

Impression Suggestions

Roles for Women

Refugee
Laundress
Cook
Pacifist
Abolitionist
Copperhead
Seamstress
Milliner
Mantua maker
Local farmwife
Wife/daughter of tradesman or farmer
Town gossip/busybody/local character
Society matron, social belle
Entertainer, singer, actress
Public speaker-social issues, reform, etc
Boarding house keeper
Visitor or traveler
Vagrant
Hired servant
Grouchy old woman
Town drunk or naysayer

Roles for Men

Refugee
Mayor, congressman, government
bureaucrat
Judge, justice of the peace
Preacher or chaplain
Pacifist
Copperhead
Abolitionist
Scallywag or carpetbagger
Grouchy old man
Town drunk or naysayer
Entertainer, singer, actor
Local farmer
Doctor or dentist
Carpenter
Tradesman: baker, tinker, blacksmith,
barber, rum seller, brewer, telegraph
office, postmaster, printer, newspaper
reporter, saddler, miller, tailor,
machinist, mechanic, cooper, attorney
Militia member arriving for drill
Potential military recruit
Vagrant
Visitor or traveler
Traveling salesman
Hired servant
Hired hand
Teacher

First Person Impression Information

Doing Living History

The following is taken from "Living History Tips" prepared by Richard A. Cheatham, 1984, of Living History Associates Ltd. in Richmond, Va. and First Person Interpretation Some Principles and Guidelines Richard A. Cheatham, Living History Associates, Ltd.

- Living History is not acting. Actors and actresses learn and rehearse specific lines and have a limited and temporary interest in the period. Those doing Living History must necessarily have a broader knowledge of the period, as they are subject to be asked anything by the visitor.
- You needn't know everything. Though the more you know about the life of the period the better off you'll be, the person you are portraying wouldn't have known everything. Don't hesitate to claim ignorance on any appropriate subject. That can also communicate an accurate bit of the past. When you do impart information, make sure it's accurate.
- Determine who you are and your relationship with the visitor. You can't explain your special perspective on life if you don't have one. Determine who you are. This includes social class, occupation, education and many other variables.
- Be yourself. Even though you will be portraying a different person in a different time, don't attempt, at least in the beginning, to adopt a character so radically different from your own that you can't relate to or sympathize with it. Keep your own personality and adopt new social attitudes, dress, aesthetics and appropriate knowledge of the world around you. Many who try to change too radically come across as either to "stagey" and false, or they are so uncomfortable they simply can't function at all.
- Try to avoid static situations. Stroll, carve wood, play cards, read period newspapers, etc.
- Continually seek out new historical information to use in informal conversation
- Minor verbal slips by interpreters or modern comments made in passing by visitors can usually be ignored and passed over in order to maintain a first-person conversation overall.
- Take your historical characterization seriously and live the part.

First-Person

There are two major types of living history interpretation: first-person and third-person. When we describe the past as the past, we are using third-person interpretation. Third-person interpretation uses phrases such as “they did”, “they would have”, and “they used”. First-person interpretation recreates the daily activities, thoughts, and behavior of a person who would have lived in the past. First-person interpreters use phrases such as “I do”, “I will” and “I use” while educating the public. The interpreters behave in a fashion that evokes, as closely as possible, the behavior, folkways, customs, beliefs, activities, speech, religion, technology, dress, deportment and contemporary perspectives of the people they represent. First-person interpreters make conversation rather than speeches and monologues; dialogue is improvised based on historical sources.

Developing Your Impression

Developing a first-person impression requires research. You will need an understanding of the world of the mid-1800s—what your persona would and would not know, what they would experience and understand, their beliefs and attitudes. You must develop a worldview, an understanding of your persona’s past as well as his/her present.

When you develop a first-person impression, draw on your own personality and background. Consider your own ethnic identification, education, upbringing, values, and social standing. Modify your present day occupation and hobbies to fit the 19th century. Being in first person does not mean acting a part. Using yourself as a template for your impression will allow you to react naturally and spontaneously to situations, the public, and other participants while in first person at events. Once you have developed a biography, share it with others; especially if they should know you well (family, comrades, etc.).

