

## **Battles of Saratoga 250th- Living History Standards**

### **Follower (Female) Impressions**



Female “followers” were present with most military garrisons and armies during the American War for Independence. Women were assigned to the same companies as their husbands (officially, unmarried women were not allowed to live with the troops) and were thus counted and victualled. They worked along the same organizational lines as the soldiers too. They were, effectively, simultaneously not part of the army (they held no ranks, were not enlisted, and were not salaried) and were yet part of it (they were fed, sometimes clothed, assigned duties, read the articles of war, and subject to military orders and martial law). Girls were, by default, assigned to the same military structures as their parents.

Only the armies of Europe and the Continental Army had followers; militia did not. The reason for this was tied to the contextual realities of military service entailed with standing armies, including the nascent Continental Army. In turn, the number of women and girls who followed the Continental Army was proportionally smaller than their European equivalents.

Women present in camp were typically employed to wash clothing, repair or make military clothes, and serve as nurses in the hospitals. They also foraged, sometimes cooked, and, of course, raised their children. The terms “follower” or “women” were used to describe them during the American War for Independence: “camp follower” and “distaff” were popularized only later.

Although not as common as male sutlers, women sutlers sometimes sold foods and other wares in camp and were untethered from the classification of being a soldier’s wife. Officially, sutlers were permitted by the military and their prices were regulated. As with most sutlers, their wares principally revolved around selling alcohol and other foods, but they sold sewing notions, combs, knives, etc., as well.

Context is King: the armies present at Bemus Heights/Freeman’s Farm/Saratoga inhabited stationary encampments for multiple weeks with their baggage at hand. If one can document specific examples that occurred elsewhere which break a rule (for example, a woman wearing nothing but a shift, petticoat, and handkerchief in the Caribbean), these do not contextually fit the situation at Bemus Heights/Freeman’s Farm/Saratoga in 1777 and therefore do not apply. Nevertheless, there would have been exceptional examples of things worn or used outside the norm. This guide regulates what was normal – in living

history, we seek to portray the common, the usual, and the standard, instead of playing up the exceptions.

Any woman who chooses to dress as and portray a soldier or officer in their living history unit may do so. However, any impression must completely comport with the standards set for those impressions. No mixing of impressions (such as half female follower, half soldier) is permitted.

Everything worn or carried by a female follower living history participant at Battles of Saratoga 250<sup>th</sup> should reflect one's culture and social class. This guide addresses the women and girls who followed the armies in 1777 that were tied to the enlisted class. While the Northern Army had no "upper class" women present, it's well known that the British had a few (including one Lady), as well as some girls, and the Germans had one (a Baroness) and her daughters. This guide does not address their clothing or associated material culture. If you have any questions or concerns about any of the following standards, or questions regarding anything not addressed in these standards (such as an appropriate upper-class impression), please reach out to Anne Clothier ([Anne.Clothier.Programs@gmail.com](mailto:Anne.Clothier.Programs@gmail.com)) to discuss.

Each subject (such as "shifts") is subdivided into **standard**, **exceeds standard**, and **unacceptable** categories. The **standard** defines the basic terms required for any living history impression at Battles of Saratoga 250<sup>th</sup> events. While not required, elements listed under **exceeds standard** are encouraged, particularly as these offer the most legitimate interpretive value to our visitors. Anything listed under the **unacceptable** category is completely disallowed. The standards outlined are valid for the duration of the entire event, not just during visitor hours.



## **Contents**

**Clothing:** Shifts; Stays and Jumps; Pockets; Petticoats; Aprons; Gowns and other Body Garments; Caps; Hats and Bonnets; Handkerchiefs; Stockings and Garters; Shoes and Buckles; Mitts; Cloaks.

**Equipage:** Liquid Vessels; Carrying personal items; Blankets and Tumplines.

**Hygiene and Personal Effects:** Hair; Glasses/Spectacles; Artistic Objects, Jewelry, Pins, and Watches; Makeup; Smoking.

**Camp:** Tentage/Housing; Furniture; Food/Cooking and Cookware.

**Appendix:** Women with Burgoyne's Army, Oct-Nov. 1777

# CLOTHING

## Shifts

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-stitched plain white and/or natural linen. Lightweight white or natural wool flannel. Cotton with an appropriate pre-19<sup>th</sup> century weave. Body is long (to lower thigh) and full. Sleeves gathered into narrow (about ½-inch finished) bands (cuffs) that sit just below the elbows. Bands close with sleeve links (cuff links), buttons, ribbon, or string. Neck opening should be wide and low enough, so the shift barely shows when worn with a gown.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance. Linen or wool flannel as detailed above.
- **Unacceptable:** Synthetic fabrics. Shifts made of patterned fabric. Modern shirts. Long sleeves. Drawstring necklines or sleeves. Laced ruffles.

