is the second Time we meet with the Word *Hat* in the Statute Book...

1571. The *Cappers*, or Knit-Capmakers of *England*, observing the great Increase of the Wear of *Hats* made of *Felt*, had, before this Time, obtained an Act of Parliament for preventing of any foreign Materials from being worked up into Hats. But that not answering fully, they, in this thirteenth Year of Queen *Elizabeth*, obtain a second Law, (Cap. xix.) *Anno* 1571, purporting, “That every Person above Seven Years of Age should wear, on *Sundays* and *Holidays*, a Cap of Wool, knit, made, thicked, and dressed in *England*, and dressed only and finished by some of the Trade of *Cappers*, on the Forfeiture of 3s. 4d. for every Day so neglected to be worn: Excepting...” Nevertheless, the Fashion of *Felt* Hats prevailing so strongly, as the very penning of that Act seemed to portend it would, as well as by Reason of their superior Strength, Lightness, and Beauty, as also of their being much better adapted to screen from and keep out Sun and Rain, the knit Caps are long since driven out, and are only to be seen in some of the poorest and more remote Parts of the Kingdom.

2. 18th CENTURY DESCRIPTION OF CAP MAKERS OF THE 18th CENTURY:¹⁰

The Business of Cap-making was formerly much more in Request than now, when the Makers were called *Cappers*, and by that Title incorporated with the *Haberdashers*; yet there are divers Kinds of Caps worn at this time, for different Uses, and made by different Sets of People: Those for the Army is one Branch, and the most profitable, of which there are not above two or three principal Undertakers, who employ a Number of Hands, chiefly Women and Girls, who seldom take Apprentices. The next are the Leather Sort, to bear out much Weather, chiefly for the use of Sailors and Postillions. The last Sort are chiefly of Silk and Velvet, worn by Men, Women, and Children, which are made and sold, by those properly called Cap-makers, some of whom also keep Shops (of which there are not many) and take Apprentices, with about 5 or 10 l. each, who generally work from six to eight, and can earn in that time, when perfect in their Business, which is mostly Needle-work 1s. 6d. or 2s. Many of this Sort are likewise made and sold by *Milliners*.

⁹ Anderson, Adam, *An historical and chronological deduction of the origin of commerce from the earliest accounts to the present time.* London, 1764, vol 1 of 2, p 305 and 411-2.

¹⁰ *A general description of all trades, digested in alphabetical order: by which parents, guardians, and trustees, may, with greater ease and certainty, make choice of trades agreeable to the capacity, education, inclination, strength, and fortune of the young under their care.* London, 1747.

APPENDIX 2: HENRY MAYHEW ON CAP MAKERS, FROM ARTICLE IN THE MORNING CHRONICLE, 31st OCT, 1850:

LABOUR AND THE POOR. METROPOLITAN DISTRICTS. [FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.] OF THE LONDON DRESSMAKERS AND MILLINERS. LETTER LXXVI.

...In the low-priced millinery trade the workwomen are not only indifferently paid when employed by tradesmen, and the material supplied to them, but they more and more supply their respective articles of millinery as the result of speculation. Widows' caps, cap fronts, dress caps, and fancy collars, are all made more than ever on speculation, as tradesmen now, with rare exceptions, do not supply the material for widows' caps. In the construction of these caps a "goffering" machine is used. This machine now costs about 20s. new, and from 10s. to 15s. second-hand, when little or nothing the worse for wear. It is like a small mangle, the interior (and sometimes the exterior) being made of iron, and by the turning of a handle the fabric to be "goffered" (or "crimped") is passed through the machine, and is goffered accordingly.

My readers will no doubt have noticed announcements in shop-windows of "Widows' cap hands wanted," or "Cap front hands wanted," or some similar intimation. To the uninitiated, the modest looking placard seems to make public the fact that there is employment for a certain number of work-women, and of course at a regular wage, as their services are in demand. Such, however, is not the case. These 'wanted's' are to intimate that the purveyors of caps may carry in their wares, and the placarder may, of course, buy or refuse to buy at his option. "Only do that, sir," said a competitive tradesman to me, "and you'll have a hundred of them in an hour, with all sorts of caps. Where they come from to my place I don't know, haven't a notion – don't know the address of one of them – they're nothing to me. They come with their goods in boxes, and of course I make the best bargain I can with them."...

...It is on those who work on speculation that the pressure of distress falls the heaviest. Perhaps one-half of the body of cap-makers do so work. Their lodgings are 1s.3d. to 1s.6d. a week for an unfurnished garret, and their principal diet is tea, morning, noon, and night; and that may be said of all classes of underpaid milliners...

