

This handbook is derived from many open sources and is meant to be a stepping stone for further research. As more information and original sources are found and examined, information on our hobby continues to evolve – this document should be a living document, always improved by the unit membership.

Co. K, 3rd U.S. Regular Infantry Re-enactors



Handbook for Civilians

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Welcome to the Civilians of Company K, 3rd U.S. Regular Infantry Re-enactors!

Co. K, 3rd US Regular Infantry is a Civil War living history organization devoted to an accurate portrayal of the life of a regular army soldier during the Civil War. As civilians our goal is to support the military mission of the unit by developing civilian impressions appropriate for our presence in a regular military encampment and by actively contributing to the unit's overall presence at events. We seek to educate the public on the life of civilians in camp life, home life, while traveling, and while visiting family members with the regular army. Civilian members with children are expected to develop period-appropriate activities for their children. Children and adults alike are encouraged to practice 19th century etiquette during events. Our clothing and equipment are reproductions patterned as closely as possible to the originals. Authenticity is closely supervised and we strive for a high standard in our civilian impression, while at the same time maintaining an atmosphere of learning, fun, and collaboration. All of us have more to learn.

The civilian organization of the 3rd US Regular Infantry is loosely structured and encourages the active participation and input of all members. A Civilian Coordinator is elected by the civilian membership each year at the Annual Meeting of the 3rd US Regular Infantry. A Civilian Corner Editor is also elected to write and/or edit the Civilian Corner column in the monthly newsletter. Ad hoc committees may be formed to organize special projects. Civilians may also participate in various civil war period projects or fund-raising activities. All projects will be proposed in advance and then presented to the civilians at a meeting for discussion and a vote. Previous activities have included quilting bees, museum tours, dances, and classes on various topics such as fitting a bodice or making a bonnet.

We encourage all civilian members to share their opinions, research, and ideas while respecting the opinions and re-enacting goals of others in the group. Members wishing to write an article for the Civilian Corner column should contact the Civilian Corner Editor, who welcomes any such contributions. Re-enacting can be a life-long learning process and it is our goal to raise awareness while supporting each other.

The 3rd US Regular Infantry participates in a number of living history and re-enactment events each year. Types of events range from living history demonstrations and encampments to small recruiting events to large battle re-enactments. A schedule of upcoming events is published in the monthly newsletter of the 3rd US Regular Infantry, *The Old Guard*. Headcounts for members attending events are collected by corporals for military members and by the Civilian Coordinator for civilian members.

Civilian members are invited to participate in all events as they choose and to camp in the area designated for civilians. A Civil War impression must be maintained while you are in the camps, both civilian and military. In theory, any time a female was present in a military camp she was escorted, and although a constant escort may be difficult to manage at many events, all civilians should be aware that in the 3rd U.S. Regular Infantry, women and children are not permitted on the company street. Civilians are expected to follow the rules for each event as set by event organizers. Rules are usually posted on the event website, and may be put into the newsletter as space permits; more information can be requested from the Civilian Coordinator if desired.

Guests may attend certain events, as a reenactor, and may be required to pay a guest registration fee in addition to the event fee. Guests are expected to adhere to unit authenticity standards in regard to etiquette and appearance (clothing, hair, make-up) throughout the event. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring member to ensure the guest is dressed appropriately for the event and understands the unit authenticity standards. Each guest must remain in accurate civil war clothing and hairstyle throughout the time they are participating.

Commissary: There is a charge for commissary. Currently the 1st Sgt. serves as Commissary Director, coordinating all meals for the unit, including the transportation of equipment, purchase the food, and the preparation of the meals throughout the weekend. Unless other instructions are received from the Military leadership, the meals provided at a typical weekend event will be breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday, and breakfast and lunch on Sunday. Meal times are set by our commanding officer based on when the men are needed for drill, demonstrations and/or battles.

Commissary counts are collected along with the headcount for each event, and an accurate count is essential so that costs can be kept down while ensuring that there is enough food for everyone. Commissary plans and purchases are made as early as two weeks prior to an event therefore the commissary fee is not refundable less than 14 days prior to an event.

Commissary charge for each event is \$15 per person (subject to change if the event requires more meals). We like to say that the first bite is \$15, the rest of the meals are free; if you want to purchase one meal for the weekend, that meal will cost \$15. Please don't elect out of commissary but then ask if you can have a bite of fruit or a couple of carrots. If you choose not to participate in the commissary you are responsible for your own meals.

A Company Mess arrangement will be established and all members who take their meals with the commissary will be assigned to a work detail during the weekend to help with set-up, cooking, clean-up, or other tasks associated with providing meals. Teamwork is essential to ensure the tasks are done and are shared by everyone instead of just a few.

Please let your Civilian Coordinator and the Commissary Director know if you have any health concerns. Remember to drink plenty of fluids and eat light meals during hot events. If you don't feel well, let someone know right away. Re-enacting can be physically stressful, so please be aware of and respect your physical limitations.

Some basic rules of safety and re-enacting etiquette follow:

Members are to maintain decorum in camp and follow the protocol of the Civil War period military camp. At most events, there will be two company streets – one for military and one for civilian. Women and children are not permitted on the Military company street at any time.

One company fire is maintained near the commissary which is established at the head of the Military Company Street. It may be used by any member of the unit for warmth or heating hot water, etc., however the commissary has priority. The commissary is part of the military establishment and

the Commissary Director has authority to determine whether and when it is appropriate for company members to be in the commissary area. No company member should get in the way of those preparing meals.

Fire safety is of the utmost importance. If you dig a fire, you are responsible for it. No fire should even be left burning unattended. At night all fires must be put completely out or a fire watch must be set. No unsupervised children should ever be around the fire. Children are never to touch or play with the fire implements or the fire itself.

No one is ever to put any cartridges or cartridge papers into the fire.

Children are never to touch or play with cartridges or black powder.

If you do not bring your own chair or camp stool, be prepared to sit on the ground. Members who bring their own chairs may use their own discretion in allowing others to use them or reserving them for personal use. Members who bring their own chairs are encouraged to mark them.

A civilian member who has developed a specific impression such as laundress, governess, seamstress, nurse, etc. may occasionally ask other members to fill in for her in her absence. If you have not been asked to fill in, do not attempt to do so. Some impressions include use of expensive equipment which may be damaged or cause injury if used incorrectly, and it is better to ask spectators to return at a later time than to give out misinformation regarding another's impression. However, if you are interested in learning from another member more about her impression or joining her in presenting it, please don't hesitate to make your interest known.