## Stays and Jumps

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-sewn linen or woolen stays or jumps, bound in leather, which produces the proper 1770s silhouette, i.e., a smooth conical torso. Fully or partially stiffened with boning, metal, reeds, etc. Busks are optional. Leather stays.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Not wearing stays or jumps (unless wearing a bedgown; see below).

## Pockets

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-sewn linen with narrow ties to wrap around the waist. Worn underneath the petticoats and accessible through the pocket slits. Some pockets were heavily embroidered but were still hidden. Pockets were occasionally visible under the apron when contextually suitable (a woman selling goods, for example).
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Visible pockets out “for show” (such things should be brought to a visitor’s attention by the wearer, not the other way around). Synthetic materials. Inaccurate embroidery motifs or printed fabrics.

## **Petticoats**

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-sewn wool or linen (or blends thereof, including cotton or silk). Fabric patterns and colors must conform to period examples. Quilted petticoats. At least two petticoats must always be worn. Outer petticoat length should be between low-calf and ankle, with shorter petticoats more suitable for work. Under-petticoats can be shorter, or less decorative, as their function is to provide warmth and fill out the silhouette. Petticoats should be pleated to narrow (about ½-inch finished) waistbands of self-fabric or tape. Slits at the sides of the petticoat allow access to pockets (see above). Narrow ties are attached at the sides of the waistband and wrap around to tie in front and back.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Synthetic fabric. Modern skirts. Petticoats shorter than mid-calf. Only one petticoat. Inappropriate patterns such as modern calicos, paisleys, or cabbage roses. No visible drawstring waistbands (there were no drawstring petticoats).

## **Aprons**

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-sewn (ideally hand-finished) linen or worsted in solid white or natural color or check or crossbar patterned. Stroke-gathered or small pleated. Narrow tape for ties is commonly wrapped around the back and tied in front. Aprons should be long enough and wide enough to cover a majority of the petticoat front.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance. Stroke-gathered (not pleated).
- **Unacceptable:** Synthetic fabrics. Printed or wildly colored fabrics. Drawstring aprons. Decorative aprons with ruffles or lace. Eyelet or bibbed aprons.

## **Gowns and other Body Garments**

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-sewn (ideally hand-finished) stomacher-front “English” gown with robings and back pleats that are cut in one with the skirt. Made of wool or linen (or blends thereof, including silk or cotton) or printed cotton. Fabric patterns and colors must conform to period examples. Bedgowns. Center-front closing gowns are discouraged (too fashion forward) but may be worn if the gown front is hidden by an appropriately worn handkerchief. A worn, threadbare “Cast off” British,

German, or Continental Army military coat may be worn with an affiliated impression only (i.e., a Continental Army follower may wear a Continental Army coat). Note: German followers may wear short gowns.

- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Stomacher-front gowns without robings (If you have converted your center-front gown to a stomacher-front gown, it must have robings). Sleeveless “English” or “French” bodices. Fitted garments worn without stays or jumps. Bedgowns without stays or jumps are acceptable; one may wear a sports bra if necessary. Inappropriate patterns such as modern calicos, paisleys, or cabbage roses. Silk gowns. Riding habits or Brunswicks are not permitted unless approved under application (see the introduction).

## Caps

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-sewn fine white linen, cotton lawn, or silk organza. In general, cap and hair styles should have some height and volume in this period, but not too exaggerated. Caps were generally trimmed with a silk ribbon tied in back or on top of the head. Some hair should be visible in front, with the cap set at least 1” back from the hairline. Women of African descent may wear linen or cotton handkerchiefs (see below) wrapped as seen in the artwork of Agostino Brunias.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Wearing no cap is unacceptable. Synthetic materials or cotton. Cap colors other than white. “Mob caps” (circular caps consisting of one piece of material gathered all around to create both caul and ruffle).

## Hats and Bonnets

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-stitched (ideally hand-finished). Hats or bonnets are optional, but if worn, they must be worn over the cap (see above). Hats should have a flat, shallow round crown made of felt, chip, or straw, maybe silk covered, and should be tied behind the head with silk ribbons. Bonnets are made of silk or wool with paste board, buckram, or boned brims.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Synthetic ribbon for trim or ties. Hat with high modern crown greater than one inch. Hat with ties on top of the brim or tied under the chin. Hat folded down over the ears. Hat with back curled severely forward to touch the crown.

