

Resources for Distaff - Second South Carolina Regiment

Clothing

The Second South Carolina Regiment usually attends events that took place between 1780 and 1782. Women's clothing was beginning to change a little during this time period, but remember, we were most likely "on the road" and wouldn't have had access to the latest fashions. So you will want to shoot for styles that were popular during the late 1770s. This is not an exhaustive list or guide, but should help get you started. Please conduct your own research (the Internet is a great thing!) and let us know what you find. If you have any questions about this guide or just in general, please email Caroline at oldhousejunkie@gmail.com.

The basic wardrobe for a camp follower is relatively simple and cost effective if you're new to the hobby. As a beginner, you will need a chemise, a petticoat, a bed gown (or short gown), an apron, a pair of stockings, a cap, and a pair of plain, flat or low heeled black shoes. Once you have obtained these, you can begin building your wardrobe based on your participation levels. A quick word about these garments.

Petticoats

Multiple, voluminous petticoats were worn during the 18th century, sometimes over skirt supports such as bum rolls, hip pads, and panniers. Panniers are not practical for camp life, and bum rolls only come in handy when you have a jacket that needs a little oomph. Hip pads can give that wide hipped look that was "en vogue" without compromising your ability to work in camp. But none of these are required to accomplish your look. Two petticoats can give you the voluminous shape that was desired during the period.

Caps

Linen or cotton caps should be worn during the day. A married woman with an uncovered head was considered loose. Women only uncovered their heads for parties and balls. Many of the sutlers listed below offer nice caps. Caps are also easy to find at events. Remember: the "mob cap" is not accurate. This is essentially a cap with a frill all the way around and may have elastic (a big no no). A proper cap will have a flat, unadorned edge at the back.

Bed Gown/Short Gown

This is essential undress wear for camp. Each of these garments can be worn without stays or jumps. There is a trend against short gowns in the research world, as they may have been a regional garment, but they have not been marked as inaccurate as of yet. They are different from bed gowns in that they are short and somewhat loose; they can hook, lace, or pin up the front; though some short gowns are a lot like bed gowns is that they pin across the front (sideways) and are secured by an apron.

Once you are certain that you will be participating regularly, you will want to invest in 18th century shoes and stays, which are the most expensive things for ladies. Shoes can be obtained online through several dealers or at events. Stays in particular are very important as most women's clothing in the 18th century did not fit correctly unless you were wearing them. The "cone" shape was the look for the 18th century. Note that stays were meant to be a support garment, and should be comfortable. That is why it is always important to have them fitted to your body. Stays with a stomacher (a triangular piece of fabric that is inserted beneath lacing) allow for the most flexibility for weight fluctuations. An equally supportive, but less constricting garment is a pair of Jumps. They are half boned, and usually feature straps. This are a cost effective way to get the basic shape for the period without spending a lot of money. Remember, it is nearly impossible to wear a gown with a set of stays, so until you get them, you will have to stick to bed

gowns, short gowns, and jackets (though technically you should wear stays with all of these, but you won't be called out if you don't!)

Many women in the hobby can sew, and choose to do so, while many of us often purchase our clothing from sutlers. A word of caution—just because a sutler is set up at an event, doesn't mean that their clothing is 100% authentic. The list of resources and pointers below should give you an idea of what you should aim for. Someone who only has basic sewing skills can put together a petticoat as it is two yards of fabric (preferably 55" to 60" wide), halved, and sewn up the sides. A lot of ladies wear drawstring petticoats but this is not entirely accurate, plus it adds unwanted bulk at your waistline. The period correct way is detailed in a wonderful tutorial by the ladies at A Fashionable Frolick:

<http://fashionablefrolick.blogspot.com/2011/04/threaded-bliss-tutorial.html>

- **Fabric**

In the 18th century, linen was the typical fabric worn by all classes, and in particular, the lower and middling classes. You should shoot for linen petticoats unless you are wearing a matching printed cotton petticoat (for a gown). Most colors can work for the period, but darker tones are best for camp life. Blues, reds, browns, and greens are a good basis, but yellows and even dark oranges were popular during the period. Stripes are a good "fun" way to introduce some personality into your wardrobe. Note that stripes were always worn vertical however. Small check and plaid fabrics were generally not used, though there are some exceptions (specific regions of the US for example, Scottish regiments, etc.) Windowpane check was used for aprons and kerchiefs.