Company members are expected to maintain a courteous attitude and respect for the property and personal space of other members, particularly in or in front of members' own tents. Be aware that space in camp is often crowded. All company members should be sensitive to the requests of those needing privacy or quiet time between activities. Company members should never use or borrow company equipment or another member's personal equipment without first obtaining permission.

If at any time company members (military, adult civilians, or children) are observed to be doing something which will harm themselves, harm someone else, damage someone else's property, or bring disrepute upon the unit, other company members should take action to stop/prevent such activity and remind the erring member(s) of appropriate company policies governing members' behavior. All company members should assist in maintaining a safe and authentic camp environment.

Any member who commits to attending an event will be held accountable for all applicable registration and commissary fees for that event, even if that member ends up not going. Event registration fees are not refundable. Commissary fees may be refunded if notice* is given more than 14 days prior to an event; *to be refunded commissary fees notice must be given in the following form: the member must contact all, and receive confirmation of cancellation notice from at least one, of the following members: Commissary Director, Co K. Commander, 1st SGT, and Civilian Coordinator. All Commissary fees are paid at the event Friday evening. If members

present at an event have not paid their fees by the time of the pre-battle inspection, they may not take the field or participate in similar activities.

If you would like to receive a copy of the unit by-laws, please contact your Civilian Coordinator and request a copy.

If you need any help gathering ideas or materials for your impression, please feel free to call on others in the organization. Many of us have extra outfits and will be glad to loan you a dress so you can participate as you collect your own garments. We can provide information on vendors from whom you can obtain good quality garments and accessories. If you can sew and would prefer to make your own clothing, we can help you select historically accurate patterns and fabrics and will be happy to work with you on your clothing. The Sewing Academy website and forum can be of infinite help in constructing your own clothes: <http://www.thesewingacademy.org/>

Members are not required to develop a first-person impression, but some may wish to do so. Some helpful hints and a worksheet are included with this handbook and more reference materials on first-person re-enacting are available for those who are interested.

Some basic information on civilian clothing follows, along with a list of resources including books, websites, and recommended sutlers. Good reference materials are also available from your local library or bookstore. Many libraries have women's magazines from the Civil War years on microfiche. These articles can offer many tips on how to accessorize your impression. Many of us have books which you may borrow. When in doubt please ask. We are always willing to help!

We try very hard to make our time together fun for you and your family. Please read your copy of our newsletter, The Old Guard, to find out information on upcoming events. If you have any question or concerns, please contact your Civilian Coordinator.

We look forward to seeing you at the next event!

We are working to develop the Men's section of period dress recommendations. Check back soon for guidelines or contact one of our current male civilians for more information on male impressions and dress.

Mid-19th Century Clothing Basics for Women

Overview

Only 100% natural fabrics, such as cotton, linen, silk, and wool, were available during the Civil War years.

For reenacting purposes it is doubly important to stay with natural fabrics, both from an authenticity standpoint and also for safety reasons. Many of our camp life scenarios may cause us to spend time working around an open campfire. With wide skirts, shawls, capes, etc., the risk of singeing your garments is always a concern. Cotton and wool will burn cleanly if they catch on fire, while synthetics will melt, possibly to your skin, which is extremely unpleasant. Also, at many of our events it can become very warm and natural fibers breathe and handle excess moisture better than synthetics.

When purchasing fabric, look for geometric shapes that are small and not too “busy” on the fabric. These should look as if they are stenciled onto the fabric. Many stripes and plaids are highly suitable; flowered calico was not used. Muslin of the time was more like today’s linen. Much of the cotton fabric of the time had a much finer finish than today’s cottons, almost silk-like with a slight sheen (but lighter weight than polished cotton). Some reproduction fabrics do an excellent job of recreating this finish.

Cotton dresses of the 19th century were rarely solid so if you are constructing a cotton dress, use prints. If you wish to wear solids in silks, choose darker colors to be on the safe side (black, gray, brown, chestnut, navy, etc). Remember that we are portraying the lives of the ordinary, mostly working class or middle class civilians, so while something may have existed at the time, if it was rare or restricted to a certain class of society, it is probably not your best choice.

White shirts with skirt ensembles were worn almost exclusively by younger women in their teens, as were the popular Zouave jackets. Pretty much all outerwear was fully or partially lined. Underpinnings were typically white and could have cotton lace trimming or embroidery. If you’re not sure about what to get please ask any of us for specific details, and we will try to help. Several ladies have a few children’s clothing patterns.

Clothing Fasteners

Women did not cut their dress fabric unless they absolutely had to. They would usually have hidden hook and eye closures with “fake” buttons on the bodice, hook and eye closures on the skirt, and drawstring waistbands on the undergarments. Women did not use zippers, snaps or Velcro.

Underpinnings:



****Should be one of your first purchases/sewing projects.**

Underpinnings provide the foundation for your 19th century wardrobe and are the basis over which your outer dress fits. A 19th century foundation creates a 19th century shape. Yes, it is obvious (to you and others) when you are not wearing the right undergarments! ☺ You will want to have at least two sets of basic underpinnings (drawers, stockings, chemise).

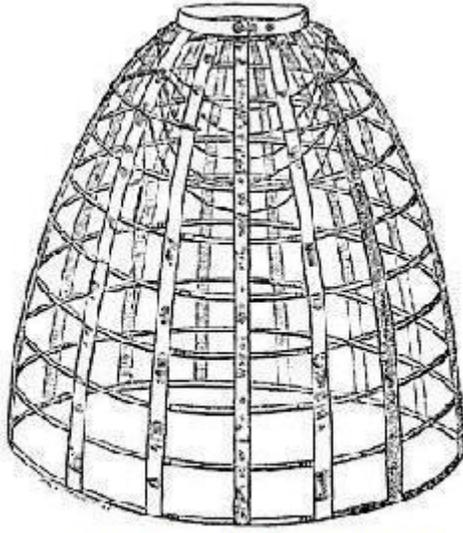
****Chemise:** A one-piece knee-length white cotton gown worn under the corset. The chemise soaks up perspiration/body oils and prevents the corset from pinching your skin. The chemise is a simple scoop neck with sleeve and body cut as one.

****Drawers:** Crotch-less with a drawstring waist; at least two sets are recommended.

****Cotton or woolen stockings:** Black, white, neutral; held in place by 19th century garters. At least two pairs are recommended.



