

## A Veteran Comments on Reenacting

*"Who knows but it may be given to us, after this life, to meet again in the old quarters, to play chess and draughts, to get up soon to answer the morning roll call, to fall in at the tap of the drum for drill and dress parade, and again to hastily don our war gear while the monotonous patterns of the long roll summons to battle? Who knows but again the old flags, ragged and torn, snapping in the wind, may face each other and flutter, pursuing and pursued, while the cries of victory fill a summer day? And after the battle, the wounded and slain will arise and all will meet together under the two flags, all sound and well and there will be talking and laughter; and cheers, and all will say, "Did it not seem real? Was it not as in the old days?"*

Pvt. Berry Benson, 1<sup>st</sup> South Carolina Rifles Regiment; *Berry Benson's Reminiscences of the Civil War*, S.W. Benson, editor, 1962.

## Civil War Reenacting Has a History of Its Own

During the war, "sham battles," in which blanks were used, were conducted by Confederate and Union troops for training purposes at the winter camps. Near the end of the nineteenth century, old veterans in civilian attire got together at reunions, and retraced their steps, over the same ground they had fought across as young men. Beginning in the early twentieth and continuing into the 1930's, the U.S. army "fought" U.S. Marines in war games held on Civil War battlefields using contemporary weapons, and loosely following the movements of the original armies.

In the mid-1950's, the eve of the Civil War centennial years, black powder marksmen formed the North-South Skirmish Association to hold target shoots using original weapons, while dressed in makeshift "uniforms" of Civil war soldiers. From this hobby came men, who wanted to experience more of the lifestyles of the soldiers of the 1860's. They began to research the proper dress, drill, camp life, etc. to become "living historians" for their own enjoyment as well as for the education of the American public, who have always been fascinated with the War Between the States.

In the 1960's, the National Park service began "living history" programs to better interpret historic sites to the public, including Civil War battlefields. This resulted in more professional research being conducted on the many facets of a Civil War soldier's life, which in turn increased interest among reenactors.

The late 1970's saw a steady increase in the number of Civil War reenactors, who were interested in living history as well as in focusing public attention on preservation of our heritage and historic sites. The hobby really became popular in the 1980's with the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary reenactments. These events attracted thousands of reenactors, which drew tremendous publicity and enabled further evolution of the hobby. Now battalion sized and even brigade-sized organizations took the field instead of the company sized units, which were all that was possible in the early years.

The 1990's saw the results of more extensive research, and organization with reenactments providing unprecedented living history experiences as well as raising large sums of money for historic preservation. This continues into the new century.

## Reenacting the 33rd Alabama

The 33rd Alabama Volunteer Infantry Regiment is an organization of "living historians", who create authentic impressions of soldiers of the War Between the States. Our organization professes no political or social ideals other than those expressed in the United States Constitution. We are a non-profit organization that exists for the enjoyment of our members, the education of the public, and the preservation of our heritage.

Joining our ranks will enable you to feel the excitement of the charge; smell the smoke of battle; enjoy the camaraderie of camp life; drill in the same maneuvers; march in the same formations used by our ancestors. In other words, actually do the things you've only read about before.

You will meet people from all walks of life and every part of the country who share common interests in history. You will discover a sense of pride when you walk over an original battlefield in the uniform of a soldier who fought and even died there; when you fire a salute over the grave of a veteran or at the site of a monument; when you see the expression on the face of a youngster you have educated by your knowledge and historical impression.

## Two Impressions

We portray the 33rd Alabama (C.S.A.) and the 6th Indiana (U.S.A.) infantry regiments. We do this because 2/3's of the Civil War reenactment community prefers to portray Confederate soldiers. Therefore, in order to stage reenactments with realistic battle ratios (generally 2:1 Northern majorities), reenactors have to be able to "galvanize" (a period term meaning joining, or in our case portraying the other side). This unfortunate necessity has actually helped the hobby because it gives the reenactors a broader perspective of the war and it lets the public know that we are primarily concerned with historical accuracy rather than becoming a part of any "radical fringe element."

## What happens when you join?

Upon payment of your annual dues of \$25 you are placed on the unit muster roll with the rank of "Private". You now have the right to vote on all unit business (We hold our annual unit business meeting and officer/NCO elections every January) such as the events we wish to attend each year; which side we will portray at the events; authorization to buy equipment for the unit; etc. You also vote in the annual unit elections. The only requirements to be eligible for election to a unit position are to be a member in good standing; to have participated as a Private for one year; and to possess the required knowledge for the position sought after (see Unit By-Laws, #7).

You are not required to purchase all your gear at once. You are highly encouraged however, to become fully equipped as soon as possible. You can participate without a musket (the single-most expensive item) but all who do so quickly realize that it's much more fun to be a "shooter". Your initial investment is expensive (hand-made items made to period specifications aren't cheap), but most of your gear will last for years and years. In fact, as your gear begins to show a little wear, you begin to take on the look of a veteran. In a manner of speaking, the worse you look, the better you look!

