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## Co. F, 14<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, 1862-65, Inc.

A private, not-for-profit, 501(c)3, educational and historical preservation organization

A National Regiment Member      Website: [CoF14thCVI.com](http://CoF14thCVI.com)

### **Policies and Guidelines for Civilian Impressions** **Company F, 14<sup>th</sup> Connecticut Volunteers Statement of Purpose**

The civilian members of Company F, 14th Connecticut Volunteers strive to accurately portray northern civilians of the 1860's. We are the families, friends, and supporters of the 14th Connecticut Volunteers. Company F presents a holistic historical portrait of the home front and the camps and fields experienced by Northern citizen soldiers during the Civil War. As a living history and educational organization we take pride in the historical accuracy of our impressions based on ongoing historical research. As living historians, our goals are educating ourselves and the public about the sacrifices made by soldiers and civilians during the Civil War. Our organization works together as friends and colleagues sharing a common interest in the culture of mid-19th century America. We share research skills, information, and collegiality among ourselves and with the public to fulfill our educational mission.

#### **Clothing and Supplies**

The following lists contain some of the basic items of clothing and equipment needed for an accurate civilian impression. We suggest you not purchase or make any of these items until you have contacted a member of our civilian committee if you are unsure of the accuracy of the item.

#### **Civilian Ladies**

- A day dress or work dress of appropriate period material and pattern
- Low heeled, square toed leather shoes or boots of the period
- Cotton stockings with garters if needed
- White cotton 'underpinnings' - chemise, drawers, corset or stays, under petticoat, hoops or corded petticoat, over petticoat. (Important note: if your dress is cut with pagoda sleeves, under sleeves must be worn.)
- Bonnet, sunbonnet, period appropriate straw hat, slat bonnet
- Basket or carpetbag
- Drinking cup or mug
- Gloves, handkerchief
- Appropriate accessories for your impression; jewelry, pocketwatch, apron, shawl, sewing kit, etc.

*"Qui Transtulit Sustinet,"* (He Who Transplanted Still Sustains)

## **Civilian Men**

- Trousers and vest (waistcoat) in period appropriate material and pattern
- Sackcoat or frockcoat
- Cotton, wool or linen shirt with period appropriate print and opening, appropriate buttons and collar
- Suspenders/braces – no elastic or clips. Proper braces attach to trousers with loops and button holes
- Leather shoes or boots in a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century pattern
- Cotton or wool socks
- Cotton or flannel drawers
- Hat or cap period appropriate shape for the 1860s, straw may be worn in summer
- Drinking cup or mug
- Handkerchief
- Appropriate accessories for your impression; jewelry, pocket watch, cane, tobacco pipe, etc.
- Period cravat

## **Equipment in Camp**

In camp and for display, good quality reproduction items representing the period: white canvas tent or fly, tin and cast iron cooking gear and dinner implements, woolen blankets or quilt in authentic colors and patterns, china dishes, etc. At reenactments and living history events, we maintain an authentic period camp. If you carry a water bottle, camera, or cell phone, please be mindful that it is concealed. A calico ditty bag may be useful for this purpose.

## **Civilian Knowledge**

Our civilians represent the families, friends, and supporters of the 14<sup>th</sup> Connecticut and a basic knowledge of the history of the original 14<sup>th</sup> is required, as well as some understanding of the Civil War itself, and the time period. Civilian members of the unit should have a basic understanding of the culture of the time, including etiquette and religion, and should be able to speak with the public in an informative manner about their role and portrayal.

## **General Points**

All members, including new members, must satisfy the requirements stated in this document and in the unit by-laws, before participating in an event. Proper conduct and a suitable impression must be maintained when in the presence of the public at events, and is encouraged at all times. Members of Company F are expected to strive for the highest standards of historical accuracy in their impression, and to be respectful of the research and impressions of fellow members as well as living historians from other groups. All civilians must have an impression suitable the time period and that aligns with and promotes the educational mission of Company F.