****Under-petticoat:** Made of white or colored cotton, worn over the drawers and chemise; also called privacy petticoat. Petticoats should be made of cotton (for warmer weather) or wool flannel (for cooler weather).



**DOUGLAS & SHERWOOD'S NEW
EXPANSION SKIRT - 1858**

****Corset or stays:** Laces down the back and fastens with hooks in the front; worn over the chemise.

***Corset cover:** Drawstring sleeves, neck and waist; worn over the corset to soften the shape through the dress, not essential.

Hoop/cage crinoline: The hoop is what you think of when you think of a prom dress or wedding dress hoop petticoat – made of white cotton with drawstring waist or hook/eyes. Typical hoop has 4-6 hoops which may be larger or smaller, based on economic status. A Cage crinoline is more accurate and looks like a hoop without the cotton covering. The cage crinoline has many more hoops, is lighter, and moves differently. Hoop/cage crinoline is worn when not working around the fire and with better dresses when leaving camp to visit, go to town (sutlers) and attend a dance or other formal occasion.

***Over-petticoat:** If you were a cage crinoline, you need to wear 1 or two of these over the cage. Made of white cotton, worn over the hoop/cage crinoline to soften the lines of the hoops so they are not visible through the dress skirt. This is a must once you acquire a cage or hoop.

The Outer Wardrobe:

In order to develop your outer wardrobe, you will need to know a little about who you are portraying (who you are, your economic status and geographic background, etc). As civilians mingling with the soldiers of the 3rd US Regulars, we need to have a reason to be in camp. Examples of possible reasons: working as a laundress or seamstress for the US Army; visiting a family member; civilian from the area providing information on enemy troop movement to the military leadership.

Once you decide on the reason you are mingling with the military, you can begin to develop your story. This story will help you seamlessly interact with spectators and answer questions they may have about you, the military, and why you are here.

The following questions are suggestions on what to ask yourself to develop your story and then move toward developing your outer wardrobe to match that story. From this story, you can develop more and more details and expand your wardrobe and material culture items (things you bring to a reenactment such as dishes, accessories, etc).

Some suggested questions to ask yourself as you develop your character:

- Where are you from?
- What is your economic status?
- Why are you here?
- How did you get to your new location? (Train, wagon or horse etc.)
- Be able to explain your daily activities as a _____
- Know a brief family history.
- How do you feel about the war?
- Your home state is on the side of _____?

Fabrics

Prints and types of fabrics varied according to the style of dress. To get an idea of the various period prints that were available in different types of fabrics, visit the link provided above. The file section of the Civil War Reenacting for beginners has a great reference resource for fabrics

Basic Dress

The terms work dress and day dress are modern reenactor terms used to indicate a basic cotton or wool dresses worn for every day, either without a hoop when doing chores and working around a campfire or worn with a hoop to dress up for visiting or a trip to Sutler Row. Think of clothes in your 21st Century wardrobe - the older shirt or pair of jeans that may once have been a favorite, but is now worn while painting or gardening – some have an older dress they now reserve for camp duties.

The basic dress, a one piece dress, usually features a loose fitting bodice (gathered or fan front) that allows freedom for movement; the skirt can have ties on the inside known as “skirt-lifters” that enable you to lift the skirt a couple of inches at four or five places around the circumference to get the hem off the ground - remember, you’ll be walking around a campfire. Hoops should be avoided when doing chores and working around a camp fire; your petticoats or corded petticoat will help keep your skirts from getting wound around your legs. While working you might also wear an apron that’s full enough to fit around the front half of a skirt; the apron can also have a bib to pin to the front of the bodice- aprons were made of cotton or wool. When in performing chores, it is perfectly acceptable to move your sleeves out of the way by rolling the cuffs.



Finer materials dress up the dress

Finer dresses are made of fine/sheer cotton, wool, or silk and worn with a hoop. Your basic dress of cotton can double as a “work dress” and “day dress”, while you are getting started in reenacting. Many styles available - two pieces or one-piece. Many dresses were worn with a fabric or leather belt that had a buckle at the waist or fastened with hooks. Skirts were full and either pleated or cartridge pleated. Toward the end of the war they tended to be longer in the back than in the front. A hem of about 1- 4” off the ground, when over a hoop, is an appropriate length. Depending on the fabric used and the style of the bodice, many sleeve options are available. Most dresses had white collars and cuffs that were basted in for ease in removal and cleaning.

Specific styles of dresses were made with specific types of fabrics, so please check your references before choosing a fabric or dress style. Always use pictures of women of the period or original dresses as your guide.

Shoes

Most wore ankle high, wide-heeled, leather boots (black or brown) with squared or rounded toes that laced up either in front or on the side; there were no metal eyelets on the lace openings. Many modern shoes can be substituted until a reproduction pair can be purchased. Pay attention

to the shape of the toe and heel if using modern substitutions. The narrower toe and higher, narrower heel of the later 19th century are not correct for the Civil War era.

Extreme Weather

Capes and coats were worn in colder weather with coats offering the best protection from the cold. Outer garments were lined and most capes had hoods attached. Shawls can be crocheted, knitted, or woven of cotton or wool. Women of some social standing might have silk shawls with patterns woven into the fabric or stenciled on. A knitted or crocheted “sontag” or “bosom buddy,” sort of a wrap-around vest, can also be worn – these are especially practical if you are working and need your arms free.

Keeping the sun off the face was another necessity. Parasols were used all year as a sunshade. These should have a smaller canopy, decorated with ribbon and fringe. Parasol handles were made of wood and may have a hinge to provide a collapsible handle. If you have on a hat or bonnet that shades the face, you don’t need a parasol. However, many bonnets sit back on the head and do not provide shade for the face. In this instance, you would have carried a parasol while wearing a bonnet.

Bonnets/Hats

By the years of the Civil War, hats were mostly worn by young women or by older very fashionable women. Because we are portraying the norm of what is worn, it is suggested that if you are over 25, you wear mostly bonnets. Many women would not appear in public without gloves and a shawl; most also wore a hat or bonnet which was decorated with ribbons, silk flowers, and/or feathers. On hats and bonnets, a rule of thumb to remember is flowers on the front and bows in the back; feathers were used on the insides with the linings used to frame the face. A feather could also be used on the outside, but the flume should always be toward the front of the bonnet. Most women didn’t have money to spend on a hat to match each outfit.