Talking Like You Mean It

Presenting your impression will rely greatly on your language and how you speak. You may look the part, but your whole impression can be torn away if you don’t sound right. However, don’t try imitating an accent you don’t have or cannot imitate well or speaking a language in which you are not fluent. Not only will you quite possibly end up sounding phony, but also you may insult people who have an accent or speak the language.

If you are portraying a person from the south and you don’t have a Southern accent, address why in your biography. For instance, perhaps you emigrated just prior to the war and still have your native regional accent, you’re visiting friends or relatives, or you were educated in a different region. If your impression is of a particular ethnicity and calls for an immigrant accent, perhaps you came to America as a child or you are a first generation American and have only a small trace of a foreign accent if any.

The vocabulary you use is also another area on which you should concentrate. Begin eliminating modernisms from your vocabulary and research period vocabulary. Diaries, letters and speeches from the time are the best way to pick up on how people spoke.

First Person Development Questions

Do not feel you have to answer all questions; this is only a guide to help you develop a first person impression. Choose the pieces of information you wish to work on now and come back to the list when you are ready to expand your impression. A more detailed guide can be found in *Past into Present* by Stacy F. Roth.

Personal Sphere

- What is your name?
- What is your birthday?
- Where were you born?
- Who lives with you and what is their relation to you?
- Where and how were you educated?
- Do you read and write? Do you read anything on a regular basis?
- What is your state of health? What diseases have you suffered?
- Do you have any particular habits or routines?
- Where have you traveled?
- Where else have you lived?
- Are your dialect and speech patterns different from your neighbors? Are there unique regional or ethnic words and phrases that authenticate your origins?

Occupational Sphere

- Do you have an occupation?
- What are the typical daily, weekly, seasonal, and annual skills that you need to know?
- Do you have any unique skills or talents?

Local Sphere

- Are there customary talents that are common to your station, status and class?
- Do you possess common knowledge and/or survival tactics specific to your era, station, status, and class?
- Are you religious, irreligious or in the middle?
- Do you take part in—or disdain—popular amusements?
- Who are your neighbors? What do you think about them?
- What cash and home-use crops are grown in the area?
- What laws affect your life and daily business?
- How do you get from one place to the other?

Stational Sphere

- What clothing is typical of your station?
- What manners do you use?
- Do you own property?
- Who is in your social circle?
- Who are your betters and inferiors? How do you treat them?

Recommended Patterns

The following companies provide well-documented patterns for Civil War civilian clothing. Do not try to alter a modern pattern--the shoulder seam and sleeve placements are different.

Past Patterns (www.pastpatterns.com)

We suggest this company for patterns for your first dress because of the clear instructions and illustrations. Although the bodice and skirt should be made of the same fabric, you will need to purchase separate patterns for each part. The pieces are sewn together to make a one-piece garment. The Past Patterns skirt pattern is 700 (1850-1863 Fashionable Skirt), which will explain the peculiarities of 19th century hems and skirt attachments to waistbands. You may choose from several bodice options--701 (1860-1867 Gathered bodice, with bishop or curved coat seams) or 702 (1850's-1863 Dated-fitted bodice), which has full pagoda sleeves not suited for a work dress. With minimal adjustment, most sleeves and the bodices may be interchanged. If you choose the fitted bodice, remember that it may not fit as well after you acquire a correct corset. Past Patterns also has patterns for men, including trousers (#014 & 015: Classic Plain-Cut Summer Trousers of the Mid-19th Century), shirts (#007, Two Mid-Nineteenth Century Shirts), and frock coat (#009 Double Breasted Summer Paletot).