Wool was very popular as well, but most of our events are in the south, so it's not always the most comfortable to wear. Solid colors are the rule.

Cotton fabric was definitely used, though keep in mind that upper middle class and wealthy people used it more often than the lower classes. For our regiment, we were based in Charleston, so our ladies may have been able to afford cotton fabrics or have access to them. There was a strong second hand clothing trade in the cities.

Floral patterns were very popular in the 18th century but considerable research should be put into pattern selection. A good rule of thumb is, if you can't find a source for your fabric, then don't use it. A good way to familiarize yourself is to check out the fabrics created by Colonial Williamsburg. There are many former and current patterns licensed by them that will give you an idea. Note that printed petticoats were not worn with solid color jackets, bed gowns, etc.

Some websites to check out:

- **Burnley and Trowbridge** (www.burnleyandtrowbridge.com)
A great website that is geared towards 18th century re-enactors. They have a wonderful and ever changing selection of striped linens that make lovely gowns and petticoats. They carry authentic cotton fabrics and wools. They also have a great selection of accessories including neckerchiefs (or modesty cloths), stockings, hats, and shoes.
- **Wm. Booth, Draper** (<https://wmboothdraper.com/>)
This another site geared towards 18th century re-enactors. Their fabric is expensive, so it is best for familiarizing yourself with what was popular in the time period. They also have citations for how and when the fabric was used.
- **Fabrics Store** (<http://www.fabrics-store.com/>)

This is an excellent and cost-effective resource for linen fabric. They also have daily sales. You will want to purchase the “All Purpose” linen in the IL019 weight. Note: Don’t wash your linen fabric before it has been turned into a finished garment—it gets messy!

- **96 District Storehouse** (<http://www.96storehouse.com/>)
A South Carolina company that usually attends most of the Southern events. A great selection of accurate fabrics and sewing accessories.

- **Patterns**

If you wish to make your own clothing, go for it! There are several companies that make patterns for 18th century clothing.

- **Larkin & Smith** (<http://atthesignofthegoldenscissors.com/>)
These ladies have turned their many years of reenacting and historical research into a pattern line that is first rate. While the patterns are expensive, they come with step-by-step guides to walk you through construction, history of the garment, and even period correct sewing techniques. They also have sewing and clothing accessories for sale in their shop.
- **J.P. Ryan** (<http://www.jpryan.com/>)
Very accurate, but often confusing patterns. She offers a greater variety of clothing patterns than most purveyors, but is geared towards the seasoned seamstress.
- **Rocking Horse Farm**
Another accurate option. Patterns are available at Wm. Booth Draper and Smoke & Fire: <https://www.smoke-fire.com/rocking-horse-farm-patterns-1.asp>
- **Other Options: Mill Farm, Kannik’s Korner, and Period Impressions**

For those of us less inclined towards the domestic arts, there are many reputable sellers of readymade clothing out there. One of the go-to companies for cheap, readymade clothing is James Townsend and Son. They are a good place to start but not always accurate. For example, there is a garment called a “bodice”. It basically looks like a vest with lacing up the front. This is a 1970s reenactor garment that has been proven to be inaccurate, yet it won’t die. Don’t buy this garment. The only time a bodice was worn was underneath clothing for warmth, in which case, we attend very few cold weather events so it’s just not needed. Other accessories that you will need to complete your look include a pocket, neckerchief, mitts or fingerless gloves for cold mornings, and a basket/market wallet/linen bag for storage or when you’re shopping. Also a bonnet or flat straw hat is a nice accessory to dress up with and/or keep the sun out of your eyes.

- **Readymade Clothing and Accessories**

Note, just because they are sutler, doesn’t mean they sell accurate clothing. You’ll always want to check with them to see what patterns they are using to make sure the garment is authentic.