A basic dark hat or bonnet for winter and a straw hat or bonnet for warmer weather will suffice. Knitted hoods were also popular. For a working impression, an undecorated soft quilted bonnet or slat bonnet is appropriate. Lace and crocheted caps that fit across the crown of the head were also worn, particularly by older women. Head coverings were usual but not mandatory.

Basics for Male Civilians

A gentleman can strive to portray a high-class gentleman such as a Senator or Congressman, a Sutler (these were licensed by the US Army to operate near the military camp and sell to the Army), teamster, undertaker, blacksmith, store clerk, a minister/reverend, farmer, mill worker, field worker, miner, etc. As a civilian with the 3rd US Regulars, you should strive to have your impression link to the US Army somehow.

Start out getting a hat, shirt, vest, suspenders, pants and boots/shoes appropriate to your impression. Add things such as a coat (sack or frock) and accessories as you go to give more character to your role. You don’t have to get everything at once.

Research, research, and do more research...view Tin Types to view pictures of gentlemen of the Civil War Era for clothing ideas, hairstyles, and facial hair.

Learn the social etiquette and proper behavior of the day.... Between men and women, your character and the military soldier, officer, etc.

CLOTHING GUIDELINES (Gentlemen)

Hats:

Felt Hat – **REQUIRED**. Top hat, low hat, plug, bowler, derby, or pork pie. In the South and West however, top hats were often replaced by broad brimmed, low crowned hats for everyday frock suit wear. A hat is **HIGHLY** recommended to prevent sunburn and give shade to your eyes.

Undergarments:

Shirt- **REQUIRED** (cotton, linen, flannel, or wool) with drop shoulders, pullover with button placket with 3-5 buttons made of wood, bone, galvanized rubber, or re-covered with matching fabric.
Recommended: cotton for hot weather, wool for cold weather.

Under Trousers- **RECOMMENDED**. If you are planning on wearing woolen trousers, you will want to buy out of white or ecru cotton to protect your legs and other "important" areas from been chaffed by the wool pants in hot weather. Under trousers also provide extra warmth at colder reenactments.

Outer Garments:

Trousers- **REQUIRED**. (wool or cotton) high waist, no back yoke, narrow button fly, no belt loops (didn't have belt loops until the 20th century), well-fitted but not tight. Striped pants or solid black or gray were most popular. Farmers, laborers, ranchers, factory workers and such usually wore a outfit of sturdy wool, cotton, corduroy or denim trousers.

Braces/ Suspenders (non-elastic). Suspenders were commonly worn. Can purchase these at sutlers, eBay, or from other reenactors.

Cravat- **RECOMMENDED**. Colorful cravats were often seen with Frock coats in the 1860's. Cotton, silk, or linen. Bow ties and Windsor ties did not become popular until the 1870's.

Frock Coat- **RECOMMENDED**. The frock coat was single or double breasted, usually black, bottom hem above the knee, and distinguished by a squared shape at the bottom front. worn with contrasting pants and top hats. Coat and pants usually **DID NOT** match!!

Sack Coat- **RECOMMENDED**. Hemline falls a few inches below waistline. Shorter than a Frock. Considered an alternative to a Frock coat. Usually black or gray and **DID** match the pants!! Instead of squared hemline at the front bottom of the coat, it is curved and rounded out so that the bottom of the vest is shown. Usually only the top button of a sack coat is buttoned.

Vest- cotton, silk, or wool. Usually colorful and garish, stripes were popular. Solid black or gray was also popular for more dressy occasions. 19th Century vests usually (though not always) had lapels, either in a shawl or notched style. They also nearly always had a lower hem that was parallel to the ground, rather than the modern vest which tapers downward in front.

Footwear:

Shoes- Brogans and other dress shoes are appropriate.

Boots – period pattern with squared toes. Heel plates acceptable. Officer's boots acceptable.

Formal/Evening Wear: (Optional) Few civilians have this type of attire, however, if you are portraying a Senator/Congressman or foreign military observer, you may have use of this attire.

Dress Suit- The evening or full dress suit for gentlemen is a black dress-suit--a 'swallow tail' coat, Vest- cut low in the front to show off the shirt. Cravat- white to match shirt. Shirt- The shirt front should be white and plain; the studs and cuff buttons simple. Top Hat- felt, black, tall with a black silk or satin band.

Gloves- White gloves or gloves of the palest hue were an essential accessory, especially when dancing, as touching a lady with bare hands was not only a bit crude, but one's sweat could soil her gown.

Accessories: (Optional)

Walking Stick- straight stick with metal caps on bottom and top to prevent wear and tear on the stick. Was not curved at the top like a cane is.

Overcoat or Cape- wool, cotton, or linen, usually lined with cotton or silk. Usually black or dark gray.

Wallet- made of leather or cloth, usually a bi-fold

Eyeglasses- must be of the correct style for the period

Jewelry and Pocket Watches must be of the type used during the time period. Watches on chains that hook to the top vest button are acceptable.

The No No List

NO modern glasses (did not have this in the 1860's) Contact lenses can be worn. Period glasses with your prescription are highly recommended.

NO sunglasses (did not have this in the 1860's) Sunglasses were rare in this Era and usually meant the wearer either had Syphallis or was blind.

NO wristwatches (did not have this in the 1860's) Pocket watches on chains are RECOMMENDED though.

NO cigarette smoking in view of others (if you smoke, make it a very private activity as modern cigarettes are not period correct.) If you wish to smoke in public, we recommend either a pipe, chewing tobacco, cigar, or hand-rolled cigarettes. (Note- if you are a cigarette smoker and do not know how to roll your own, ask another gentlemen or soldier to show you how to roll a cigarette. Or break up some of your brand of cigarettes ahead of time and put the tobacco in a little leather pouch and then use that to smoke in a pipe so you still get the same flavor.)

Hair Style Guidelines for the Civil War Era

Male Civilians

Hairstyles must be appropriate to the period. For men, extremely long hair is not appropriate. A regular haircut with well-trimmed sideburns, moustache, beard, and hairpart are acceptable. Braids or long hair

in a ponytail are not acceptable.

Men used hair pomade and wax to keep hair neat.

Female Civilians

In the mid-19th century, a woman wore her hair parted in the middle, and swept back into a nice neat bun at the base of her neck. A farm woman would dress her hair differently from women of the middle or upper class. The typical farm woman had to dress early in the morning; she would put her hair up as easily and quickly as she could. This style works best for the portrayals we typically strive to achieve.

