

**Capote:** ("KA'-pote") The fur traders made use of the natural repellency and warmth of wool blankets by making Capotes. A capote is a hooded over garment or coat. Capote is an anglicized version of a French word meaning "Cape Cod Coat". It dates back to the early 1700's. There are also many period drawings of soldiers wearing them in early American history. They came from the early French influence on trade of Northern England and Canada. This coat, used by Indians and Mountain Men, made use of colorful and functional wool blankets to keep warm and take the chill out of low winter temperatures. It was even warm at night, as sleeping bags had not yet been invented. Most of the capotes had a hood that could be pulled over the head in cold weather. They were also water resistant to light snow or rain. They can be used as a coat or as an extra blanket in cold weather. Because of these reasons, the capote became an important part of the clothing used during the fur-trapping era, and **we recommend you have one at camp.**

The capote is relatively easy to make once you get past the fear of cutting into a wool blanket. The main materials needed are a 74 x 90 inches (or so) of a wool blanket. Note that larger people require larger blankets. Wool is recommended as the newer man-made fibers are not as warm and do not repel water as well. And **synthetic fibers can be flammable.** The traditional capote was made from a Hudson Bay or Whitney wool blanket. Many options are available for a very inexpensive capote, including getting your blanket from a thrift or discount store or a military surplus store. Patterns are available from Indian and mountain man craft stores. But, here's some simple directions for making your own capote: First, make a pattern from some wrapping paper. Measure your arm length from the top of your shoulder to the wrist, adding an extra inch. Measure the length of the coat body from the back of your neck to whatever length you desire; preferably a little past the kneecap. Most blankets are 74 x 90 inches, so keep that in mind when laying out your pattern. (Helpful hint: You may want to use an old coat as a pattern. Remove the threading from the seams and take the coat apart completely.) Remember that the body of the capote is made from one piece of cloth. When you think you have all the pieces you need, lay them on the blanket and trace around each piece using chalk (on the blanket). Mark the items "left arm," "right arm," etc. Cut out each piece with scissors. Construct the capote by putting all the pieces together with pins or tape. When laying the pattern onto the blanket, make certain that the colorful stripes (if you have any) are all going in the right direction. When sewing, follow the sketch; use wool yarn for sewing pieces together and for the edging (if sewing by hand). The last piece is simple. Cut a belt to circle your waist with enough left to hang over. It should be about 3 inches in width. You now have a nice warm Lone Hawk capote. (Figures shown here are for approximate sizing, and are **not to scale.**) If you run short of material, you may be able to stitch two smaller pieces together to make what you need. (Be careful when you lay out the pattern).