Laughing Moon Mercantile (<http://www.lafnmoon.com>)

This company offers good patterns for men's wear. Their line includes shirts (#107 - Men's Victorian & Edwardian Shirt (1845-1920)) and vests and frock coat (#109 - Men's Double Breasted Frock Coat & Two Vests (1850 - 1915)) patterns. Laughing Moon patterns do not include instructions for period construction and stitches.

They also offer good patterns for nicer dresses (#111), corsets and undergarments (#100).

Elizabeth Stewart Clark's Historic Moments

<http://www.elizabethstewartclarkandcompany.com/>

For children's patterns

Homespun Patterns (available through different vendors)

Offer accurate men's patterns for frock coats, sack coats, vest, trousers and shirts. Their instructions can be difficult to follow and not recommended for someone unfamiliar with 19th century sewing techniques.

Simplicity Civil War Patterns

Several of these patterns, including the men's patterns, are out of print. If you choose to use these patterns, be aware that the instructions in the patterns are not period sewing techniques. There are several websites that will help you decide if you wish to use these patterns. Elizabeth Stewart Clark offers a critique of these patterns on her website under "Clothing Articles". Farthingales also offers advanced instructions for some of the Simplicity patterns at <http://www.farthingales.on.ca/costume.html>. If you choose to use the Simplicity patterns and are not familiar with period sewing and construction techniques, contact your sponsor or the civilian coordinator for assistance.

Recommended Suppliers

Bailey, Bennett & Scott, Tailors (huck towels)

<http://www.confederate-tailor.com/>

C & D Jarnagin Co.

<http://www.jarnaginco.com/>

C.J. Daley

<http://www.cjdaley.com/>

Carter & Jasper Mercantile

<http://www.carterandjasper.com/>

Chris Graham (suspenders)

1420 E. Vineyard Rd.
Hayesville, North Carolina 28904
(704) 389-6126

Clearwater Hat Company

<http://www.clearwaterhats.com/>

Corner Clothiers

<http://www.cornerclothiers.com/>

Dirty Billy's Hats

<http://www.dirtybillyshats.com/>

E.J. Thomas Mercantile

<http://www.ejtsutler.com/>

Ezra Barnhouse Goods

<http://www.ezrabarnhousegoods.com/>

Fall Creek Sutlery

<http://fcsutler.com/>

Frank Marek (braces)

fjmarek@sbcglobal.net

Frazer Brothers

<http://www.frazerbrothers.com/>

Jersey Skillet Licker

<http://www.skilletlicker.com/>

John Keahey (ready made clothing)

2810 W. Pebble Beach
Missouri City, Texas 77459
musketman51@houston.rr.com
281-261-0665

John Zaharias (utensils)

P.O Box 31152
St. Louis, Missouri 63131
jazsutler@worldnet.att.net
314-966-2829

Kathy Kleiman (socks)

10264 Eaglenest Ct.
Fairfax, Virginia 22032
703-323-1219

Mattimore Harness (boots)

<http://www.civilwarboots.com/>

Mickey Black (socks)

<http://www.salisburyemporium.com/mickeyblacksocks.htm>

**Missouri Boot & Shoe Company
(Robert Serio)**

<http://missouribootandshoe.tripod.com/index.htm>

Myrtle Avenue Clothiers

<http://www.myrtle-avenue.com/>

Needle and Thread (see Wooded Hamlet below)

Orchard Hill Sutlery

<http://www.orchardhillsutlery.com/>

Originals by Kay

<http://www.originals-by-kay.com/>

Otter Creek Tinware

<http://mysite.verizon.net/ottertin/octinw1.html>

Panther Primitives

<http://www.pantherprimitives.com/>

R.K. Lodges

<http://www.rklodges.com/>

Tentsmiths

<http://www.tentsmiths.com/>

The Company Tailor

<http://companytailor.googlepages.com/home>

The Graceful Lady

<http://www.thegracefullady.com/>

Tim Allen

<http://www.timallenhats.com/>

Tim Bender Hats (TP & H Trading Co.)