A wonderful site for the basics of styling you hair:

<http://gothampatterns.com/hair.html>



A woman of the middle class might take a little more time to style her hair, possibly adding some false hair.

A female of the upper class who had the time might style her hair in fancy curls and elaborate manners, using her own hair or false hair, usually with the aid of someone else.

For balls or other festive social occasions, hair could be curled on the back of the head and decorated with flowers, ribbons, beads or feathers.

When styling your hair you must part it down the middle, with bangs hidden! No adult females over the age of about 14 should have their hair hanging loose.

Popular hairstyles included:

- A bun at the nape of the neck or back of the head;
- The 1850's style of loose drape sides into a bun at the back of the head;
- A 'U' shaped roll at the back of the head - either from one's own hair or over a pad or adding false hair;
- Long hair braided into a single or double braid and formed into a bun;
- Double braids crossed over the head or at the nape of the neck and pinned at the sides.

Grooming Aids

Useful grooming aids include mousse or hair pomade. Topsy-Tail hairstyle for doing rolls, French roll hairstyle for doing rolls, large and small bobby pins, hair pins, invisible hair or wave nets from the drug store (these are correct for the period as they approximate silk hair nets of the time).

False Hair Options

- Hair extensions to give the allusion of longer hair, then styled
- "Period hair extension braids," then styled
- False hair over roll
- False braids to add style
- False hair in net attached to back of the head
- Ringlet hairpieces - only on young teens or much older women
- A full wig in the correct style (this will be very hot and become annoying to keep in place)



Short Hair

A female with short hair should part her hair down the middle and pull it back; blending the layers and use false hair pieces to work the hair into a parted-down-the-middle and pulled back style of the day. Although rare, there were some women with short hair as a result from illness, disease or lice and those women still worked to achieve the style of the day as best they could. If you have short hair, you may add hair through a hairpiece or extensions. You can wear a sunbonnet with a long back curtain when outside (which occurs a lot at encampments), or, in the winter, a winter hood which covers the back of the head and neck for winter. Older women may wear a white day cap as a carryover from their younger days.

Nets

Your hair should always be styled and dressed before the net is set in place. Never, simply stuff loose hair into a net. Nets are useful to hold the hair in place but are not required. By 1861 the invisible net had been invented and would blend in with the hair. Basic hair nets or wave nets can be purchased at many supermarkets or beauty supply stores. These nets approximate the woven nets of fine silk thread which were worn during the Civil War era. Nets may be worn alone or attached to a decorated band of ribbons or flowers for dressier occasions. Decorated nets would not be worn with a work dress or while cooking or doing laundry, but could be worn with a day or evening dress for visiting, entertaining, dancing, etc.

Contrary to what is seen at many reenactments, crocheted snoods of white or colored yarn or cotton thread are not authentic and should not be worn.

Accessories

Jewelry

Pierced ears were fashionable; earrings were on wires instead of posts. Brooches or other pins were used at the neck to hold collars in place or as additional ornamentation. Many women could not afford watches, but those who did have them wore them on chains that could be attached to a front bodice fastener or onto a brooch. The watch would then be tucked into the waist of the skirt. Some women had small pouches (leather or fabric) that attached to belts at the waist to hold watches. Pocket watches specifically made for women were very expensive; so many women carried smaller versions of men's pocket watches. As tempting as it may be, think twice about taking a family heirloom piece to a reenactment. There are many heartbreaking stories about GGGrandmother's brooch being lost during an event.

Eye Glasses

Obtain reproduction or period frames for your prescription lenses to be worn while re-enacting; modern glasses are an obvious anachronism and will ruin the 19th century look you have worked so hard to achieve. Of course, contacts are always an option.

Gloves

Leather gloves were worn when leaving the house, usually brown or black in color. At dances and other formal evening occasions, white gloves were worn. While eating or drinking, gloves are to be removed.

Makeup

While most women didn't use make-up, some did use face powder. Powdered rouge was also available but not used widely. If you feel you must wear make-up at an event, please keep it to an absolute minimum. Today's fragrances also are inappropriate, and they are not pleasing to wear during events since they attract insects. No nail polish of any kind should be worn.

Overnight Events

Many of our events will require an overnight stay. The evenings around the campfire are filled with camaraderie and sometimes hijinks but always a splendid experience.

We arrive Friday evening, set up our own campsite and leave on Sunday afternoon after the event is closed to the public. All participants are expected to help set up/ tear down the commissary tent. This is a huge effort and the more people there are to help, the faster everyone can get leave and get home. If you are unable to arrive early enough on Friday to help set up, please make sure you stay to help tear down the tent. We are not a period camping adventure business, where everything is set up for you and you just show up, live in and use the amenities, and then leave at the end of the event without helping in any way.

Seating (there is an entire handout on chairs available separately)



This is something that many people do not think of.... a place to sit. The rule is: if you don't bring something to sit on, expect to sit on the ground! A good wooden chair or stool is essential to your camp equipment. Your feet will

get tired and you will want to sit down. If you have your own chair, you will always have a place to sit. Mark your chair and don't hesitate to relieve someone of their sitting in your chair if you yourself in need of a seat. ☺



Personal Tentage

Civilians should own a common tent (A-Frame 6x6x6) – no wall tents, please. Most of the time, we are in garrison with our military members and as such need to use common tents in order to blend in. This way, from a distance, the Civilian company street looks just like a normal military company street.

We all understand how expensive this hobby can be and we understand that your investment during the early part of your first year will be focused on your basic wardrobe (drawers, chemise, corset, petticoat, stockings, basic dress, and shoes). After the investment in your basic wardrobe, you will want to purchase a tent.

The unit has a limited number of A-frames (common tents) that available for new members to share, during their first year on a first come, first serve basis – you must let the civilian coordinator know when you register for an event that you will need to borrow/share a tent and remember, there is always a possibility that there may not be enough tents available. It is expected that by the beginning of your second year, you purchase your own tent. Panther Primitives (<http://www.pantherprimitives.com/>) is the most reputable manufacturer of period tents in the hobby. You may also keep a look out for used tents being sold by reenactors but beware that a used tent may be overly worn... this is definitely buyer

beware.

If you are more comfortable in a normal bed, indoors, and do not want to spend the night in camp, you are welcome to make your own reservations at a local motel or B&B. Be aware that you may have to walk quite a distance to/from the parking to camp and are expected to be in one hour prior to the event being open to the public.

