



### **THE LIVING HISTORIAN'S CREED**

By: Bruce Catton

*We are the people to whom the past is forever speaking.  
We listen to it because we cannot help ourselves, for the  
past speaks to us with many voices.*

*Far out of that dark nowhere which is the time before we  
were born, men who were flesh of our flesh and bone of our  
bone went through fire and storm to break a path to the  
future.*

*We are part of the past that brought the future they died  
for. They are part of the past that brought the future.*

*What they did—the lives they lived, the sacrifices they  
made, the stories they told and the songs they sang and,  
finally, the deaths they died—make up a part of our own  
experience.*

*We cannot cut ourselves off from it.*

*It is as real as something that happened last week.*

*It is a basic part of our heritage as Americans.*

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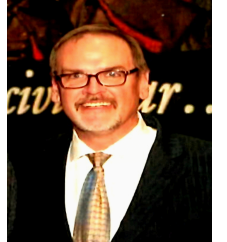
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## **A Newspaper focused on all Living History**

By: Harry Sonntag, Editor-In-Chief

### **Welcome to the Living History Gazette!**



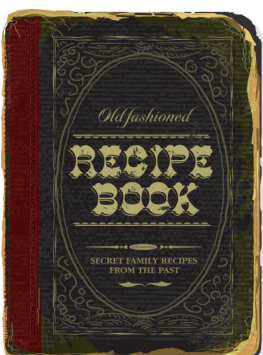
The Living History Gazette has been in the planning stages for well over a year and we believe this new publication will add great value to our hobby and specifically, you our readers. We have identified the growing demand for a forum in which every aspect of the hobby can benefit, and we are eager to leverage our vast experiences to meet these needs.

Our staff has worked tirelessly to ensure that this newspaper is of the highest quality and meets your needs and expectations in every edition. We are determined to provide a quality reading experience to build a long term relationship with our readers and advertisers. We aspire to develop a publication that brings information to living historians across every era of American history. With our team of diverse professionals, we are confident that we will set a new standard of communication and collaboration by offering this publication.

With each volume of the Living History Gazette, readers will find informative content related to our hobby. Since we are not an era-specific publication, content will be compatible with most impressions. We will offer resources from some of the most reputable living historians and makers. You will read informative articles from those who have spent years actively participating in our hobby. Sutlers from many eras will advertise their businesses so that our readers will know exactly what to buy and where to purchase their desired items. This will provide an opportunity to develop the most historically accurate impression possible to honor those whom we attempt to represent in this modern age. We will publish a schedule of living history programs and battle reenactments from the Revolutionary War to the Vietnam War. So, if you know of a quality event, please let us know!

This is an important milestone in the continuing growth of Civil War Historical Impressions, Inc. Although this newspaper does not specifically cover the American Civil War, we want to include every era of our country's history. It's critical that we "Keep Our History Alive."

We are excited to embark on this new venture and hope that you will join us in making the Living History Gazette a successful hobby publication! Thank you for taking the time to read our first edition. I would love the opportunity to work with you to continue the development of this newspaper in a manner that benefits us all.



#### **Ginger Bread**

3 eggs, 1 cup of molasses, 1 cup sugar, 1 cup butter, 3 cups flour, 1 cup milk (sour or sweet), 1 teaspoon of ginger, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and all-spice. Stir hard and bake slowly.

#### **Hard Winter Short Cake**

In the absence of fruit of all kinds, make a short cake and pour over it sweetened cream. In many new farming districts there is no fruit whatever and it requires a great deal of ingenuity to get up desserts.

#### **Snow Ball Cake**

1 cup of sugar, 1 1/2 cups of flower, 1/2 cup butter worked to a cream, whites of 3 eggs well beaten, 1/2 cup of milk, 2 large teaspoons of baking powder and bake

### Did You Know?

You can take out an ad to assist your organization with recruiting? Contact us at [Editor@LHGazette.org](mailto:Editor@LHGazette.org) for details!

## Camping Comfortably in the Cold

By: Franklin Van Valkenburg

I've spent a lot of time outdoors, both in living history and modern camping settings. Figuring out how to "smooth it" is one of the more enjoyable learning curves to spending quality time outdoors. It may be said there's no such thing as bad weather when camping, just bad gear or bad skills. Knowing what to do and having the right equipment may vastly improve your experience in the outdoors. With cooler weather starting to arrive, here are some tips on keeping comfortable and staying warm at events - specifically in a historical setting.

Staying warm is all about staying dry and trapping air around your body that warms up due to your natural body heat. In the modern context, this is how down (aka "puffy") jackets and sleeping bags work. While down insulation isn't a luxury we typically have in the field when interpreting the 19th Century, the concept still applies. This is why having a good 100% wool blanket is critical. The thicker and spongier the blanket, the better - the woven fibers will act similar (though

not to the same level of performance) to down insulation. The rule of thumb is 3.5lbs to 5lbs for a good cold weather blanket. Anything lighter and it's either not thick enough or not big enough to wrap around you. Polyester, in addition to not being period correct, isn't as efficient as 100% wool, which will retain up to 80% of its insulating value even when wet. Leave the cotton coverlets and quilts at home! The next trick is how to use your wool blanket in conjunction with your other gear to make the best of your sleeping arrangements. If you have a second blanket, you may think to layer it over you for extra warmth and that can help in certain cases. However, the weight of the wool over you may reduce the pockets of air around your body, making you colder. A great alternative is to use a second ground cloth, which traps heat since it doesn't breathe like wool does. The added bonus is that doing so also better protects you from wind and moisture.