## **Handkerchiefs**

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-hemmed linen or cotton shaped in a triangle or square (folded diagonally into a triangle). Worsted, flannel, linsey-woolsey, or silk handkerchiefs may be layered for warmth. Fabric patterns and colors must conform to period examples. Handkerchiefs should be large enough to be draped around the shoulders and cover the bosom. Handkerchiefs may be tucked into the gown front or pinned to the outside of the gown front. A handkerchief may also be worn between the robings in lieu of a stomacher. However, handkerchiefs should be left out over the shoulders and over the back of the gown no matter how they are worn in front. Note: handkerchiefs are recommended but not required.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Handkerchiefs tucked into the sides of the gown neckline, exposing the bosom. Fringed or knitted shawls. Synthetic fabrics. Handkerchiefs with modern pattern motifs. Paisleys. Handkerchiefs tied together in front.

## **Stockings and Garters**

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-made stockings that fit above the knee, made of densely knit wool, linen, silk, or cotton. Any patterns and colors must be of the period. Knee socks (because the tops are not visible under the petticoat). Stockings should be held up by tied wool, silk, or linen tapes. Note: stockings are recommended but not required.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Frame-knit stockings knit flat to shape and stitched up the center back to form a visible seam. Hand-knit stockings or socks knit in the round to shape with a faux seam of purl stitches up the center back. Stockings cut and sewn from knit fabric yardage using an accurate pattern. Gore clocks (embellishment on both sides of the ankle) are subtle and same color. Stockings should be held up by tied wool, silk, or linen tapes.
- **Unacceptable:** Commercially available striped or clocked stockings (neither are legitimate replicas). Diced (Highland) hose. Short socks. Tights or pantyhose. Buckled leather garters (these were military issues). Synthetic materials.

## **Shoes and Buckles**

- **Standard:** Leather or broadcloth (in accord with age) shoes, constructed in a style consistent with relevant 1770's fashion, i.e., with a wooden "squash" heel, closed

with replica buckles or tape ties (one or two holes per latchet). Men's shoes (see men's standards) are acceptable. Simply styled black leather modern shoes. Note: footwear is recommended but not required.

- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance. Small original or replica buckles.
- **Unacceptable:** Shoes with no distinct heel. Obviously modern footwear such as hiking boots, sneakers, lug soles, etc. Wooden clogs. Victorian-style lace-up shoes. Wingtips. Fake buckles.

## **Mitts**

- **Standard:** Knit or woolen fabric, linen, or leather. Elbow-length fingerless gloves, with a half-thumb, most often with a point over the back of the hand.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Modern fingerless gloves.

## **Cloaks**

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-stitched single color (usually red) broadcloth. Closed with ties (wool tape or silk ribbon) at the neck. Generally mid-calf for longer cloaks, and wrist-length for shorter cloaks. With or without hood. Hoods should be fan-pleated in back and may have silk lining. The body of the cloak should not be lined. The edges of the cloak may be bound or trimmed with wide silk ribbon or wool tape.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched and constructed after a pattern taken from an extant garment with relevant provenance.
- **Unacceptable:** Celtic-style, LARP, cosplay, Renaissance Faire, or any other inspired fantasy cloaks. Decorative metal clasps.

# EQUIPPAGE

## Liquid Vessels

- **Standard:** Wooden or redware rundlet. Leather-covered pocket or saddle flask.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Same as above.
- **Unacceptable:** Military canteens of any type or form. Modern flasks.

## Carrying personal items

- **Standard:** Linen “Market” wallets. Linen or flannel Bolsters. Frails (soft-sided grass baskets with two short handles). Split wood or willow baskets in styles which conform to period examples. Handkerchief bundles (see Handkerchiefs).
- **Exceeds Standard:** All hand-sewn fabrics. Otherwise detailed as above.
- **Unacceptable:** Knapsacks. Haversacks. Rattan baskets. Baskets are made with synthetic materials, metal tacks, or glue. Post 18<sup>th</sup>-century basket forms (such as “Nantucket” or “Buttocks” baskets).

## Blankets and Tumplines

- **Standard:** Hand or machine-woven wool or linsey-woolsey, preferably plain white, check, crossbar, striped, or plaid, closely resembling extant examples. 2 or 3-point blankets, rose blankets, or Dutch blankets. Blankets can be rolled and carried over the shoulder, carried in baskets, or carried via leather or woven tumpline. Blankets are not required at Battles of Saratoga 250th events, but they must conform to these standards if carried on a march or displayed in camp.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Handloomed. Blankets may be either “imported” (a solid piece of material) or “colonial” (a seam down the middle where the two halves are joined).
- **Unacceptable:** Modern or Civil War replica gray blankets. Blankets are made of synthetic materials (such as polar fleece). Hudson Bay blankets.