The unit generally participates in eight to ten reenactments per year plus living histories and memorials. We usually don't take the field in the summer months (too hot) or the winter months (too cold and wet) but there are occasional exceptions. For instance, we sometimes participate in living histories (different from reenactments in that there are no battles) at historic sites, usually National Battlefield Parks such as Shiloh; Murfreesboro; Chickamauga; Kennesaw Mountain; Andersonville; etc. The Park Service prefers to host these events in the summertime, when the most tourists visit the sites. We will hold wintertime "Camp of Instruction" to go over drill and other living history skills that we don't have much time for at the busy reenactments.

Most members prefer to ride together to and from events to split the gas; chew the fat; visit historic sites in the area before arriving at the event site; and in general make the trip seem to go by faster. Where possible, we will "caravan" to events.

### Reality Check:

Civil War reenacting does not mean Marine Corps boot camp! However, we are portraying soldiers, so you can expect to be given orders by commissioned and non-commissioned officers when in the field. You will never be given any order that is personally demeaning or not in compliance with the Military Code of Conduct (besides, in a hobby, no one can force you to do anything anyway, but your cooperation is expected, and appreciated). You may have to stand short periods of guard duty; go on firewood-gathering details or canteen-filling details; or some other fatigue duty that is necessary at a particular site. In the field you are encouraged to limit "contemporary conversation" to an essential minimum to help emphasize the atmosphere of the period. This doesn't mean "acting"; it just means maintaining a period attitude that helps to enhance everyone's experience.

Civil War reenacting does not mean survival camp! You are welcome to eat cornmeal and blue beef and drink acorn coffee if you want to, but that is up to you. What you eat or drink in period containers is strictly your call. However, visible modern food and/or drink containers will not be tolerated. A cooler for perishable items that is hidden in a tent under a period blanket is fine. In cold weather, a sleeping bag that is hidden under a period blanket is fine. We want to encourage you to experience as much of the soldiers' lives as you want to, but we also realize that we all have to go back to work on Monday! Therefore, we have no problem with such anachronisms that don't call attention to themselves. On the other hand, things that do call attention to themselves such as

flashlights, Coleman lanterns or stoves, modern eyeglasses, modern shoes, wristwatches, etc, **will not be tolerated**.

### **Drill**

Civil War reenacting is not an Olympic event! However, we believe in participating in reenactments. **We don't go to an event to lie around all day.** We can stay home and do that (especially if our wives are not at home!). We believe in drill. There are a lot of issues about the period that can be debated, but drill is not one of them. The soldiers drilled regularly and often. Plus, we are using exact copies of the very same drill manuals that they used, so our replication in this respect is exact! Drilling also makes us a more efficient fighting force as well as increasing the safety factor necessary for large numbers of men using black powder, muzzle-loading weapons in close order formations. When in formation, we will march from one point to another just as they did. At reenactments however, the drills rarely last over one hour at a time (and usually only one per weekend), and the marches are rarely further than a mile, if that far. So it is not necessary to be an athlete to participate. However, the better physical shape you are in, the more you will enjoy reenacting, or anything else for that matter.

## FAQ

*How much does reenacting cost?*

We don't want to discourage anyone, but the initial cost of obtaining uniform, equipment and weapon can run over \$1000. We give our new recruits an 8-month period to be fully accoutremented so you don't have to purchase everything at once. Remember that I said initial cost? Once you have purchased "the basics", you only have to buy the food you eat and pay for the gas that it takes you to get to a reenactment. From time-to-time, used uniforms and accoutrements are available from individuals in the 33rd. Keep your eyes open for deals!

*I don't have enough money to purchase everything. Can I borrow some items I don't have?*

Yes. Many of our veterans have extra equipment that they are more than happy for you to borrow. Arrangements can be made through our unit commander to borrow what you need until you can purchase the item.

*Can I take reenacting for a "test drive"?*

Yes. The 33rd Alabama will let you borrow everything you need to reenact one weekend as a trial weekend. If you like it, you can then join up.

### *Where do we sleep at reenactments?*

Nearly all of the events we attend are semi-permanent camps, meaning we sleep in shelter (dog) tents or A-frame tents. We realize that we have to get up and go to work on Monday, so cots, sleeping bags, and air mattresses are welcome, **as long as they are kept out of site**. Occasionally we will attend a campaign style event when the situation arises. The big difference between the two is that a campaign style event means that you carry everything around with you (no big tents, cots, etc.). There is also a modern camping area for modern tents, RVs, etc. Some reenactments also have a civilian camp.

### *But I don't own a tent.*

The 33rd Alabama has a few shelter tents that we will loan out. Also, many members have their own tents that they have purchased. You can always ask them if you can stay with them in their tent.