However, if you only have one rubber blanket, make sure you're doing something



to address the ground under you. Keeping a moisture barrier between you and the ground is critically important. Furthermore, how you interact with the ground will determine how long and cold of a night it is. The Earth's mass is immensely more than your own, so any natural body heat you develop will get sucked right out of you and into the ground unless you address it. Piling up dry leaves (almost a foot thick so it still works when you lay on and compress it) is a great method. Without leaf litter, straw or dried grass works well too. If you don't have any of that available and you happen to have that second blanket, folding it lengthwise and laying it under you will both

*Continued on page 3*



*May our praises to our LORD bring glory to HIS name and honor to our ancestors . In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Throughout our history, there have been those who are the guardians of the word of God in order to bring them to those who do battles in His name. Most commonly known as Chaplains or Padres in our country, these Priests, Pastors, and Ministers willingly share the dangers, trails, heartbreak, and often the final sacrifice of the American soldier, sailor, airman, or guardsman. Their role is often overlooked in history, but their role has been

pivotal in the glorious pagent that tells the past of our great nation.

As a clergyman and living historian, I am often struck how many of our friends have trouble answering why we "bring history alive." The answer to "why" is legion, but I would like to add one more.

We all know the historical fabric of the United States, nay the western world, is under threat. Is it a coincidence that both our Lord's honor and our country's past are under threat? The role that we play as historians has become vital in the defense of both. We are now crusaders on the front line, serving a cause that our ancestors could hardly imagine. We can and will win this fight... it has already started. Whether a single historian at a small town fair or standing on the firing line at a large event, remember what we are now very much defending ; One nation, under God.

Fr. David Coe, OSJ Ret.



By: Ashley Sonntag-Bottomley

**Welcome to the first edition of the Curator's Corner!**

In this column you will find tips, tricks, and archival resources for the everyday collector and the professional alike. To jump right in, as a museum professional and living historian myself, many of my friends and people I know accumulate vintage and antique pieces through intentional and unintentional collecting. Unintentional collecting occurs when we are gifted items by family, friends, and members of the public who know we would appreciate the historic value of an item. Intentional collecting occurs when we

*Continued on page 6*

**DID YOU KNOW?**

*Every historic site has a tremendous need for volunteers. If you have a site near your home, contact that site and volunteer. Even the simplest of skills make a difference.*

**The Importance of Living History and the Educational Significance for Children.**

By David Walker

As a living historian and a retired educator with almost 40 years of teaching, I believe living history is an especially important aspect of teaching history outside the classroom. With the emphasis on STEM, which stands for science, technology, engineering, and math, schools have been teaching less and less history, geography, and government in the classroom. Policy makers dictate curriculum and what subjects will be tested for the states. Not all states follow the same pattern. Each state can vary what grade level each subject is taught. A lot of states do not teach handwriting anymore. Most students have a laptop that they carry with them from third through high school. If the state does not decide to test state or American history at various levels, most schools will not emphasize teaching that subject. In Ohio, American History is taught at the eighth and ninth grade levels. It is divided between explorers to the Civil War at the eighth grade, and Reconstruction to modern times for the ninth graders. The ninth graders are tested, but the eighth grade is not. This completely differs from the way I was taught. The stories in the reading books were American history stories based on individuals such as Abraham Lincoln or George Washington. In modern times, new textbooks hardly exist. Teachers are required to teach to the standards using any material they can, including outdated textbooks.

Each year, I see more students home schooled. Many historical events have a school day on the Friday before the weekend event. They get to see a hands-on demonstration by soldiers, civilians, and tradesmen that teach and explain the times in which they reenact. There are other living historians who portray notable characters such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson from the Colonial period, and Abraham Lincoln, Jefferson Davis, General Robert E Lee, and General Ulysses Grant from the Civil War. History includes Abigail Adams, Clara Barton, and Harriet Tubman. These men and women bring their words and ideas to the forefront.

There are people who reenact from Ancient Roman times up to the Vietnam War.

Many students see history as memorizing a bunch of dates and do not see the importance of what is being taught. With living history, a reenactor portrays history you cannot learn from a book. Students get a chance to understand daily life with the living historian who is wearing authentic clothing of the period and showing the tools used in bygone eras. This helps the student realize history can be more relatable and engaging than learning by traditional methods. When I walked Pickett's Charge in the tall grass, crossing a fence in the intense heat, I realized what those soldiers had to deal with, and I did not have the burden of wearing a wool uniform, nor the weight of an ammo pouch, haversack, or rifle. Also, I did not have anyone firing a rifle at me. One of my favorite places to visit is Colonial Williamsburg where I see people reacting with the public and never going out of first person. There are people who do their best to trick a living historian to talk in the third person, but someone like Bill Barker who portrays Thomas Jefferson, formally

from Colonial Williamsburg, now Thomas Jefferson's home at Monticello, is a seasoned veteran who will stay in character. Barker has been interpreting Jefferson for over 31 years and has even authored a book describing his life interpreting Thomas Jefferson. He knows Jefferson so well that when I asked him to describe his relationship with Alexander Hamilton, he took over twenty minutes to answer. He was the person who inspired me to be the best living historian regardless of portrayal choice. Authenticity with clothing, reading countless primary sources, being able to talk candidly in front to the public and striving for excellence is a goal every living historian should have. Meeting Thomas Jefferson at Monticello or George Washington at Mt. Vernon was a chapter out of a book that was brought to life and the presentations amazed me. I see living history extremely important for people of all ages.