Remember, a lot of 18th century women’s clothing should be worn with stays or jumps.

- **Seams Colonial** (<http://seamscolonial.com/index.html>)
Dorothy creates clothing for the 18th century using period correct fabrics and patterns. She is a sutler but doesn’t appear very often at the events we attend. She did attend the Lake City event this past December. Her rates are extremely affordable.
- **Sharon Buryston/The Village Green Clothier** (<http://villagegreenclothier.com/>)
A long-time reenactor and historian, Sharon is the author of “Fitting and Proper” which is one of the definitive guides to clothing in the 18th century. She also takes clothing commissions and is moderately expensive.
- **Fashions Revisited** (<http://www.fashionsrevisited.com/>)
April Thomas maintains a website and Etsy with a good selection of basic garments (chemises, etc.) and accessories. She offers silk bonnets that are accurate to the late

18th century, and are a nice alternative to the typical flat straw hat. Also many different kinds of caps. She has a degree in fashion history, so she knows her stuff. She often attends mid-Atlantic and northern events.

- **American Duchess** (<http://americanduchess.blogspot.com/p/shoe-shop.html>)
A good source for limited run, historically appropriate shoes. Lauren designs shoes for all eras, but has several 18th century shoes, though all are heeled and take some breaking in. Most appropriate for our hobby (current as of December 2016): the Kensington (1760-1790) and the Fraser (1700-1760). The Dunmores would work as well but only come in wool and sateen, both of which are not practical for camp life. Be sure to order up a size as the shoes run small.
- **Fugawee** (http://www.fugawee.com/womens_colonial.htm)
The original source of historically appropriate shoes for all eras. They have both flat and heeled colonial shoes for ladies. Sizing runs accurate according to the sources consulted.
- **Burnley and Trowbridge** (<http://www.burnleyandtrowbridge.com/ladiesshoes.aspx>)
B&T offers heeled and flat shoes for women, as well as mules (for undress wear).

- **Fun and Interesting Sites**

Here is a short list of some interesting sites that deal with clothing and/or 18th century life.

- **Colonial Williamsburg** (<http://www.history.org/history/>)
A good jumping off point with information on clothing, food, manners, and everything in between.
- **Guidelines for Campfollowers** (<http://44thregiment.itgo.com/cfguidelines.html>)
A British unit lists some guidelines for being a campfollower.
- **18th Century Material Resource Center**
(<https://www.facebook.com/18thCenturyMaterialCultureResourceCenter>)
If you're on Facebook, this is a great page with lots of information on the 18th century and includes some articles on campfollowing.
- **18th Century Sewing** (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/18thcenturysewing/>)
Another Facebook destination, this is a wonderful group of ladies who focus on 18th century sewing projects. It's a good education as well.
- **18th Century Notebook** (<http://larsdatter.com/18c/index.html>)
A compendium of extant 18th century garments.
- **Historically Speaking** (<http://historicallyspeaking.driftingfocus.com/>)
A progressive reenactor who does many eras. Note I said that she is "progressive", meaning that she mucks in with ultra-accurate units. But she does have an interesting perspective on the hobby that a lot of reenactors don't discuss. She hasn't updated the blog in a while, but there are several good posts on there. The Second South is not a progressive unit, but we can always improve our impressions.
- **Pinterest** (<https://www.pinterest.com/oldhousejunkie/18th-century-inspiration/>)
You can find some really great source material for 18th century women and clothing here. Just keep in mind that not all citations are correct. I have linked you to my personal "18th Century Inspiration" page. It is a blend of high fashion from the period, so I wouldn't bust up in the camp wearing some of the outfits. But you can get an idea for fabric patterns, etc. There are some period drawings/paintings of more humble impressions that are worth perusing as well. I've also uploaded photos from my trip to the Bath Fashion Museum in Bath, England last fall.
- **Before the Automobile** (<http://augustintytar.blogspot.com/p/18th-century.html>)
This woman is based in Finland and sews the most fantastic 18th century clothes. Truly inspiring!