Bedding

In the winter, a bale worth of straw loosely piled and topped with a mattress tic or wool blankets and quilts can make a nice warm bed for the night. Straw - bring your own or sometimes it is available for purchase at an event. If you prefer to get off the ground in the warmer months (or year round) wood cots/beds in the style of the period are not readily available as reproductions. However, you can find WW1/WW2/Korean War wood cots that will do, once covered with a stuffed mattress tic, quilts, and blankets. You may have to replace the canvas on the older models but they will do if you must be off the ground. Stuff your mattress with some straw when you arrive at the event and empty when you leave.

Plate/bowl and Eating Utensils

You will get hungry and want to partake of the company commissary goodies when the meal is served. It is always nice to have your own plates and eating utensils to use. Visit your local thrift store for inexpensive plates and flatware: a three pronged fork, spoon, and knife plus a plate that is either plain ironstone (white/off-white) or resembles blue/white, tan/white, or red/white transfer ware. To start, you may do well to have a wide bowl of some kind, later you can expand to add a plate. A bowl will hold stew in addition to things that a flat plate will, but a flat plate will not hold stew. Steamboat Arabia is a great resource for pictures of originals: 1856.com/

Cups/Glass

Cups/Mugs for warm beverages can range from mugs made of pottery to transfer ware cups. Water glasses can be plain clear glasses with stems (look for reproduction pieces that resemble period pieces). Ask your Civilian Coordinator for more details, if you are unsure. Water is supplied for you at large events. Steamboat Arabia is a great resource for pictures of originals: 1856.com/

Lantern

You will need light..... acquire a period lantern with candles and matches to last the weekend. Candle lanterns are safer than oil, especially with all the flammable material (clothes, straw, hay, etc) that will be with you in your tent. ☺ Steamboat Arabia is a great resource for pictures of originals: 1856.com/

Sewing Kit

A small sewing kit (either in the form of a housewife, basket, or wood box) will often come in handy.

Vanity

Small mirror, toothpaste/toothbrush, moisturizer and cleanser in a period container, and deodorant are all things you may want to have with you. Many ladies also bring a basin or pitcher/basin combination for washing up. ☺

Wood Box

You will need a container in which to place your lantern/vanity items/cups/glasses, etc and a wooden box makes a great carrier. This can also double as a small table for inside your tent or even a chair in a pinch.

As you spend years in the hobby, you will add things to your impression, such as a small table or a journal and pencil to capture highlights of the weekend... but the above can get you started for a comfortable weekend in camp. Steamboat Arabia is a great resource for pictures of originals: 1856.com/

Creating a First Person Impression

First, please understand that most of the events we attend do not call for 1st person interaction. In fact, you may never encounter a situation where you have to interact in first person, but there are occasions where you may have an opportunity to participate in first person scenarios. For that purpose, we present the following information.

A first person impression is not required but some members may find it interesting to do research and preparation with the aim of creating one, either for a specific event or as an everyday persona. Such an impression can be based on an actual historically documented person (does not need to be a famous person, and could even be a member of your own family who lived during the Civil War) or a fictional character of your own devising. The most important thing is to know and research your character and your character's world – early life, family, education, politics, economic status, daily activities, religious persuasion, stance on slavery and the war, etc.

Choosing a person to portray is fun! You can use your imagination and come up with a small town anywhere. You can choose to be Union or Confederate, married, single, or widowed, with children or no children. This is where you can have fun and stretch your imagination. You simply need to make sure that your story matches that of a proper Civil War era civilian. Civilian impressions that are popular are cooks, laundresses, seamstresses, weavers, nurses, politicians, business men, etc. The regular army did not have any female soldiers. Impressions that work best are those where you are doing something - selling newspapers, writing or reading letters, etc. We are a family organization and have all types of interests and abilities. As a beginner you should always double check with others about your portrayal to make sure it is appropriate for what we are doing, but the roles civilians can portray have a wide range.

Some suggested questions to ask yourself as you develop your character:

- Where are you from?
- Why are you here?
- How did you get to your new location? (Train, wagon or horse etc.)
- Be able to explain your daily activities as a _____
- Know a brief family history.
- How do you feel about the war?
- Your home state is on the side of _____?

Additional guidelines:

- Use first person pronouns - I, me, we and us.
- Use present tense – “we do” rather than “they did”
- Determination, dedication, preparation and practice! Practice makes perfect - the first few times you run through your impression you may fumble and slip up, but the more you practice the more it will become second nature. Always maintain your first person impression with the spectators. Changing your tense mid-sentence will confuse the listener.
- You may choose to have props that will aid in your portrayal, but do not carry things that you do not need. Just as in a third-person impression, you should be able to explain each item you are carrying -

how it is used, why you have it, etc. Do not carry ‘farby’ (modern, anachronistic) things that you do not need, i.e. coke cans, watches, and modern eyeglasses.

- A quality impression uses humor constructively. Off-color jokes, offensive/vulgar language, along with ethnic, gender, religious or other put-downs are inappropriate.
- Discussion of modern events or politics will detract from any first-person impression and should be avoided.
- A proper female of the 1860’s would be more restrained in her vocabulary than a female in the 21st century typically is. Watch out for modern slang expressions and be cautious of the topics chosen in mixed company since women were still in the age of innocence.

Basic Worksheet for Developing a First-Person Impression

Name:

Location: Where you are from?
Where you are going?
Where you are at this point of your travels?
Why are you here?

Background: How old are you?
Do you have children?
Do you have siblings?
Are you married? - if so, to whom? - is he part of the military?
Do you live on a farm or in a city?

Current events: Are you Union or Confederate?
How do you feel about the war?

Daily life: What time do you get up?
What time do you go to bed?
What does your typical day consist of?
How do you live your life?
Do you make your clothes or buy them in town?
If you work on a farm be prepared to answer questions about the type of farm you have, what you grow, what your previous season was like.
Know when you harvest your crop and when you plant for the next season.

You may want to include some of the “happenings” of the time – such as presidential news, recent battles, new inventions, etc. Remember, it might take several weeks to months for current news to reach outlying areas. So what we would consider to be outdated (“old news”) could still be current in the 1860’s.

Understand the 1860’s history of the town you live in or where the event you are attending is taking place. (i.e. Fort Washington is Washington City; remember there is no West Virginia since it was still part of Virginia, etc.)

A Sample First-Person Scenario

Title:

The Orphans

Objective:

The purpose of this scenario is to show the manner in which the regular army units would bend the rules to accommodate the non-military needs of the men in the unit. The scenario will show a glimpse of civilian hardships in the 1860's and how the civilians in need would be forced to rely on the generosity of relatives for survival.

