

# Citizens for Independence Guidelines

The Citizens for Independence (CFI) is a family orientated group of Civil War reenactors whose purpose is to present to the public a historically accurate impression of Southern Civilian Life during the time of the War Between the States. The CFI attempts to give a glimpse of everyday life and home-front activities for a typical town during this era.

Presentations to the public on everyday life during the war are made through:

1. Our dress – reproducing historically accurate clothing
2. Our First Person Impressions, the persona we portray at Civil War events
3. Our Surroundings – living in as near to “period correct living quarters” as possible during a reenactment.

The following information has been gleaned from several resources after much research and has been prepared to help the newcomer in getting started with their civilian impression. Good luck and welcome to reenacting with the Citizens for Independence of Bould Springs, Texas!

## **Our Dress – Reproducing Historically Accurate Clothing**

Women’s Clothing had several characteristics in common throughout this period, and these general stylistic details should be present in reproduction clothing. Dresses of the period were styled so that the shoulder seam fell in a diagonal across the back of the dress, and the sleeves were joined to the dress at a point about two inches below the natural shoulder line. The waistline of a dress should be at or slightly above the natural waist, and either a hooped petticoat for a day dress, or a corded petticoat for a work dress supports the skirt. A variety of fabrics were available for dressmaking, but beginning reenactors unfamiliar with fabrics of the period are best advised to begin by using solid color materials until they learn about prints and patterns.

Dresses worn for daywear universally had a high, jewel neckline and full-length sleeves, which came in a variety of shapes. Low-necked dresses were reserved for only the most formal occasions – the 21<sup>st</sup> Century equivalent would be a “white -tie” function. They are inappropriate for wear at most reenactments except at formal dances. Ladies customarily wore a bonnet or some other style of headgear appropriate to their age and their activities.

For a civilian woman’s impression, the basic items you will need are:

Undergarments – chemise, corset, stockings, drawers, and petticoats

- A chemise, one petticoat, and stockings are the most important.
- As soon as possible, you should add the drawers, an under-petticoat or modesty slip, and another petticoat.
- To have a correct impression, you should eventually add a corset.

Dresses

- The most practical for the CFI would be a “work dress”, as we do a lot of group cooking. However, a “day dress” that is not too fancy would work too depending on the type of impression you will be doing.

### Shoes

- Correct reproduction shoes or period-looking boots. The style for the 1860's is a leather shoe with square or round toes, not pointed, and low if any heels.

### Headgear

- Something appropriate to our age and style of dress like a bonnet, hat, or day cap.

### Hair

- One of the more difficult aspects about reenacting for women is the hair. It is hard to get used to parting the hair down the middle and pulling it back, but that is how they did it then and how we have to do it now. If your hair is short, a hairpiece will be necessary. Hairpieces were quite common in the 1860's (referred to as false hair). If your hair is long, it will be much easier for you to style your hair appropriately.

### Men's Clothing

- Men's clothing is less complicated. Men's frock coats were the standard "suit" of the day. Sack coats, which were shorter and less tailored, were slowly beginning to replace frock coats for day wear, but were still considered to be sportswear or work clothes during the Civil War period. Most frock and sack coats were made in sober, dark colors, but waistcoats and trousers could sometimes be checked, plaid, or in some other fancy design. Neckties of various fabrics gradually replaced old-fashioned cravats and stock. They were usually black or dark colored. A gentleman was considered to be undressed without a hat or coat, and so it would be very rare to see men in just their shirtsleeves. The trousers should be without creases front and back. They should extend a couple of inches above the waist, suspended by braces (suspenders) rather than by a belt at the waist.

### Children's Clothing

- Children's clothes closely mimicked the styles worn by their mamas and papas, differing only in length and fabrics. Little girls often wore aprons and pinafores to keep dresses clean. Children under the age of five or six, regardless of sex, wore dresses.

### Note to All Reenactors Whether Male or Female;

1. Ladies – no nail polish (It wasn't around in the 1860's)
2. Piercings – The only body part that was pierced were women's ears and only one set of piercings. Please remove jewelry from other piercings for the events.
3. Wristwatches – Please remove them. Gentlemen and Ladies would use pocket watches.
4. Eyeglasses – You will not be asked to remove your modern glasses at your first event, but you should expect to replace them with either period- style glasses or contacts as soon as possible.
5. No polyester, zippers, or Velcro.

If you are unsure of whether or not an item was used, research is very easy and interesting to do. Also, ask another reenactor. However, do not base your answer on one reenactor's response. There is a lot of bad information being passed on by reenactors with good intentions. We all want to help you get started and sometimes shortcuts are suggested that will cost you later on in your reenacting career. So, try to get as close to correct as possible in the beginning so that you haven't waste money on something that will need to be replaced in a few months. Some good books to read to begin with are *First Impressions: Getting Started in Civilian Reenacting*, *Who Wore What* or a copy of *The Citizens' Companion*.