### *What's an anachronism?*

For reenacting, an anachronism is anything that doesn't belong in the 1861-65 time period. Examples would be wristwatches, radios, coolers, cigarettes, and modern eyeglasses. If you do bring an anachronism to a reenactment, we ask that you keep it out of sight!

### *What do we eat at reenactments?*

Some units eat in a company mess where everyone brings food and contributes to the meals. The 33rd allows individuals to decide for themselves what they are going to eat. You are responsible for providing and cooking your own food. Some events have sutlers that will sell you a meal, if you so desire. If you can't remove your choice of foods from their modern packaging, we ask that you keep them hidden (in tent, in box, under blanket, etc).

### *What's a sutler?*

A sutler is a merchant that sells authentic or non-authentic merchandise at a reenactment. No reenacting experience is complete without a trip (or several) to the sutlers. You may also buy the items you need for your impression at a sutler. It is a good idea for new recruits to take a veteran with them to help them pick out which merchandise is good and which isn't.

*Someone called me a "fresh fish." What's that?*

A new recruit (that's a period term, by the way)

## Uniform Recommendations:

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Alabama and the 6<sup>th</sup> Indiana served in the western theater of operations during the war. We chose to portray these two regiments not only because they were good outfits but also because they were western outfits. Historically, two thirds of the infantry regiments from Alabama served in the western theater, while only one third were sent to Virginia. Geographically, most of the reenactments we attend take place in Alabama and the surrounding states (part of the original western theater of operations), so our choice was only natural.

These two outfits were very typical of the armies they were part of. Accordingly, our impression is generic rather than specific in order to be representative of the western soldiers, who were present during the campaigns we reenact. In so doing we are less likely to mislead the public with an impression that may only apply to certain conditions or circumstances. For example, the 21<sup>st</sup> Alabama Regiment fought in the battle of Shiloh, but then spent most of the rest of the war in the forts protecting Mobile Bay. Because of their special circumstances, their uniforms, arms, and equipment would probably not be representative of the regiments in the Army of Tennessee.

Our uniforms and equipment are representative of the western soldiers during the period between the fall of 1862 and the spring of 1865. This is due to the fact that the biggest variations in uniforms and equipment were seen during the first year of the war (especially in the Confederate army). Uniform variation continued but to a much lesser degree during the rest of the war, which was when the major fighting (and therefore the vast majority of reenactments) took place anyway.

In the past, choosing the proper Confederate uniform has not been an easy task due to the scarcity of research in that area. Everyone has always wanted to know who led the charge, but few cared to find out what kind of material or pattern of clothing was worn by the men, who made the first charge, or any details about the equipment they carried, or what kind of tent they slept in the night before the charge, or if they even had a tent to sleep in, etc. Much has been learned in the past few years however, due in large part to the research initiated and/or carried out by reenactors as well as professionals, who believed that attention to detail is crucial to the proper interpretation of history.

### Confederate "Standardization":

We know that the Confederate States Quartermaster Department was able to supply its soldiers a great deal better than was previously believed. However, due to the nineteenth century fledgling Southern textile industry, different clothing depots issue different patterns of uniforms. Furthermore, the mills used different shades of dyes from time to time, some of which faded faster than others did. This meant that variations in central government issue uniforms were common.

Adding to the variation was the fact that the supply was never able to meet the demand. Therefore, when government clothing and equipment was received in the field, it was issued to the men, who needed it most. This meant that there would be differences between those wearing newly issued uniforms or parts of uniforms as opposed to those, who were still wearing the older clothing and equipment.

Shortages also meant that the Southern soldiers' clothing was supplemented a great deal by the folks back home, and to a lesser extent by official state issue. This caused more uniform variation because of the differences in the uniform patterns used by the Confederate States Central Government; the folks back home, and the states. Therefore, one could summarize by saying that the Confederate soldiers were *well uniformed but not uniform*.

What all this means to you as a reenactor is that as soon as you can, you should purchase some Confederate-issue clothing and accoutrements and/or some civilian made clothing to more closely resemble the typical soldier of the Army of Tennessee.

### Caveat Emptor:

There are many contemporary "sutlers", which produce authentic Civil war uniforms and equipment. Unfortunately, there are many other sutlers, who will sell items, which are partially or totally incorrect, due partly to lack of research, and partly because as long as reenactors (who have not done their research either) will buy what sutlers are selling, they will continue to sell it! Another factor to keep in mind is that "cheaper" is usually not "better" when procuring a historical impression. Finding a bargain is great, but not at the expense of authenticity. We encourage recruits to not buy anything until they have had an opportunity to research the proper uniform items and equipment. There is almost nothing worse in reenacting than to have spent a good deal of money on a piece of equipment that is incorrect for our time period or theater of war.

"FARB" or "Farby" (far be it from me to look like that!) is a reenacting term for someone who might be a nice guy, but for whatever reason does not wear authentic gear. Farbs are a detriment to the hobby because they trivialize the nature of living history.