[Widow's Caps]

I am told that the makers of widows' caps may be estimated at 250, or certainly under 300... From a middle-aged woman, working in a decent apartment, but in a very poor neighbourhood, I had the following statement:-

"I was taught widows' cap making when I lived at home with my father, and did very well at it then, as there were fewer in the trade ten or twelve years back. I paid 30s. for being taught, and 30s. for a machine. I generally found my own material, but I have made it up for the shopkeepers. Now I always find material... My husband has 20s. a week now, but two years or more back, when he was nearly six months with nothing to

do, we suffered greatly. We had two young children, and have still, but they were ill with hooping-cough, and we had nothing but my cap-making to depend upon, and sometimes I was not able to work. Whatever could be pawned was pawned then, and some nice things were lost. I did not clear above 5s. a week all that time, take one week with another, and out of that we must pay 2s. 6d. a week for the rent of two rooms, for we durstn't get into arrears, or we might have been turned out of doors, and we had no friends in London – mine were dead, and my husband is a countryman. That was my season of trial. Widow's cap-making is a poor trade – very poor... I make from 5s. to 6s. a week by cap-making. I suppose I make from sixteen to eighteen dozen every week. How those that depend on widows' caps live I can't tell – they must have other ways of getting money... There is such competition among poor needlewomen that they'll work for what gets them only tea and dry bread."

[Cap Fronts]

Cap-fronts are also made on speculation, but in a less degree than widows' caps, and they are carried by the makers for sale to the shopkeepers, and to any distance if they hear of cap-front hands being wanted. The variety of forms, fashions, and adornments in caps, as well as the varying price of the material, render it impossible to give any fixed amount as that at which caps are usually sold. They are made for house caps which cover the head, and are worn without the bonnet, or bonnet caps (cap fronts as they are generally called), which are worn with the bonnet and cover only the front part of the head. It is on these cap fronts that the slop cap-makers are employed more than on other kinds. They are made for common wear of tulle or of blonde... When a cap has the addition of ribbons, &c., it is said to be "trimmed;" when without ribbons or other ornaments it is "plain." Perhaps an average retail price for a cap-front trimmed is 1s.; for one plain, half that amount.

A pale woman, with a feeble look, whom I found at work making caps, gave me the following account. Her room was a small attic, and its principal furniture was a Waterloo bed, with its decent curtain. There were also two tables, six chairs, a painted chest of drawers, and some other articles of furniture in much greater profusion than is usual in the rooms of the poor. This was accounted for by the husband being a bedstead-maker, and having made the furniture partly himself, or having bartered bedsteads for it. She said:-

"I got married out of a place where I had saved a few pounds, between four and five years back. My mother was a milliner, working for a cheap shop; so I was taught the use of my needle for cap-making and such like, before I went to service. My husband's earnings won't keep us both. He doesn't clear 12s. a week the year through, at least not more than 12s. at his trade, and no man works harder; but then he works for what they call a slaughter-house. I have 4 ½d. per dozen for making these plain fronts. I find nothing but thread, and a pennyworth will make three dozen fronts, which I can make in a day, from seven in the morning to seven or eight at night. I reckon I clear 1s. a day on whatever work I get from Messrs. - , my present employers. I am not fully employed, but I earn 4s. a week, not less, all the year through... These caps are what we call 'fronts and

whiskers.’ [The “front” was a ribbon with blonde round it, the “whisker” fully frilled blonde.] I sometimes, when I’m not on for shop, make some on my own account. They used to be called ‘lappets.’ They are made up plain, because some customers like to trim them themselves...If a capmaker takes in plain caps a shopkeeper will say, ‘They are never asked for now; only trimmed caps.’ If we take in ‘trimmed.’ Then he says, ‘Plain caps are more wanted; people like to trim them themselves;’ all to beat down the prices, and I don’t think the public’s any cheaper served. My trade would be far better if there wasn’t so many respectable young women, living with their parents, who work at it for next to nothing, just for pocket-money, and because it’s better than being idle, and they consider themselves too good to go to service, or too delicate to ‘make place’ (fill a servant’s place)... I live a good deal on tea. My husband has tea, too, three times a day, four days in the week, and sometimes with beef sausages, or a rasher, or a bit of fish with it. Always a meat dinner on Sunday, and a pint of beer, but beer at no other time... If my husband fell sick and continued sick two or three weeks, or less, there’s only the parish to look to. We make both ends meet as it is, and that’s all. If I had any family I don’t know what we should do.”

APPENDIX 3: ACCOUNT OF DEATH OF A CAP MAKER FROM STARVATION, FROM ARTICLE IN THE TIMES, 19th NOV, 1846:

DEATH FROM STARVATION

On Tuesday Mr. Baker held an inquest at the Halifax Arms, King Edward-street, Mile-end New Town, on the body of Mary Anne Ryan, a widow, about 45 years of age. On the jury being sworn they proceeded to view the body, which lay in a parish shell, at the house, No. 5, Spring-gardens, King Edward-street, a narrow row of houses, between which ran a black muddy ditch, exhaling the most noxious effluvia. The room in which deceased died was on the ground floor, and about six feet square, destitute of every article of furniture, bed, or bedding...

