



## A Guide to Civilian Women and Children's Wear



This document aims to give some guidance and a helping hand to those starting new with the society, or members who wish to better their impression!

This is a [guideline](#) NOT a rule book.

### Sections

1. The beginning - A simple guide to the basics you will need to come on camp and be a presentable lady.
2. Into the depths - More information and details of daily wear.
3. Recommendations - A few websites and selling pages where one might acquire such items.
4. Further readings - Books we recommend and some YouTube links.

## Section One - The beginning

When stepping on to camp as a civilian woman, there are some essentials you will need. Starting from the bottom up, you will need a pair of boots that are sturdy and support the ankles. Boots with elastic down the sides and buttons were popular with a small practical heel. Women on camp were also known to wear men's brogans as they are practical and may be purchased from the sutlers.



Moving on we have your main attire. It was more common for women to wear a cotton work dress with either printed patterns, checks or stripes. Plain cotton was not used as the dye back then did not fasten adequately to the fabric leaving an undesirable appearance. For the days where warmer layers were needed a dress made of wool would be worn also. Separates (meaning a skirt and jacket) were made of the same patterned fabrics; however, these were less commonly worn. There is only evidence of young girls (under the age of 25) wearing white blouses and skirts but if that is what you wish to wear then it is acceptable.



Finally, your hair should be neatly confined at the nape of your neck with a middle parting as a general rule. A snood may be worn if it is the same colour as your hair (see further reading for a detailed article on the Victorian snood) however if you wish to wear the more 1940s style bright colours you may.



A hat made of straw may be worn in sunnier times, a linen cap to protect the hair from dirt, a crochet/knitted hood or a sun bonnet. There will be more detail further on in the document.

A few extras you may like to include would be an apron (made of hard-wearing patterned fabric as it hides stains) and a Sontag for warmer layers (detailed below). To begin your impression as a camp follower during the 1860s can be simple by following these three guides. The main factor to get you looking authentic from the beginning is the dress you wear, if correct you are off to a good start!



	<b>Ideal</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Not Advised</b>
<b>Shoes</b>	Leather shoes buttoned or laced in the style of the period. (Quarter master stores or civil war sutlers are a good start).	Black or brown modern boots (Clark's or cadet boots for example).	Any other modern shoes.
<b>Dress</b>	Machine or hand sewn printed cotton/wool dress.	Matching separates or a white shirt and skirt.	Modern dress not in the style of the period.
<b>Hairstyle</b>	A middle part with hair confined.	A snood crocheted or a fringe.  The hair with a middle parting in a bun at the nape of the neck.	Brightly coloured hair or loose hair not tied up (unless they're children).
<b>Layers</b>	A sontag or cape.	A knitted shawl or hidden warm modern layers (thermals for example).	Modern outer garments worn during the day (acceptable once camp is closed!) I highly recommend thermal tights, to keep you warm.

## Section Two - Into the depths

This section is aimed at those wanting to better their own impression, or for those newcomers who wish to know more! This will follow the same principle as the previous chapter going from bottom to top.

### Stockings

Made of cotton in either stripes, plain or with clocking (a small design at the ankle) are worn against the skin like modern socks. These are to be held up with a garter (a piece of fabric, ribbon or leather) tied under the kneecap to prevent them slipping down.