Overview:

Three children, whose parents have died of a disease, are forced to travel to find their only living relative, a common soldier, to solicit his help. They have only a small amount of money left for their travels. Their parents' possessions and home were sold at auction to pay debts. The children are taken to the unit commanding officer to plead for assistance because their soldier relative cannot leave the army to take care of them. The commanding officer explains the army regulations for the allowance of soldier's families. The children cannot be accepted under the circumstances. However, the officer takes pity on the children and in order to aid his enlisted subordinate, he bends the rules to allow the children to stay. A wife of one of the other soldiers is summoned to take care of the children, and they are welcomed into the regimental family.

Script:

Children approach a sentry at the army post. At least one of the children must be a teenager. This child is the leader and spokesman for the group. They ask to see a common soldier. The sentry doesn't know how to handle this problem and calls for the corporal of the guard.

The corporal of the guard listens to the children's story. He is not authorized to solve their problem. He calls for the sergeant of the guard, and they have a conference. The sergeant escorts the children to the commanding officer. The younger children begin to cry.

The soldier relative is summoned to the fort office. The sergeant stops the children outside the office and explains the situation to the soldier relative. The children crowd around their relative and hopefully, their new guardian. The soldier is upset and concerned for the children. However, he does not know how to approach his commanding officer.

The sergeant enters the office and requests permission to speak with the officer. He explains the situation to the officer and explains that the soldier and children are outside. The soldier is requesting a conference with the officer.

The officer and the sergeant discuss the situation. The officer appears uninterested in the plight of the civilians in the atmosphere of war. The sergeant pleads that the soldier has been an excellent man and the children are destitute and will be easy prey in the hard city world. He asks the officer to meet the soldier and the children.

The crying children and the soldier are ushered into the office. The officer listens to the story of the oldest child and the pleading of the soldier to be discharged from the army to take care of the children. The officer refuses to allow for a discharge unless the soldier can pay a discharge fee of \$300 as prescribed by army regulations. The soldier cannot pay the fee.

The sergeant interjects as the children's condition begins to soften the officer's heart. He suggests that the children be allowed to fill a position on the company roster for laundress. This would entitle the children to receive a government food ration and work for additional money. They could be allowed to accompany the regimental wagon trains with the other civilian families of the men.

The officer agrees to the idea. The wife of one of the soldiers is summoned to take care of the children and find them clothes, food, and quarters. The soldier expresses his gratitude for being allowed to take care of his wards. All are dismissed.

The Language of the Fan (this is meant to be fun, not a basis for civilian life)

- The fan placed near the heart: "You have won my love."
- A closed fan touching the right eye: "When may I be allowed to see you?"
- The number of sticks shown answered the question: "At what hour?"
- Threatening movements with a fan closed: "Do not be so imprudent"
- Half-opened fan pressed to the lips: "You may kiss me."
- Hands clasped together holding an open fan: "Forgive me."
- Covering the left ear with an open fan: "Do not betray our secret."
- Hiding the eyes behind an open fan: "I love you."
- Shutting a fully opened fan slowly: "I promise to marry you."
- Drawing the fan across the eyes: "I am sorry."
- Touching the finger to the tip of the fan: "I wish to speak with you."
- Letting the fan rest on the right cheek: "Yes."
- Letting the fan rest on the left cheek: "No."
- Opening and closing the fan several times: "You are cruel"
- Dropping the fan: "We will be friends."
- Fanning slowly: "I am married."
- Fanning quickly: "I am engaged."
- Putting the fan handle to the lips: "Kiss me."
- Opening a fan wide: "Wait for me."
- Placing the fan behind the head: "Do not forget me"
- Placing the fan behind the head with finger extended: "Goodbye."
- Fan in right hand in front of face: "Follow me."
- Fan in left hand in front of face: "I am desirous of your acquaintance."
- Fan held over left ear: "I wish to get rid of you."
- Drawing the fan across the forehead: "You have changed."
- Twirling the fan in the left hand: "We are being watched."
- Twirling the fan in the right hand: "I love another."
- Carrying open fan in the right hand: "You are too willing."
- Carrying the open fan in the left hand: "Come and talk to me."
- Drawing the fan through the hand: "I hate you!"
- Drawing the fan across the cheek: "I love you!"
- Presenting the fan shut: "Do you love me?"

Illustration of Sample Hair Styles of the 1860s



Reference Materials

Websites for the Living Historian/Reenactor:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CivilianCivilWarCloset/> (Civilian Civil War Closet)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/399120710278616/> (civil war reenacting for beginners)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/19thCenturySewingSisters/> (Sewing Sisters)

<http://www.authentic-campaigner.com/>

<http://www.thesewingacademy.org/>

3rd US Regulars, Co K Websites:

<https://www.3rdusreenactors.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?q=3rd%20us%20regulars%20co.%20k> (3rd US Regulars, Co K Facebook)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/usvcivilians/> (USV Civilians – this is our unit umbrella group)

General Reenacting

First Impressions: Getting Started in Civilian Reenacting, Susan Lyons Hughes

An Introduction to Civil War Civilians, Juanita Leisch

The Lady Reenactor, Volume 1, Rick Keating, pub.

Ballroom Dancing

Hillgrove's Ballroom Guide and Practical Dancer

Civilian Life & Biography

The Journal of Women's Civil War History, Volumes 1 & 2, Eileen Conklin,

ed. Hospital Days: Reminiscence of a Civil War Nurse, Jane Stuart Woolsey

Mary Chesnut's Civil War, C. Vann Woodward, ed.

Too Afraid to Cry: Maryland Civilians in the Antietam Campaign, Kathleen A. Ernst

Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1843), Margaret Fuller

Women at Gettysburg 1863, Eileen Conklin

Women in the Civil War, Mary Elizabeth Massey

Lincoln's Labels, James Schmidt

This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War, Drew Gilpin Faust

For the fiction category

Letters from Fiddler's Green by Michael Fitzpatrick. Mike was a fellow speaker at last year's Society for Women in the Civil War Conference and is a member of 20th Maine Co E.

Under sutlers I'd add Battlefields and Beyond Bookstore in Gettysburg. Bernadette is great to deal with and I've gotten some great hard to find/out of print books from her.