<http://groups.msn.com/timbendershats/timbendershats.msnw>

Robert Land Footwear

<http://www.robertlandhistoricshoes.com>

Ragged Soldier Sutlery and Vintage Volumes

<http://www.vintagevolumes.com/>

Wisconsin Museum

http://museum.dva.state.wi.us/Ser_giftshop_items.asp

Wooded Hamlet aka Needle and Thread

<http://www.woodedhamlet.com/>

Recommended Reading

- Bradfield, Nancy. *Costume in Detail, 1730-1930*. New ed. Boston: Plays Inc., 1981.
- Cashin, Marilyn A. *A Moment in Time: Images of Victorian Fashions from the Mid-1800 s*. South Plainfield, NJ: Mac Publications, 1992.
- Clark, Elizabeth Stewart. *The Dressmaker's Guide to Fit & Fashion*. Idaho Falls, ID: by the author, 2001.
- Leisch, Juanita. *An Introduction to Civil War Civilians*. Thomas Publications, Gettysburg, 1994.
- _____. *Who Wore What? Women's Wear 1861-1865*. Thomas Publications, Gettysburg, 1995.
- Meller, Susan and Joost Elffers. *Textile Designs: Two Hundred Years of European and American Patterns*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991.
- Setnik, Linda. *Victorian Costume for Ladies, 1860-1900*. Atglen, PA: Schiffer Pub. Ltd., 2000.
- Severa, Joan L. *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900*. Kent State University Press. 1997.
- _____. *My Likeness Taken: Daguerreian Portraits in America*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2005.
- Trestain. Eileen Jahnke, *Dating Fabrics: A Color Guide 1800-1960*. American Quilter's Society, Paducah, 1998.
- Vansteamburg, Ary. *The Everyday Clothing of Rural Women at the Time of the Civil War*. Rev. ed. Baltimore, MD: Mariah Furnace Press, 1993.
- Various. *The Citizen's Companion: The Voice of Civilian Reenacting*. Back to Basics: Women's Apparel During the Civil War 1861-1865, Special Edition, August, 2006. Lakeway Publishing Co., Inc., Morristown, TN.

This list is just a start; our members have handouts, bibliographies and other books covering many different subjects concerning reenacting and civilian life that we can share. If there is a particular subject you would like information on, contact the civilian coordinator or your sponsor.

Websites and Listservs

Websites

Texas Rifles

www.texasrifles.org

Elizabeth Stewart Clark

<http://www.elizabethstewartclarkandcompany.com/>

Civil War Reenactors Homepage

www.cwreenactors.com

The Authentic Campaigner

www.authentic-campaigner.com

Vicki Betts' Furr Homespun Dress

www.uttyl.edu/vbetts/furr_homespun_dress.htm

Vicki Betts Homepage

www.uttyl.edu/vbetts/

Ragged Soldier Sutlery and Vintage Volumes

<http://www.vintagevolumes.com/>

Historical Costume Collection at Cornell University

<http://figdev.cit.cornell.edu/2003/costume/index.htm>

Photos from the Aurora Collection of Men's Civilian Clothing

<http://news.webshots.com/album/124213743maCIWz>

Photos from the Mid-West Civil War Civilian Conference 2004

<http://news.webshots.com/album/118499909RNcjwT?start=0>
<http://news.webshots.com/album/118544301cptpiq>

Instructions for Women's Hairstyles

<http://www.thegracefullady.com/ladiessociety/hair.htm>

Links to Online Texas History Primary Source Documents

<http://home.austin.rr.com/rgriffin/texhisdocs.html>

Listserve

Texas Rifles Civilians

Civilian members of the Texas Rifles Civil War reenacting group.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TRCivilians/>

Texas Rifles

Main listserv for all Texas Rifles members.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TexasRifles/?yguid=177241131>

19c Ladies S-SW Region

This group is for the civilian woman reenactor who lives in the South and Southwest regions of the United States.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/19cLadiesS-SW/?yguid=177241131>

Citizens of the Civil War era

This is a list to discuss all aspects of civilian life during the Civil War era; this includes customs, material culture, religion, politics, and all else that affected the citizens of the era and their thought pattern.