Reenacting is of course a hobby, but unlike most hobbies, this one demands responsibility out of respect for our ancestors and the important legacy they left us as Americans. Being responsible also helps to reveal the truth in what has always been a controversial period in our nation's history.

Most reenactors order the bulk of their basic gear. Some men have been known to purchase their entire uniform in person at a large event. Probably the best thing to do is to order those items that you are sure are correct and get the other items at a reenactment with the help of a "veteran" from the unit.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Alabama has two sets of uniforms and equipment, which we lend to men, who want to join, but are not quite sure if this hobby will be worth the expense it takes to get outfitted properly. If you are really serious, we will outfit you for a reenactment. Be *forewarned* however! It is a rare occurrence for a recruit to fail to join after participating with us in the field. Reenacting is that much fun!

## Recommended Uniforms/Equipment

When considering uniforms you may, as an option, consider purchasing your own pattern and cloth. With a little sweat equity you may reproduce a uniform at a fraction of the retail cost. A word of caution, please do your research beforehand, as a uniform that is constructed incorrectly will be as historically incorrect as the worst "sutlers row" product. A list of pattern and fabric suppliers will be included in the Appendix of this list.

Note: Nineteenth century people did not wear their clothes as we do today. Loose fitting clothes were the style. Also, nineteenth century "standardization" was a far cry from the meaning of the word today. The army generally provided clothing in only four sizes, so the chances of a perfect fit were small. Some companies had a "company tailor," who could make individual alterations for a price. The quality of a company's tailor's work most certainly varied however.

Quality Vendors will be listed below each category. The complete Vendor information list will be listed following the Recommended Uniform and Equipment list.

Shoes – U.S. issue Model 1854 Jefferson bootees, also called "brogans", with pegged soles.

The average sutler row shoe has only superficial resemblance to a Civil War Brogan. These suppliers make high quality reproductions:

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

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

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

Trousers – U.S. issue infantry pattern sky blue kersey (a pronounced diagonal weave) wool trousers. The pattern called for a waist with a high back about 3" higher than the front, as well as other 19<sup>th</sup> century details. Confederate Depot trousers were cut in a more modern fashion than their US counterpart but still retained all the character of 19<sup>th</sup> Century clothes, as did Civilian models. Research shows that Confederates in the field wore civilian trousers in large quantities. Note: Nineteenth century men wore their

trousers at the navel. Suspenders are optional since they were never issued, but were definitely worn by men whose waist did not match one of the four issue sizes. Period photographs do not show many men without their coats on, but of the ones that do about half are not wearing suspenders.

#### US and CS Trousers

CJ Daley Historical Reproductions <http://www.cjdaley.com/>  
Wambaugh, White and Co. <http://www.wwandcompany.com/>  
County Cloth/Charlie Childs <http://www.crchilds.com/>  
N J Sekela <http://www.njsekela.com/>  
Richmond Depot <http://www.kabar44.com/>

**Shirt** – U.S. issue white flannel (wool on a cotton warp) shirt with hand-sewn buttonholes. Buttons should be stamped sheet iron (tin).

CJ Daley <http://www.cjdaley.com/>  
N J Sekela <http://www.njsekela.com/>

Note: At present, very few sutlers sell these shirts and the price is cost prohibitive. While half the Union army probably wore these shirts at any given time, the other half were wearing cotton shirts sent from home. Therefore, you have another option:

**Civilian cotton shirt** in woven (not printed) checked or striped pattern with hand-sewn topstitching and buttonholes. If your shirt has machine-sewn buttonholes, you should redo them by hand, or sweet-talk your wife into doing it. Buttons should be horn, shell, or glass.

CJ Daley <http://www.cjdaley.com/>  
Dirty Billy <http://www.dirtybillyshats.com/index.php>  
Wambaugh, White and Co <http://www.wwandcompany.com/>  
N J Sekela <http://www.njsekela.com/>  
Richmond Depot <http://www.kabar44.com/>

**Hat/Cap** – U.S. issue Model 1858 black "Hardee" hat. Predominant in the western Federal armies, these hats were issued without brass insignia, which the men did not like anyway.

or: Black wool felt civilian hat and/or: U.S. issue Model 1858 forage cap. The crown of the cap falls forward toward the leather bill unlike the kepi, which has a more rigid crown and was not commonly issued to Federal troops.

Note: You have a very important choice to make in selecting your hat/cap. The proper hat or cap is crucial to a good impression of a 19<sup>th</sup> century soldier. A man's hat not only fit his head, but it fit his personality as well. Hats were predominant in the western armies of both sides. However, many caps were issued to western troops, and some men preferred them, especially if they felt it fit their personality.