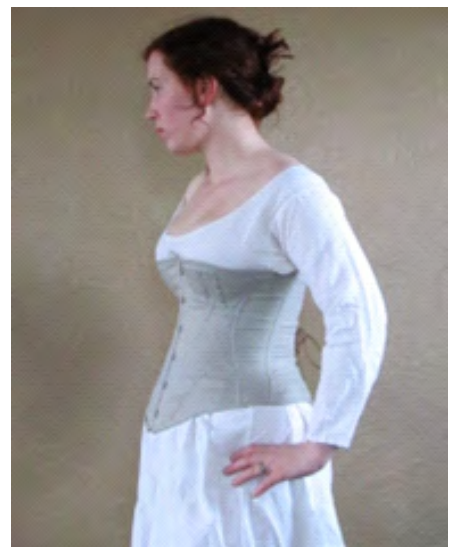
### Undergarments

A pair of bloomers were worn next to the skin made of cotton or linen and were most commonly white. The ankles may be adorned with lace or ribbons if the wearer wishes so, the waist would tie at the back for easy use of the lavatories. A shift made of similar materials of cotton or linen was worn next to the skin on your top half protecting you from the corset rubbing and to protect your corset from sweat. Shifts could also be decorated with ribbons and lace and had adjustable ties on the sleeve and neckline at times. Corsets of the time closed at the front with hooks and eyes and tightened at the back with lacing. The style of the period called for a triangular gored corset offering shape to the hips and bust creating the hourglass figure that was fashionable. You do not have to wear a corset unless you would like to!



### Petticoats

To give the skirt that full look without using hoops, petticoats can have similar effects. Corded petticoats most noticeably create the bell shape and are stiffened so hold their shape. I find using stiff curtain lining to make petticoats works effectively. They were made of cotton or linen and could be frilly and Lacey or embroidered, it's down to personal preference.



## The work dress



A dress made of cotton or wool mentioned above in the beginners section was most commonly worn by women in camp. They were comfortable, practical and hard wearing. There were two distinctive styles of sleeves for the time, these were the puffy sleeves pleated down to a cuff or the wide open cuffed sleeve. Buttons were made of natural materials like wood or tin, plastic buttons are not acceptable during this time period. Sleeves began below the shoulder and often had piping on the hem. The large sleeves and narrow waist band are typical of the period to make the figure appear hourglass shaped. Women were seen to wear belts for practical reasons or as accessories. Lighter colours were worn by the younger generations unless they are sheer in which case are not acceptable due to modesty.

## Hairstyles and headwear

Hair is to be kept neat and confined so as to not affect you whilst working. The main part of the hair should be confined at the nape of the neck with a middle parting. There are many pictures of women's hairstyles which are easily achieved. Snoods were used to keep the hair secure and were the colour of your own hair. Plaits were a common way of easily putting the hair up and could be pinned into place to keep the hair out of the way. There are plenty of photos suggesting women did not wear anything to cover their hair outside and inside the home it appears to be personal preference. A linen cap may be worn to protect the hair from dirt or smoke as a practical measure. Those under the age of 65 pictured wearing caps generally covered the back of the head and framed the face whereas those over the age of 65 were pictured wearing caps that cover the whole head and seldom trimmed. Fringes or bangs were relatively unknown to the period and there are no pictures depicting such hairstyles however if that is how you wish to wear your hair you may, it is all down to personal preference!

<https://www.thesewingacademy.com/2011/03/getting-snoody/>

(A useful article on snoods)

## Some hat suggestions:



## Warmer layers

For those days in camp when it gets bitter and cold there are many options to layer up. A Sontag or bosom friend can be worn around the torso which are very effective at keeping you warm. They are often knitted or crocheted and wrap around the body. Knitting patterns can be found for making these!



A knitted hood may be worn on the head and offers lots of warmth and decoration:

They can be adorned with tassels, bows, or ribbon; whatever takes your fancy!

Linked below are some patterns for knitted warm weather goods.

Lined capes kept the drafts at night, mostly made of wool with a linen or cotton lining. There are many designs of capes and often fastened at the neck, with hoods or collars, with sleeves and varying decorations.