My own history is vastly different from my ancestors, but remarkably similar with our goals and values. Looking back as an educator, many of my students told me their best memories were attending History Day.



*Cont. - Camping Comfortably in the Cold*

offer some insulation and cushioning against the cold, hard ground.

Sleeping flat on your back means more surface area in contact with that cold, hard ground if you haven't properly prepared enough insulation underneath you. Sleeping on your side will reduce that contact and keep more of your body heat where you want it. Just be mindful that turning on your side doesn't further expose you to wind or rain.

If you have enough of a thermal cushion under you, sleeping flat on your back will more quickly build up heat and maintain it. Moving will dissipate that heat and cool you off.

The next is how you dress for bed. This is variable depending on how you sleep (hot or cold), but you need to figure out what base layer best suits you. If you can lose your frock/jacket and pants, that can act as a layer under you or a pillow.

Additionally, you must address your extremities! Changing into dry wool socks before bed will make a huge difference. If they're a bit roomy, that's a plus since it gives your toes that dead space of air to warm up. Sleeping with your shoes on will compress your socks and negate the benefit of that dead space you can wiggle and warm up your toes in.

Gloves, mittens (better than gloves - air pocket around your fingers), or another pair

*Continued on page 4*

***Lyme Disease: A Re-enactor's Nightmare***

by: Sue Huesken

All living historians need to be aware of Lyme Disease and other tick-born illnesses. The ticks that spread Lyme are usually very small and easily missed. Re-enactors are susceptible to tick bites, as they are out in wooded areas and open fields where ticks reside. Most ticks are not infected, so a bite does not mean illness unless it has the bacteria in it.

Most doctors do not understand this disease and the medical community as a whole has a lot to learn. There is too much reliance on flawed lab tests. I have heard three doctors lecture on Lyme and claim 98% are cured with 20-30 days of antibiotics. For the thousands of us who continue to be ill, we say, "Wake up, Doc!" The insurance companies are listening to the doctors who claim quick cures and are refusing to pay for long term treatment. Many of the better Lyme-knowledgeable doctors are being persecuted and ostracized because they are deviating from "standard medical practice." They are only trying to help their ill patients. For those people who have been diagnosed and "cured" with short term antibiotics, WATCH FOR SYMPTOMS. They may take a year or two or longer to return. Don't

let any doctor tell you to ignore them. We put my husband, Ted, back in treatment after realizing his problems were not only stress and carpal tunnel.

Many people know to look for a rash as a sign of Lyme Disease, however not everyone gets one. Some people have flu-like symptoms with high fever, others are not symptomatic. See the accompanying symptom list if unexplainable medical problems have been happening to family members or friends. Lyme is very unpredictable. Problems vary from person to person, which is one of the reasons why the medical world is so confused over Lyme. Please share the accompanying symptom and prevention lists with friends and fellow re-enactors.

***Lyme Disease Prevention***

Protecting yourself from any disease is always the best prevention. The bacteria that causes Lyme Disease is usually spread by deer ticks in either wooded areas or open fields. Long sleeves and long stockings and shoes keep arms and legs from being exposed to the ticks. Think twice about the authenticity of bare feet.

Repellents effective against ticks are also a good idea. Use products containing 20-30% diethyltoluamide (DEET). Some types are for skin use, but others should only be applied to clothing. Do not saturate as

adverse reactions can occur. Check body and clothing for ticks and small black "spots." Ticks on clothing may not be killed by washing, but a half hour in a hot drier will usually destroy them. Inspect blankets or sleeping bags before climbing in. Ticks need to feed to inject bacteria into a person's blood. Remove any found on the body quickly and completely. Use tweezers and pull the tick straight out. Do not twist. Be careful not to squeeze, or it will regurgitate bacteria into the wound. Thoroughly wash hands and bite area. If you do get bit, DO NOT PANIC! Most ticks are not infected. Just watch for symptoms. The most common early ones are the EM (or Bull's Eye) rash and/or flu-like fever. If symptoms occur, see a doctor immediately.




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***Continued from page 3***

of socks on your hands can actually be very nice long before you'd think to wear them. Instead of jamming your fingers under your armpits or between your thighs, you'll be able to sleep in a more relaxed posture.

Don't forget to wear a sleeping cap either, as most of your body heat escapes through your head. If your sleeping cap is a bit roomy, you can pull it down over your eyes to block out light and keep the creepy crawlies from skittering over your face.

Before you go to bed, eat or drink something warm to help bolster your core temperature. Warm up water and pour it into your canteen (don't put your canteen in the fire) to stick down by your feet. It'll start the night off well!

When you wake up and have to pee - just get up and do it. Being half-awake and wrestling over whether you can hold it keeps you from sleeping. Your body actually expends energy keeping your bladder and its

contents warm, so getting up and emptying your bladder frees that energy up to keep the rest of your body warm. Getting up also affords you an opportunity to move around, get your blood flowing, and warm your feet back up if you're feeling a bit cold. Maybe you can put some more warm water in that canteen or drink another cup of something hot before tucking back in.

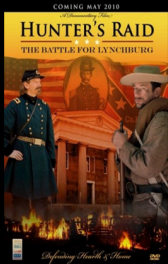
Don't forget your fire! Keeping firewood collected nearby will make it easy to wake up, add another log, and turn back over. Having a fire will make it drastically easier to stay warm. If you're with a group, split the night between all of you and take turns staying up by the fire to keep it going.