Avoid the following during the event:

- Modern eyewear
- Sunglasses – in the 1860s people wore sunglasses if they were blind or suffering from syphilis

- Modern headwear/caps/bandannas, etc.
- Cell phones
- Plastic water bottles, plastic of any kind, zip lock bags, Styrofoam coolers
- Wrist watches – there were none in the 1860s
- Overt modern make-up
- Nail polish of any kind – none in the 1860s
- Cover tattoos, they should not be visible in period dress. Body piercings/body jewelry should be removed except for period appropriate pierced earrings
- No cigarettes – tobacco use such as chew, pipes, cigars, etc., are acceptable for the period
- No zippers, Velcro, obvious synthetic fabrics
- No bare feet, flip flops, sneakers, or shoes with heavy patterned treads

### **Some Recommendations and Information for Civilian Ladies**

Period undergarments should be worn to create an appropriate foundation and silhouette for 1860s dress. Undergarments include chemise, petticoats, corset or stays. Undergarments should be appropriate to the dress and impression you choose to portray. A corded petticoat may be more suitable and comfortable than hoops if you are cooking or doing activities. Your dress should be the proper length, cut, and fabric for the period and the impression you portray. Chemise - RECOMMENDED. Necessary when you are wearing a corset. It will protect your corset and dress from you and you from your corset. Split crotch drawers or Bloomers/Pantalets – RECOMMENDED for both modesty and convenience. If your hoop tilts up, everyone will see your modern day underwear/thong, yoga pants, etc. Bloomers keep them hidden for your own privacy. Split drawers recommended making using the bathroom easier as you don't have to untie, unbutton or pull down. Corset - RECOMMENDED. It is obvious when you are not wearing one. Although not required, most historically correct patterns and dresses are fitted to a corset and period dresses look “funny” and do not fit properly if you were not wearing a corset underneath. RECOMMENDED - A corset that is long enough to come down over your hips. This prevents boning from digging into your thighs and stomach when seated and also provides better back support as well as slims the waist for those of us who wish to look a bit thinner. There is absolutely no reason to tighten the corset to the point you are uncomfortable. Give yourself breathing room.

One-piece dresses or bodices and skirts are a good choice. A Garibaldi blouse with jacket, vest, tea bodices Swiss bodice, Zouve jackets, etc. with skirt. Garments should be well fitted (the Victorians liked tight) and made with period appropriate pattern and style. A narrow white collar is recommended with a pin at the throat. A standard collar should fit all dresses and bodices. Lace, cotton, crochet collars were all worn. Women were well covered during the day and supposed to be modest. No cleavage should be visible during the day at events. Low necklines were for night balls and dances during the period.

All dresses are to be of period construction and of wool, silk, or cotton. Cotton dresses should be of a reproduction calico, stripe or plaid, in appropriate prints. Solid colored cotton dresses are discouraged as not usual to the period. Silk and wool dresses must be of period color and/or prints. White shirtwaists and skirt combinations should only be worn for portrayals of fashionable, young women of the upper class and be of high quality materials suited to the impression. Mixed fabric ensembles may be allowed for lower socioeconomic portrayals such as refugee, cooks, or washer woman. Dresses must be of the appropriate cut and style for the time of day (no ball gowns or evening dresses during the day).

Headwear must be appropriate to your dress and portrayal. Fashion bonnets can be worn with high fashion dresses and should be 1860s style and construction. Slat bonnets are appropriate for most impressions. They must be of period fabric and, if applicable, period print. No *Little House on the Prairie* sunbonnets. Hats may be worn but must be of appropriate shape, construction, and material. Sutler snoods should be avoided or worn covered by bonnets or hats. A broad brimmed period straw hat is a good summer hat and will protect you from the sun.

Shoes should be black leather, square or rounded toe, lace up the side or front, flat heeled, as smooth soled as possible (avoid the tire-tread look), and without any extra trim. Modern "Granny" or ankle boots are acceptable if they fit the shape of the period. Speed laces, the hooks rather than holes for the laces, are inappropriate and should be removed. No tennis shoes, flip flops, "China" shoes, modern flats or ballet slippers.

Hair should be of period appropriate style. "Part in the center-Pull it back-Plaster it down." Bangs, fringes, or wisps are not appropriate to the 1860s. Hairstyles should match your impression. A refugee on the road or a poor farmer's wife will probably not have a fashionable hairstyle; merely pull it back in a bun and get it out of the way. Short hairstyles can be covered with a period appropriate hair net under the bonnet.

Aprons: pinner or waist style are acceptable and recommended if you are doing cooking around the campfire or to enhance your impression.

Shawls are a nice accessory for all weather. Shawls can be decorative lace, plain woven, woolen, knitted or crocheted for style and warmth. Knitted or crochet "sontags" are also appropriate for warmth. Mantles, paletots, saques, cloaks and capes are appropriate for cool and cold weather. A woven basket with a cover or cloth cover for carrying things you buy at the sutlers for carrying your camera, wallet and car keys.

### **Some Recommendations and Information for Civilian Men**

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

Linen or summer weight wool frock coat, over shirt, sack coat, or other utilitarian civilian article of clothing constructed utilizing period tailoring techniques and of cloth appropriate for the socio-economic background for the person you are portraying. 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!! The sack coat was shorter than a frock. 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.