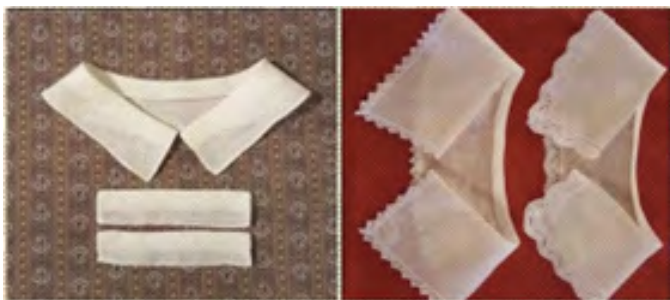
## The work apron

Made of a hard-wearing material and either plain or patterned. They could either be a simple tie around the waist or one that pins to the bodice.



## Cuffs and collars

To save fabric cuffs and collars were made separately making them re-usable between dresses and easier to clean. They were held with pins or a fashionable broach. They were worn by young and old, lower class or upper class, plain or ordained with lace. Cuffs were attached to the inside of the sleeve and folded over the top, this protected the sleeves from wear and tear.



	<b>Ideal</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Not Advised</b>
<b>Undergarments</b>	A full set of cotton under things, stockings, and a corset (not necessary)	Modern underwear	
<b>Dress</b>	A cotton work dress in a printed pattern or a plain woollen dress. Hem should sit just above the ground for practicality	Separates made of the same fabric or a white shirt and skirt either plain or patterned.	Modern clothes
<b>Hair</b>	Confined in a period way with a middle parting	A middle parting with either plaits or a bun at the nape of the neck	Hair loose
<b>Hats</b>	A straw hat decorated or un-decorated, a hood or a Sun bonnet		An obviously modern hat
<b>Outerwear</b>	A cape, sontoag or shawl made of wool, knitted or crocheted	Modern outerwear worn once camp is closed	Wearing modern outer wear during the event
<b>Collars and Cuffs</b>	Made of cotton or linen and decorated or un-decorated (aren't necessary just a decoration)		
<b>Accessories</b>	A plain or patterned apron Pinned or tied at the back		

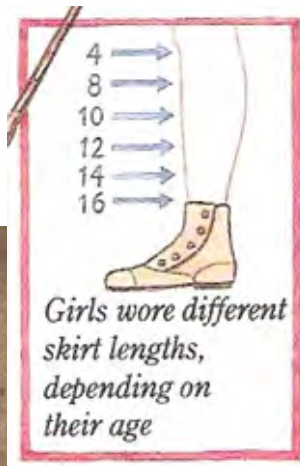


# Children

A note for dressing your children on camp:

## Young girls:

Little girls, toddlers to 5, dress length should be just below the knee. Then from 6 to 10 or 11 skirts sat at the midcalf. Ages 12 to 14 or 15 came down to ankle length. Depending on the social standing of the girl denotes the length. A girl working for a living would have her skirt about 2 ins off the ground so she wouldn't trip. A young lady of some social standing would have a floor length dress.



Fabric was scarce during the war especially for those of the working class or camp followers so dresses would be passed down to younger generations, cut down to make smaller items of clothing or adjusted such as adding an extra panel to the skirt to make it longer. As a society we take pride in being a family and in such we trade down our old clothes to the younger generations, as I am sure there are dresses still in circulation the grown-ups once wore!

## Young boys:

Boys wore dresses until they were potty trained until the age of about  $\frac{2}{3}$  years old and then put into "knickers" which were knee length breeches and a short jacket. With the onset of war boys were suddenly put into uniforms to look like their fathers. However later on in the years when the casualty lists were published this fell out of favour. Therefore, it's up to the family as to what you put your young children as it is with any of these topics, personal preference!

## **Some useful links**

In this section I have found some links to patterns, clothing and articles which may be useful. These are just some suggestions to help.

