

## **Civil War Revisited Event**

### **General Information:**

- You can join us for the morning session (8:30 – 11:30); the afternoon session (1:00 – 3:30); or both
- You will receive double lab hours for participating (6 for the morning session, 6 for the afternoon, or 12 for both)
- You are responsible for your own transportation to Kearney Park; however, I will be picking up the items from the costume shop at 7:45 and returning shortly after it ends (about 4 pm), and I am happy to give bring anyone along.
- Parking is free behind the Kerney mansion—enter on the service road on the south east corner of the property
- Presentations will take place inside the mansion.

### **The Presentation**

We will be talking about all the layers of clothing a lady had to wear to be properly dressed during the civil war, and dressing up someone in the clothing as we talk.

Included in this packet is a basic overview of what the presentation will be (from <http://nhdcivilwarclothing.weebly.com/layer-by-layer.html>) and you will be expected to read it over before the event

### **What is your role?**

- **Take turns dressing up!**
- **Organize the items for the next group.**
- **Answer questions.**
- **Generally just be helpful and help the kids have fun**

## The Dresses From the Inside Out



**Women wore about 7 layers of clothing under their dress everyday.**

- **Bloomers or Pantalettes**
- **Chemise**
- **Corset**
- **Corset cover/camisole**
- **Under petticoat**
- **Hoop skirt**
- **Over petticoat**
- **Dress/Blouse and Skirt**
- **Hat, gloves, parasol, and boots**

### Layer by Layer

Women went to extreme lengths to highlight their features and change their natural appearance. Women would wear 8 layers in total. Layers slowly decreased through the years however, especially when women had to begin filling the roles of their husbands when the civil war began. Women also slowly started to toss aside the traditions of fashion after budget became tight and women had to take over businesses and farms. However, before the Civil War women took fashion into high regard.

First Layer



The first layer was the first step to pants. Women would wear bloomers underneath their dresses. Bloomers were always below the knee, if not all the way to the ankle. Younger women would usually wear bloomers that reached just below the knee, and as they got older and more mature the pantalets or bloomers would become longer. If a woman's ankle were to ever show, it was considered an immoral action, and bloomers were worn in order to keep their ankles covered in case their dresses were to fly up.

## Second Layer

The second layer was a chemise, commonly known as a shimmy. A chemise was a simple cotton nightgown that reached just below the knees. A chemise would help to protect the women from being pinched by the corset that would go directly over it. The chemise also helped keep a woman's bodily oils from soiling the corset. It also provided a modest covering for the woman's true body form when a corset was not worn, such as at bedtime.



## Third Layer



A corset was worn on top of the chemise. A corset was worn to give a smooth line from the waist to the bust. Corsets also highlighted a woman's bust, hips, and waist, and made her appear thinner than she actually is. Corsets pushed a woman's ribs, stomach, liver, diaphragms, and gall bladders together. Women almost always needed help to lace up their corsets; they had to be tied extremely tight in order to emphasize their features. Corsets were commonly made out of whale bone or steamed-pressed wood. Hook and eye clasps were attached to the front and the corset laced in the back. Corsets were known as one of the most important parts of a woman's clothing. Corsets were extremely popular in the 1800's and are still quite popular today.

## Forth Layer

The next layer was a camisole or a corset cover. This protected the corset from fading or getting color rubbed onto it. Corsets were extremely hard to launder, so women tried their best to keep them clean and quality. Some women wore their corset covers after putting on their crinoline skirts.



## Fifth Layer



The fifth layer is a under petticoat. Made of cotton, it was worn underneath the hoop skirt to preserve modesty and keep dust and dirt from blowing up under the skirt. An under petticoat also helped to keep the legs warm in the winter. Most under petticoats were white to better blend in with the hoop skirt.

## Sixth Layer

The sixth layer was the hoop skirt or crinoline. Hoop skirts were very commonly made out of steel and then covered by cotton. However, hoop skirts were sometimes made out of whale bone sewn into cotton, or hemp rope sewn into cotton. Which ever technique was used to make the skirt, they were always a bell shape that was placed right above the hips. Crinolines were extremely wide, some flaring out to a total of 18 feet. Only 3 women could fit into an average sized room when wearing a crinoline skirt, and trolley fares were raised for women wearing a crinoline skirt. Normally, the bigger the event was, the larger and wider the crinoline skirt was. For instance, if a women was to just simply work around the house, the crinoline skirt might be



small only 2 or 3 feet wide, as pictured, or just left off all together. However, if the women was to go to a party or meeting with friends, the crinoline skirt would reach to a minimum of 7'.

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### Seventh Layer



The next layer is the over petticoat. The over petticoat, like the over petticoat, was worn in order to both protect clothing and improve appearance. Over petticoats protected the day skirt from getting rust on them if she was to get stuck in the rain. It also helped to smooth out the appearance of the skirt and keep the hoops from showing through. In the winter months, women usually wore 4-5 over petticoats in order to keep warm. During the summer and spring months, however, women only wore 1 or 2. Over petticoats were extremely similar to under petticoats, just slightly thicker.

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### Eighth Layer



Finally, the actual top and skirt was put on. A women either wore a blouse or a bodice. A blouse was much more loose fitting and casual, while a bodice fit tightly onto a women's body. after the shirt was put on, the skirt would go over. Depending on the event skirts could be plain and simple and made of cotton, or intricate and silk with details and beading.