This is a touchy subject, but in the context of soldiers in the field during the 19th Century: they spooned. Without modern heating, you had to rely on drapes over windows, a wood stove or fireplace if your room had one, blankets, mattresses, and

sharing your bed to keep warm. It wasn't uncommon to rent a room at a hotel and share your room (and bed). People back then didn't have the same concept of every individual having their own bed. Remember my comments above about spare/second blankets and ground cloths? They may not be yours, but one you're sharing with someone else. Sharing ground cloths, blankets (and body heat) will turn your individual experience into a safer full night's sleep. If spooning one way still bothers you or you need to roll over, going back-to-back offers a lot of surface contact right where your major blood vessels are.

Hopefully this helps you at your next cold weather event! In the meantime, I encourage you to try some of this out in your backyard. If things don't work out quite right, you can still safely "bail out" to your home. Figure it out there before you're at an event so you don't have to bail on your pards.

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## 80th Anniversary of D-Day Commemoration, Conneaut, Ohio

By: Scot Buffington

On August 17-19 this year, the small town of Conneaut, Ohio commemorated the 80th anniversary of D-Day.

“Why in August?” some may ask. The beach landings take place on Lake Erie. In early June, the lake is extremely volatile. In addition, most schools are still in session.

This year also marked the 25th year of hosting the event. The staff and volunteers of D-Day Ohio, Inc. host 1,800 reenactors and over 40,000 visitors each year. Making this the largest such event in the world.

The reason this event site was chosen is because the beach is nearly a clone to the topography of Omaha Beach.

The event featured seven fully operational

tanks, eight amphibious landing craft, and 600 allied infantrymen. Adding to this were 250 Axis reenactors, Free French troops, and countless other reenactors.

Offsite parachute drops featured the WWII Airborne Demonstration Team.

This event is totally free for both the reenactors and the public.

All funds are raised throughout the year by donations, advertising, and merchandise sales.

For more information please visit

<https://www.ddayohio.us/>.



*Continued from page 2*

seek out specific items due to their relevance to our personal interests. Often times living historians, myself included, collect antique pieces from the eras we are passionate about. We do this for many different reasons, including but not limited to studying them, accurately reproducing them, completing a collection, or simply to act as the caretaker of the moment to preserve them for the benefit of future generations. This collecting, both intentional and unintentional, leaves us with a need for storage and handling solutions that will protect and preserve these pieces while they are in our care. Not only am I a professional in historic preservation and a person with a private collection, but I have also been affectionately dubbed the “Keeper of the Family Junk,” as my aunt likes to describe it. By her definition, this person, herself included, becomes the designated person who collects, labels, and stores all the family keepsakes, mementoes, and important documents. In some cases, items are passed on to other members of the family, but in most cases, the keeper becomes

the last stop for their family history before the next generations express little to no interest in continuing the tradition. At this point, the Keeper often contacts historical societies and institutions to potentially donate their family collections to preserve their stories. All historic sites and archives experience the widespread interest in the donation of large family collections that contain materials that span generations. Local historical societies in particular struggle with limited resources and funding to store or maintain these extensive collections, forcing the Keeper to maintain an archive in their home until a new Keeper can be identified in the family. Over my years working in archives at multiple historic sites and accepting artifact donations from the public, I have seen many different creative storage methods by private citizens for artifacts of different material and chemical compositions. We would never know what may walk through the front door on a given day. Items could date back mere decades or reach back hundreds of years. Over an item’s lifetime, well-intentioned people

with no conservation knowledge simply due to a lack of resources available, often attempt to repair or restore items with everyday materials that include harsh glues, tape, lamination, or inks/paints. Materials like these are often incredibly acidic, irreversible, and lead to the deterioration of any natural fibers they come into contact with. Unfortunately, information about artifact care is not common knowledge. Only awareness can help individuals make educated decisions to prevent the further deterioration of historic materials. It is in part this need for private citizens to have awareness of available resources that cannot be found in big box stores for the care of family and personal collections that inspires me to write this column today.

For our first edition, I would like to introduce you to three companies with easily navigable websites for all sorts of archival storage, handling, and conservation materials:

Gaylord Archival (<https://www.gaylord.com/>),  
TALAS (<https://www.talasonline.com/>),  
and Hollinger Metal Edge *Continued on Page 10*



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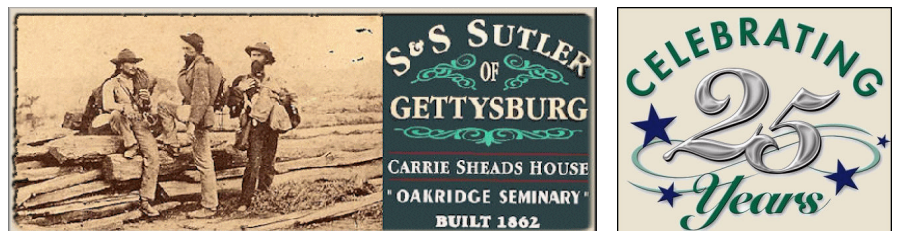
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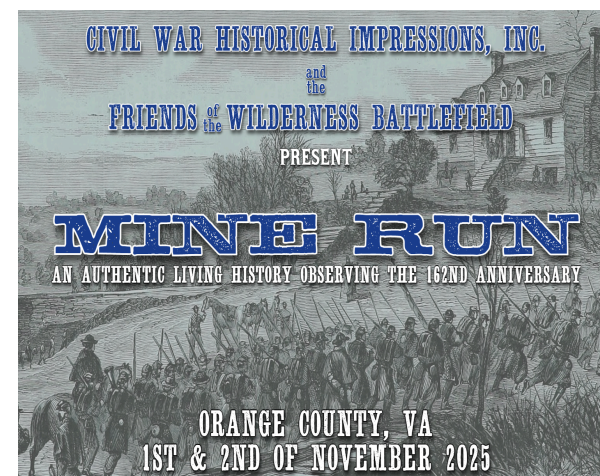
2025 marks the start of the 250th Anniversary of the Revolutionary War. Watch the schedule for updated events!