## **Our First Person Impression – The People We Portray at Events**

It is very important to decide early on what “type” of person you will portray. This helps you in choosing your clothing for yourself. It also adds to the fun of reenacting. The members of the CFI have chosen “first person” names and we try to address each other by these names at events. Your persona is something that will take time to build, but get started thinking in terms of who you want to portray, why you have chosen this character, and what they were doing during the war years. You will, undoubtedly, be asked to tell a spectator about yourself at events. Spectators love to talk to us and that is our purpose for being at reenactments. We educate the public about the Civil War. We need to be accurately informed in what we relay to the public.

## **Our Surroundings – Period Correct Living Quarters**

The CFI portrays the small town of Bould Springs, Texas. Our tents are our homes during an event, as it is not feasible to go into each event and build small houses. We try to set up our homes with living quarters as might have been seen in the town of Bould Springs during the war. As such, we are trying to become less “farb” and more authentic. “Farb” things are items that are not true to the time period. It’s quite tempting to go to a sutler’s tent and begin purchasing everything they have in the way of furniture to outfit our quarters. However, use caution. A lot of what the sutlers sell is stuff that is easy for reenactors to pack, but not necessarily what would have been in homes during the period we are portraying. Most of it is strictly for the military as, during the war, the sutlers followed the military. Again, do your research. There are hundreds of books in the library that have pictures of furniture and furnishings that were prevalent during the 1860’s.

We are also trying to “clean up our act” by not having non-period plastic, pop cans, containers, coolers in the view of the public at any time. Please help us in this respect. All of us like to have our 21st Century beverages during the heat of the day. While you are in your tent, transfer it into a period cup or glass before bringing it out. If we are all diligent about staying “in the period” not only will we impress the public, but also our fellow reenactors.

## **Fire Safety**

Part of our impression requires the use of campfires. We use these fires for cooking and heat. The following guidelines are essential and will not only protect our members, but spectators and event sites.

- Fire pits on sod, are to be cut into the ground so that the sod can be folded back and returned in place with minimal witness marks.
- The area around the pit is to be cleared of materials that could spread the fire from the pit.
- Keep plenty of water handy and have a shovel for throwing dirt on the fire if it gets out of control.
- Stack extra firewood upwind and away from the fire area.
- Keep the campfire small. A good bed of coals or a small fire surrounded by rocks give plenty of heat.
- After lighting the fire, make sure your match is out cold.
- Never leave a campfire unattended. Even a small breeze could quickly cause the fire to spread.
- Do not continue to feed a fire if you do not intend to use it ie Sunday. This will allow all the wood in fire to burn up, leaving little or no wood chunks to be removed.

- When extinguishing the fire, drown the fire with water. Make sure all embers, coals, and sticks are wet. Move rocks, there may be hidden burning embers underneath. Stir the remains, add more water, and stir again. Fold the sod back into place and pat down.
- Feel all materials removed from the fire with your bare hand. Make sure that no roots are burning. Do not bury coals – they can smolder and break out. Any wood that is partially burned is to be first extinguished, and then taken away from the event site for disposal. Extra wood that was not used is to be sacked away from the fire pit area.
- Straw is never to be stacked or piled near a fire pit.

There are some events that we may rope off the pit area for the safety of spectators.

## **Parental/Guardian Responsibilities**

It is every parent's responsibility to supervise their own children at all times unless other arrangements are made with another responsible person in advance. Children cannot be left alone anywhere without proper supervision. Each parent is responsible for their child's actions at all times anywhere within the reenacting site including the restrooms. Parents are responsible for any damages incurred by their children whether to another reenactors property or to the host facility. Children are not to have access to matches, candles, lanterns, or fuel at any time or without parental supervision.

## **History of McLennan County Texas**

People began arriving in what is now McLennan County in the 1830s. The Texas Rangers established a Fort in 1837 but it was abandoned as it was deemed too far away from settlements. People continued to come to the county, and by 1850, the required 100 signatures were available to prepare a petition for the establishment of McLennan County.

The county was established in January of 1850 and quickly established a county government located in the county seat of Waco. The city of Waco is located about an hour south of Dallas, its most important crop was cotton, and cattle were its most profitable livestock.

When the county was organized, there were 4 settlements: the community of Waco; Earth, eight miles northwest of Waco; Bold Springs, east of the Brazos River and about 14 miles north of Waco; and White Rock, about 10 miles north of Waco near the present community of Ross.

The development of the community of West began with the establishment of a settlement at Bold Springs (the original spelling was Bould Springs as evidenced by 1856 and 1870 postmarks), a small flowing spring located on with is now the Clyde Bennett farm at the northeast corner of the intersection of Interstate Hwy 35 and SFR 1895, adjacent to the city limits of West.

Sometime prior to the establishment of a stagecoach route from Dallas to Waco village in 1852, an early settler named Carey Boulds, probably a "squatter", built a small cabin on the hill about 100 yards from the spring which bears his name. The cabin was a single room structure of logs and chinking, with a stick and mud chimney. It was about 18 X 24 feet. This was one of the first cabins in northeastern McLennan County.

As the Civil War began, many of the male residents left their homes to join the ranks of the Confederate Army. These and many other able bodied men who had settled in northeastern McLennan County had worked hard to turn the land from a wilderness into a rural farming community. The population of the Bold Springs area had increased from a few Indian inhabitants to over 300 industrious Anglo-American residents.