# HYEGENE and PERSONAL EFFECTS

## Hair

- **Standard:** Hair styles of the 1770s were fairly large, with some height and volume. Hair should be put up under a cap, with most of the volume on top (not at the back) of the head. Some hair should show above the forehead. Hair pieces (sometimes called “rats”) may be added to the top of the head under the cap to create more volume. Short hair disguised as long hair by the addition of hair pieces. Bangs must be pinned up.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hair dressed in no more than pomade and minimal powder, otherwise as detailed above.
- **Unacceptable:** Visible bangs. Hair worn in a bun at the back of the head (rather than on top). Hair dyed with any unnatural color. “Court” wigs or hairstyles.

## Glasses/Spectacles

- **Standard:** Reproduction period-appropriate metal frames with circular lenses. Contact lenses.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Original spectacles made prior to c.1790, i.e., with both circular lenses and temple pieces.
- **Unacceptable:** glasses not in accord with pre-1780 styling or materials.

## Artistic Objects, Jewelry, Pins, and Watches:

- **Standard:** No jewelry. Any facial piercings must be removed or replaced with small clear retainers/hiders. Plain metal wedding bands. A simple narrow silk ribbon (generally black) tied high around the neck, generally on younger women. Plain metal straight modern pins. Plain hat pins. Timepieces must be kept out of sight.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Same as above. Tinned brass, wound and pressed head pins (for garment closures, sewing, etc.).
- **Unacceptable:** Artistic objects or insignias, medals, pins, patches, or badges (including SAR and DAR civic organization badges). Medals, badges, or patches copied from 18<sup>th</sup> century artifacts, unless specifically documented to your impression (such as a personalized token). Modern jewelry (plain metal wedding bands excepted). Wrist watches. Plastic proxy wedding bands.

## **Makeup**

- **Standard:** No cosmetic makeup.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Same.
- **Unacceptable:** Nail polish. Obviously, heavy makeup, including eyeliner, eyeshadow, etc.

## **Smoking**

- **Standard:** Tobacco smoked from a clay pipe (allowed in camp after visitor hours only).
- **Exceeds Standard:** Same as above, using heritage tobacco.
- **Unacceptable:** Use of cigarettes, cigars, or vaping in camp. All smoking is prohibited near historical buildings, at any time when high fire danger warnings are in effect.

# CAMP

## Tentage/Housing

- **Standard:** Machine-stitched tentage as commonly used at reenactment encampment events including, but not limited to, marquee, wedge, horse, awning (“fly”), or lean-to tents. Wood poles, ropes, and metal or wooden stakes. Note: space for modern camping may be made available by contacting Anne Clothier at least one month in advance of the event.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Hand-stitched tentage made of linen, constructed according to documented dimensions with relevant provenance and context. Drawn wood poles with iron fittings, wooden pins, and hemp or jute rope. Straight-sawn milled boards (to sleep on top of and/or under). Note: branch cuttings for constructing brush huts may be available by contacting Anne Clothier at least three months in advance of the event – do not bring any brush to the event.
- **Unacceptable:** modern tents in camp. Plastic rope.

## Furniture

- **Standard:** Chairs, benches, folding stools, tables, boxes, chests, trunks, and portmanteaus broadly based upon examples seen in British/Irish/American or German camp scenes or artifacts broadly dated from ca.1750 to ca.1780. Note: we recommend limited use of camp furniture – followers had to carry any they wanted on their person.
- **Exceeds Standard:** Little or no camp furniture. Any furniture must be mobile enough to have been carried (see appendix, below), constructed after patterns taken from extant examples with relevant provenances.
- **Unacceptable:** Any furniture that does not conform to historical sources broadly described above. Adirondack chairs. Lanterns and lantern poles displayed during public hours (these may be used otherwise).

## Food/Cooking and Cookware

- **Standard:** Foods conforming to those available to the people of New England or Upstate New York in the 1770s. Cookware and eating/drinkware should be made of wood (treen), pewter, tin, iron/steel, horn, silver, earthenware (redware, slipware, creamware), porcelain, stoneware, and glass. Wrapped foods on display should be in parchment paper or linen. Note: we recommend limited use of cookware,

particularly fragile ware and large iron kettles, Dutch ovens, trammels, etc. In the case of the former, they were prone to easy breakage and therefore not commonly used by those travelling on campaign. In the case of the latter, since soldiers and followers had to carry them, only tin kettles and small, lightweight iron kettles were utilized.