**Spotlight**

In each future issue, We will Highlight a Authentic Reenactor-Living Historian

## 2025 EVENT SCHEDULE

MONTH	DATES	EVENT	LOCATION	ERA
January	4	Awaiting the Traitor	Richmond, VA	Rev War
	24-26	Defense of the Ancient City	St. Augustine, FL	Civil War
February				
March	15-17	160th Bentonville	Bentonville, NC	Civil War
	15-17	Military Through the Ages	Williamsburg, VA	All
April	19	250th Battle Road	Concord, MA	Rev War
	4	Seige of Fort Blakeley	Mobile, AL	Civil War
May	3	Rev War Weekend	Mount Vernon	Rev War
	17-18	Fort Macon	Atlantic Beach, NC	Civil War
June	6	Mid-Atlantic Air Museum	Reading, PA	WWII
July				
August	9	Cedar Mountain	Culpepper, VA	Civil War
	27-29	D-Day	Conneaut, OH	WWII
September	20-21	Eisenhower Farm	Gettysburg, PA	WWII
October				
November	1	Mine Run	Spotsylvania, VA	Civil War
	22-23	Remembrance Day Parade	Gettysburg, PA	Civil War
December				

**Lighting the in the 18th Century**

Without modern electric street and home lighting, the eighteenth century was a very dark place once the sun went down. But the people found ways to cope with the darkness using both natural and man-made light. Sometimes the light of the moon or even the stars would provide just enough light to navigate outside. The full moon gave off enough light to create shadows. A full moon rises at dusk and sets at dawn. Unlike most lunar phases, its glow lasts the entire night. But even without a full moon there still was some moonlight. On a cloudy night people had to resort to man-made light. Man-made lighting in the 18th century included candlewood/fatwood, rush lights, oil lamps and candles.

To save on resources these types of artificial lighting were only used once it got dark. Here are some more details on the various types of man-made light in the 18th century. **Kitchen Fire** - In a room with a brightly burning fire, people could see to eat, wash, spin, iron clothes or accomplish any of a hundred other simple tasks. On a “bright moonshine evening,” especially when the ground was covered with snow, it might be light enough to read inside the house. Usually no more than a single candle was used for those who needed additional light.

**Candlewood/Fatwood** – Splinters of pine with high resin content that burned easily and brightly but also quickly were a quick and cheap light source. Knots of pitch pine, called “candlewood” were saved and burned at the side of the hearth for additional light.

Splinters of this wood could be used as a candle or to help speed up starting a fire [fatwood]. **Oil lamp** – Oil lamps were metal or ceramic containers holding oil and supplied with a wick that burned to provide the light. The simplest form looked like a small bowl with a spout. Oil or even fat scraps filled the bowl and a simple wick or rag laying in the spout fed off the oil in the bowl to provide the light. These simple lamps were often called Grease lamps or Crusie Lamps. An improved oil lamp known as a Betty lamp appeared in the late 1700’s. This version included a v-shaped or tubular support for the wick and a hinged cover over the oil container. A small hook was often attached by a chain to the Betty lamp to help pull out the wick to make it burn brighter.

*Continued on page 12*

**Spotlights....** Did you miss the article on Cold Weather Camping? If you passed it over, go back to page 2 and give it a read!

## DID YOU KNOW?

Living History organizations from every era are actively recruiting? Future editions will provide a detailed list of those units looking for new members!

## The Importance of Correct Cast Iron Cookware for the Living Historian

By: Andrew Bentley

Cast iron cookware, is a seemingly innocuous piece of material culture serving a utilitarian and ubiquitous role in households and on military campaigns alike. Yet, like any piece of material culture, there are stark changes in overall form, stylings, and nomenclature. When selecting the correct pieces for a living history impression care must be paid to recognize and let this fact guide your impression.

The usual rules apply. Match the correct types of cast iron cookware to the era of the impression, and drill down further for the specific impression to mirror what was used at that particular point in time by the individuals being portrayed. This level of attention to detail is seen most often in our garments, weaponry, accoutrements, and other trappings. What has emerged more recently is an eye towards correct commissary equipment for military events and an attention to cookware in general, though it has not always been this way.

Cookware in general has just as many nuanced differences and unique features in design and materiality as many garments. They change in form over time, reflective of the society from which they are created and as such can change sometimes dramatically from one era to the next. This is even more true for cast iron cookware.

Much like the variations in Richmond Depot Jackets, so too can an evolution of stylings and markings be seen on Richmond manufactured cast iron cookware produced for the C.S. Government throughout the war.

While recent emphasis has started to emerge in this level of detail for civil war commissary equipment, particularly confederate cookware, it is still largely an under researched and less understood piece of the material culture puzzle. This partially stems from the lack of consolidated/published research on the topic, which makes understanding the nuanced differences in cast iron cookware limited and less accessible to the living historian.



Part of it is also from a lack attention paid to that component of our impressions, with a general acceptance of a “close enough”, something the author has been guilty of as well for this very topic.

Why is it important?