For your Confederate impression using only recommended gear, either the black civilian hat or Hardee hat will do. **Brass insignia:** Due to the fact that insignia was not commonly used; and the fact that a hat without insignia was easier to reshape to your liking for comfort and looks; and the fact that if you wore it, you had to keep it polished; brass insignia was the exception rather than the rule. It is therefore discouraged.

All of these suppliers below make top quality 19<sup>th</sup> century headwear:

Dirty Billy's Hats <http://www.dirtybillyshats.com/index.php>

Clearwater Hat Co. <http://www.clearwaterhats.com/default.htm>

Greg Starbuck <http://home.earthlink.net/~cwkepi/>

Coat (U.S.) – U.S. Model 1858 fatigue jacket (sack coat). Buttons should be U.S. Model 1854 general service issue eagle (small, with shield instead of branch letter).

Note: Uniform patterns and styles varied between the different Federal Quartermaster Depots, but these differences were slight especially compared to the Confederate Depots.

or: U.S. Model 1851 enlisted man's frock coat (same buttons). Frock coats were not uncommon, but the sack coat was definitely predominant plus a reproduction frock coat generally costs over twice as much as a sack coat.

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

Wambaugh, White & Co. <http://www.wwandcompany.com/>

N J Sekela <http://www.njsekela.com/>

County Cloth/Charlie Childs <http://www.crchilds.com/>

Coat (C.S.) – Shell Jacket – In the first year of the war, many pre-war companies of southern soldiers continued to wear their volunteer militia uniforms, which varied greatly in color, pattern, and style from company to company. The 4<sup>th</sup> Alabama Regiment was more standardized, and fought in the battle of First Manassas wearing their blue AVC frock coats. Many companies formed after the fighting started went to war wearing "over shirts" that were decorated with trim for a "uniform" look.

In August of 1861, Governor A.B. Moore issued a call to the ladies aid societies across the state of Alabama asking them to produce uniforms for the Alabama soldiers. The state sent these aid societies, "...sets of patterns...together with a model suit..." which included shell jackets, trousers, and great coats as examples for them to reproduce. This "commutation" jacket pattern was basic six-piece bodies, two-piece sleeve; stand up collar, seven-button shell jacket, with shoulder epaulets and two belt loops. Photographs

suggest that many commutation jackets were made later without epaulets and/or belt loops.

In March of 1862, while on duty at Pensacola, Florida, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Alabama Regiment received an issue of "gray woolen jeans uniforms". Jeancloth was a very common rough cloth made from a woolen weft on a cotton warp. Jeancloth had been around for years before the war, and was used extensively throughout the war. The jackets that the 33<sup>rd</sup> Alabama received were probably commutation pattern uniforms. There are many photographs of Alabama soldiers wearing commutation uniforms, but it is important to consider that most of these photos were taken in the first year of the war. Alabama soldiers continued to receive state issue uniforms throughout the war, but the numbers were relatively small. This was due in part to the shortage of material, and the success of the Confederate States Quartermaster Department.

By the fall of 1862, the Confederate Quartermaster Depots were able to supply large numbers of uniforms to the troops, which meant that from that time until near the end of the war, the majority of the men would be wearing central government issued clothing. Also, in their wartime letters, most soldiers asked for and/or mentioned receiving clothing made at home, though it was usually shirts, socks, or drawers, and sometimes trousers. The inference is that at any given time of the war, at least some of the men would be wearing parts of if not a complete Confederate commutation uniform, either sent by the state government for distribution to Alabama troops through the Quartermaster Department, or directly to the men by relatives, who often simply sent civilian clothing. During the same period however, the majority of the men would be wearing uniforms issued by the Quartermaster Depots of the central government.

Research shows that from at least as early as September 1862, until near the end of the war, the most common shell jacket worn in the Army of Tennessee was the "Columbus Depot" (contemporary term) jacket. This jacket was made of wooljean material, and dyed varying shades of gray. Confederate textile mills used different shades of vegetable dyes or sometimes no dyes, when they ran short. These dyes easily faded, plus the dust and dirt of field use gave most gray uniforms an oatmeal-brownish (or "butternut") tint after a while anyway. This is something to consider when deciding on the color of your Confederate jacket, since modern synthetic dyes do not fade as easily. The Columbus Depot jacket had a medium blue wool trim on the collar and cuffs. Sometimes, due to shortages of the dye or wool, these jackets would be issued with no trim. At one time, thought to be a different pattern and labeled "Atlanta Depot" jackets. It is another option to consider.

There were two types of Columbus Depot jacket styles: the Type I (contemporary term) had a longer waist than the Type II, which was shorter waisted, and had an outside breast pocket. Check out this link for more information on Columbus Depot Jackets.

*Confederate Depot Jackets-The Material Evidence*

A number of soldiers wore single-breasted frock coats sent from home. These were usually made of wooljean, with no trim. This is yet another option for you, but of course

the number of men wearing frocks would be small plus reproduction frocks are more expensive than shell jackets.