- **Exceeds Standard:** This depends upon the army you represent a follower of:
  - For the Northern Army: “Heritage” quality foods that would have been available to the military personnel and followers present at Bemus Heights/Saratoga in September-October 1777. In most cases, these include issuances of fresh beef (or sometimes salt pork or beef), flour (or sometimes rice), salt, peas, rum, chocolate, and sugar. Seasonally available foraged foods such as turnips and apples. Purchased foods and drinks from sutlers, such as cheese, apples, bread, milk, rum, wine, and beer. Kettles made of hot-dipped tin or cast iron constructed after patterns taken from extant examples with relevant provenances. Suspensions for cooking are made of foraged tree branches (not steel). **Note:** alcoholic drinks may not be consumed during visitor hours; these are listed here for the purpose of interpretation only.
  - For the Army from Canada: “Heritage” quality foods that would have been available to the military personnel and followers present at Freeman’s Farm/Saratoga in September-October 1777. In most cases, these include issuances of salt pork (or sometimes salt beef), flour, and spruce beer. Seasonally available foraged foods such as turnips and apples. Purchased foods and drinks from sutlers, such as cheese, ham, apples, bread, sugar, tea, milk, rum, wine, and beer, were exorbitant by this point in the expedition. General officers had a greater amount and variety of foods available because they had the funds and baggage allowance to convey it (inquire with Anne Clothier if appropriate to your impression). Kettles made of hot-dipped tin constructed after patterns taken from extant examples with relevant provenances. Suspensions for cooking are made of foraged tree branches (not steel). **Note:** alcoholic drinks may not be consumed during visitor hours; these are listed here for the purpose of interpretation only.
- **Unacceptable:** Displayed modern food packaging such as plastic containers, plastic wrap, or foil. Overtly modern processed foods, such as cupcakes or sandwiches (no, sandwiches are not appropriate). Stainless steel cookery or utensils. Use of any modern packaging, or any modern food consumption, must remain hidden from view.

## **Appendix:**

### **Women with Burgoyne's Army, Oct-Nov. 1777**

Unfortunately, there are no known visual descriptions of Continental Army women present with the Northern Army in 1777. But some American authors were so mesmerized by the appearance of the women followers travelling with the British and German soldiers that they felt compelled to write letters describing them. Interestingly, certain observations were repeated across multiple accounts, such as seen in the three accounts below.

Elisha James, a Continental Army artificer stationed in Albany, received permission to travel to Saratoga to see the momentous event of the British surrender there. When he returned to Albany, he wrote to his wife, Sarah, describing for her "what my Eyes have Latly Seen" (Elisha James to Sarah James, October 19, 1777):

I am glad you think of a Book for our Little Stanton I Should Be glad to See him & my Little Sally ye very glad though I Canot at present have them in my Armes yet they are always in my mind whom may a Kind God preserve till I come to se you all[.] I See Some Regulars children Aboute Stantons sise marching with them tyd on a hors & Some in Knapsacks & others in Baskits on the womens Backs.

Later in life, Daniel Granger, a teenaged Massachusetts militia drummer at the Saratoga surrender, still retained vivid memories of what he saw of the women who walked by him into captivity on the day of the surrender (M. M. Quaife, "A Boy Soldier Under Washington: The Memoir of Daniel Granger," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. 16 (March 1930), p.547):

They had some Women, who wore short Petty coats, bare footed, & bare Leged, with huge Packs on their backs, some carrying a child & leading another or two, They were silent, civil, and looked quite subdued.

In her letter to Mercy Otis Warren, Hannah Winthrop described what she noticed of the women travelling with Burgoyne's surrendered army as it plodded through Cambridge, Massachusetts (Hannah Winthrop to Mercy Otis Warren, November 11, 1777. MHS, Mercy Otis Warren papers, Ms. N-17.):

Last Thursday, a large number of British troops came softly thro the Town.... To be sure the sight was truly Astonishing, I never had the least Idea, that the Creation produced such a Sordid Set of Creatures in human Figure—poor dirty emaciated men, great numbers of women, who seemd to be the beasts of burthen, having a bushel basket on their back, by which they were bent double, the contents seemd to be Pots & kettles, various sorts of Furniture, children peeping thro gridirons & other utensils. Some very young Infants who were born on the road, the women barefoot, cloathd in dirty raggs Such Effluvia filld the air while they were passing, had they not been smoaking all the time, I should have been apprehensive of being Contaminated by them[.]