### **Dresses**

A wrap dress pattern:

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1674996854/>

A day dress pattern:

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/928527753/>

An example of a dress and an eBay seller who sells good quality clothing

[https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/186357221834?mkcid=16&mkevt=1&mkrid=711-127632-2357-0&ssspo=vqle7VSwTxS&sssrc=4429486&ssuid=swmNoXVqRVu&var=&widgetver=artemis&media=FB\\_MSG](https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/186357221834?mkcid=16&mkevt=1&mkrid=711-127632-2357-0&ssspo=vqle7VSwTxS&sssrc=4429486&ssuid=swmNoXVqRVu&var=&widgetver=artemis&media=FB_MSG)

Historical clothing retailer (high prices however):

<https://originals-by-kay.com/>

<https://originals-by-kay.com/shop?olsPage=products%2F100-wool-front-opening-dress-suitable-for-civil-war-reenacting>

### **Petticoats**

A listed item:

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/709440157/>

A pattern:

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/990673442/>

### **Stockings**

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1591936514/>

Quarter master stores (Etsy, events or main site)

## **Shift**

A pattern:

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1085576470/>

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/901815017/>

## **Bloomers**

Pattern: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/806553203/>

Clothing item: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/901794051/>

Clothing item:

[https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/182627646909?mkcid=16&mkevt=1&mkrid=711-127632-2357-0&ssspo=Oj2\\_](https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/182627646909?mkcid=16&mkevt=1&mkrid=711-127632-2357-0&ssspo=Oj2_)

<UIYjTsi&sssrc=4429486&ssuid=cjcxvD4QBG&var=485188358835&widgetver=artemis&media=COPY>

## **Corsets**

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/901904081/>

[https://redthreaded.com/en-gb/products/1860s-gored-corset?](https://redthreaded.com/en-gb/products/1860s-gored-corset?fbclid=IwAR0AejX0jOnEfOSVl_)

[fbclid=IwAR0AejX0jOnEfOSVl\\_](fbclid=IwAR0AejX0jOnEfOSVl_)

[GSDKiFB0q31IomAVawTWvXaHDmLzNRb1OKUHXLlbo\\_aem\\_ATTDbOvw92\\_PcLEqAagCuYD8Nx4r0IEd7V-5NqxR1KAL0-wsgyTPMQD-g5zJkLHVwb0](GSDKiFB0q31IomAVawTWvXaHDmLzNRb1OKUHXLlbo_aem_ATTDbOvw92_PcLEqAagCuYD8Nx4r0IEd7V-5NqxR1KAL0-wsgyTPMQD-g5zJkLHVwb0)

[https://www.priorattire.co.uk/ourshop/prod\\_8015491-ModernVictorian-sport-riding-](https://www.priorattire.co.uk/ourshop/prod_8015491-ModernVictorian-sport-riding-corset-2729.html?fbclid=IwAR3I06px6ZBB-)

[144g9itEctkM9a4MYtg2TTsIVFJ56qE5FXnmG-2UzpEhM0\\_aem\\_ATT-](144g9itEctkM9a4MYtg2TTsIVFJ56qE5FXnmG-2UzpEhM0_aem_ATT-)

<ANZsxt2F85vDjJYn4odAg6MPKJV-upSddjpDGFlameOyejBVNSjQQD5aqYcOTv4>

<https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/901855431/victorian-corset-style-emma?loadwebview=1&bid=51GPzfkTsSMsviyUW4mx1EgUhoki>

## **Boots**

[https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/116140338287?mkcid=16&mkevt=1&mkrid=711-127632-2357-0&ssspo=ME0tUMI4RM-&sssrc=4429486&ssuid=cjcxtvD4QBG&var=&widget\\_ver=artemis&media=COPY](https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/116140338287?mkcid=16&mkevt=1&mkrid=711-127632-2357-0&ssspo=ME0tUMI4RM-&sssrc=4429486&ssuid=cjcxtvD4QBG&var=&widget_ver=artemis&media=COPY)

Ebay

Civil war sutlers

Quarter master stores

## **Head wear**

A cap:

[https://www.priorattire.co.uk/ourshop/prod\\_7388393-Mid-Victorian-sortie-cap.html?](https://www.priorattire.co.uk/ourshop/prod_7388393-Mid-Victorian-sortie-cap.html?)