Clothing, Accessories, & Hairstyles

Civil War Gentlemen: 1860s Apparel Arts & Uniforms, R. L. Shep
The Way They Were Dressed 1860-1865 Vol I and II, Donna Abraham
Fashions and Costumes from Godey's Lady's Book, Stella Blum,
ed. Ladies Wear Daily, Juanita Leisch
A Reenactor's Guide to Clothing & Fabrics of the Civil War Era, Karyn R. Zeller
The Techniques of Ladies' Hairdressing of the 19th Century, Jules & Kaethe Kliot,
ed. Tussie Mussies: Victorian Posey Holders, Jeri Schwartz
Victorian and Edwardian Fashion: A Photographic Survey, Alison Gernsheim
Victoriana Americana: The Customs and Costumes of Victorian America, Evelyn Swenson
Who Wore What? Women's Wear 1861-1865, Juanita Leisch

Cookbooks

Blue and Grey Cookery: Authentic Recipes from the Civil War Years, Hugh & Judy Gowan
Suited to a Tea, Patricia B. Mitchell
Union Army Camp Cooking 1861-1865, Patricia B. Mitchell
Victorian Parlors and Tea Parties, Patricia B. Mitchell
Waking Up Down South: Southern Breakfast Traditions, Patricia B. Mitchell

Etiquette

Etiquette and the Usages of Society
The Ladies' Book of Etiquette, Fashion and Manual of Politeness
Martine's Hand-book of Etiquette and Guide to True Politeness

Housekeeping

The American Frugal Housewife, Lydia Child
Home Front Regiment 1861-1865: Women Fighting from the Hearth, Patricia B. Mitchell
My Baby, Elizabeth Rock

Laundry

Laundry and Cleaning Practices of the Mid-Nineteenth Century, Virginia Mescher
Laundry Handbook: A Manual for Creating a Civilian or Military Laundress Impression or Laundry Exhibit, Virginia Mescher
"Washer Woman" (The Civil War Times, August 1999), Vickie Wendel

Sewing and Handwork

Authentic Victorian Dressmaking Techniques, Kristina Harris, ed.
Civil War Ladies: Fashions and Needle-Arts of the Early 1860s (primary source material from Peterson's Magazine 1861 and 1864...), R. L. Shep
Dating Fabrics: A Color Guide 1800-1960, Eileen Jahnke Trestain
The Ladies' Hand Book of Fancy and Ornamental Work – Civil War Era, Florence Hartley
The Little Corset Book: A Workbook on Period Underwear, Bonnie Holt Ambrose

Civil War Quilts

Big Book of Best-Loved Quilt Patterns, Leisure Arts
Civil War Women: Their Quilts, Their Roles, Activities for Re-enactors, Barbara Brackman

Grandma's Best Full-Size Quilt Blocks: Pieces of the Past for Today's Quilter, Better Homes & Gardens

Quilts from the Civil War, Barbara Brackman

Teach Yourself Blocks From the Past, Marie Henry

Civil War Spies

Dear Ellen Bee: A Civil War Scrapbook of Two Union Spies, Mary E. Lyons & Muriel M. Branch

Only Call Us Faithful (a novel based on the life of Elizabeth Van Lew, from primary source materials), Marie Jakober

Spies! Women in the Civil War, Penny Colman

Stealing Secrets: How a Few Daring Women Deceived Generals, Impacted Battles, and Altered the Course of the Civil War, H Donald Winkler

Spies and Spymasters of the Civil War, Donald E Markle

Women in Uniform

(No women were documented as serving in the 3rd US Regulars, Co. K)

Patriots in Disguise: Women Warriors of the Civil War, Richard Hall

They Fought Like Demons, Deann Blanton and Lauren M Cook

Fiction

Civil War Women – stories by Alcott, Chopin, Welty, and others

Enemy Women, Paulette Jiles

Letters from Fiddler's Green, Michael Fitzpatrick

Museums as References on 19th Century Material Culture

Steamboat Arabia: <http://www.1856.com/>

The Hagley Museum: <http://www.hagley.lib.de.us/>

Winterthur: www.winterthur.org

Maryland Historical Society <http://www.mdhs.org/>

US Army Heritage and Education Center <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ahec/>

Fashion Archives Museum Shippensburg University: <http://fashionarchives.org/index.html>

<http://fashionarchives.org/index.html>

Recommended Resources & Organizations

Atlantic Guard Soldiers Aid Society	www.agsas.org
Genteel Arts Academy	www.genteelarts.com
Society for Women and the Civil War	www.womenandthecivilwar.org
The Valentine Museum	www.valentinemuseum.com
Victorian Dance Ensemble	www.civilwardance.org

Recommended Sutlers

(the following list of Sutlers are a good start, but unfortunately some of the quality and authenticity has degraded over the recent years as some of the larger sutlers are outsourcing their sewing – until you have an eye for fabric and style, feel free to continue to use references and fellow civilians to ensure you have spent money on clothing you can actually wear to events)

Button Baron	http://www.thebuttonbaron.com/
N.J. Sekela	www.njsekela.com/
Abraham's Lady	www.abrahamslady.com
Originals by Kay	http://www.originals-by-kay.com/
Mantua Maker – Vivian Murphy	http://www.themantuamaker.net/
Civil War Lady	www.civilwarlady.com
Family Heirloom Weavers	www.familyheirloomweavers.com
Heirloom Emporium	www.heirloomemporium.com
James Country Mercantile	www.jamescountry.com
Needle & Thread, Gettysburg, PA	(717) 334-4011
The Octagon Ladies' Repository	www.OctagonLR.com
Ragged Soldier Sutlery	www.raggedsoldier.com
Vintage Volumes	www.vintagevolumes.com
Wooded Hamlet Designs	www.woodedhamlet.com
Ezra Barnhouse Goods	www.ezrabarnhousegoods.com
Battlefields and Beyond Bookstore in Gettysburg	http://battlefieldsandbeyondbooks.com/

Other Resources

www.foodhistory.com

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all who contributed to the publication of the civilian handbook!

This is the first in a series of handbooks for the civilian to use as a reference guide when putting together their impression. The illustrations used in this edition came from stock Internet photos, Harper's Weekly and from the Godey's Ladies Fashion Manual. Future editions will contain additional information on the civilian portrayal.

Comments and questions about this handbook are welcome - please contact the Civilian Coordinator. Seventh edition revised September 2013 by Janine Stier.

Civilian Coordinator Contact Information

See the unit website for the current Civilian Coordinator contact information:

<https://www.3rdusreenactors.com/>