...Elizabeth Simmonds, widow, said she occupied the room in which deceased lay, for which she paid 1s. 6d. per week rent. The deceased had lodged with her for some months, and paid her 6d. a week for the accommodation. She obtained a few pence per week by the making up of men's and boys' cloth caps for a person in the same street. She could not obtain more than would get her a cup of tea and dry bread, and was frequently without that. She had no bedding, but lay on the ground beneath some rags, her head being supported by a wooden box. She owed witness 2s. for the last four weeks' rent, having had but a few caps to make during that interval, and very little to eat. Her apparel consisted of only the remnants of an old chemise and ragged gown, without stockings or shoes. About six months since the deceased hurt one of her legs by a fall, and it had, from neglect, become ulcerated, and was very painful. Witness advised her to go into the workhouse or an hospital, which she declined, saying she had nothing to go in. On Sunday night last, witness went to her own bed, which is only composed of a heap of rags, with scarcely any covering, being in great distress herself, obtaining a scanty living by vending nuts in the streets, and having been obliged to part with every article of furniture. About 2 o'clock in the morning she awoke, and said, "Ann, are you asleep?" Receiving no answer for some time, she got up and, approaching the spot where deceased lay, she felt that her head and face were death cold. On procuring a light she found deceased quite dead.

Mr. Clarke, the summoning officer, stated that in February last deceased applied to the Stepney parish for relief, which was given in bread and meat on five different occasions, since which time she had not applied. Also, that her son, aged 16, had been received into the house two years since, where he died.

The jury returned a verdict of "Found dead; accelerated by long continued privation and starvation."

APPENDIX 4: CAP MAKERS AND MANUFACTURERS LISTED IN POST OFFICE LONDON DIRECTORY (SMALL EDITION) 1852

NAME	TRADE	ADDRESS
ADAMI Geo & Chas	Army and navy cap ma	11 Leicester St, Regent St
ALLISON Peter	Muslin and net cap maker	6 Silver St, Wood St
BARBER Widow & Son	Cap makers	13 Royal Exchange
BEAVER James	Military cap ma	12 Archer St, Haymarket
BENNETT & FIELD	Hat and cap ma	Winchester Ho., Sthwk Br Rd
BOULTON Samuel	Widows' cap maker	2 Whiskin St, Clerkwl
BRAUN & KORTOSKE	Fancy cap manufacturers	34 London Wall
BROWN & CRAY	Cloth cap makers	11 Long Lane, Bermondsey
BYERS George	Hatter and cap maker	1 Pall Mall
CHATTING Edward	Hatter and cap maker	5 ½ Newgate St
COHEN Benjamin	Cap maker	4 Cutler St, Houndsditch
COOKE Ann (Mrs)	Fancy cap maker	3 Church Lane, Islington
CRAY Thomas	Cap maker	See Brown & Cray
DASH Martha (Mrs)	Hat and cap maker	118 Tottenham Ct Rd
DAVIES Michael	Cap maker	57 Brick Lane, Spitalfields
DUNLAP William	Hat and cap maker	1 Gt Smith St., Westminster
GAIN John	Cap maker	See Taylor & Gain
GARDEN Hugh & Son	Army cap ma and saddlers	200 Piccadilly
GRICE Wm Henry	Cloth cap maker	100 Bethnal Green Rd
GROVES Wm. Walter	Hat and cap ma	10 Panton St, Haymarket
HART George & Son	Hatters, cap ma, & hat & cap lining & leather cutters, hatters' trimming ma [etc]	127 to 129 Union St, Southwark
HAWKES, MOSELEY & Co	Helmet, army cap & accoutrement makers to her Majesty & the Royal Family	14 Piccadilly
HYAMS Henry	Furrier and cap maker	98 St George Street
JACOBS Mark	Cap maker	35 Brown's Lane, Spitalfields
JONES Edmond	Who. Widows cap maker	68 Banner St, St Luke's
JONES George & Co	Hat and army cap ma	80 Borough High Street
KORTOSKE Benjamin	Fancy cap maker	See Braun & Kortoske
LANGNER Julius D & Co	Wholesale hat & cap manufacturers & trimming sellers	11 Crescent, Southwark Bridge Rd
LUCK Richd & Son	Silk hat and cap makers	50 Watling St
MASON Wm	Hat and cap ma	30 Great Dover St, Borough
MORRIS Hyman	Furrier and cap maker	138 Minories
MOSELEY George	Helmet cap ma	See Hawkes, Moseley & Co
NEWMAN Eliza (Mrs)	Cloth cap maker	230 Kent St, Boro'
PALMER Edward John	Hat and cap maker	1 Aldgate
PHILLIPS Lawrence	Military hat & cap maker [etc]	28 Strand

PITT James & Co	Hatters and cap makers to her Majesty	8 Piccadilly
SANDIESON Wm	Cap maker	23 London Rd, Southwark
SHEARD Henry & Co	Hat and cap makers [etc]	147 Strand
SLACK Joseph Gillam	Hatter and cap ma	62 South Audley St
SQUIRE Jas. & Co	Who. Cap manufacturers	6 Union St, Boro'
SYKES Thomas	Hat and cap ma	22 Lit. Windmill St, Golden Sq
TAYLOR & GAIN	Cap ma.	1 Winchester Pl., Southwark Bridge Rd