Straw hat: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1523778089/>

Straw hat: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1482824302/>

Straw hat: [https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/353707287975?mkcid=16&mkevt=1&mkrid=711-127632-2357-0&ssspo=0dBDWvqcRQK&sssrc=4429486&ssuid=cjcxtvD4QBG&var=&widget\\_ver=artemis&media=COPY](https://www.ebay.co.uk/itm/353707287975?mkcid=16&mkevt=1&mkrid=711-127632-2357-0&ssspo=0dBDWvqcRQK&sssrc=4429486&ssuid=cjcxtvD4QBG&var=&widget_ver=artemis&media=COPY)

Linen cap: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1523329945/>

## **Hairstyles**

Snood article:

<https://www.thesewingacademy.com/2011/03/getting-snoody/>

A snood: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/753941873/>

A snood: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/678058825/>

## **Accessories**

Apron: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1708530305/>

Hood patterns: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1643120302/>

Under sleeve patterns (worn under wide sleeves): <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1640290962/>

Collar pattern: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1679288307/>

Bag pattern: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1664525180/>

Toddlers mittens pattern: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1665141334/>

Knitted garters (for stockings): <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1664927264/>

Collar pattern: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/934933644/>

## **Children**

Children's apron: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/1686288630/> (Children)

Children's cap: <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/691641686/>

## **Videos**

A very informative woman with some really great ideas!

<https://youtu.be/-mPtQJxKWLc?si=slu2mJak5EtTk-WI>

<https://youtu.be/XbJgMS9LRU0?si=UpQNJP4XaRpKNbW>

[https://youtu.be/KU\\_s3YK0I9I?si=6pDGcvi1U8rcfps2](https://youtu.be/KU_s3YK0I9I?si=6pDGcvi1U8rcfps2)

<https://youtu.be/2LxbTobJxgQ?si=CyjMkidmMtbqsmhs>

<https://youtu.be/FXP2YXg7TtQ?si=G9vTSxmRegw62oZR>

<https://youtu.be/REd2nT6quxU?si=5xRsJdMfFTIHOEr->

[https://youtu.be/XiQRPXylchE?si=Q\\_VLnkA7mkkAwVWf](https://youtu.be/XiQRPXylchE?si=Q_VLnkA7mkkAwVWf)

<https://youtu.be/h-hBPn516C4?si=oBciwo1gaSfNkDzJ>

## **Book recommendations:**

Who wore what, women's wear 1861-1865.

By Juanita Leisch

A very informative book on everything women's wear with context and photos.

The way they were dressed 1860-1865.

By Donna J. Abraham

A detailed photograph book of families, portraits and details.

Civil war ladies: fashions and needle arts of the early 1860s.

By R. L. Shep

A really detailed sewing pattern book with some period music sheets too!

Women in the civil war.

By Mary Elizabeth Massey

Writes about the effects of war on women and the role they played, an interesting read.

Americas printed fabrics 1770-1890.

By Barbara Brackman

Quilting projects and detailed fashion textiles, prints and patterns with lots of photos!

As always this is a guideline and by no means a rule book. It is intended to help new members with the prospect of joining and make it a less overwhelming experience. The links included are just guidelines and many of these items can be purchased or swapped between members, always keep an eye out on those blanket sales! There are many Facebook groups for selling and buying re-enacting clothes or ask another member for help! Myself and a few others are capable seamstresses and knitters and as a society we can come together and help each other out!

If anyone (men and women) is interested in the Christian commission/sanitary commission, then please contact Claire Morris as it's a brilliant group effort and educational display we can all get our hands on!

If anyone has any suggestions or input, please go ahead this is a group effort and by no means perfect.

A big thank you to Val Holt and Shaz Paul who have been a great help and provided lots of information!

Thank you,

Georgina Robinson



Aspects of Common Hats from the Civil War Years  
The Most Common