So why does this matter? There’s the purist answer, that if we strive for correctness in all parts of our impression then our cast iron cookware is no different and must be correct. The other answer I would postulate is that cooking, more than most other parts of our impressions, is such a universally connective piece of history because of its direct connection to that simple transcendent activity of cooking. When interacting with visitors to public living history events, without fail cooking is always an area of interest and garners interest from many. Often they are folks who are not necessarily enthralled with the military sciences of war. But cooking and consuming food transcends eras, and correctly presenting exactly (or as close as possible) how it was done is important to present an accurate portrayal of that.



Like with all living history as well, we are painting a living picture, trying to portray a previous moment in time. It’s incumbent upon us to honor the memory of those people and events by doing it as correctly as possible.

So now what? How do I get it right?

The first thing to do is to evaluate for your impression is whether cast-iron cookware even applies to your impression. Every confederate doesn’t necessarily require the same cast iron if any at all in some instances. Conversely, a union impression may surprise you and have cast iron cookware be required to get it exactly right for that particular impression.



Once you’ve identified what you need and what it should look like to match the era of your impression, you need to start hunting for the pieces. In this instance, correct reproduction cast iron cookware does not exist for the 18th and 19th century. Historical castings have yet to be fully and authentically reproduced, so you will be searching for the original thing. This is a challenge unto itself, and requires time and effort to hunt on eBay, in antique malls, and other corners of the earth to find the right pieces. But when you secure original cast iron cookware for your impression, the difference will be immediately apparent compared to a contemporary substitute or even anachronistic but historical piece. The workmanship, materials, and little details of these pieces will often surprise you. The attention to these little details, when applied to your entire impression will lead to macro changes, ones that are noticeable to the trained and untrained eye alike.

## Old Knapsacks

*Indianapolis Daily Journal, September 3, 1867*

The following is an extract from a letter of a "woman in Washington"

I saw a pile of knapsacks the other evening at the cottage on fourth street. Knapsacks and haversacks left behind for safe keeping by the boys who went to the front and never came back. The eloquence of the worm eaten and moulded bags can not be written. Here was a piece of stoney bread uneaten, and a little paper of coffee, the smoken tin cup in which it had been boiled so often over a hasty fire on the eve of battle. There was the letter, sealed, directed and never sent. The soldiers could not always get a stamp. Here a letter half written, commencing "Dear wife, How I want to see you." Dear Mother, My time is nearly out." The rusty pen just as it was lain down on the half-filled sheet by the gallant and loving hand which hoped to soon finish it, here tinted with red, white and blue. Here are photograhs of famous generals and dear ones at home. Here were letters of heart-breaking love, and loyalty to duty, and holy faith and cheer, written at home; and here was the testament given him by the woman he loved best, soiled and worn. For the American soldier, if he rarely read it, still would carry his testament as a dear talisman



to save him from harm. Here were those mementoes of the brave, living, loving life gone out. They never came back! The mourners at home do not know where they fell, or whether they were buried. To one unfamiliar with the soldier's life, these relics might mean little. To me they mean all love, all suffering, all heroism. I look on them, and again seem to see the long lines of marching men file past; dust-covered and warm, on their way to the front. I see the roads of Virginia, simmering in the white heat, lined with exhausted men lying down to sleep and die, after the last defeat; hear the cry of the wounded, the moan of the dying; see the half-filled grave, the unburied dead. All the awful reality of war comes back. So, too, do knightly days and dauntless men. Pace walks amid the flowers, and already our soldiers seem almost forgotten. Days of war and deeds of valor seem like dreams gone by.



The biggest challenge facing the living historian building a quality Confederate impression is the relative lack of standardization across the Confederate military. Material culture research is essential due to the array of different uniforms and equipment used by southern soldiers. The same dynamic applies to selection of a blanket for your impression. Most Union soldiers carried a wool blanket with relatively standard specifications. The Confederate living historian, however, has a wider variety of different options and it can be difficult to determine which is best suited for your impression without a basic knowledge of Confederate blankets. British imports dominated the antebellum blanket trade in America. The United States in the mid-1800s produced relatively limited

supplies of the coarse wool required for heavy woolen blankets, while British manufacturers had both abundant domestic supply and ready access to cheap wool from Europe. By 1859, England exported over 55 million yards of blankets, heavy woolens, and wool carpets to the United States. Blankets for American markets were often dyed in various shades of deep blue, grey, blue-grey, scarlet, and green, while domestic British consumers preferred undyed white blankets. Blankets were woven as a long continuous piece of heavy fabric and cut down into pairs of blankets for sale, so blanket imports were frequently denoted as pairs of blankets rather than single blankets. Stipes of various widths and contrasting colors both helped to ensure alignment during weaving and denoted where to cut individual blankets. All American industry combined produced roughly a million yards of blankets in 1860. Most of this production was from New England and all the southern states combined produced

*Continued from page 6*

(<https://www.hollingermetalede.com/>).

These companies have easy to follow menus for actions in storage and handling, exhibit and display, environmental controls, conservation and repair, book binding, and more. Each also has a wealth of information available through resources compiled by professionals in the areas listed above. . Company staff, as well as professionals from major institutions around the world, draft articles with step-by-step guides on how to safely engage with each of the areas of collection management as a private person with little to no background in preservation.

I highly recommend familiarizing yourself with the categories available on each of these websites, browsing their blog resources, and assessing your own archival needs prior to our next edition, where we will dive into the specific needs associated with different types of collection materials.