What all this means is that you have a choice in selecting your Confederate coat. Your choices are listed in the order of the most prevalent to least prevalent (mid-late War):

Columbus Depot Shell Jacket (Type I or II)

Confederate Commutation Jacket

Department of Alabama Jacket (slight style variation, probably issued in 1864 or later, with trim on collar only)

Variation of Commutation Jacket (different jeancloth or homespun material, no epaulets or belt loops)

Frock coat

When first putting your kit together, you are not likely to want to buy more than one Confederate coat or jacket before taking care of acquiring other gear, both Confederate and Federal; therefore, you should consider a first choice that provides you with the flexibility to present a proper impression from early to late war in more than one theater and specialize later as budget and closet space allow. The list above sorts from most to least flexible as follows:

Frock Coat (entire war)

Confederate Commutation Jacket (entire war)

Variant of Commutation Jacket (entire war)

Columbus Depot Jacket (fall of 1862 to end of war)

Department of Alabama Jacket (1864 to end of war).

Note: All buttonholes and topstitching should be hand sewn. Buttons should be either brass block I or wooden (late war issue). Buttons were frequently lost in the field, and many museum specimens have U.S. eagle buttons on them. You may want to put some Federal buttons on your jacket as "replacements".

Confederate jacket and frock suppliers:

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

County Cloth/Charlie Childs <http://www.crchilds.com/>

Ben Tart <http://www.bentart.com/>

Socks – Civilian or U.S./C.S. issue wool (winter) or cotton (summer) in white or gray.

Ben Tart-Repro Confederate Army socks <http://www.bentart.com/>

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

Evergreen Acres farm <http://www.hardscrabblefarm.com/80th/reg-socks.htm>

Terre Lawson

Blanket – Gray-brown preferred, but any natural color twill weave wool/jean or tight woven wool blanket(s). U.S. issue blankets were gray-brown with gray-black end stripes,

and usually had "US" applied in the center of the stripe.

Note: Blankets that weigh less than five pounds do not provide much warmth.

County Cloth/Charlie Childs <http://www.crchilds.com/>

Fall Creek (emergency issue blanket **only!**) <http://www.fcsutler.com/>

Haversack – U.S. issue black painted canvas haversack. Haversacks were used to carry food. Regardless of what you are actually carrying in your haversack, the impression should be that it is carrying food.

Note: Soldiers of both sides adjusted the straps of their haversack, canteen, and cartridge box for comfort on the march. They wore them high, so they would not beat their hips and thighs for miles on end. The canteen and haversack were worn over the belt.

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

NJ Sekela <http://www.njsekela.com/>

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

Canteen – U.S. issue Model 1858 "smoothside" canteen with brown or gray wooljean cover. Usually, natural wooljean was used to cover canteens because it was cheaper. The good material was saved to make clothing. Unfortunately, most sutlers sell canteens with blue wool coverings. Blue was used as a canteen cover color, but gray and brown were predominant. If you purchase one of these, you should change your canteen cover as soon as possible.

C&D Jarnagin <http://www.jarnaginco.com/>

Village Tinsmith <http://www.csa-dixie.com/villagetinsmith.htm>

NJ Sekela <http://www.njsekela.com/>

Note: Canteen straps should be cotton, cotton webbing, or leather, sewn together or made with a buckle or button (easier to put on and take off, or a good place to hang a tin cup, if it will not fit inside your haversack).

Tin cup and Tin Plate – Original sizes and shapes varied, but most reproductions are basically alike. You also have the option of obtaining a canteen half, which you can use for cooking and as a plate. Buy from a sutler, who sells lead-free, solder tin ware. If you are allergic to tin, drink out of a period bottle, or a clay, copper, or pewter cup.

Note: Do not purchase enamelware, graniteware, speckle ware, etc.

Knife, Fork, and Spoon – Any one of these items could be considered optional, although most men prefer them to their fingers! Original wooden, bone, or plain metal handled utensils are still commonly found in antique stores, and are usually inexpensive. Also, reproduction combination utensils are available from sutlers.

These items can sometime be found at event sutlers but do your research. Here are some sources for correct reproductions:

Village Tinsmith <http://www.csa-dixie.com/villagetinsmith.htm>

Carl Giordano <http://www.cg-tinsmith.com/>

C & D Jarnagin Co. <http://www.jarnaginco.com/>

**Ground Cloth/Poncho** – This item could be considered optional, but is a very handy piece of equipment to have. U.S. issue "gum blanket" (solid piece of painted or rubberized canvas cloth). The "poncho" was basically a gum blanket with a reinforced slit cut in the middle, but these were generally issued to the cavalry.

C&D Jarnagin <http://www.jarnaginco.com/>

**U.S. Waist Belt** – U.S. issue Model 1856 waist belt with U.S. issue Model 1856 oval "US" belt plate that is stamped sheet brass over lead backing.