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Citizens_of_the_CW/?yguid=177241131

Period Foods

The following foods are appropriate for the Civil War era and do not require refrigeration.

- Slab bacon, pickled pork and/or corned beef, (not the stuff one typically gets at the local grocer, but properly cured.)
- Round wheel of cheese, preserved by rubbing with butter
- Fresh eggs from the farm (unwashed), keeps about a week when kept out of direct sunlight
- Dried Beans
- Period appropriate fruits and vegetables (generally something like apples, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, onions, carrots, or other seasonal type food from the garden or orchard, or from the cellar). This event will be in the fall so consider items that would have been available, like apples, or would have been put up in the cellar or dried.
- Homemade bread
- Jumble cookies
http://www.cooks.com/rec/search/0,1-0,jumble_cookies,FF.html
- Gingerbread
- Pickled eggs:
http://www.cooks.com/rec/search/0,1-0,pickled_eggs,FF.html
- Fried dried apples or fried apple pies.
http://www.cooks.com/rec/search/0,1-0,fried_apple_pies,FF.html
- Dried peach pudding
- Pickles
- Canned goods with period labels and used with period openers
- Condiments such as pepper sauce, mustard and mushroom catsup

Search period cookbooks for ideas as well. Modern-day “off-the-shelf” foods chosen carefully for their resemblance to period foods are acceptable. Several of the merchants on the Recommended Suppliers list sell period-looking condiments and canned goods.

Another resource is “Re-staging an 1861 Picnic Or a Civilian Living History Activity for First Manassas”, page 30-35, *Civil War Historian Magazine*, May/June 2006, Volume 2 Issue 2.

The following quotes are from *A Journey Through Texas*, by Frederick Law Olmsted, 1857. They describe the different types of foods available in Texas in the mid-19th century.

Page 60: “Supper, consisting of pork, fresh and salt, cold corn-bread and boiled sweet potatoes...”

Page 61: “After a breakfast, similar in all respects to the supper...[in Texas] the meals are absolutely invariable, save that fresh pork and sweet potatoes are frequently wanting. There is always, too, the black decoction of the South called coffee, than which it is often difficult to imagine any beverage more

revolting. The bread is made of corn-meal, stirred with water and salt, and baked in a kettle covered with coals. The corn for breakfast is frequently unhusked at sunrise...Wheat bread, if I am not mistaken, we met with but twice, out of Austin, in our whole journey across the state.”

Page 65: “At supper we had capital mallard-ducks from the river, as well as the usual Texan diet [referring to pork and corn bread]”.

Page 80: “We cooked a kettle of chocolate...”

Page 84: “There was no flour in the town, except the little of which he made his cakes.”

“We inquired at seven stores, and at the two inns, for butter, flour, or wheat-bread, and fresh meat. There was none in town. One inn-keeper offered us salt-beef, the only meat, except pork, in town. At the stores we found crackers...poor raisins...When butter was to be had it came in firkins from New York.”

Page 95: “Until we reached Austin, the people, in cultivation of character and style of life, were as uniform as their pork and corn diet.”

Page 132: “...a clean table set with wheat-bread, ham, tea, and preserved fruits...”

Page 144: [In New Braunfels at a German home] “...An excellent soup is set before us, and in succession there follow two courses of meat, neither of them pork and neither of them fried, two dishes of vegetables, salad, compote of peaches, coffee with milk, wheat bread from the loaf, and...sweet butter.”

Page 187: [In New Braunfels at a German home] “...For supper we had wheat and Indian bread, buttermilk and eggs. At breakfast, besides the same articles, there were also *pfannelkuchen*, something between a pancake and an omelet, eaten with butter and sugar.”

Page 245: [near Victoria] “...In the garden were peach and fig-trees, and raspberries. Pears on quince-stocks...The banana is cultivated here and at Indianola, but only as a curiosity...”