This column is dedicated to the seasoned collector who may want to brush up on their archival knowledge, and to the new collector, the family historian, and the museum professional learning new skills to support the needs of their organization/institution. Check in to the Curator's Corner in each edition of the Living History Gazette as we explore a new aspect of conservation, preservation, and archives throughout 2025 and beyond!

only 1,650 pairs of blankets in 1860. Only a single southern mill, opened by the Crenshaw Woolen Company in Richmond in December 1860, had the extra wide looms required to weave full 60-inch-wide blankets. Many American blankets were constructed of two pieces of narrower heavy woolen fabric, sewn together along a lengthwise center seam.

When the war began, Crenshaw offered to produce blankets for the Confederate military, but the Quartermaster Department instead signed a contract with Kelly, Tackett, Ford & Co., operators of Washington Mill in Fredericksburg, to produce 10,000 Army blankets. Invoices survive for delivery of at least 5,848 blankets between June and October 1861, but it is unclear whether the contract was ever filled in full. The advance of Federal troops in spring 1862 forced Kelly, Tackett, Ford & Co. to relocate their equipment to Manchester, just outside of

*Continued on page 11*

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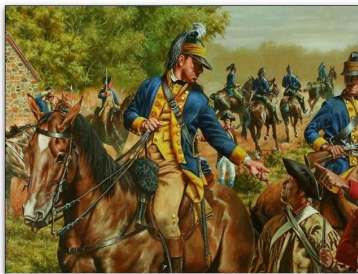
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### *Von Heer's Provost Corps: Marechaussee*

#### The US Army's First Military Police Unit



By: *William Buser*

Captain Bartholomew von Heer, a German-speaking Prussian officer, was appointed the first commander of the "Marechaussee Corps."

They were responsible for maintaining order and enforcing the Articles of War within the Continental Army, which was often unruly and disobedient. The Corps. consisted of the following:

- 4 - Lieutenants
- 1 - Quartermaster Sergeant
- 1 - Clerk
- 2 - Trumpeter
- 2 - Sergeants
- 2 - Corporals
- 43 - Dragoons
- 4 - Executioners

On June 6, 1778, orders were issued for the establishment of the new Provost Corps. They were to be armed, uniformed and accoutered as light dragoons.

Beginning in 1779, the Marechaussee began to be used in ways other than their prescribed duties.

General Washington asked them to conduct reconnaissance missions, serve as dispatch couriers, and in an emergency, serve as a cavalry for the general army force.

*Continued from page 10*

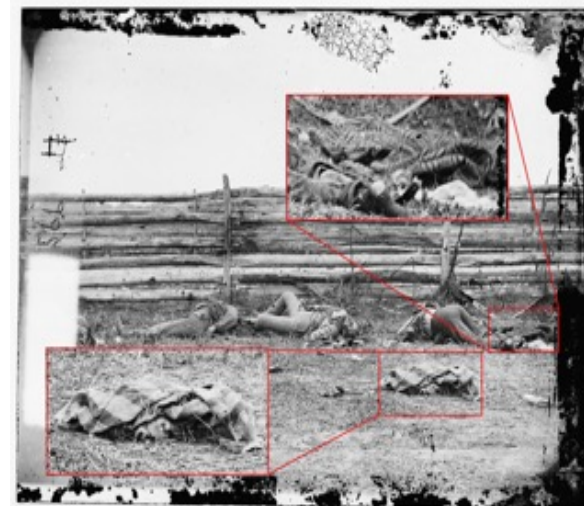
Richmond. There they were a major cloth supplier but no record exists of further blanket production.

Crenshaw, their government bid rejected, agreed to produce 5,000 Army blankets for a commercial firm. Throughout fall 1861, the mill produced 450 grey wool blankets weekly, measuring 60 inches by 80 inches and weighting 3 7/8 pounds. The businessman resold the blankets for twice what he had bought them for as the price of increasingly rare blankets skyrocketed by the war's first winter. Crenshaw sold an additional lot of 1,000 Army blankets in February 1862, but the extent of their blanket production after this is uncertain. The firm signed a large military contract in September 1862 to supply uniform cloth, which ran until the mill's destruction in a May 1863 fire. Later that year, President Davis was told "we are now destitute of a supply of blankets... there are no factories in the South engaged in the manufacture of blankets. We are dependent almost entirely on purchases in England..." With limited domestic production, the South turned to expedients. Citizens donated large numbers of blankets during each of the war's first two winters. A South Carolina relief organization called in 1862 for civilians to "contribute liberally... in blankets or woolen carpets as a substitute for blankets. The quilted 'comforts,' so called, are not considered so useful to the soldier as the blanket, which is easier dried after being wet. Let the 'comforts,' then, be retained for use at home, and our blankets be sent to our soldiers." A patterned civilian coverlet and a likely civilian wool blanket are both visible in one of the photos of Confederate dead at Antietam.

The Quartermaster Department paid Crenshaw in October 1862 to scour and clean donated blankets, drawers, quilts, comforts, and bedding. Some of the items cleaned were likely captured Federal equipment being prepared for reissue, as the contract also included dying overcoats, coats, jackets, and pants.

Among the donations were wool carpets lined with cloth and pressed into service as emergency blankets. Purchases of "carpet blankets" date as early as September 1861. The Nashville Depot reported in January 1862 having used 20,559 yards of carpeting for emergency blankets and contracted with a local firm for 13,041 lined carpet blankets. In the first two years of the war, the North Carolina state quartermaster issued at least 11,952 carpet blankets and in 1863 the Atlanta Depot had 20,559 yards of carpeting on hand for blankets. With even carpets becoming scarce, in 1863 the Georgia state quartermaster manufactured 10,000 blankets out of jean and kersey cloth lined with cotton shirting. Half of these had been issued by October 1864, with 4,895 still on hand.