**C.S. Waist Belt** – There was enough variation in C.S. belt plates to give you a choice of selection. Those most prevalent in the Army of Tennessee are listed below in the order of most commonly used:

Frame Buckle: cooper (either forked tongue, or "Georgia frame" straight tongue)

Rectangular "C.S.A.": copper or brass, solid cast with the letters slightly of center to the left.

Crimp-cornered "CS": copper, solid cast

Oval "CS": stamped sheet brass (no backing)

Snake Buckle: solid brass, English import

Captured "US" belt plate (see US waist belt)

**Cartridge Box** – U.S. Model 1855 .58 caliber cartridge box and cartridge box belt (with breastplate) this cartridge box could be attached to the belt for extra support, so that the "sling" (contemporary term) was not needed. Most men seemed to prefer the sling due to the weight of a fully loaded cartridge box (live cartridges are much heavier than blanks).

**Cap Pouch** – U.S non-regulation, shield-front cap pouch

or: U.S Model 1850 cap pouch

**Sling** – U.S. issue leather musket sling.

or: Enfield rifle-musket sling, if appropriate

or: no sling

**Knapsack** – U.S. issue Model 1855 double bag knapsack (this was the most commonly issued Federal knapsack, though made by many sources with many minor variations).

or: U.S. issue Mexican War softpack

or: no knapsack (use a blanket roll instead)

Quality Leather goods are very important. The price of these goods may vary with the amount of quality construction. Take into consideration the time frame and order leathers that can span a wider range of time period. Avoid specialty products.

Missouri Boot and Shoe Co.-Leather goods of all types

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

LD Haning & Co.-Knapsacks, leathers and groundcloths <http://ldhaning.com/>

C&D Jarnagin <http://www.jarnaginco.com/>

NJ Sekela <http://www.njsekela.com/>

Dell's Leather Works <http://dellsleatherworks.com/>

Fall Creek (buckles are very good) <http://www.fcsutler.com/>

Bayonet – Appropriate bayonet and one-piece U.S. model 1855 bayonet scabbard for the long arm you have chosen.

Lodgewood –originals <http://lodgewood.com/>

Company Quartermaster <http://members.verizon.net/~vze3jhwa/>

C&D Jarnagin <http://www.jarnaginco.com/>

Fall Creek <http://www.fcsutler.com/>

Long Arm – The 33<sup>rd</sup> Alabama was issued Enfield rifle-muskets and .69 caliber smoothbores. Many men of the 33<sup>rd</sup> were armed with enemy Springfields that they had picked up off the battlefield. The 6<sup>th</sup> Indiana was issued Enfield and Springfield rifle-muskets throughout the war.

Take your choice:

English Model 1853 Enfield rifle-musket (.577 caliber)

U.S. Model 1861 Springfield rifle-musket (.58 Caliber) The .58 caliber U.S. Model 1863 Springfield would be another option, except for the fact that reproductions are rare.

U.S. Model 1842 Springfield smoothbore musket (other .69 caliber smoothbores including "conversion" muskets would be additional options, except that such reproductions are also relatively rare and expensive)

Most reproduction rifles, muskets and bayonets are not exact replicas of originals. You will probably have to purchase your weapons at the best prices and modify it with the help of experienced gunsmiths. These suppliers have experience in these modifications:

Lodgewood Mfg. <http://lodgewood.com/>

John G. Zimmerman <http://www.edsmart.com/jz/>

Fall Creek (not defarbed) <http://www.fcsutler.com/>

Regimental Quartermaster (not defarbed) <https://www.regmqm.com/productindex.htm>

APPENDIX:

## **PATTERNS AND FABRICS**

These sources are for well-researched fabrics and patterns. They may provide you with and alternative to purchasing wholesale. Be sure to do your research before beginning your sewing project, as construction is as important as the fabric itself.

Ben Tart-Great fabrics and finished garments <http://www.bentart.com/>

James Country Mercantile-Homespun patterns, best overall patterns on the market today <http://www.jamescountry.com/>

Past Patterns-Good Federal pants pattern.... but that's all. <http://www.pastpatterns.com/>  
County Cloth/Charles Childs <http://www.crchilds.com/>

Another good place to pick up gear on the web is

The Authentic Campaigner- <http://www.authentic-campaigner.com/>

## **Optional Uniforms and Equipment**

**Shoes** – C.S. issue shoes, English imported shoes, or civilian pattern boots

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

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

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

**Suspenders Civilian** - Neither army ever issued suspenders. They should be cotton webbing, canvas, or ticking. No elastic. They should have buttonholes or leather tips with tin or brass buckles—no nickel-plated metal. Note: A good rule to follow is that if your pants fit without them, you do not need them. Also your first visit to the Port-a-John will encourage you to do away with them if not necessary.