A good period hat is a must. Men kept their heads covered in public. Any period correct style and color of broad brimmed hat is acceptable as are top hats, low hats, plug, bowler, pork pie or wheel caps. Period correct straw is acceptable during the summer for everyday frock suit wear.

Sack coat, frock coat or other utilitarian civilian article of clothing constructed utilizing period tailoring techniques and of cloth appropriate for the socio-economic background for the person you are portraying.

Shirts are at your discretion based on your impression. All are to be cut to a period pattern and sewn using period tailoring techniques. Cotton, homespun, 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. Cotton recommended for hot weather, wool for cold weather.

Cravats are recommended. Colorful cravats were often seen with frock coats in the 1860's.

Vests must be of correct pattern, fabric and cut. Brocade front vests are discouraged. Perfect for a pocket watch and chain. Vests were made of cotton, silk, or wool. Usually colorful and garish, stripes were popular. Solid black or gray was also popular for more dressy occasions. 19<sup>th</sup> 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

Trousers (wool or cotton) are to be cut using a period civilian patterns and of appropriate cloth. Broadcloth, cotton jean, woolen jean, kersey, woolen plaids, or linsey woolsey would all be good choices for material. Striped pants or solid black or gray were most popular. Plaids were also popular. Farmers, laborers, ranchers, factory workers and such usually wore an outfit of sturdy wool, cotton, corduroy or denim trousers.

Under trousers are recommended. If you are planning on wearing woolen trousers, you may want to buy or have one of the ladies make you a pair of under trousers out of white cotton to protect your legs and other "important" areas from been chafed by the wool pants in hot weather. Under trousers also provide extra warmth at colder reenactments.

Period correct braces/suspenders (non-elastic) were commonly worn. Recommended to hold pants up and to support tools, knives or other weapon, etc.,

Footwear (boot or bootee) is at the discretion of the living historian and should be appropriate to the impression. Footwear, like the rest of the clothing, must be of correct pattern and constructed using correct techniques. No hiking boots, sneakers, etc.

Accessories: Walking sticks should be straight with metal caps on bottom and top to prevent wear and tear on the stick. Canes were not curved at the top like a modern cane is. White gloves 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. Wallets 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.

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

### **Ladies and Gentlemen of Company F**

**NO MODERN ITEMS SHOULD BE VISABLE DURING OUR LIVING HISTORY EVENTS.** We are portraying life as it was 150 years ago and it damages our historical impression and accuracy if we do not strive to keep in period during living history events. If you have any questions, please consult one of the committee.

Company F strives and achieves high standards regarding historical accuracy and we continue to research and develop our impressions for our own greater understanding of the period of the Civil War and to help educate the public in honoring those men and women who served and sacrificed.

#### Getting Started:

There are numerous on-line sutlers and sellers, including eBay. Be very careful if you are not familiar with products you are ordering. Below are some recommendations for your review. The links below are not intended to be a comprehensive reference. Shop around and ask advice. For women's clothing and information I can recommend Blockade Runner for your review.

The Blockade Runner general web page: this is a good informative resource with historically accurate items at reasonable prices. The ladies catalog especially has some nice articles and information. Their slogan is "affordable authenticity" and they stand by this:

<http://blockaderunner.com/> (scroll down below the Tea Party advertising).

Comprehensive catalog for military and male and female civilians.

Blockade Men's Clothing: <http://blockaderunner.com/Catalog/catpg11b.html> there are other links for men's items and clothing on the index

Blockade Ladies Catalog with articles and notes on items and authenticity: <http://blockaderunner.com/nlc/nlc.html> A good resource. Items are good quality at a good price.

Missouri Boot and Shoe: <http://missouribootandshoe.com/>

Fugawee Historic Footwear: <http://www.fugawee.com/>

Abraham's Lady: <http://www.abrahamslady.com/>

Material, sewing, supplies:

Needle and Thread: <http://www.woodedhamlet.com/>

PA Fabric Outlet, Harrisburg and Lancaster, PA—Harrisburg website: <http://www.pafabric.com/locations.html>

#### References:

Godey's Ladies Book Fashion Plates Petersons Magazine Fashion Plates

Abraham, Donna, J., The Way They Were, A Photographic Reference, Vol I and Vol II, Abraham's Lady, LLC, Vol I, 2008, Vol II, 2011

Leisch, Juanita, Who Wore What? Women's Wear 1861-1865, Thomas Publications, Gettysburg, PA 1995