While these expedients helped address immediate needs, the Confederacy increasingly turned to England to solve its blanket shortage. 20,000 blankets landed in Savannah aboard the first major blockade runner in September 1861. By circa December 1862, Confederate agent Caleb Huse reported having shipped 62,025 blankets from England. Some shipments were intercepted, like 192 bales of gray blankets "believed to be such as are used in the United States army" found by on the captured steamer Peterhoff. Many more, however, reached the troops, with a soldier in Georgia writing in November 1863: "Quantities of new English blankets have been issued. A single one is large enough to cover a double bed and the texture is far superior to the blankets usually brought south with goods..."



**DID YOU KNOW?**

The next edition of The Living History Gazette will be available on February 1, 2025!

*Blankets... Continued from page 11*

North Carolina uniquely supplied its own troops instead of relying on the central government. Between September 1862 and March 1864, the state issued 33,164 blankets. During the winter of 1862-1863, this number included 2,249 cotton comforts and 1,338 quilts, but these expedients fall away after the state began importing English blankets in 1863. By September 1864, the state had issued 31,000 imported blankets and had 26,886 more on hand. Three of these blankets survive and are nearly identical, with a twill weave of cobalt blue yarn, wide black stripes on each end, and with 'NC' embroidered in the middle using red yarn. Georgia followed suit in 1864, importing 113 bales of blankets in early summer 1864. These shipments quickly reached the troops, as a Georgian officer wrote soon after "... I laid under a pine, on a nice pair of new white blankets I had been allowed to buy out of an importation of the blockade by the state of Georgia for Georgia troops.

Importation efforts reached impressive heights in 1864. The Quartermaster Department estimated it had imported 316,000 blankets between November 1863 and December 1864. In the final six months of 1864 alone, the Quartermaster Department issued 156,092 blankets, almost certainly all of which had been imported. After shoes, no other quartermaster item was imported in larger numbers than blankets.

Confederate soldiers huddled for warmth under a wide array of blankets and the period you are portraying dictates the appropriate blanket for your impression. Early war impressions call for coverlets, quilts, and carpet blankets. Imported English wool blankets should predominate mid and late war impressions. Wool blankets of practically any period design and construction are appropriate throughout, reflecting the variety of English blankets in antebellum use, those imported during the conflict, and limited domestic production.

Federal blankets are also appropriate, as at least some British imports closely resembled Union blankets and captured blankets were reissued by Confederate authorities (presumably with the 'US' removed). With a few portrayal-specific modifications, almost any period blanket is a viable choice for your Confederate impression.

Readers interested in further details regarding Confederate blankets can read Mr. William's full article at [www.stonewallbrigade.net](http://www.stonewallbrigade.net).

*Lighting ....Continued from page 8*

In the 18th century the oil used came from animal or plant sources. Refined petroleum products did not appear until the mid-nineteenth century. Whale oil burned the best and was used in street lamps. More commonly available oils included: bear fat, deer fat, fish oil, passenger pigeon fat, nut or plant oils. Candles – Candles in the 18th century were made of a number of different substances, but not paraffin which is another petroleum based product. Most candles were made of animal fat known as tallow. Tallow candles lasted longer than rush lights and gave off a bit more light but they were more expensive than rushes. Tallow was primarily sheep fat with some bull's fat mixed in. Better candles were made of beeswax or bayberry. Both gave off a pleasant odor and a clear flame. Being more expensive, these candles were used in churches and in formal spaces in homes such as the parlor or the dining room. The best and most expensive candles were made of Spermaceti, which was a waxy substance found inside the head of sperm whale. These candles burned 3 times brighter than a tallow candle. They also lasted longer and didn't smell bad while burning. Candles were relatively expensive, in terms of the beef tallow and household labor that went into making them. Almost all Americans used candles sparingly; in a group of central Massachusetts inventories taken between 1790 and 1810, for example, over half of the households owned only one or two candlesticks, and those having four candles were very rare.

**Article Submission!**

**Do you have a submission that you feel our readers would enjoy? Submit your article or idea for consideration to**

**Editor@LHGazette.org**

**All submissions will be reviewed and if accepted, placed in the Living History Gazette's future editions.**

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Many people walked through their homes at night without candles. They had walked those familiar routes so often they could get by without the light. People who were less confident moving around a dark house would use a candle mounted in a special candleholder known as a chamber stick. Chamber sticks were specially designed to make it safer to carry candles from room to room. They had broad drip pans to catch running wax or tallow and offset handles to prevent burning one's hands if the candle dripped badly. Of course, the user had to walk slowly as they passed through the house so that the motion of the passing air did not blow out the candle. People needing light outside of the home carried candles in lanterns.

Lanterns were usually made of tinned iron. One version was a pierced tin lantern that resembled a round cheese grater. The tiny piercings provided air to keep the flame going. A small open door allowed more light to shine out in one direction but also exposed the flame to wind. Better lanterns had one or more glass sides to allow the light to shine out while still protecting the flame. In addition to providing illumination, lanterns also helped prevent the spread of sparks in highly flammable areas like a barn. The poor fashioned makeshift lanterns, using paper or hollowed out turnips for protection from the wind and rain.

The popular Halloween pumpkin can trace its origins back to the poor turnip lantern.