Chris Graham

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

NJ Sekela <http://www.njsekela.com/>

**Shirt** – civilian cotton in woven checked or striped pattern (see Required Items).

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

Dirty Billy <http://www.dirtybillyshats.com/>  
NJ Sekela <http://www.njsekela.com/>

**Haversack** – C.S. issue white cotton duck, unpainted haversack, or: C.S. issue tarred or painted canvas haversack, or: civilian made cloth haversack (Same vendors for US haversack)

**Canteen** – C.S. issue Gardner pattern wooden (cedar) canteen, or: C.S. issue smooth-side, unmarked drum canteen

Village Tinsmith <http://www.csa-dixie.com/villagetinsmith.htm>  
C&D Jarnagin <http://www.jarnaginco.com/>  
C J Daley <http://www.cjdaley.com/>

**Cartridge Box** – C.S. issue cartridge box (black or russet color) from various western depots, cartridge box plates were not common in the Western Theater. (same vendors as US)

**Cap Pouch** – C.S. issue cap pouch (black or russet color) from various western depots (same vendors as US)

**Sling** – C.S. issue canvas sling, or: Enfield sling (on P1853 Enfield), or: no sling

**Knapsack** – the Confederate Ordinance Department stopped issuing knapsacks after 1862 (Same vendors as US)

The following are listed in the order of the most commonly used:

U.S. Model 1855 double bag soft knapsack

Mexican War pattern knapsack

Single bag civilian knapsack

English made knapsack

No knapsack

**Vest** – civilian, sent from home in either military (high collar) or civilian (V-collar) pattern

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

Corner Clothiers <http://www.cornerclothiers.com/>  
NJ Sekela <http://www.njsekela.com/>

Overcoat/Greatcoat – U.S. Model 1855 infantry pattern—single breasted coat with shoulder length cape, or: State of Alabama issued greatcoat patterned after U.S. M1855 in various shades of grey or oatmeal, or: no greatcoat (most common). Note: Federal greatcoats were highly prized, in winter, but were usually discarded soon thereafter because of their weight.

CJ Daley <http://www.cjdaley.com/>  
County Cloth/Charles Childs <http://www.crchilds.com/>  
NJ Sekela <http://www.njsekela.com/>

Personal items – Using “period” items will greatly enhance your impression as well as your personal re-enacting experience. Such items include, but are not limited to a pocket Testament, bristle toothbrush, pocket knife (single-bladed jackknife), wooden comb, “housewife” (sewing kit), wallet, pencil (knife sharpened, round plain surface), mirror, period playing cards, books, etc. Many of these items are readily available from most sutlers.

CJ Daley <http://www.cjdaley.com/>  
NJ Sekela <http://www.njsekela.com/>

## Tentage

U.S. issue shelter tent – commonly referred to as a “dog tent” by veterans, who said it was only big enough to accommodate a dog; the most common Civil war tent. The Confederate army never issued shelter halves, but thousands were captured and used by Southern soldiers. The tent was formed by putting together two shelter halves, each half carried by one man. Although somewhat standardized as 5’6” long and 5’5” wide, due to variable shrinkage, material quality, etc., the actual sizes varied. Many veterans, acclimated to the outdoors, often took their chances with the weather rather than carry the extra weight.

C.S. issue tent fly – In the summer of 1863, Gen. Braxton Bragg ordered six tent flies to be provided for every 100 men in the Army of Tennessee. These flies were carried with the regimental baggage, and, by then, one baggage regiment was assigned to each regiment. The wagons often fell far behind and the men did without.

U.S. issue “common tent” (period) called “A-frames” or “wedge tents” (modern) – the dimensions were 6’10” long x 8’4” wide x 6’10” high. They were used throughout the War but took up a lot of space in the wagons. After the first year of the War, the Union army began to replace them with shelter tents. Thereafter, common tents were used more often in static camps.

The Confederate army issued wall tents and common tents on occasion, but the number was extremely small after the first year of the War. The space in supply wagons was better taken by food, ammunition, medicine, etc.

Note 1: Tentage has been, shall we say, somewhat controversial in re-enacting. Because we re-enact in the warmer months when the armies would be campaigning, tents would be rare. In setting up tentage and static camps we would have to educate the public that this was done mostly in winter. We have decided that the event type will determine the level of tentage. For “campaign events” tentage will be minimal or non-existent. “Campaign-impression” events allow tentage and/or flies but encourage minimal use. Only for “garrison” events is the use of large numbers of tents not discouraged. In Civil War re-enacting, “less is better” for a more accurate impression.

Note 2: Tent ropes should be hemp or manila. Coated ropes and synthetic ropes should not be in evidence. Tent pegs should, ideally, be wooden but given the hardness of the ground at many locations, metal pegs that can be driven deep enough to be essentially invisible, are acceptable. While tent poles most often were scavenged from a nearby woods or, in the case of dog tents were formed by stringing a rope between two rifles bayonet-down into the ground, manufactured poles are an acceptable substitute.