Page 254: [in Indianola] “...vegetable gardens, which furnish...salads at all seasons...The native oysters are large and abundant. Game of all kinds is cheap.”

Page 280: [in Dhannis] “...venison, wheat-bread, eggs, milk, butter, cheese, and crisp salad.”

Page 318: [Eagle Pass] “.roast kid, eggs scrambled with sausage meat, and vegetables...”

The following quotes are from *Bacon, Beans, and Galantines* by Joseph R Conlin. This book deals mostly with the California Gold Rush; however, food descriptions should be applicable to 1860s.

Page 8: “...Samuel Griswold Goodrich described a New England breakfast as ‘no evanescent thing. In a farmer’s family it consists of little less than ham, beef, sausages, pork, bread, butter, boiled potatoes, pies, coffee, and cider.’...John Mack Faragher describes the daily diet of a midwestern [sic] farm family of mid-century as including two kinds of meat, eggs, cheese, butter, cream (especially in gravies), corn in one or more forms, tow kinds of bread, three or four different vegetables, jellies, preserves, relishes, cake or pie, milk, coffee, tea.”

Page 11: “By mid-century beef was replacing pork in the Northeast but pigmeat remained the cushion of southern comfort. There were nearly two hogs per capita in most of the southern states...A writer in *Godey’s Lady’s Book* sums it up: ‘[In the] South and West...it is fat bacon and pork, fat bacon and pork only, and that continually morning, noon, and night, for all classes, sexes, ages, and conditions; and except the boiled bacon and collards at dinner, the meat is generally fired, and thus supersaturated with grease in the form of hog’s lard.’”

Page 12: “...[Corn] was the staple of the South, eaten in mush, cooked before an open fire as ‘pone’ or hoecake, and baked into a more or less proper bread.”

Page 14: “Beans were ubiquitous at home...”

Page 16: “...common fare during the 1840s were broccoli and artichokes. Other vegetables, of which there are numerous off-handed recipes in the cookbooks and references in the marker reports, were asparagus, lima beans, haricot or string beans, cucumber, eggplant, mushrooms, okra, rutabagas, salsify, and spinach, as well as tomatoes.

“..eating greens and other vegetables raw seems not to have been uncommon...the common American salad was...’composed’ of a variety of vegetables and dressed with a sweetish mayonnaise-based liquor much like the substance contemporary bottlers sometimes label ‘French Dressing.’

“Then there were the preserved vegetables and fruits...”

Event Checklist

The following checklist may help you as you are preparing for events. All items may not apply to your situation; just cross off those that do not apply to you. Space has been left if you need to add other items.

Clothes

Female

- Drawers
- Petticoats
- Chemise
- Corset
- Stockings
- Hoops
- Headwear
- Shoes
- Dress and any separate articles such as under sleeves
- Apron
- Gloves
- Hair pieces
- Hair pins and other items necessary for hair style
- Outer wear such as a shawl or paletot
- Jewelry
-
-
-

Male

- Drawers
- Socks
- Hat
- Shoes
- Trousers
- Vest
- Shirt
- Cravat
- Sack coat or frock coat
- Suspenders
- Overcoat
-
-

Toiletries

- Medication
- Roll of toilet paper
- Sunscreen
- Pain relievers
- Allergy medication
- Pepto, antacids, alka seltzer
-
-
-

Camping equipment

- Tent
- Ground cloth
- Tent stakes and poles
- Hammer
- Cots or pallets
- Bedding
- Chairs or stools
- Folding table
- Food
-
-
-
-
- Water
- Plates, utensils, cups
- Cooking equipment
- Clean up items: soap, towels, etc.
- Flash light
- Period lighting
- Candles
- Large trash bags for clean up after the event and any wet items.
- Wicker baskets
-
-

Things to do

- Sewing
- Knitting
- Toys
-
-
-

Impression needs

-
-
-
-

Other

- Event information and directions
- Road map
- Texas Rifles ID card